



## An Artist's Musings

by Susan Schaefer

### Learning to Ride a Bike

I have many fond childhood memories of growing up on the farm. Climbing trees, playing hide and seek with the neighbours kids at dusk, and learning to ride a bike.

We've all been there. Our first attempt to try riding a two wheeler bike can be disheartening. Skinned knees, bruises and shakey starts; these all come to mind.

Trying to balance, while having the courage to let go and peddle as fast as you can be quite the feat and somewhat disheartening.

I very clearly remember learning to ride a bike on our family farm. Thinking back, the bike was way too big for me – almost the same height as I was. But we didn't have the luxury of having several bikes to choose from. You used what was there, an oversized rusty old bike.

One day I decided, this was the day. I dragged the wobbly bike out, threw my leg over the bar and tried to stretch my legs to the pedal. I could pedal for a few feet before gravity took over and I would find myself laying in the dust. I tried this several time before getting to-tally frustrated.

I poked my little head into the kitchen door, almost in tears and said to my dad "I can't do this." He was sitting at the kitchen table with his brother having a beer or 2. Dad told me that because of the huge wad of gum in my mouth, that I was having trouble balancing. Hmmm. I wonder? Wise words from your father figure.

Determined, I walked outside and spit the gum out of my mouth. I got on that damn bike, showed it who was boss and road across the yard! Wow – I was beyond excited!

I ran into the house and told my dad what had happened. "See I told you." he said with a grin.



From that day on, I had a new found freedom. I would zoom all over the country side, often riding the 3.5 miles into town to visit my grampa Schaefer, or making the 2.5 miles trip to visit best friend. (5 miles round trip) Yes, back in those days we still thought in terms of miles not kilometres. I would ride my bike to the field delivering lunch to my dad.

Sometimes in life, you are held back from the notion that you can't do something. It's easy to give up and kick the dirt in frustration. All it takes is a little re-wiring of your thoughts, and to give it another try. You might surprise yourself.

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