

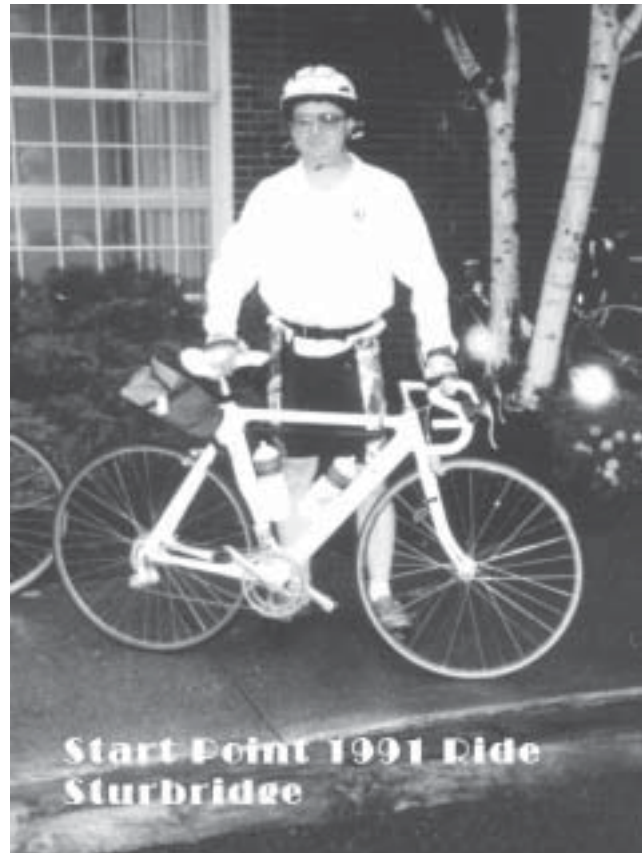
1991 Pan Mass Challenge

Brian M. Richards
Pan-Massachusetts Challenge
Sturbridge to Provincetown
August 10 & 11, 1991

For a while there was a possibility that the 1991 Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC) was going to have major cancellations. The weather report as of Friday at noon forecasted 15 to 25 m.p.h. winds with up to three inches of rain for Saturday. It did not dampen my spirits as I arrived at the Sturbridge Host Resort for the Friday night pasta dinner. Five weeks before the event another tragedy hit our family. My younger sister Carol, who is expecting her first child late this fall, was stricken with cancer. Although I had not lost the weight that I had planned, I resolved that I would give my best showing in her honor. I did train for this ride, having accumulated over 1,500 miles before the ride. It was great to be back among the PMC family. I was making jokes that I was going to bring up the letter from the 1989 ride, change the date to 1991, and say it was the same, rain and cold weather both days. Billy Starr (the founder of the PMC) said that it was heart warming when people came up and told him that they did not care what the weather was like, they were just glad to be here.

I got up at 3:30 AM Saturday. The weather outside did not seem so promising. It was pouring out. I put on a light weight rain jacket. There were over 1184 riders registered, an increase of 205 riders from last year. The breakdown was as follows, 1114 two day riders (192 miles), 70 one day riders (80 miles), 888 males, 296 females, and 180 people outside New England. I'm sure the PMC will hit their goal of \$1.5 million this year. The riders went together as one group, a departure from past years. I took up my familiar place, at the end of the pack. Thirty minutes before the ride my front tire went flat. I fixed the flat and said a prayer.

The ride started at 6 AM. It was basically no rain, except for a drizzle now and then. For the first 60



miles on day one, and 20 miles on day two, my biggest problem was having my glasses fog up. When it rained, I had to take my glasses off. I took my rain jacket off at the 20 mile point, as it was too warm. I got more wet from the spray back from my tires than I did from the rain. At the 35 mile point I was accidentally cut off by a car. I was grateful for the new brakes I had installed on my bike. I almost went head over heels because I stopped so fast, but without them I would have slammed into that car. A fellow rider said nice braking.

