

YOU CAN HELP WIN



THE FIGHT AGAINST
CANCER

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The Pan Massachusetts Challenge (PMC) provides many challenges to the participants. The overriding challenge is that we are cyclist fund raisers, something that I had to remind myself as the weekend progressed. There was some doubt on the organization that I would raise the minimum this year (\$700), let alone become a *Heavy Hitter*, someone who raises twice the amount, due to my move to New Jersey. It was pointed out to me that I would lose quite a few sponsors at Seabrook Station, and it would be very hard to pick up sponsors in New Jersey. I did lose a lot of sponsors at Seabrook, but I did pick up some more sponsors there. If I collect from everyone I will have raised over \$2020, making me a *Heavy Hitter* again. \$934 came from New Jersey sponsors. There was no doubt in my mind that I would do well. I felt real proud Friday night at the pasta dinner wearing my *Heavy Hitter* t-shirt, meeting friends made on last years ride.

I will have to change next years appeal and tell people that the event awards shirts instead of t-shirts. This years riders received a regular bicyclists shirt (the ones with the pockets in the back). I will be proud to wear that shirt at Delaware meets. It is our tenth anniversary.

I had listen to the weather forecast Thursday night, and decided to take my favorite racing bike instead of my mountain bike, something that I paid dearly for.

Saturday morning it was raining, but we had 930 bicyclists that showed up in various types of rain gear. If it wasn't for the *Jimmy Fund* I doubt if most of us would have showed up. I had on a gortex pants and jacket. I was wearing a pair of insulated gortex bicycling shoes. I dropped my bike just before the ride on the non derailleur side, scuffing up the tape on the handle bars. There were two classes of riders, the two dayers (194 miles) and the one dayers (80 miles). The one dayers only had to raise a minimum of \$350, but the *Heavy Hitter* category remained at \$1400. The riders again were broken up into three groups, the fast riders, the steady riders, and the casual riders (i.e. the slow pokes). I was back with the casual riders. We started at 6:15 A.M., it was a cold rain (60 degrees). I couldn't wear my glasses due to the rain, which caused an eye strain. One of the big hazards was pot holes. They would fill up with water and you couldn't tell if there was a pot hole or not.

The biggest problem was any exposed extremities would cramp up do to the cold rain. My rain suit does not keep me dry (you sweat to much). It keeps me warm, so I had no problem. It started to warm up after 8 A.M. My so called water proof shoes leaked through by the 28 mile point. The rain at times would be a drizzle, the change to a down pour. This is the first year that it rained on the PMC.

I would have missed the same turn off that I missed last year at the forty mile point if someone wasn't in front of me. My rear tire blew out at the sixty mile point. A guy who was watching the ride came over to give me a hand.

Thank God for the water/rest stops. They were located approximately every 20 miles. At the 63 mile point the first day there was lunch. It was a light drizzle when I got my food. I sat down in the grass and started eating. Then it started to pour. I wish I had a camera to show you the look of disgust on my face as I watched my plate fill up with water.

It monetarily stopped raining as I was leaving the 63 mile point, and because it was getting warm, I took off my rain gear. I was even able to clean my glasses and wear them for a whole 3 minutes when it started raining again.

It finally stopped raining at the 80 mile point. I cleaned my glasses, and was feeling great. Then the winds picked up, going against us. That completely demoralized me. I was getting ready to quit, and ask for a ride for the final 29 miles, when I thought of our main challenge, that as fund raisers. I promised. You pledged. I delivered. I just gritted out the last 29 miles on guts alone. Pain is only temporally, pride is forever. I could not in good conscience come back to you next year and ask you to sponsor me if I quit. It hurt, and I cried, but I was determined to finish out my ride. I would never do anything to really hurt myself. I did train, and I know the fine line between discomfort and permanent injury. I survived.



There weren't as many spectators there to watch or cheer you on. There was a lady out at the 73 mile point with some of her children there holding cups of water. She was there last year too. As I past by her she said "We love you, thank you for doing this. We are proud of you". At that point even the rain couldn't wash away the tears running down my cheek. At the 100 mile point there were 6 young boys holding there hand out to give you the High 5. That was the biggest morale boost of the day. I was able to

press the flesh with all of them as I passed through.

Sunday started off beautiful. I left at 5 A.M., in the semi dark. I had on my Captain America outfit on. The shirt had a green border, covered with white stars on the front and back. The bike pants had the same field running along the side of my legs. I really stood out and got some good compliments. The first 40 miles were uneventful except my left foot was giving me problems, but I survived. I introduced myself to Billy Starr (the founder of the PMC)

at the second water stop. He only knows me by my letters, but he recognized my name. He asked me how I was doing, and I told him about Saturday. Then I told him I wouldn't trade this weekend for anything else in the world.

The last 45 miles were the roughest of the ride. They say that the female sex is the weaker physically of the two sexes. Bull. There was this girl who had a cast on her right leg. She had torn out some tendons. She had a bike cleat drilled into her cast so she could get into a bike pedal. She hit a pot hole Saturday and took a toss. She went by me Sunday like I was standing still on a hill. Then as I was going up the highest hill Billy Starr came by and asked how I was doing. I'm dying as he flying by me saying what a small hill it was. I hate jocks.

