

Biking Beginnings...and Considerations – Memory Missionary Missive – May 2017

Growing up as a child in Bowling Green, Ohio was wonderful, though I did not immediately recognize all the blessings we had in this small, university town. Among the benefits of living there was community support for a fabulous parks and recreation department providing services to children of all ages. The number of programs and the character of the leaders was especially impressive in the '60s and '70s.

So it's with great joy that I tell you of one particular staff member from those days. His name was Eli Joyce and for my money he was about the coolest guy a youngster could find. Eli had characteristics that many of us would like to emulate: relating easily with children/youth of all backgrounds, sharing a love of experiencing the outdoors plus using his seemingly boundless energy in positive ways. He was helpful to all of us – assuring we all had the instruction necessary to succeed, equipment available to use, programs that were enjoyable and instructive.

My bet is that for a number of reasons, including the influence of Eli, an inordinately large percentage of kids who grew up in BG are enjoying physically active retirement and pre-retirement lives. As an example, I'll share one hard-to-lose behavior in my own life that is most likely due to Eli.

Eli was the mastermind and energizer behind a group called BG Bikers. The elementary school-aged kids in this group spent time learning how to ride our bicycles responsibly, doing bike maintenance, learning rules of the road and leadership (older kids led the trips around town.) The capstone event was a longer ride to a neighboring town. My regular bicycle riding today comes from this experience.

Why tell you about Eli? First, it gives me the opportunity to encourage you to “remember the Eli” in your life and consider doing a few things in his/her honor

- Write that special person a thanksgiving letter describing the joy you have from the experience of knowing him/her. Maybe in the midst of that note you can share a meaningful story(ies) from times you were together. (NOTE: If the person has already died or you have no contact information, maybe you can still jot the note as a wonderful reminder?!?)
- Consider which of his/her good qualities you are emulating (or might start) as you interact with children of all ages

Second, with a nod to Eli's legacy, here are some requests of those riding bicycles and driving motorized vehicles:

1. Bikers: please follow the rules of the road, including
 - a. Don't ride full-speed through stop signs and red lights (ESPECIALLY when cars should have the right-of-way!) It's a poor example and gives bikers a bad name
 - b. Signal with your left arm when you're turning so others know your plans
 - c. Wait your turn in traffic just as though you are driving a full-sized vehicle
2. Drivers of motorized vehicles: could we all make it an “aspirational goal” to pay more attention to driving than to our phone? (texting, calls, messages, ...) While bicyclists can be slow-moving, please treat them with the same respect you would a slow-moving tractor
 - a. Swerve away when passing (at least 3 feet please – it's the law!)
 - b. Wait to pass until it's safe for you, oncoming traffic and the biker

With gratefulness to Eli and responsible drivers/bicyclists everywhere, let me say...enjoy the day (and the memories!)

Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, is an aspiring “memory missionary.” He and wife Kim are having fun with Long Memories efforts (www.LongMemories.info), focusing on helping others in “Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!”

[NOTE: compilation of all MMM articles is here: <http://www.longmemories.info/articles-by-long-memories-llc-founders-pdf-format>]