

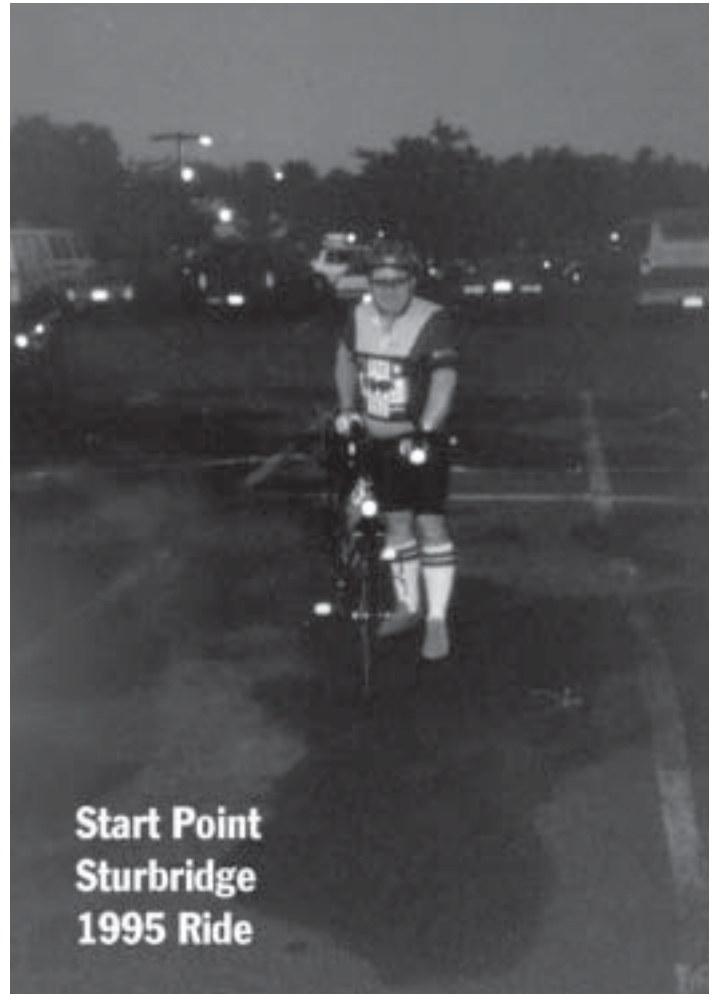
# 1995 Pan Mass Challenge

Brian M. Richards  
Sturbridge to Provincetown  
August 5 & 6, 1995

The official kickoff of the 1995 Pan Massachusetts Challenge (PMC) always starts the night before at the annual pasta dinner. I arrived at Sturbridge from New Jersey at 3:30 P.M.. I dropped my belongings in the hotel room and went straight to register for the Ride.

There were 1,715 riders. It was different from past years as there were distinct groups. One group started from the original starting place in Sturbridge, the second group started from Boston. Two day riders if they started from Sturbridge did 192 miles. Two day riders (unofficially) from Boston did 163 miles. One day riders from Sturbridge did 109 miles, and one day riders from Boston did 83 miles. I mentioned that two day riders from Boston did 163 miles as it was meant as a one day ride from Boston, but some of those riders decided at the last minute to do the two day ride.. The one day group from Boston was meant for 55 and older one day riders (83 miles). This group was setup for the older riders who hates the hills we from Sturbridge experience on day one. All groups on day one arrived at the MAA (Mass Maritime Academy). Two day riders were required to raise a minimum of \$1,000 (including those from Boston who decided to do a two day ride). One day riders were required to raise a minimum of \$500. Heavy Hitter status (a special T-shirt is awarded to Heavy Hitters in December) is \$2,000 no matter what group you were in. There were 1,590 two day riders and 125 one day riders.

Male/female ratio was 75%/25%. We had approximately 1,400 volunteers to help the riders throughout the weekend. After eating some pasta, I went to bed at 6:30 P.M. to get ready for an early start. For the first time I actually got some sleep before the Ride.



Start Point  
Sturbridge  
1995 Ride

Saturday morning I got up at 3:15 AM., showered, changed into my bicycle clothes and placed my luggage on the proper truck. The PMC was better organized this year. My berthing space at the MAA (Mass Maritime Academy) on day one was in barracks number two. Luggage tags were broken into colors, depending on which barrack you were in, or if you were going to be on the ship, the Patriot State. It makes it easier to sort the luggage for the volunteers to bring it to your room.

