

# Wascana Freewheelers Cycling Club

## 2021 President's Report

Prepared by Geoff Ellis

The 2021 season was another difficult season for the club. The challenges of operating a cycling club during a pandemic are significant.

### Pandemic

#### Activities

The COVID pandemic continued to shape the club's activities. Membership is at about 40% of previous non-pandemic years. This is not unique to our club. In addition, many of the club's favourite events are difficult or impossible. Campgrounds were closed at the start of spring.

Interprovincial travel was strongly discouraged. These factors canceled the May long weekend event. "Gone with the wind" rides have also been canceled in the past two years due to the end of that event requiring all participants to share a van cabin (i.e. airspace).

#### Unfilled executive positions

The club is having difficulty filling executive positions. For the 2021 year, we operated without a vice president, a tour coordinator, a special events coordinator, a marketing coordinator, and a "tech person". The reduced club membership does limit the pool of potential executive members.

### New technology

#### Cycle Club App

The club experimented with new technology in 2021. We used the Cycle Club App to record ride attendance and manage COVID waivers. This came about at the recommendation of SaskCycling as a mechanism for managing COVID waivers. The results of this were mixed.

Members expressed approval for the app's ability to show upcoming rides and who was planning on attending. As a ride leader, I definitely appreciated not needing to handle physical papers to meet our COVID waiver requirements. However, there were members that had technical issues with getting the app installed.

## Facebook

We also made more use of Facebook for club announcements and ride planning. The reasons for this are twofold. One reason is that publishing an event on Facebook is easier than it is on the website. The second is that having a social media presence is important for marketing and recruiting new members. One of the other side effects of the club being active on social media is that it offers us other opportunities to participate in the Regina cycling community. For example, we were contacted twice last year for interviews by news outlets. E.g. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/city-of-regina-cycling-1.6109920>

## Looking Forward

Despite the challenges we currently face as a club, I believe there are good days ahead for the club. The COVID pandemic caused a large spike in bicycle sales. There are lots of new riders. If we can find the right time and method for connecting with these people, we have the opportunity to grow the club. And when the pandemic finally subsides, we will be able to return to more of the events we love. The best Freewheeler rides are yet to come.