

On the Loss of Our Friend

Sadly, GCC AMBUCS lost one of our long-time members this month, Bud Mesker. When we write of a lost member we usually talk about his 8 children and 31 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We talk about how long he was a member and how long he was a firefighter, that he spent four years in the military as an MP. But those things, while great, do not show what an impact Bud had on our lives.



Some of us took the time to attend the funeral and see all of his family. We heard the pastor speak about everlasting life and we heard his son speak about his dad and all the things he loved. Then one of our AMBUCS, Scott Price, got up to speak about Bud on behalf of our chapter. He related a story about his last visit with Bud and how he told Bud how much he meant to our chapter and to Scott personally. Bud took Scott's hand and then put his other hand on top, patting it, and thanked him for saying that. Scott said he will never forget that moment. Bud had an impact on Scott's life.

As we drove to the cemetery in a long procession of cars, most of the other drivers pulled over and stopped, after all this is the Midwest where values still exist. For that moment, Bud touched their lives even if they didn't know it. Of course, it helped that we had an Urbana fire engine leading the procession silently but with its red lights flashing. Bud worked for the U of I fire department, now dissolved, but the Urbana station stood in for them. Bud had impacted the lives of many firefighters in 28 years. We also had three or more Harley-Davidson riders in the procession. For Bud there was only one true brand of motorcycle and he told his step-son to get rid of his Honda and get a real motorcycle. Bud rode with several groups of Harley riders over the years. He impacted their lives with his easy smile and quick comebacks.

We stood at the cemetery while soldiers folded our country's flag and presented it to Bud's family and some of us jumped when they fired the guns. How many lives Bud impacted in his four years of service we'll never know. Many lives impacted by one man. May this be said of each of us.

God speed, Bud!



2nd Annual Amtryke Road Rally

Our fun day of trike riding, the Amtryke Road Rally, was held April 27th at the C-U Elks Lodge at Savoy. Fifteen children and their families stopped by to enjoy some snacks, ride around the track, and have a great time. The riders could go through the bike wash, stop at the gas station for a fill-up, ride over the rumble strips, and then crash right into a wall of fake bricks. Once they started riding they didn't want to stop. We hoped for a group picture of the riders but that wasn't possible. At right are a few of the riders waiting their turn at the brick break.



One of our riders, Eden, was so excited waiting for the event that she wouldn't take a nap. She kept asking if it was time for the Rally yet. When she got to the Lodge she was a little overwhelmed and wanted to go home. She rode around nearly in tears but what she didn't realize was that she was riding by herself, her mom was not pushing her for the first time ever! After a little while, she calmed down and ended up having a great time with her Amtryke.

Everyone in the family was welcome so the siblings of the riders came along and one family brought two, pink, push cars for their other children to ride. When the two little girls took a break they generously allowed other children to ride in their cars. What a great lesson in sharing!

Captain America came to the event and the children loved it. Thanks to GCC AMBUC, Bob Lacey, for arranging for the Captain to attend, (and sweating in the suit). We also had a member of the Elks Lodge stop by and we put him to work stacking at the brick break station.

Thanks to co-leaders Larry Windingland and Renae' Strawbridge for leading our chapter in making this happen! And thanks to all the AMBUCS and friends who staffed the stations and to the Elks Lodge for again allowing us the use of their hall. Hope to see everyone next year!



2019-2020 Slate of Officers

Our election of officers will be **May 7th** at the lunch meeting. The slate is listed below. Due to the fact that all candidates are running unopposed, the Board voted to suspend the written ballot for this election in favor of a show-of-hands vote.

President Elect: **Scott Price** Secretary: **Sally Denhart** Treasurer: **Elaine Windingland**
Sgt. At Arms: **Kyle Moe** Big Hat President: **Keith Jamieson**
New Directors: **Bob Lacey, Steve Gibbs**

Don Dunlap will finish **Keith Jamieson's** second year as director and **Larry Windingland** will continue serving for his second year. **Renae' Strawbridge** will move to President. **Ray Griest** will move to Chairman of the Board.