I managed to get in while it was still sunny out. I left my luggage bag outside while I took a shower. It started to rain, and all my clothes got wet, except for the change of clothing that I brought with me. There was one shower for 700 guys at the P-Town Inn. It was looking good weather wise after 1:30 P.M. The final two miles of the ride is done as a parade to the ferry. It rained again, and we all got soaked. Some of the sick humor on the bus going from Boston to Sturbridge was that it never snows on the PMC, that there's no nuclear disaster on the PMC, etc. The one I like was a note to be attached to our pledge list which states that a penalty of 25% be attached to all pledges in case it rains on one of the days of the ride, and 50% if it rains on both. The bottom line is I am proud that you sponsored me.

Eighty seven cents of every dollar that was donated last year went to the research and treatment of children's cancer. Most of the expenses of this event are covered by corporate sponsors. Some expenses are covered by people like my self. I cover all my own fund raising expenses (this package is one example). I use my own computer, printer, toner, paper, envelopes and stamps. I had to take a day off without pay this year to do this event. I even sponsored myself. If the event produces a video of the ride that I participate in I will contact key people at Seabrook Station, in the town of Seabrook, Pack 160, and my family and give them a copy of the video. I will notify you as to where the video can be borrowed for your viewing pleasure at home (I even have to buy the video). New Jersey sponsors will be able to contact me personally.

To my New Jersey sponsors (and to my New England sponsors who don't know), the *Dana Faber Cancer Institute* (the recipient of this fund raiser) will accept any child in this country for treatment if it falls under their research, regardless of the financial circumstances of the family. That is why I ride and why I ask for help.

The *Jimmy Fund* was born on May 28, 1948. The *Boston Braves* just finished a tough game at home against the league leading *Phillies*. After the game the team players (*Phil Masi, Warren Spahn*, and others) showed up in a hospital room to meet a 9 year old boy who is suffering from cancer. Their words to the adoring young fan are shared with hundreds of thousands of people throughout the nation listening to *Ralph Edwards'* popular radio program, *Truth or Consequences*.

At the boy's side is *Doctor Sidney Farber*. A year earlier Doctor Farber and a team of scientist achieved the first remissions in childhood leukemia using chemotherapy. For the next 11 minutes,



thanks to a boy known only as Jimmy, average Americans are at once made aware of childhood cancer and the call for the hope in its treatment.



At the end of the program, Edwards asked his radio audience for contributions to the *Children's Cancer Research Foundation* to buy a television set so that Jimmy can once again watch the Braves in action. The deluge of donations addressed to *The Jimmy Fund* covers the cost of the television and initiates construction of what

has become a world class center devoted to the research and treatment of cancer.

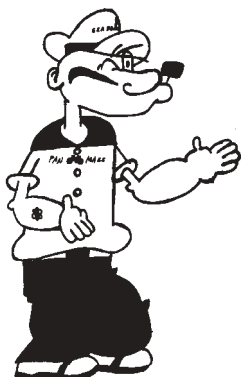
The PMC stands for the *Pan Massachusetts Challenge*. The PMC started in 1980 due to the efforts of Billy Starr. He lost a mother, uncle, and cousin to cancer. What started out with 36 riders and \$10,000 in donations is now going to be a million dollar operation. Last year the PMC had 802 riders and raised \$850,000, 17% of the total amount raised for the Jimmy Fund. Our goal this year is \$1,000,000. We are the largest two day cycling charity fund raiser in the world. We have riders as far away as California who participate in this event. I want to be the southern New Jersey representative in this event.

If I can bring a smile to your face, and a tear to your eye, and leave you with the feeling that you might consider sponsoring me again next year as I *Spin my Wheels* for the *Jimmy Fund*, I obtain my greatest challenge. Whether you are a first time or second year sponsor, and whether you will be with me again next year or not, I want again to say thank you. I will always participate in this event. I will write to you at the end of the year letting you know how much I raised and how much the PMC gave to the *Jimmy Fund*. I will follow it up with a pre pledge letter next May. I will tell you what are goals are for 1990, and rehash my past accomplishments. I will then follow it up for an appeal for a pledge. I will never ask you personally. If you do not decide to pledge next year, I will not be offended. You do not have to write me a letter back. Your sponsorship is all that I ask.

In closing, you are probably wondering why an over the hill guy would want to torture his body for 194 miles to raise money for the *Jimmy Fund* instead of writing out a check. I wasn't even born when my grandmother died from bone cancer. She was 48. My mother battled cancer the second time around for 11 months before she died one week after her fortieth birthday. My father's forty month battle with colon cancer came to an end on September 10, 1988. He was a hard man to get along with, but an honorable one. Just before he died he told my brother that he was angry for having lost his battle with cancer. My father never cursed or blamed God for his predicament. My father's name is **Joseph Albert Richards**. I'm glad I was his son. There were few things in life that I ever did that made my father happy, but I'm sure if you could talk to him today, he would tell you how proud he was of me, that his oldest boy has done good. I can still remember calling my Dad each day of the ride last year, but with my father being on his death bed, he had more pressing things on his mind. If I could pick up the that phone again I would just say "***This one was for you Dad. Say hello to Mom. I miss you.***"

As to what became of Jimmy? His fate was never publicized. Nobody, most of all the boy himself, wanted Jimmy to be a celebrity. Hope is all he asked for, hope is what he received, and hope is Jimmy's legacy.

I hope you will at least consider sponsoring me next year as I *Spin my Wheels* for the *Jimmy Fund*. I hereby dedicate my ride in memory of my parents, **Joseph Albert (a 1988 sponsor) & Kathleen Marie Richards** and my grandmother, **Lillian Marie McKinnon**. Until next year.



The Pan-Massachusetts Challenge

Thank you & may God Bless

Brian M. Richards