

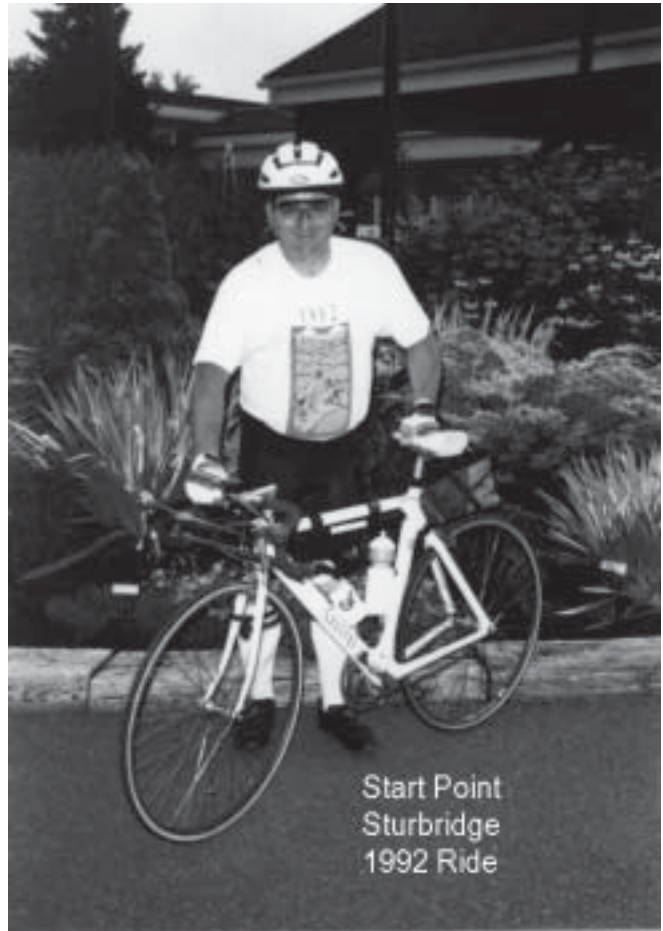
1992 Pan-Mass Challenge

Brian M. Richards
Sturbridge to Provincetown
August 8 & 9, 1992

The Sturbridge Sheraton Host was the place to be on August 7 as excitement was building up for the thirteenth annual Pan Massachusetts Challenge to benefit the Jimmy Fund. For the first time in five years I was able to come into the ride without an immediate member of my family who were either fighting or had died of cancer in the past year. A new video of last year's ride was shown. Yours truly was used again on the video. They filmed me while I was riding my bike. I said in the video that I was feeling great, but my sister, who is expecting right now, is going in for cancer surgery next week and what I go through is nothing compared to what she's going through. I said again that I was feeling great and raised another \$3200 for Cancer research. It brought an applause from the audience. I was happy to tell them that my sister had a healthy baby boy last October 27, and was now in remission.

The official statistics for the ride were as follows. There were 1499 riders, 1419 two dayers (192 miles) and 80 one dayers (80 miles). There was 405 ladies in the ride. In what has become a major development, over 345 riders came outside Massachusetts, with 70 from New York, 50 from New Jersey, 25 from Pennsylvania, eight from Florida, and even six from California. The minimum amount to raise by the two day riders was \$800, while the one day rider had to raise \$400. Heavy Hitter status (someone who raised twice the minimum amount) was at \$1,600 for both categories of riders. If I collect from everyone I will have raised over \$4,210, making me a Heavy Hitter 5 years in a row.

Saturday morning started ominously for me. I accidentally locked myself out of my car. I tried to open the lock with a coat hanger, but was without success. Then I had the bright idea of breaking my right rear window to gain entry. I picked up a heavy metal ashtray from the motel and tried to break the window. All I managed to do was to wake up everyone in the motel. It was 4 A.M. Finally someone came down and suggested that I pull the molding off from the window and attempt to pry the window open without breaking it (it is a



window that does not roll down). When I did that the window shattered. A guy who saw me do it said to call the police and tell them that someone broke into my car, that he didn't see anything. I said I couldn't do that because "He" saw me do it. So here I am, out probably \$200 for a car window. Thank God for my best friend who taped up the window for me.

I was back at my familiar place, at the end of the pack. We did run into some fog at the start of the ride, but it burned off with temperature on day one getting up to the low 80ies. The roads were not blocked off as was initially promised for the first 40 miles. The ride is well marked with signs as to where to turn, and the conditions of the road (that is, steep decent, bumpy road, dangerous or busy crossing, etc.). In addition, a map is provided in case you do get lost. I had problems reading the map because I was wearing my distance glasses. I had to hold the map at arms length to read it. A young woman went

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off the road on a wicked decline at the 8-mile point. The Charlton fire department sent an ambulance. I found out later that she suffered a mild concussion, but refused any help and continued with the ride.

I was struggling on the ride. At the 10-mile point a



friend of mine said "you look like your struggling". I told him I was running out of gears. I had over 1,200 miles under my belt for this years ride, and yet it felt like I had not trained for the ride. I found out the following Wednesday when I got back to New Jersey about what the problem was. I was using a 13 x 26 cassette unit on my bike. The numbers stand for the teeth, where the bigger the number, the easier it is to pedal. I always used a 13 x 28 tooth freewheel before. Those extra two teeth made a big difference. I didn't realize this at the time. My friend said I was getting older. I told him I felt like I had aged 30 years. For the first time in five years I felt there was a good possibility that I would not finish the ride, let alone not walking up any hills. The first 40 miles on day one, with the first 20 and last 23 on day two are the roughest, as they involve climbing up very steep hills. At that point I went into survival mode to conserve as much strength as I could. I just wanted to get in as many miles possible to say I made a decent try of it.

