

**Subject:**STLRC and the WHEEL 'N WARRIORS

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**From:**STLRC Webmaster <webmaster@stlrc.org>

**To:**jim jeske <jim2119@msn.com>, DownhillDave@live.com

**CC:**Darryl Fabick <darryl\_fabick@hotmail.com>, Faye Holdenried <fholdenried@hotmail.com>, wayne marsh <wwmarsh2003@yahoo.com>, James Cobb <COBBJR@GMAIL.COM>

Jim and Dave,

I writing on behalf of several of us who administer STLRC. We know that you have been involved with the WHEEL 'N WARRIORS and applaud you for what you are doing. However there are questions we have about the nature of that organization and its relationship to STLRC. The appropriate resolution of this matter would be for the STLRC Board (now that we have one) to state their position. Before we present this to the Board, we need to better understand what is intended.

Last summer John Schmeink of the STL VA, down by JB Park, contacted us to see if some of our members would volunteer to assist in leading bicycle rides for a group of veterans who suffered from head trauma. Several of us met with John to discuss what would be involved. He also indicated he was trying to convince his reluctant supervisor to endorse this program.

Among the things John said to us was that there were about 80 such vets in all. Rides would be perhaps only 5 miles in length, each vet had been given an especially fitted bike, rides would be about one per month, they would provide their own transportation to the ride, and rides would be on (sparsely traveled) paved trails rather than streets. He indicated that he wanted a few, regular ride leaders who would develop a relationship with the vets -- people who just show up occasionally would not be desirable.

When we formed STLRC back in 2012, one of our major concerns was that our ride leaders be protected from law suits because of some supposed failure on their part, so we felt we should make sure such protection was offered to those volunteers working with the vets. Our concerns about such liability were never answered, but John suggested that was an issue we should take up with his supervisor. Even though we never were able to resolve that, we presented this opportunity to our members with the stipulation that these volunteers were working as individuals and not representing STLRC.

We also offered to provide a space on our website, distinct from regular STLRC rides and perhaps even password-protected, where info for the vets could be posted. John's response was that only a few of these vets had computers, and phone trees would work better for them.

We left it that the two of you, and perhaps a couple of others, would continue to work with the WHEEL 'N WARRIORS as individuals and STLRC would have no formal involvement.

Around the beginning of February this year, I had an email exchange with Erin Slawinski ([erins@ambucs.org](mailto:erins@ambucs.org)) of an organization called AMBUCS. She was wanting STLRC to serve as a

"sponsor" for the WHEEL 'N WARRIORS. After a couple of emails, she wrote that she would be back in contact after she returned from a business trip. I never heard further from her, and I forgot about it. As far as I was concerned, I would get others involved once she and I had determined what she had in mind. The next thing I heard a few days ago was when Darryl sent several of us a flyer listing vet rides and requesting to post rides on our website. Now I am writing you to clear up several questions. Here is what comes to mind:

- What is the relationship between John Schmeink and Erin Slawinski?
- Are we still talking about the same group of vets we discussed last summer?
- Does Erin agree with the guidelines John gave us?
- What does it mean for STLRC to be a "sponsor" of WHEEL 'N WARRIORS?
- What would be the nature of vet ride listings on the STLRC website? For STLRC rides, anyone who is willing to join and sign our waiver can ride if they follow our rules.
- What liability would STLRC members have if they inadvertently caused an accident involving one of the vets?

We can get together as a group to discuss this or we can do it by email. Primarily we would like to have answers to our questions so we can present this matter to the STLRC Board of Directors, most of whom are not in the loop in this discussion.

David Brown (314-696-8183)

Webmaster

STLRC Representative to League of American Bicyclists