

## Why We Ride Bikes

Four mid-50s friends, riding bikes. Our bikes would be better described as functional versus fast. We dress comfortably but make no Tour de France fashion statements. We meet on multi-use paths and trails. Among the four of us, we have kids who still need our attention, a grandchild or two, and aging, sometimes ailing parents who require our care. We meet on weekends or after work now that it's light later. Our husbands accept our "back in a bit" as we rush toward our ride.

Selene Yeager, a health, fitness and cycling expert, recently wrote on her "Fit Chick" blog, "Your Bike Doesn't Know How Old You Are." No it doesn't. What's more, riding our bikes, we don't feel our age! We are kids again. We are having fun. We are filled with joy. The faces on the other bicyclists we pass--no matter their ages--show that same joy.

On a recent ride, as we rotated around our peloton, I asked each rider friend, "Why do you ride a bike?" Beth shared that she had knee surgery; bicycling is easy on her knees while providing enjoyable outdoor exercise. Kristi said she has battled weight all her life and bicycling is so much more enjoyable than time on an elliptical or other exercise machines. Dana, who has also been an avid runner, compared and contrasted running to bicycling. She likes how much farther a bike will take her, that it is not punishing to the body, and that bicycling is something you can do as a kid and continue to enjoy as you grow older. Bicycling, she said, can be more social than running and yet is something you can also do alone.

What we all four feel is that bicycling is just plain fun. The health benefits of bicycling are extensive--including cardiovascular, strength, coordination, and cognitive improvements. All of that makes bicycling an appealing route to fitness. For the four of us, bicycling is a workout

that does not feel like work. We are happy about the health benefits, but we're not exactly paying attention to all that as we ride along--we're just having way too much fun!

If you haven't already, try some time on a bike. May is National Bike and Walk Month. We would love to see you out on the bike path or trail. Wave as you pass by. You'll recognize us--we'll be the gals with the great big grins!

Kathy Biagioli is a Lee's Summit resident, middle school teacher, and Chair of the Education and Encouragement Subcommittee of the Lee's Summit's Livable Streets Advisory Board.