

Shop

Action Wheels Bike Shop
1066 Rt 45, Deptford, NJ 08090
Phone: 856.468.5115
More: actionwheels.com

A quick chat with Patty Woodworth, the owner of Action Wheels.

How did you get started? My brother took an interest in BMX racing when we were kids and, like a typical little sister, I followed him into it to be annoying. The 'local' track and shop was almost an hour away, so my brother convinced our parents to let him sell a couple of little motorcycles we had to get seed money to start a small shop in our basement. They applied for a sales tax license and got him started. We sold tires and tubes, small stuff, at first then worked up to wheel sets and frames sets. Two years later, Jim convinced them to let him move the bike shop into a store-front in our downtown. He would walk over after school and run the place for a few hours before going home for dinner. He was 15 at the time. During this same period, we would run races on a track we built in our backyard. Jumps, berms, starting gate, the works. My parents were all about doing everything for their children so they proceeded to find land and start a real BMX track nearby. In addition to running races, we raced all over the country going to regionals, nationals and the grands. Our parents were educators so they had summers off and carted us all around to support our interest. That was pretty much how it all began...32 years ago.

What is your shop's specialty? We actively try to guide our customers in a direction that allows them to become a cyclist. Each rider is different and wants something different from their cycling experience. We take people out on our test ride loop so they can make an informed decision. With their purchase, they receive a disc full of tips to get them comfortable (66 tips by Growth Cycle). We include a "Cheat Sheet for Cyclists" in their owner's package so they have an understanding of maintaining their new steed. "Our Places to Ride" list gives them a jumping off point for riding at their level. We try to remove the road blocks that might prevent them from really getting involved. We offer as many as 5 rides a week of varying levels to get the beginners on a group ride and give them something to progress toward. I also send regular shop emails to keep people current: when and where the club centuries are, how to dress for different seasons, announcing holiday and bonus rides, and local advocacy in addition to special purchase offers. You can just sell someone something and let them go home or you can provide them with the tools to make an experience that will last a lifetime.

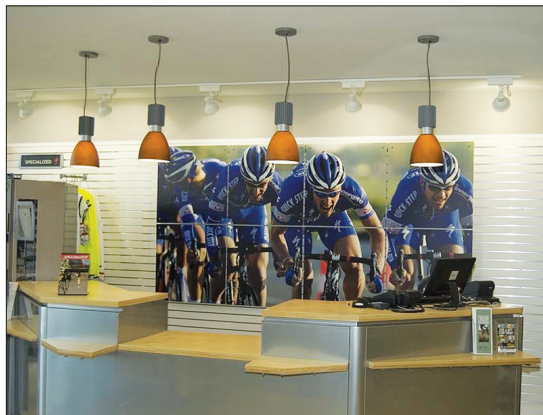


What is the best part about your job? I'm a social being and love being engaged with people. Some folks hate retail but I totally dig that interaction. In that vein, I lead rides 4 times a week, taking groups on road and mountain rides and connecting them to the sport and other people who love the sport. So I get to spread the gospel of cycling and feed my social jones.

Road, mountain, fixie or BMX? My BMX background led me to the woods and that is where my heart is. There is something spiritual that happens to me in the woods that I just don't get on the road. I do love road riding, it just doesn't give me the same warm and fuzzies.

What is your favorite ride? The road ride from Morgan Hill to Vegas! I've never had more fun on a bike. In the woods, I love a place in Philly (Philadelphia) called the Wissahickon. Been riding there since the late 80s and would choose to go there over any other local mountain or road ride. It's rocky and challenging with great climbs. I highly recommend it.

What is your best bike sale moment? Any good stories? When the guy or gal who bought a starter bike comes back in beaming and is so in love with the sport that they want to take it to the next level. I sold a bike to a guy a few years back who was running to lose weight. He figured he could cross-train a bit to save his knees so he bought an entry-level road bike. He joined us on our group rides and in less than a year is all about riding. He came back in and bought a tri bike and then an S-Works. He even traveled with me twice to Spain for a training camp that we take customers to each spring. We've become friends and even hired him as our contractor when we remodeled to become a Specialized



Concept Store. More recently, he has found a passion for the woods and is a mountain biker. I love that story...

I heard you love to camp, tell me about your latest camping adventure. I went on an epic adventure with a great bunch of folks a few weeks back. It was the Komen Ride sponsored by Specialized Bicycles. We rode our bikes from Morgan Hill California to Las Vegas. The first day we rode to Lake McSwain and had to sleep on the ground after riding more than 100 miles (151 for some). This is not something I would have chosen to do but some sweet gal helped me through it all by pitching the tent and showing me how to blow up the air mattress. I returned the favor by taking her picture doing all the work and loaning her a pillow. The next day, we rode to Yosemite and stayed in Housekeeping Camp. We likened it to a Turkish Prison Camp. Funny thing is, it was probably the best part of the trip. A bunch of folks who didn't know each other became fast friends and made lasting bonds due to the more intimate nature of our experience. And thanks again for building the tent.

Tell me about your training camps in Spain. I wanted to go to a Eurocycler camp a few years back and my husband said 'only if you take someone with you'. I decided to make it a bike shop trip and enlisted 13 folks to come along. The next year, 21 riders went. It's a great way to start the season. You ride about 400 base miles in five days along the Mediterranean and through the same mountains where the pros train. The guides are great and know how to pace each of the groups to make sure everyone is having fun and gaining something from the experience. They even offer nightly clinics on topics that are useful like descending techniques and nutrition. I pretty much just tell everyone what flight they need to book and collect their money to send to Eurocycler. It's another way to offer something to our customers who want to take it to the next level.

What's next for you? Gonna keep on keeping on. I'm always on the lookout for the next big adventure. The folks at Western Spirit hosted our ride to Vegas and they were amazing. I hope to get a mountain bike trip together with them at some point within the next year or so. I also have two kids, Sophia, 8 and Henry, 5. I hope to pass on my love of cycling and take some family adventures with them. Maybe I will even take them camping.

—Paige Dunn

