



Marge Coragliotti's bicycle club has swelled to 200 members—but in the beginning, teaching safety to Concord, Calif., youngsters proved a struggle.

HANDSOME, 14-year-old John Plier was a friend to everyone, but particularly to Clyde and Marge Coragliotti, a childless couple who lived in his neighborhood in Concord, Calif.

John was a familiar figure around the Coragliotti home, helping in the yard, running errands, and sometimes just keeping the couple company. They looked forward to his frequent visits.

That's why the news that stunned others on the block that warm afternoon in May, 1952, was crushing to them. John had turned his bicycle into the side of a bus—and was killed instantly.

The emptiness in their lives was almost more than they could bear; he had been like a son to them. They knew they must do something to keep his memory alive—something lasting. But what? Finally, a thought came to Marge Coragliotti: "John still might be alive if he had known more about bicycle safety. Suppose I try teaching bike safety to others?"

There were many things against it. She worked all day in the Navy shipyard. Also, she and her husband owned a bicycle shop, and it would be easy for gossips to say bicycle-safety work was simply a gimmick to attract business.

Spring faded into fall and fall into rainy winter. The Coragliottis still had not decided on an appropriate memorial. Then one day, almost a year after John was killed, a bike rider fell in front of the car in which Marge was a passenger. The driver slammed on the brakes, and the automobile stopped inches from the boy. He was frightened but uninjured. Marge helped him up. He was about John's age—the same sandy hair, the same disarming smile. At that moment, she made an important decision: she would quit her job in the shipyard and work for the safety of Concord's children in John's name.

Marge set a date for a meeting, sent notices to the newspapers, and bought refreshments and prizes. The day came: an overcast Oct. 16, 1953.

She Makes Bicycling Safer!

The boy had been like her own son, but now he was gone—killed in a bike accident; what could she do to keep his memory alive?

By **ALFRED MARTINEZ**

And the children came, too—80 of them crowded into her small house. Thus, the Children's Club of Concord was born.

She quickly forged the policy of the club. There would be no dues. She would teach safety. It was as simple as that, with one problem: she had no idea *how* to teach safety. So she wrote to every possible source she could think of for material. In less than a week she had stacks of folders, books, and letters. She noted the most frequent causes of bike accidents: riding double, riding without brakes, riding without handgrips, and holding on to moving vehicles.

In three weeks, the club grew to 200 members.

Marge poured her own money into it, and when a neighboring merchant heard of this, he arranged to have her speak before the Concord Lions Club. The result: a check. The same thing happened with the Kiwanis Club. Slowly, steadily, interest awakened, and help moved in.

Marge taught bicycle safety by practical experience as well as by the book. Although a heavy-set woman, she learned to ride a bicycle herself and led her young charges on camping trips. She made learning fun by letting the children participate in parades as a unit. They learned to ride unicycles built by her husband and formed drill teams which have since won top awards.

But there were difficult times in the club's early months. Adult interest occasionally waned, and Marge often became discouraged. Just before one meeting she had decided that it would be her last; someone else could take over. But something happened to change her mind.

DURING her talk on safety, she noticed a little boy fidgeting in his chair. She tried to ignore him, but his twisting distracted her. At recess, she asked the boy: "Jimmy, what on earth is the matter with you?" The dark-eyed seven-year-old replied wistfully: "Bicycle Lady, I'm sitting on burns."

The story came out. The boy's clothes had caught fire while he was burning papers. A neighbor saw him and rolled him on the lawn, smothering the fire. But Jimmy had suffered some burns—and it hurt where he sat.

Marge was ashamed of herself for thinking of quitting; instead, she wrote for literature on fire safety, and added a new dimension to the club. Thanks to little Jimmy, she also was given a name that evening: the Bicycle Lady.

Have the results been worth all the effort? Marge would be the first to say yes. In nine years, hundreds of children have belonged to the club—and not one of them has met with a major accident that could have been prevented by observing safety rules.

COVER:

In this dramatic portrait of Carl Sandburg, artist William A. Smith captures the dignity of a beloved poet-historian. A personal friend of Sandburg, Smith also wrote the heart-warming profile on page 4.

Family Weekly

January 6, 1963

LEONARD S. DAVIDOW *President and Publisher*
WALTER C. DREYFUS *Vice President*
PATRICK E. O'ROURKE *Advertising Director*
MORTON FRANK *Director of Publisher Relations*

Send all advertising communications to Family Weekly, 153 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1, Ill.

Address all communications about editorial features to Family Weekly, 60 E. 56th St., New York 22, N. Y.

Board of Editors

ERNEST V. HEYN *Editor-in-Chief*
BEN KARTMAN *Executive Editor*
ROBERT FITZGIBBON *Managing Editor*
PHILLIP DYKSTRA *Art Director*
MELANIE DE PROFT *Food Editor*

Rosalyn Abrevaya, Arden Eidell, Hal Landon, Jack Ryan, Peer J. Oppenheimer, Hollywood.

© 1963, FAMILY WEEKLY MAGAZINE, INC., 153 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 1, Ill. All rights reserved.