Water stops were provided approximately every 20 miles. There a rider can get his or her

water bottle filled, get juices and all somewhat high energy food (all donated), use of the rest rooms, and get bike mechanical and medical care. They also had various themes at each stop. The first stop on day one was a 50ies type theme, with the four young girls pictured dancing to the Beach Boys. Lunch was provided at the 60-mile point on day one. The back of my neck was starting to tighten up at the 60-mile point, so I asked and got some Modrin.

One of the more interesting things on the ride was from Trek USA bicycle company. They were providing free use of bikes to anyone whose bicycle broke down and couldn't be repaired. They and International Bicycle were providing free tires to those who need them. I carry two of my own with me on the ride. I did not suffer a flat this year.

I finally made it in at the Maritime academy. I was never been so tired in my life. I didn't even stay up to see myself on last years' Emmy award video, starring yours truly. My berthing area was on the Patriot State, the training ship of the Mass Maritime Academy. I was sharing a small room with three other guys. I had more room when I was stationed aboard the USS Nimitz with two hundred guys in Reactor Department berthing area. I also got the top bunk, of which I am terribly afraid of heights. You had to put your bicycle in a separate building, instead of in the same room if you were staying in the barracks. Next year I'll ask for the barracks. I got up at 3:30 A.M..





Fourth Water Stop
80 mile point
1992 Ride

the 150-mile point you pick up Route 6. At the 160-mile point you bear right off Route 6 to get ready to begin the roughest part of the ride. A guy in front of me kept going straight. I yelled out "Wrong way" but he kept going straight. There was no question in my mind that I was going to do the official course. I feel it is a sense of honor that if you are putting up the money to allow me to be your representative in the ride, that I give it my best. I tried to get more Modrin at the fourth water stop (169 mile point) on day two, but still struck out.

Sunday. Although I was tired I couldn't get any sleep because of the adrenaline running through my body. I ate breakfast at 4:20 A.M., and waited for day light. Though I was not cut up like I was in 1990, I was dreading this day. It was cold (50 degrees) and cloudy. I had on a light nylon rain jacket. I did sweat wearing it, but without it I would have had the chills. I did something stupid. I left at 4:45 A.M. instead of 5:15 A.M., like I did on past years. I knew I was going to be slow on the ride and wanted to get an earlier start. The big problem was looking for obstacles in the road. The roads leading to and on the Bourne Bridge had vertical grates on the drain basins, wide and long enough for a skinny racing tire to fall through. I made sure I stayed far enough away from the edge of the roads until daylight.

The hills after the 169-mile point are many and brutal. My favorite two ladies who always cheer you up that big bear of a hill were there. I made it up with just a little struggle. Then you are on Route 6 going by the familiar sand dunes going into Provincetown. It started to rain. My glasses were fine. The biggest problem is that they would fog up now and then. There were two guys in front of me who were drafting each other. The guy in the rear came to close to the guy in front, and jammed his front wheel into the front guys rear wheel. They came to a sudden halt, with the guy in the rear being thrown off his bike and into the middle of the right lane. He was lucky that traffic was light then, or he would have been run over by a car or truck. No one got hurt.

I was approaching the 118 mile point where I had my first temptation. There I could have picked up Route 6 and shaved 15 miles and many hills off the ride, but I continued with the official course. At the first rest stop on day two (130 mile point) I asked the nurse for some Modrin. All they had was aspirin and Tyenol. I was looking for anything with ibuprofen in it. I found that to be the best pain reliever.

The next 39 miles were quite easy on me. Somewhere around



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Challenge. We couldn't do it without you." Thanks for being concerned.

Brian M. Richards

p/s Even a honest guy like me wins one. I found out Monday after the ride that I was covered in full for glass coverage, even though I told the insurance company what had happened.

The rain was making the newly painted white line by the shoulder very slippery. I saw several people skid off the road.

If I have to look at any part of the ride that I truly dislike, it is the last six miles. You bear off on Route 6 to begin to take some very lonely parts of the ride, all covered with steep hills. I was really tempted to continue on with Route 6. I was looking at a 5-year record going down the drain, of never walking up a hill. There is no one there to cheer you on. As I was approaching those hills and asked my dad for help, I thought of what he went through, and I realize I was being selfish. I wasn't in pain, just discomfort. Before I realized it I was approaching the winner circle at the P-Town Inn. I raised my right fist into the air and smiled. I did it again without walking up a hill. True, I was no Greg LeMond this year, but unlike Greg LeMond, I didn't quit.

In closing, the real heroes of the ride are people like yourself who give up their hard earned money to sponsor me for this event. As we are so found of saying, "Helping those we know or don't know to beat cancer is the Pan-Mass



1992 Pan-Massachusetts Challenge

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The 1992 Pan Massachusetts Challenge

In Memory of

Anna Anderson, Leo Arsenaault, Winnie Baker, Doris Mae Beecher,
Margaret Bertalan, John L. Black, Roland Bragg, Richard Breault,
Anne Campion, James Caudell, Mr & Mrs Hubert J. Conner,
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Agnes Sandy, Julia Snyder, Domenic Stagno, Denise Marie Starceovich,
J.C. Trainer Sr, Gerildene Wiegartz

For the Pan Mass Rider the Challenge is 192 miles.

One mile at a time.

For those who we ride for the Challenge is Life.

One day at a time.

In Honor of

Sharleen Berglund, Carol Christianson,
Alberta Masse, Illian McKinnon,
Allen Richards, Gloria Richards, Helen Zachary



*Mom & Dad would be proud. Until next year.
Thank you and May God Bless*

Brian M. Richards