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Dear Supporter,

A letter of thanks to you for sponsoring me on the Trans NH Bike Ride for MDA this season. I am sorry it has taken me so long to say thank you to those that have given their hard earned money in support of the MDA on my behalf. Please allow me to tell you a little about this years ride, and touch on a couple moments from past rides.

Thursday we had a rather uneventful drive up to Pittsburgh. We tend to load our little group of riders labeled Team DeRoche into a few vehicles and leave around lunch time with a destination of Pittsburg NH where we overnight at the Tall Timber Lodge. Had a great dinner in the onsite restaurant the Rainbow Grille, believe me when I tell you that a meal there is an ample supply of fuel in preparation for the next day's 100 mile ride down to Littleton. After the meal for our 18 members it was a short stint around the campfire to renew acquaintances and catch up on the year's events. You see this crew only assembles once a year. Some of us reside in NH, MA, one, from Ca, another couple of guys fly in from Ohio. It's kind of a "same time next year" stint. We also vary in age anywhere from late twenties into the mid sixties. Male, female, all kinds of professions and backgrounds are along. But we only make up about 15% of total riders for the TNHBR. This year we had 117 riders for the three days and there were a few riders who could not enjoy all three but did what they could for a day or two. It is always tough to see someone only join for a day or two when they want to ride all three. But better that they join us for part of the time than not at all. We need them all!

The next morning (Friday) we awoke at 4:30am to head back over to the Rainbow room where we had dined the night before for a quick bite and some caffeine, loaded up the crew and drove further north to the border where the US meets Canada. We hooked up with no less than 100 others ready to bicycle across New Hampshire.

We left the border at 7:30 AM Friday morning with pleasant temps just enough so that long sleeves were welcome for some but by no means necessary. With wet roads but only a slight bit of precipitation falling on and off. We ripped it down to Groveton averaging around 20 mph to the water stop at the memorial right in front of the giant wood chip pile on good old Route #3 that used to be a pulp pile back when I was a bit younger. We then pushed off and peddled down to Lancaster and turned right onto Route 132 where I witnessed a big bear cross the road in front of me. Only the third time I've seen a bear in a road, and the second that it was full grown, luckily a couple of the other riders got a glimpse too. We then rode along the Connecticut River, last year it stormed for the whole leg but this year we have Joe Pitkin and his "magic" rain jacket. Every time we would see those dark ominous clouds overhead Joe, while continuing to peddle his bike would pull his jacket from his jersey pocket and put it on, never missing a stroke of the peddles. About 10 minutes afterward the sky would clear and we'd be set for hours. He did this on a couple different occasions over the weekend. When queried about the jacket he had some lame story about seeing it "online" and getting the last one. But I believe it is all a cover up as he just wants to ensure that he is always welcome on group rides as now he has a set job. Of course he does now have that spot and is invited everywhere.

From the turn along the Connecticut it was right on down to Littleton where we hit the (TNHBR supplied) massage tables, these massage therapists volunteer each year to provide their service for free. (Well almost free, they do see an occasional beer as a tip) and then onto the warm showers. Had a meal and got some much needed rest.

Saturday was a nice day as we peddled on to West Lebanon, a huge deviation from our normal landing spot of Laconia. Seems the Bike Week guys switched it up this year and in turn our TNHBR board of directors opted out of Laconia and got us bicyclists a little further away from the Motorcycle enthusiasts and

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crowds that they attract. We averaged 17 mph for that days ride. It was a welcome site to see the hotel that afternoon, always nice to have a comfortable place to clean up and relax, get a massage and an excellent dinner. Saturday night was the awards banquet, this years unveiling of the "new" TNHBR logo jersey...and the money count. We collected at that point around \$150,000. for MDA, which has now ballooned to \$177,000 as of August 1. We were blessed with a few words from Pete Lafferty (22) describing the love for his departed brother Joe who passed away in the fall of 2007 at age 20. Both these fellows have had Muscular Dystrophy throughout their lives. It is people such as these two fine young men that encourage me to participate each year. Many of the people who have benefited from this ride are no longer with us. There was a time when I first gave this weekend of fundraising a go 11 or 12 years ago, after the long weekend I was just absolutely spent. It was about 100 degrees; it was so hot that the older of one of the Hayner brothers (members of Team DeRoche) had finally agreed to "accept" to have intravenous fluids administered to help him regain some of the fluids he had lost over the weekend. He was sitting under a tree at the school in Salem where the ride ended back then. As I was getting my bike up on the rack a young man came over in his motorized wheelchair steering it with a joystick. He stopped next to me and said "I just wanted to thank you for riding this weekend, it means a lot". Back then we were trying to hit a goal of around \$50,000. I wonder what that young man would say today if he were still with us, when we can work together to raise 3 times that sum during this event.

Team Deroche has sadly had to make a substitution this year as our normal process after having a huge meal on Saturday night with lot's of Gatorade is to wander over to Hectors (in Laconia) for a long standing cycling tradition of carbo loading known as "Guinness and Mud Pie". Don't knock it if you haven't tried it. I believe this was started by the Smith& Murch expedition team in the early 90's. But seeing as we were not in Laconia but in West Lebanon, we tried to keep our honor of tradition intact and found a suitable establishment to replace Hectors, it is Seven Barrel Brew Pub. By no means does this new watering hole carry the posh furnishings of Hectors but one thing it did have is locally made Stout and Ale's on draught. After a couple of pints at a table that started with 8 participants that grew through our short stay and had at least twice that, we retired for the evening bidding good night to those hearty enough (massage therapists) to stay and endure several more pints.

Sunday last year was just a pure testosterone driven day of riding flat roadways in a pace line at about 20 mph from Laconia to Portsmouth. This year was just the opposite. 75 miles of challenging climbs from West Lebanon to Concord to regroup at the fire station and then gathering together to ride en mass to the Fire Academy. Most of us avoided the rain showers that day, only to arrive at the fire station and watch the other riders come in as did the storm clouds and rain. After getting all back together we were escorted to the Fire Academy behind a fire truck. Of course this is the time when the skies decided to open up. This made the conclusion of the ride a bit of a mad dash once we got to the parking lot. Usually we all attend the awesome cook out provided by all the volunteers of the MDA, followed by more congratulatory words from the founders of the ride and presentation of the annual tee shirt. This year it was just a quick good by to the members of Team DeRoche and load the bikes on the roof of the trailblazer and head for home.

I guess next season we'll have to make sure we spend more time with our fellow riders and supporters as the event concludes. It is kind of nice to say good by to the riders who travel by plane once a year to share in the fun. It's also a great feeling to meet some of the people with Muscular Dystrophy who are able to benefit from your donations and our efforts. Those that I have met always are very thankful and express it in their words and smiles. I accept on our behalf, yours and mine, because without you my supporter the ride would be just a ride, not a way to help someone who is in need. Thank you.

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So there is my recap of the weekend. I hope that you got a glimpse of what goes on. I offer you the opportunity to participate again next season. Ride, support, donate, inspire. In what ever way you choose, please know that I appreciate you coming along in any capacity you choose.

Sincerely,

Steve Patterson