

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

St. Francis de Sales



Meanderings...

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The Tour Of Ajax - Buying A New Bike

SUMMER holidays was always associated with freedom. On that last day of school, we always got a prayer card from the teacher, and a ticket to the Canadian National Exhibition, even though back then it was a major expedition to go into the city, and I doubt that many of the students availed themselves of the entry pass.

Summer days were time to hop on our bikes and set off into the wild blue yonder. Once someone was out peddling, it wasn't long before a whole gaggle of young people filled the road (it was a dirt road back then, filled with little potholes dug with the heel of the foot for marbles). Some days we had relay races around the neighbourhood. Some days we were content to dare racing down the various hills, without helmets. No one had ever heard of bike helmets.

Some days we would just sit on our bikes in the middle of the road (the three cars a day that passed during 'rush hour' never bothered us), and we would talk the afternoon away. The cool bikes usually had a banana seat with a high back bar, with multi-coloured tassels hanging from the hand grips. The brakes were the old fashioned kind where you stopped by pushing the peddles backwards. The girls had plastic baskets attached to the front to carry things. There was always a large variety of bike styles, all with big mud deflectors. Every once in a while, some one would bring out an old deck of cards, or old hockey cards (we would use Montreal Canadian cards because they were always expendable) and some clothes pins from the clothesline which we would attach to the spokes to make 'clackers', this really annoying snapping sound when the wheels turned. No one had any 'speeds' except the speeds that our little legs could generate. Oh, the care free days of bicyclemania!

Well, last week I went shopping for a bike, mostly for exercise, and only remotely because of the gas prices. It was with great glee that I took my new wheels home and sat on the seat. Suddenly the seats seem so much smaller and harder than I remembered. Anyway, after sweating my way from the rectory to the Worship Space, I was looking for oxygen and I was glad we have a defibrillator on the premises. Places that are too delicate to mention were causing great pain, and the next morning those same unmentionable places were stiff and sore. Cycling seemed so much more of an effort than I remembered, and from a no-speed bike in my youth, to 21 speeds on this new bike, it didn't seem to help, because the legs themselves only had one speed - sluggish and hurting. No *Tour de France* this year!

- SR