



timesunion.comprint story 
back 

Bicyclists in solidarity

By **DANIELLE FURFARO**, Staff writer

Click byline for more stories by writer.

First published: Thursday, May 17, 2007

NISKAYUNA -- The cluster of bikers rolled through the hilly streets of town, not saying a word. The only sounds were the whoosh of bicycle tires gliding along the wet pavement and the occasional screech of hand brakes.

The nearly 150 bicyclists were there for the first local Ride of Silence, an event to memorialize those killed, injured or harassed while riding their bikes.

The riders gathered at St. James Square on Nott Street and twice made a 4.6-mile loop through the town. It took about an hour. Many were biking enthusiasts, decked out in requisite gear right down to the flashing red lights. Others rode older 10-speeds, BMX-style bikes or had children in tow in a trailer or tandem bicycle.

Most wore black or red armbands to honor those killed or injured.

Despite gloomy weather that kept some away, organizers were impressed by the turnout.

"There are enough serious riders in the area that I knew it would be OK," said Sue Troll.

Alexander Neundorf, who was visiting from his hometown of Jena, Germany, borrowed a bike for the ride. He said the biking climate in the United States is different from Europe, where cars and bikes coexist with far fewer accidents.

"Here there are bigger streets, less bike lanes, and it is much more dangerous," said Neundorf, 30.

It was the first local ride of a national event held annual since 2003. The first Ride of Silence, at White Rock Lake in Dallas, drew 1,000 cyclists. It was organized by Chris Phelan, a friend of endurance cyclist Larry Schwartz, who was hit by the mirror of a passing bus and killed.

Triathlete Todd McAuley, 38, of Colonie, waited at St. James Square in support of the riders, wearing a black brace on his left left. He was vacationing with his family in Florida last month when he was hit by a car while riding a bike through West Palm Beach. He took out photos of himself right after crash, showing his bloody face, crushed knee and skinned fingertips.

"People need to be conscious of the fact that we are on the road and we have the right to be on the road," he said.

The ride was in memory of four bicyclists: Alan Robert Fairbanks, 72, killed on Route 5S in Rotterdam, 2006; David Ryan, 32, killed on Riverview Road in Rexford, 2004; Robert Zayhowski, 43, killed on Route 66 in Sand Lake, 2000; and Joel Melnikoff of Bethlehem, who was killed on July 3, 2006, on Route 32.

Danielle Furfaro can be reached at 454-5097 or by e-mail at dfurfaro@timesunion.com.

All Times Union materials copyright 1996-2007, Capital Newspapers Division of The Hearst Corporation, Albany, N.Y.

[HOME](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSPAPER](#) | [HOW TO ADVERTISE](#) | [PRIVACY RIGHTS](#) | [COPYRIGHT](#) | [CLASSROOM ENRICHMEN](#)