Water/rest stops were provided approximately every 20 miles. There was food, juices and water provided to the riders, along with the necessary morale support. International Bicycle and Bike Nashbar provided mechanical help, and there was medical support at every stop. In addition, sag wagons were provided with the same help throughout the ride. I had a scare at the 48 mile point. A group of people had cups of cold water for the riders to grab. I normally like to

Lunch 60 mile point
Day 1 1991 Ride



A new video was filmed this year. You may be looking at a movie star. I was filmed heavily on day one. The first time I just stayed behind the van until I got filmed, so they could get rid of me. It was either at the 4th or 5th water stop where I was filmed. There will be a one hour showing sometime during November in New England. The short version will be shown at the check presentation in December. I will contact key New England sponsors if I find the date of the showing in November, so they can tape it for me. I will make available to all my sponsors a copy of the video if I am used in it.

stop and thank the people personally. I tried to "click" out of my pedals (Sampson Stratics). I couldn't exit out on the left side, so I tried the right, and couldn't do it again. I started to panic. If I had to come to a complete stop, I would have fallen down. I kept going, brought up my right foot to loosen the VELCRO straps, got my foot out of the shoe, and came to a stop. I brought my left foot up and did the same. I had to use a lot of force to get the shoes from the pedals. I found out that mud was clogging up the pedals. At every water stop I had to walk through soft ground. The cleats would clog up with mud, then I would clog the pedal up with mud when I locked in. I used water to wash my pedals and cleats to eliminate the problem. Next year I will carry a pair of sandals on the ride.

Things were a real mess at the Mass Maritime Academy (MAA), the 109 mile stop over. Originally, the Patriot State training vessel was to be used for additional berthing. I received a letter two days before the ride stating due to the Persian Gulf War the Patriot State would not be available. It was three to a room in the barracks, where one person would sleep on an air mattress. That was in addition to the 300 plus people who would sleep boot camp style in the gym. I was lucky to get in before my roommates did, so I got my

Lunch was provided at the 60 mile point on day one. I arrived at 11 AM. The support staff told me the first rider arrived at 8:50 AM. I hate jocks. At that time Mister Sun made his appearance. It was sporadic for the rest of day one, but it made it more enjoyable for me. I was able to wear my glasses uninterrupted. At that point I decided to make my move. Now that I could see the road properly I started passing people left and right. Mike Andrews (former second basemen for the Red Sox in the late 60'ies, now the Executive Director of the Jimmy Fund), who said he was going to do the ride this year at last years' check presentation, didn't show up. He probably was scared that I would pass him. I won't say I was the best, but I would have been rated in the top 25% of the riders who showed up. I averaged 16.8 m.p.h., my second best showing. I was real proud of my self.





pick of the bunks. Luggage was another problem. The plan was to have your luggage delivered to your room compliments of Boy Scout Troop 47. There were a few people who did not get their luggage delivered to the right room. They could not take a shower after they got in. My first reaction was to blame the PMC. Sunday night I found out the real reason. Some people who did the ride last year forgot to take their luggage tags off the 1990 ride. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that numbers do change from year to year.

I had problems sleeping Saturday night, as the adrenaline was pumping through my veins. I got up at 3:30 AM, showered, shaved, put on a new Mickey Mouse shirt (I already got next year's shirt picked out), and had breakfast. I said a prayer before shoving off at 5 AM.

Although I crossed the Bourne Bridge in the dark, it was reasonably safe as the police blocked off one lane of the bridge for the riders to go on. The biggest enjoyment was going over the Bourne Bridge, then under it, looking up to see riders above you. The most beautiful sight I have seen four years in a row is the sun rising while going along Service Road Bike Road with the Cape Cod Canal on your left.

Sunday's weather was the best I have seen in 4 years. One rider scared the daylights out of me at the 126 mile point. He came out behind me talking like Donald Duck (due to my shirt). He apologized, but we both laughed. If it wasn't my high tech bike that created attention for the two days, it was the shirt. I was riding a Kestrel, a carbon fiber bike. I was the hit of the ride. Some jerk forced me off the road at the 158 mile point. I uttered some choice profanity at him. He pulled off the road and came after me. I got off my bike, and 10 other riders got off theirs. We started walking towards him. I said "You got a problem. Stick around. There's one thousand behind them." He quickly went back to his car and left.