2019 Charity Golf Outing

Our next big fundraiser will be **June 17th** at Stone Creek Golf Course. Please work on finding hole sponsors and teams to play that day. Also, we'll need volunteers to staff the event so clear your calendars on that day.

Regional Spring Conference

The Central Region Spring Conference was held April 12-13 in LaSalle, IL, hosted by the I80 Chapter. We were also there to help them celebrate giving away their 100th Amtryke! The recipient is in the first picture below. We also gave away another Amtryke, provided by our Chapter, to a young boy who couldn't wait to hop out of his wheelchair and onto his new Amtryke. He's all lined up and ready in the second picture. Once he did his laps around the banquet hall, he came over to GCC President, Ray Griest, to thank us for giving it to him, (picture three top row).

Our keynote speaker on Saturday was Brian Swift, (picture one bottom row). When he was 17 he was playing pickup football in the park when he got tackled, routine, except he couldn't get up because his back was broken. Brian claims not to be a motivational speaker but his story is certainly inspiring. His parents decided never to let him give up or give in so they treated him just like any other child. When he fell out of his wheelchair, which he did a lot, his dad just said, "Well, get up. It's not about how you fall, it's about how you get up." His father built a wheelchair ramp on their house but it was too steep so instead of fixing it, he planted a tree at the end of the ramp to help Brian stop. Brian accepted all of this and just kept getting up. When they told him that he and his wife (with him in the picture), would never be able to adopt they "got up" and now have a family of three children. He also has his own business, SOAR, Swift Outdoor Accessible Recreation, which facilitates people with challenges to enjoy the outdoors, especially hunting, just like everyone else. Brian left us with this thought, "One of our greatest powers is the power to make a choice." Choose to have a good day every day!

We were pleased to have National Executive Director, Jay Laurens, in attendance to update us on the National news. National has changed our logo, removing the word "disabilities", and instead using, "Inspiring Independence and Mobility." Jay brought some new catalogs and let us know that the catalog was also online. We are moving forward with switching our Amtryke manufacturing to the American-based, Bicycle Corporation of America. For now, we will only be able to say "Assembled in America" but hope to be able to end with Amtrykes being completely made in the USA. Jay also gave us the unhappy news that Angela Labrecque will be leaving the national office but they will replace her. One of her many duties was to help produce the National magazine.

We also had more entertainment on Saturday, some wonderful dancers most of which were challenged with Downs syndrome but some that were not. Their main theme was integration and giving everyone a chance to display their talents.

Friday night was Movie Night and attendees were encouraged to dress as their favorite movie character. Central Region Director, Donna Carleton-Vish, dressed as Tom Cruise in Top Gun. GCC members came as Batman and Sherlock Holmes. The Big Hat auction was held Saturday night and our item brought in some good money. It was an enjoyable evening with good food and good fellowship.

Thanks much to the I80 Chapter for acting as our host. And congratulations on Amtryke 100! Great job!

Happy note: GCC AMBUCS has volunteered to host the **2021 Central Region Spring Conference**. We'll need lots of volunteers so put your thinking caps on and help us make it a great conference.



Guest Speaker: Tracy Wahlfeldt



Parkland College Foundation and Alumni Relations, Executive Director, Tracy Wahlfeldt came to speak with us in April. She thanked us for our continuing support of their scholarship program. She stated that not only was the help monetary but that scholarships let students know that someone believes in them. AMBUCS loves to be able to give scholarships at the local and National level, helping fill a growing need for therapists in our world.

Tracy is happy that scholarships continue to grow but costs continue to grow as well. Also, new equipment is needed all the time so she and others continue to raise funds for such things as a mannequin that can actually give birth. More equipment is also needed because hospitals are allowing students to do less and less on actual patients.

Thanks, Tracy, for talking with us this month!

