

# CONCORD BIKES

## Tell the Town Why You Bike

**Concord Bikes** is a volunteer community group that promotes bicycling as a healthy and environmentally positive means of transportation and recreation. We sponsor the annual Concord Bike Fest and advocate for safe cycling and traffic calming in collaboration with town committees and partner organizations [www.concorderbikes.org](http://www.concorderbikes.org).

While this spring's Concord Bike Fest is on hold, we want to use this time to build a stronger bicycling community by weaving together the diverse stories of people who ride bikes in and around Concord. Please share your **Why I Bike** story. Families are encouraged to submit their stories as well as children with parent/guardian permission. Make it around 100-250 words, include a photo, and send it to [concordbikefest@gmail.com](mailto:concordbikefest@gmail.com).

Here are the stories we have collected so far celebrating the **Why We Bike** community.

### Wade Rubinstein



I bike for freedom, fellowship, fitness, family, and fun. I've been cycling since I was five years old. As a child, I remember the glee of cruising on my purple Ross single speed with a baseball card clattering between the spokes. As a teenager, my red Raleigh Grand Prix 10 speed supported me on my neighborhood paper route and connected me to my friends. The Raleigh was my primary form of transportation through high school.

When I moved to Concord in 1987, I rediscovered biking. I commuted to work on my silver Raleigh 12 speed. After work, I would head for the woods and explore Fairyland, Adams Woods, Estabrook Woods, Punkatesset, Great Brook Farm...the trails are verdant and endless.

Thirty three years later, I'm still riding in Concord every chance I get. You will find me leisurely running errands around town, bounding through the Wright Woods along the Sudbury River, taking a leisurely cruise on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, or pushing hard on an early morning road ride with the Monsters in the Basement cycling club. The possibilities are dizzying.

To spread the goodness of biking, I've helped create The Bike Connector, a non-profit bicycle program in Lowell. The Bike Connector connects economically disadvantaged youth to safe, affordable bicycles.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the traffic is light and the weather is improving. I am sharing my favorite roads and trails with my children. Riding with my grown children gives me great joy and reminds me of how far I've come on my cycling journey.

## Aiyana Currie



I recall it like it was yesterday - the day I took off riding downhill on my San Diego sidewalk, free from helping hands for the first time. I didn't look back on that day, nor any day since. As a child I rode to explore, to get out of my house, to be independent, to turn on a side road just because I could, to ride as fast up a hill and feel proud of my effort. From those days till now I spend time on my various bicycles for the freedom of the ride, the wind in my face, the enjoyment of seeing the sunrise, of turning a corner on a trail and looking in wonder at a family of sleeping

deer, of pedaling as hard as possible on a deserted road to de-stress, spinning the pedals to fly down a hill and yelling "wheeee" into the wind as if I were still a child. I've competed in races around the world, slugged my bike across various countries just for the ability to ride "before the kids wake up" or to ride ahead and meet the family car in the next town. I enjoy eating a bowl of ice cream at 8 am after a ride just because it tastes good. I enjoy seeing others enjoying their ride and sometimes tagging along with them for a lively chat or new friendship. I ride because my legs and lungs allow me to explore and I am grateful for every day this is possible.

## Richard Fahlander



Since my tricycle days in Ohio, I've never stopped riding my bike. I've always enjoyed getting someplace under my own power in the fresh (or sometimes not so fresh) air. It gives me good exercise and time to cogitate, although it has its hazards. I've dodged dogs in Baltimore in the 1970s, competed with cars in Cambridge in the 1980s, and pedaled to school with my son through rush-hour traffic in the 1990s. I've done long charity rides, spandex centuries and crack of dawn loops to Boston and back. Today, I take a more casual approach with saddle bags (panniers for the chic-chic set) to carry library books, swim gear, groceries and an occasional six-pack. On a trail I find wonder around every bend. I gain a granular appreciation for the beauty of our community. On the road I wave to neighbors and stop to chat. But, then, as I huff up a hill, a six-wheel dump truck pulling a

landscape trailer races by missing me by inches. I know in my gut why so many people are wary to bike on Concord's mostly bucolic roads. I also realize that the more of us who get out and ride the safer it will be for us all. I want everyone to get the chance to appreciate the benefits of hitching ourselves to such an extraordinarily humane machine.

## Stuart Johnston



I see bicycling as a source of freedom. It's freedom from the sedentary life, freedom from another carbon footprint, freedom to say hello to others I pass along the way, freedom to choose how hard to pedal. When I was a child I remember that it was the joy of independence that fueled my banana-seat Columbia as I cruised our neighborhood and pedaled two miles to and from school each day. As an adult, I haven't been riding my bike to work, but instead have been riding it *for* work by writing New England bicycle guidebooks since 1990. I'm grateful for the freedom that my bike has provided on the miles of roads, bike paths, and mountain bike trails it has carried me and I hope to enjoy riding just as much during the next 30 years. A simple machine, the bicycle sets me free.

A better question is *Why I don't bike more?* The answer is much about traffic safety. I'm wary of riding on roads as traffic volume, speed, and driver distraction have increased through the years. I'd like more bike/pedestrian infrastructure to be built and roadways improved to enhance safety for bicyclists. Our town would be a better place in so many ways if all of us were inspired and enabled to use bicycles to get what we need, exercise included.

## Anne Speer



I usually don't even think about why I bike. It's just a part of my life. I grew up in Germany where bicycling has always been a means of transportation that then became a sport. I didn't even get a car until my twenties. In the U.S. it seems like biking has been mostly for recreation, but is becoming more a mode of transportation. It is great to see more kids ride their bikes around Concord these days. I think it is so valuable for their sense of independence.

I married an avid long-distance cyclist and enjoyed the physicality and sense of achievement that comes from a challenging road ride. Today, I mostly use my bike for errands, to go to yoga class and the library, and for food shopping. On a nice day I'll pedal up to Whole Foods in Bedford.

What I like most about biking is the pace. I move through the landscape at a speed where I can look to the left and right and appreciate details – people, houses, store fronts, the natural world. Any time I can ride my bike with purpose I feel good about myself.

## Richard Speer



I have had a bike forever it seems and got the road riding bug around 1981. I really love the long tours on the road. It is my way to reduce my basic needs to riding, eating, sleeping and being outside. In those days it helped that I was unburdened by the joys of family and the associated responsibilities. I have completed coast to coast rides across the USA, ridden from Norway to Italy, and toured Australia and New Zealand. Most of all I have to thank my bike for taking me to Coles Bay, Tasmania

where I met my future wife in 1997. I have also been a Pan Mass Challenge rider for the last 12 years and raised over 50K in donations for Dana Farber. I continue to use the PMC as a training carrot to stay in shape and to get out as much as possible. For now, long tours might not be in my future but getting out and about in the Concord area is awesome in its own way.