

Bicyclist Interview
Patrick Harwood
March 19, 2012
Word Count: 312

Severely Injured Bicyclist Yearns to Ride Again Credits Helmet with Saving her from Paralysis

You might think a broken neck, six broken ribs, a broken arm and pelvis, and a concussion would keep a person away from the hobby that led to such problems. This from an experienced bicyclist who has ridden safely across the entire United States, who four months ago was in a life-threatening accident here in her own backyard.

But local cycling enthusiast Marsha Taylor, 37, can't wait to ride again.

"I still want to ride," said Taylor, released from the hospital two days ago after a four month stay. "If I could, I'd be out there right now, but it's hard to ride a bike when you have to use crutches."

Taylor, who manages a West Ashley McDonald's, says it's "hazy" what happened on that fateful day in December. She says she was out for a ride on St. Andrews Boulevard when a car hit her from behind, "sending me flying off my bike."

Her injuries were numerous. "Gee, you might as well ask what wasn't injured," she said. "One doctor said I had what they call a hangman's fracture. She said it was a miracle that I wasn't paralyzed."

Internal injuries to her intestine, liver and gall bladder were also major concerns.

"All that caused my skin to change color, start turning bright orange," Taylor said. "When my mother saw me she said I looked like a Halloween pumpkin."

Taylor must go in for rehabilitation three times a week. It's not clear when she may ride again, but ride again she will.

“If you take precautions and are careful, bicycling’s pretty safe,” she said. “The main thing is protective clothing, especially the helmet. I never ride unless I have my helmet. It probably saved my life this time.”

Taylor is a serious cyclist who is a part of a local group that takes extended weekend rides. She had also competed in some races. Just prior to her accident, she completed a cycling tour across the U.S., and before that, in the spring, she rode in the annual Governor’s Bicycle Tour. All told, Taylor says she logged some 3,500 miles on her bike last year.

###