Lifetime Achievement Awards

Our Chapter wanted to honor our members who have done exceptional jobs over the years. These individuals consistently go beyond 100% to help the people of Champaign County. Our first recipient, **Ron Meyer**, joined in 1983 and 10 years later he had a great idea to create a handicap accessible playground in what became AMBUCS Park. He started a continuing partnership with the Urbana Park District to enhance the park. In the mean time he helped lead the effort to build wheelchair ramps, held various offices, and brought in a bunch of new members. Congratulations and thanks, Ron!



Our second Lifetime Achievement Award went to **Bud Mesker** for his wonderful work with our Amtryke program and support of all our other programs throughout the year. Bud also thought of something no one else did: he bought an Amtryke for a child on the Wish List instead of buying Christmas presents for all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He taught them that giving is truly better than receiving.

Fortunately, we were able to give the award to Bud in the hospital before he passed away.

Splinters from the Board

The Board of Directors had a special meeting on April 9 and met again at Giordano's on April 24. Action items were:

- => reimburse Scott Price for new tires he bought for the barrel train
- => donate \$500 to Bunny's MDA event
- => asked Elaine Windingland to order 1000 sheets of letterhead and 1000 envelopes
- => asked Elaine Windingland to arrange for a "burner" phone for the Chapter
- => voted to suspend a written ballot for this officer election
- => purchase two tickets to the Community Foundation Gold Hearts Gala for people to represent AMBUCS



Grants

Bob Lacey has been busy with grant writing and was successful at getting one from the Rotary Club. The Joseph H. Cannon Memorial grant will be used to purchase more Amtrykes for our wonderful children. Good job, Bob!

Tidbits

Installation and Awards Banquet will be held Thursday, May 30th, 6pm at Manzella's Italian Patio, First street, Champaign. Families are welcome just let Elaine know how many are coming.

President-Elect Renae' Strawbridge, retired from her career at the Prairie Research Institute on April 30 which also happens to be her birthday. Congratulations and Happy, Happy, Renae'!

We send our sympathy to **Kim and Andy VanEngelenburg** on the loss of their dog, Nellie.

On a happier note, members, **Laura and Steve Gibbs** added a new furry family member, Shih Tzu, Beau.

Archie Saldeen is back home and attending meetings again.

New chapter brochures are printed and ready to be used. Please remember to give them out to people who are truly interested in AMBUCS. They are stored at **Keith Jamieson's** office in the "AMBUC" space.

And speaking of new, we now have new items to give out to our speakers, 64G thumb drives printed with our name. Members can purchase the thumb drives for \$10 each from **Elaine Windingland** at any lunch meeting.

Several members got to tell President **Ray Griest** where to go..... to buy drill bits, that is.

Bob Lacey and Sally Denhart attended a seminar on Digital Media Management and they have some great ideas to update the Web site and to improve Facebook posts.

And speaking of Bob Lacey, he will be taking the lead again this year on our participation in the Urbana Park District's Bike Nites. Our first one is May 22nd. We will be talking with attendees about Amtrykes.

Our Cash Bash fundraiser made the National magazine. It's really a great time and brings in good money.

Calendar

May 7—Election of Officers

May 18—Bike Fitting Day

May 22—Urbana Park District Bike Nite

May 30—Installation and Awards Banquet

Jun. 17—Charity Golf Outing

Sept. 14—Scarecrow Festival

2020

Jan. 26—Barstool Golf

Feb. 29—Cash Bash



Winning Chances

4/2/19—50/50: \$8 to Deb Griest; Attendance: \$30 could have been won by Mike Foley but he was not present.

4/9/19—50/50: \$8 to Ray Griest. Attendance: \$46 could have been won by Mike Foley, (Again!), but he was not present.

4/16/19—50/50: \$10 to Mary Lou Younger; Attendance: \$65 was won by Judy Dramsted.

4/23/19—50/50: \$10 to Scott Price; Attendance: \$20 won by Jeannie Gothard.

4/30/19—50/50: \$7 to Renae' Strawbridge; Attendance: \$14 could have been won by Sandy Jachino but she was not present.

