



## Good Times, Good Friends And A Little Road Rash

Wallingford attorney benefits from cutting loose on his bicycle

By DOUGLAS S. MALAN

Attorney Anthony Parent remembers the moment very well. Seven years ago, he was bicycling along a Connecticut road, enjoying the scenery and releasing some tension.

Parent had been an off-road mountain bike rider, but he was starting to enjoy riding the lightweight bicycles on winding roads. Suddenly, another bicyclist whizzed past him.

"I didn't like that," Parent said. "So I caught up to him. Ego is a pretty powerful thing on a bike."

Soon, Parent made a new friend, and he became serious about road racing. His training regimen included at least 15 hours a week of cycling to prepare for several dozen road races that he competed in throughout the region.

Now at age 38 and with a family, Parent can't devote as much time to his hobby, but he remains an active racer. And it's not just about fueling his competitive fire.

"This has turned into a fantastic referral service for me," said Parent, a tax attorney who practices with his father, David, in Wallingford. "During a race, guys will pull up beside me and say, 'You're that tax attorney guy, aren't you?'"

Parent races with a team of nine other riders, including a couple of attorneys and several accountants. The camaraderie of team cycling is what appealed to him after his experiences of cycling in solitude on a mountain bike.

"We all love to talk," Parent said. "It's the whole networking thing while we're talking and meanwhile we're all racing each other while this is happening."

Parent rides about eight hours a week and trains as often as possible in Tuesday night

events at Rentschler Field that are coordinated by local racing teams. Even though he has less time to ride, Parent makes the most of it on the road because of the benefits to his business and his personal health.

"I can go out for long rides and really lose myself in my own world," Parent said. That includes taking breaks in the middle of the workday to clear his head.

"Sometimes it's hard to force yourself from the desk because you think you have too much work to do," he said. "But that's the time when you need to get away the most. All the little stresses that I thought were important are meaningless when I get back from a ride."

### Wind And Rain

But when it comes to riding, it's not all just happy-go-lucky. Parent has cycled through some serious conditions.

Like the four-stage race in Vermont in 2006 when riders encountered heavy rain and winds up to 70 mph as they climbed 2,000 feet into the Green Mountains. Parent fell out of the lead pack during the 55-mile race and had to battle the conditions alone, rather than using other riders to help buffer the gales.

"It was like a wall of wind," Parent recalled. The physical strain of climbing mountains in those conditions also took a toll on his mental capacities.

"The thing I remember is I was delirious [with fatigue] and I saw a guy who was lying on the side of the road after being blown over by the wind," he said. "But I couldn't understand what was happening at



Contributed Photo

Attorney Anthony Parent started road racing in 2003 because he enjoyed the camaraderie of his teammates.

the time. I was out of my mind."

He's also had plenty of contact with the pavement after crashing at high speeds. A couple of years ago in a New London race, his rear tire came off his bike during the race and he skidded along the road, suffering some severe abrasions known as road rash.

Such accidents "are the real reason we shave our legs for races, not for aerodynamics," Parent said. "Shaving makes road rash heal more quickly."

These days, Parent sticks to shorter races that don't require as much training time and aren't as taxing on the body. Even then, he's still covering 20 to 40 miles in races that last up to 90 minutes. His team was successful in a race earlier this spring in Bethel when they finished first in the division for riders in their 40s and 50s.

"We still have a lot of fun," Parent said. "It's more like, 'Hey guys, we gotta be at work on Monday so let's not get too crazy.' Our wives won't like it if we come home all beat up." ■