

## Going the extra mile

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By John Ciampa/Correspondent  
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Lincoln -

For Scott Barrie, participating in the Pan-Massachusetts Challenge — a two-day bicycling excursion stretching from Central Massachusetts to the tip of Cape Cod — initially served as an opportunity to ride in large, competitive setting.

But that was before Barrie lost several friends and family members to cancer, which health officials now believe is the leading cause of death among Americans under the age of 85.

“When I first started out riding in the PMC, I was really into cycling and I had heard about this ride that raises money for cancer research,” said Barrie, who rode in his first PMC in 1990. “I was 32 at the time and pretty much treated it as a race. But as I got older and started to have kids that outlook changed — I began to think a little more about why I was doing this.”

This weekend, Barrie, along with several other Lincoln residents, will join an estimated 5,000 cyclists participating in the PMC. The annual charity bike ride began in 1980, when Billy Starr, a self-described outdoor enthusiast who lost his mother to cancer when she was just 49, gathered 36 people together to cycle across the Bay State from Springfield to Provincetown.

That initial venture raised \$10,200, which Starr donated to the Jimmy Fund to support cancer research and care at Boston’s Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. By 1990, the first-year Barrie rode in the PMC, the event grew to include nearly 1,000 riders and raised more than \$1 million.

In subsequent years, the popularity and scope of the PMC has ballooned, fueled, in part, by a resurgence in cycling’s popularity. Approximately \$23 million was raised in 2006. This year, PMC officials set a fundraising goal of \$27 million, which will bring career totals for the event to \$200 million in donations to the Jimmy Fund.

“It’s been great to have had the opportunity to be a part of that growth,” said Barrie of 17 years he has been a part of the PMC. “I’ve literally been along for the ride.”

Riders of the PMC can choose among seven different riding routes ranging from 47 to 190 miles long, with varying degrees of difficulty according to distance and terrain. To qualify, they must each raise a minimum of \$1,000 to \$3,600, depending on the length of the route they choose to complete.

The initial stretch of the longest route — now from Sturbridge to Provincetown — is described as being considerably hillier and therefore more strenuous than the other stages, most of which cover southeastern portions of the state.

While Barrie is riding an 84-mile route from Wellesley to Bourne on Saturday, Don Alden, another Lincolnite and a seasoned triathlete, is riding the full 190-mile route over both days. Like Barrie, Alden is riding for a similar cause, albeit one coming from a unique source of inspiration.

"I've known several people who have battled cancer over the years, both friends and family members," Alden said. "I first started riding in the PMC after I lost my aunt. Riding then became a way for me to channel that loss."

Like many other participants, Barrie and Alden have had to endure losing other loved ones to cancer in the years since they first took part in the PMC. For Barrie, it was a cousin who lost her battle with cancer last year at the age of 58; for Alden, it was his mother-in-law.

"It keeps driving me," said Barrie. "Hopefully, I'll be around to see this through until there's some kind of breakthrough in cancer research."

Alden is also one of 51 people riding on behalf of the Caring for Carcinoid Foundation, a group founded by Lincoln resident Nancy O'Hagan. The Caring for Carcinoid Foundation riding team was spearheaded by Anne Doyle, a Lincoln resident who lost her father to carcinoid cancer.

"It's such a well organized event and a great cause," Alden said. "In a way, it celebrates life — I guess there's something therapeutic about pedaling that serves as a metaphor for moving through the challenges of life."

*Donations on behalf of any rider can be made to the PMC until Oct. 1 by visiting [www.pmc.org](http://www.pmc.org), or by mailing a check payable to the PMC, 77 Fourth Ave., Needham, MA 02494.*