I was clowning around with the parents of a first time rider saying I had helium in my tires to make me float up the hills. The father said are you serious. I could not believe I suckered someone on that. I told him that I was only kidding.

The Ride started at 6 AM.. The weather looks like it was going to be a sunny day, but two miles into the Ride it got cloudy. It was a humid, cloudy, and threatening rain all day. I came in with over \$3,300 in pledges, so I was eager to start..



8 Mile Point  
Day 1  
1995 Ride



the hybrid bicycle I used the normal pedal that most people are familiar with toe clips. This allows you to use any stiff sole shoe versus a special shoe on the clip less pedals.

The pressure this year on my toes on the right foot was bothering me. Two miles before the second water stop I stopped at a store to try to buy some Motrin. All they had was Advil, so I bought them and took one. I was glad to get into water stop two to get some water.

Lunch was at the 63-mile point. All I did was eat some sandwiches, filled up my water bottles and go on my way. The last 46 miles are a piece of cake, relatively flat. At the 85-mile point I saw my favorite two girls

At the 8-mile point I was in for a surprise. A gentleman was playing bag pipes. As I was approaching him, he was playing Amazing Grace. I was hoping this was not going to be my swan song. I got to the first water stop and it was the same scene, a group of girls dancing to greet you. Different girls this year but it was nice to see them. I asked one volunteer what the weather was going to be like the rest of the weekend. The volunteer said the same, but Sunday was going to be sunny in the low 80ies. When I arrived at the first water stop a fellow rider who knew me asked how I was doing as she was getting ready to leave. I said I'm fine and told her to go on your way.

dressed up. They are there on day two cheering you on a hill, and on day one they dress up in a crazy costume cheering you on. It was great to see them.



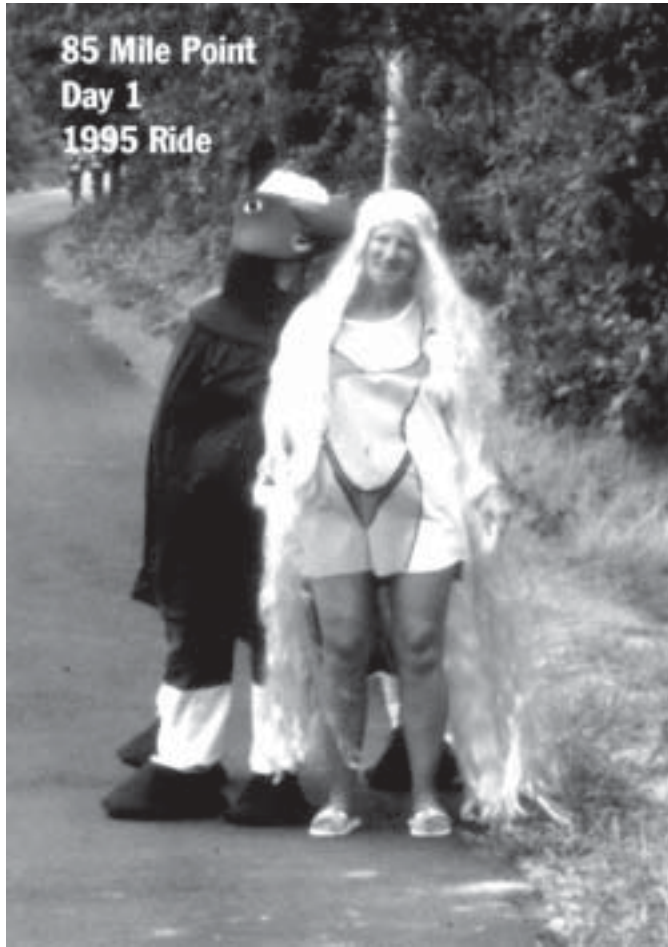
I paid dearly for the second stretch of the Ride. I forgot in packing to carry Motrin, a good pain killer. The 30-mile point is the roughest part of the Ride, a two-mile hill that takes forever to climb. I was having problems with my right foot going numb. For the first six years of the Ride I used clip less pedals. The pedals are special as it accepts a cleat that is on a special shoe that allows you to lock into the pedal, putting the pressure point on the ball of the foot. The past two years on

Somewhere between seeing my favorite girls and the 97-mile point I caught up with a girl who had on the back of her helmet "Hi, my name is Janice." I talked with her and found out she was a ten-year cancer survivor. She told me she bit off more than she could chew, doing the two-day Ride. She could not have been older than 23, but she left me with a message at the next water stop that got me through the Ride. I do not know if she made the Ride or not, as I never saw her again that weekend.