I had no problem climbing the highest hill of the ride. The two of the most beautiful ladies in the world who cheered me on last year as I struggled on were there. I smiled and waved at them. As long as they are there on that hill cheering me on I will never walk up that hill. I will never let them down. May God Bless them. I did get a kick out of medical. The medical van passed me, then waited at the crest to see if I would make it. I must have made an impression last year on them (I



CANCER

MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER
New York 63%

**M. D. ANDERSON CANCER CENTER
(UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS)**
Houston 48%

DANA-FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE
Boston 40.5%

FRED HUTCHINSON CANCER RESEARCH CENTER
Seattle 27.5%

MAYO CLINIC
Rochester, Minn. 26.5%

JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL
Baltimore 25.5%

A diagnosis of cancer has long sent people scurrying to the nearest major medical center, if not for treatment at least for a second opinion. That reaction is still wise: Cancer is too deadly and too unpredictable—and the array of available treatments too large—to trust your care to less than the best. Renowned hospitals such as Sloan-Kettering in New York, M. D. Anderson in Houston and Dana-Farber in Boston deliver up-to-date care that includes clinical trials of new drugs and experimental therapies, as well as provide much-needed psychological support through well-established programs. And their doctors tend to be leaders in their fields.

was one hurting dude last year).

I got in at 11 AM Sunday. It was like a victory circle, being cheered. Throughout the whole ride people would cheer you on. Depending on the cheers or my mood at the time I either raised my right arm in salute or cried. When I cried I was a 19 year old, Spinning my Wheels faster till I was out of sight. The times when I was going through the lonely stretches of the ride I had over 20 fan club members cheering me on led by my

mom and dad. Once when I did cried, a fellow rider asked if I was OK. I said it was the wind that caused me to tear up. Even an out of shape middle age guy like me feels like Greg LeMond for two days out of the year.

You all know why I do the ride. This event was supposed to be a one time event for me in 1988. Even though I lost a great-grandmother, grandmother (age 48), and mother (age 40) to cancer, it took my father's forty month losing struggle with colon cancer to try to beat this damn disease to get involved. The PMC did pick the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, rated the number three cancer hospital in the USA according to U.S. News & World Report (8/5/91). The PMC is a first class organization. There are no incentives for doing this event. Our real reward is the bottom line, the donation. Last year 91.8% of all money raised went to the Jimmy Fund. I do get a T-shirt for doing the ride. If I am fortunate enough to raise twice the amount, I get a second T-shirt, called a Heavy Hitter T-shirt. It's the sponsor that gets me the Heavy Hitter T-shirt.

I always ask people to sponsor me for my ride. In return, I will give you the best showing I can do, and

two letters after the ride. The first one is after the ride letting you know how I did. The second one is in December/January letting you know how much the PMC & I raised. The typical letter after April 15 is asking for money. Feel free to place that letter in the circular file, if you so desire. I only send that letter out to active paid sponsors from the prior year.

People may say I'm fighting a fool's mission, that there will never be a cure for cancer. Maybe so, but the advances in cancer treatment since 1959 when my mother was first stricken with cancer will allow my sister Carol to have a better chance of facing her challenge. Thanks to you, my sister faces a brighter future.

I do want to thank all my sponsors for allowing me to attend the ride of my life - for all life. It is in my sister's name, Carol Christianson, that I hereby dedicate my 1991 ride to.

Brian M. Richards



The 1991 Pan Massachusetts Challenge

In Memory of

*Anna Anderson, Winnie Baker, Margaret Bertalan, Doris May Beecher, Roland Bragg,
Richard Breault, Families of Mr & Mrs Larry Davis, Evelyn Gamble, John H. Johnston,
Raymond Krohn, Clifton Linscott, Josephine Linscott, Wilfred J. Masse,
Lillian Marie McKinnion, Robert S. Milligan, Thomas O'Neill, Joseph 'Al' Richards,
Kathleen Marie Richards, Michelle St. Louis, Julia Snyder, Domenic Stagno, Gerildene Wiegartz*

For the Pan Mass Riders 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

John L. Black, Carol Christianson, Alberta Masse, Lillian McKinnion, Gloria Richards, Gena Wagner



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

Brian M. Richards