

Resident Bicyclists Love Adventure of the Open Road

Don Harvey, Gordon Ziegler and Ralph Pegors enjoy riding local bike trails

With cool Southern California breezes in their faces, their multi-gear mechanical steeds by their sides and the jet stream behind them, a group of determined, seasoned men and women are ready to blend exercise with adventure ... fun with camaraderie.

The Holy Rollers as they're called are about to embark on another of their twice weekly bicycle rides that take them from the shores of Mission Bay and the beach trails of Carlsbad to the foothills of Orange County and everywhere in between.

"There's nothing more exhilarating than roaring down a dirt path on a mountain bike," said Don Harvey, who has been biking for 30 years. "Anything can happen and it usually does. There are always surprises – some delightful and some distressing. It's a great pastime for those who need exercise or just a breath of fresh air."

Last count, the club travels about 46 different routes that range from six to 30 miles. Don, who along with fellow residents Ralph Pegors and Gordon Ziegler make up Carlsbad By The Sea's contingent of the Holy Rollers, named so because of its origins out of the Men's Club at St. Andrews United Methodist Church in San Clemente, where Don used to live.

As a cycling enthusiast, Don couldn't resist inviting his fellow residents, Ralph and Gordon, to join the rides which take the group to locations such as the San Luis Rey Trail in Oceanside, Coronado Island, Lake Hodges in Escondido and Back Bay in Newport Beach.



From left, Don Harvey, Gordon Ziegler and Ralph Pegors ride on a local trail.

"The last time I rode a bike I was a kid," Gordon said. "But when Don asked me to ride about five years ago, I said sure, I'll go along, sounds like fun." Although, Gordon had not ridden in a while he found his first ride exhilarating. "What I like is that you can ride

at your own pace,” Gordon said. “The health benefits are tremendous. I think my heart and respiratory rates have improved since I started riding.”

Ralph, also a relative novice to cycling joined the group two years ago, said the best part of the rides is the scenery. “The beauty we see in some of the canyons and coast trails we ride is absolutely stunning,” Ralph said. “It’s fun to explore places you’ve never seen. My favorite trail is Lake Hodges.”

“Many of your senses get activated while riding,” Don said. “We hear the call of hawks swirling in the blue sky, we see lizards swiftly darting across the trail and sometimes a branch we forgot to duck under will sweep across our bodies.”

On any given ride the group consists of between 15 and 27 cyclists. Each watch out for each other making sure no one gets separated from the group. Safety is the group’s number one priority, with the self-imposed rule that every rider is required to wear a helmet. The health benefits include improved balance, concentration and stamina.

In addition to the physical benefits of cycling, there’s also the social aspect. Each ride usually includes a stop for breakfast or lunch along the way where riders can swap stories (or as Don jokingly says ... swap ‘lies’), discuss the news of the day or just catch up with each other’s lives.

“We solve the problems of the world during coffee time,” Gordon said with a smile. “I’ve gotten to know some wonderful people during our rides.”

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Front Porch is one of Southern California’s largest nonprofit providers of senior living communities, affordable housing and skilled nursing centers. The group was formed with the merging of California Lutheran Homes *and Community Services*, Pacific Homes Corporation, Sunny View Lutheran Home and FACT Retirement Services, to create a progressive new senior service system that responds to the needs of individuals within a community setting. The resulting Burbank-based organization is made up of 10 full-service retirement communities in California, two adult living communities in Louisiana and Florida, and more than 20 affordable housing communities managed by our affiliate, CARING Housing Ministries.