I finally got in at the MAA, checked in, and was told to take a shower, get a massage, eat, and enjoy the entertainment. I said no, I was going to take a shower and go to bed. I was warned by the head nurse to eat before going to bed. I obeyed her orders and after eating went to bed. Since I was the last man

in my room, I got the cot. This is a co-ed ride, and the barracks are co-ed. I was thinking different floors were co-ed, not rooms. Being a Navy veteran, I just stripped down to my birthday suit to take a shower. Thank God there were no girls on the floor then, as I found out there was not only co-ed



rooms, but co-ed roommates. I should have known better as there were some mens and womens separate bathrooms. The prior three years my berthing area was on the Patriot State, the training ship of the MAA. The ship has separate bathroom facilities for each room or double set of rooms, so I was caught off guard.

I was not thrilled with my roommates. I'm a light sleeper. One roommate snored and the other moaned. At midnight I woke up to the sound of pouring rain, and said to myself this is just great. I was so sore chaffing my butt on day one that was all I needed. The rain that did not stop until 3 AM. I got up at 3:15 AM, and explained to one roommate that my butt

was cut up. He gave me a lanolin lotion and Vaseline, but since I was so cut up on day one, it did not help. I left at 4:15 AM after taking an Advil so I could get in early at P-Town to take a shower. When I crossed the Bourne Bridge, it started pouring rain. It was a cold rain that did not let up until the last ten miles of my Ride. I cursed myself for not carrying my gortex jacket and pants plus neoprene booties. I never expected leaving Friday to Sturbridge in 95°F weather that I would experience 50°F weather Sunday in the rain. A good rain suit does not keep you dry as you sweat too much. A good rain suit keeps you warm. The same with neoprene booties, as they keep the feet warm. All I had was a light weight rain jacket. I nearly froze to death. I could not wear my glasses because of the rain, compounding my problems. My right foot was going numb beyond belief because of the toe clip. Since it was so cold in the pouring rain I decided to flip the pedal over and do the ride without the toe clip on the right foot versus stopping a sag van to have them remove the right toe clip. I was able to use my left toe clip both days. I got into the first water stop on day two at the 130-mile point. I was complaining of cramping up. The nurse told me I was not taking enough fluids. She told me I should take enough where I have to urinate, as less means that I am dehydrating. I'm thinking great, I freeze to death waiting to use the toilet. I drank a lot of fluids, ate some food and went on my way.

At the 149-mile point I got off my bike at the seventh water stop as I had to urinate. The lines were long so I went out in the woods to relieve myself. I had my water bottles filled and went on.

Misery loves company, and in a way when you are riding with so many people like myself being in misery, it actually started to become fun. People whom I met in past years who were passing me were saying "How's it going from New Jersey?" I replied that I'm surviving and will try and finish it, but if I hear Amazing Grace again before I finish the ride, I will take the hint and quit.





By the time I got to the eighth water stop I was shivering. The PMC put me in a van and wrapped blankets on my body, as I was coming down with hypothermia. The nurse wanted to pull me out and I said no. I told her she could not stop me this year, but could ban me from future rides. I asked her if someone could find my bicycle and fill my water bottles for me. I then asked her for someone to bring me some food and juice. Within fifteen minutes I was feeling better and said there are only twenty-three more miles to go. I told the nurse if I heard Amazing Grace in my mind by the time I got by the familiar sand dunes I would drop out.

As I approached the sand dunes it was still raining hard, but with seventeen miles to go I said to myself go for it, as I had too much pride to quit. With ten miles to go the heavy rain went to a light drizzle. I stopped and put my glasses on, making it easier on me. As I was approaching the P-Town Inn, the PMC was playing the theme song of the US Marines. I'm thinking could they have played theme song from Rocky as I was going around the winner circle. I was so tired that a volunteer moved my bicycle for me as I wanted to take a hot shower. All I heard on day two was getting in to take a hot shower. I should have known it was a setup, as all the PMC had for some 1,700 plus riders was two saw horses with hoses on them.

The ferry was canceled this year from P-Town to Boston due to the weather, so the PMC had to order thirty more busses into P-Town to get riders to their destination. Normally there are truck vans to bring the bicycles to Boston or Sturbridge. Another set of vans brings your luggage to either destination. There are busses to bring you direct to Boston or Sturbridge, or you take the ferry and if you are heading to Sturbridge, busses are provided to get you there. I like the ferry so I can meet and celebrate with some riders I have known and love over the last eight years of riding together.

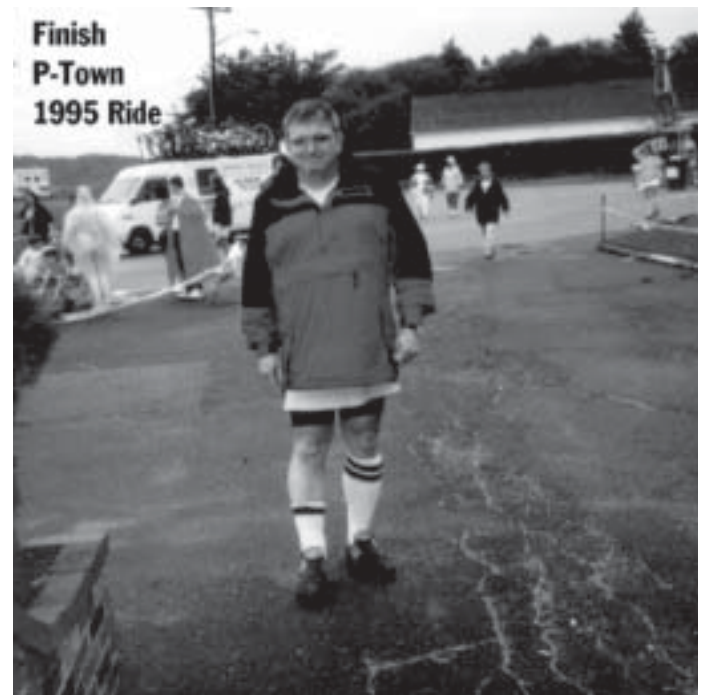
Being a clown in general on the ride to give support to my fellow riders I was asked by my fellow riders if my bicycle was for sale cheap. I smiled and said no. I told my fellow riders that next year I will ask PSE&G (Public Service Electric and

Gas Company of New Jersey) to make me an electric bicycle with a 192 mile extension cord.

I do want you to know that except the showers in P-Town the PMC is well supported, and I never do the Ride for personal gain. The PMC provides safe support, and over 90 cents on the dollar goes to the Jimmy Fund for cancer research. A shower is not that important to me.

In closing you all know my family's history with cancer. All I am trying to do is speed up the day that no one family will have to suffer like mine did. As always, my Ride is dedicated in memory of my parents, Joseph Albert and Kathleen Marie Richards, and dedicated in

honor of a girl named Janice, who left me with a special message on day one. She told me "A bad day on a bicycle beats a good day of chemotherapy any day." Thanks Janice from words of wisdom for someone half my age that got me by on day two.



Brian M. Richards



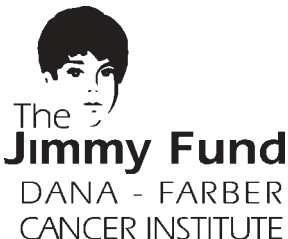
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The 1995 Pan Massachusetts Challenge

In Memory of

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Doris Mae Beecher, Margaret Bertalan, John L. Black, Roland Bragg,  
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Joseph Tonuni, Walter Warren, Walbert & Caroline Willis

*For the Pan Mass Rider*

*There is no bad day on a bicycle.*

*For those who we ride for*

*There is no good day*

*on chemotherapy.*

In Honor of

Janice, Anthony Berardi, Carol Bricker,  
Carol Christianson, M. L., Gloria Lantagne,  
Pauline LoPiano, Lillian McKinnon, Rhoda Meyer, Phyllis Miller,  
Raymond Richards, Karen Snyder, Karen Whitney, Mary Ann Williams



*Mom & Dad would be proud. Until next year.*

*Thank you and May God Bless.*

*Brian M. Richards*