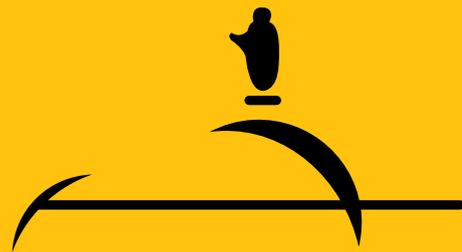


TUCSON, AZ



SOUTH BEND, IN

# DESERT to DOME

Riding for the Lives of Children



JULY 24 — AUGUST 23, 2010



# DESERT to DOME

Riding for the Lives of Children

*2,300 miles*

*30 days*

*4 wheels*

*1 goal*

*A Goal for Life*

**JOIN THE FIGHT FOR THE LIVES OF CHILDREN**

University of Notre Dame Dean of the College of Science Greg Crawford and his wife, Renate, bicycled over 2,300 miles from July 24 to August 23, 2010, to raise awareness of the newly strengthened partnership between the University and the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation. The partnership was formed to support and advance research initiatives to find treatment and cure options for Niemann-Pick Type C (NPC), a rare and deadly neurodegenerative disease that primarily strikes children before or during adolescence.

The Crawfords undertook this symbolic adventure in order to raise awareness about NPC, to demonstrate Notre Dame's commitment to this new partnership, and to raise funds to find effective treatment options for children affected with NPC. Along the route, hundreds of alumni and friends of the University welcomed the Crawfords to their towns. Fifteen alumni clubs from Tucson, Arizona to Chicago, Illinois, hosted welcome events for the Crawfords. Hundreds of people learned about NPC and Notre Dame's fight for a cure.



**Niemann-Pick Type C** is a genetic, fatal cholesterol storage disorder that primarily strikes children ,who succumb to the disease before or during adolescence. The Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation (APMRF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to funding medical research projects to find a treatment for Niemann-Pick Type C (NPC) disease. Researchers in the Notre Dame College of Science are working closely with the APMRF to find a treatment. The Foundation fosters extensive collaboration between researchers; and, the urgency of the disease, which ravages and kills children before they become adults, inspires a high degree of cooperation. Medical research is the key to saving the lives of all those around the world afflicted with Niemann-Pick disease.



*“We are riding for the Parseghian family,  
the children who have lost their battle with NPC,  
and the children and families still fighting for a cure.”*

— Greg Crawford, dean of the College of Science



**W**e arrived at the Parseghian Foundation at 5:15 a.m. to find about 15 people ready to see us off with a breakfast and balloons. So many of the Foundation's volunteers arrived at the office to support our ride. The Foundation's office walls are full of photographs and memories. Cindy's office wall in particular is a reminder to us all of the importance of funding Niemann-Pick research in search of treatments, therapies, and cures. After singing the fight song and saying our good-byes, we were off, and everyone let the balloons go in the air. A very touching experience!

After 97 miles, two flat tires, two storms, rattlesnakes, a 40-degree swing in temperature, altitude, roads that did not exist, and construction, we made it to Wilcox, Arizona. The scenery was nothing short of spectacular at the highest elevation. Our teammates, Patrick and Peter, kept us very safe, well fed and hydrated the entire ride; we went through seven gallons of water today and many bottles of Gatorade.

# DAY 1



**Story of the day:** there are a lot of Notre Dame fans around the country, and a lot of them identify with the University even though they did not attend it. We found such an enthusiastic fan in Benson, Arizona, at a gas station. Originally from Michigan, he saw our van, came over, and he spoke to us about Notre Dame football — the ins and outs, the new coach, etc. Then he pulled up his sleeve and showed us his Notre Dame tattoo. The reason I was so amazed was that this — believe it or not — was the second Notre Dame tattoo that we saw in two days: one interlocking ND and one Fighting Irish leprechaun. Now THAT is fan loyalty. Go Irish!

Saturday, July 24



*Tucson to Wilcox, Arizona: We're off!*

**T**oday, we crossed into New Mexico and saw our first two tarantulas on the road — they took to Renate very well, but she didn't feel the same. We stopped at the Arizona-New Mexico border in a ghost town named Bowie. Everything was shut down, burned down, or totally vacant. One distinctive home freaked out Renate so badly that she took off and we didn't see her for miles. But no matter where we are we get a lot of 'beeps' when cars drive by the van or us. People certainly do take notice everywhere we travel and this is very exciting and inspiring. The van gets so much attention that wherever it stops, Patrick and Peter get asked about it and have become pretty good at giving the 30-second elevator pitch about Notre Dame, the Parseghian Medical Research Foundation and Niemann-Pick.

There is a lot of time to reflect when bicycling long distances. Today, I was thinking about a recurring question I got at different Notre Dame clubs on the way down: "What's your favorite memory from Notre Dame in the two years you've been there?" They have to take a seat and get comfortable because the list is long and there are so many amazing moments already!

*Wilcox, Arizona to Lordsburg, New Mexico*



*Sunday, July 25*

# DAY 3

I think we brought a little of the South Bend weather along with us to Arizona and New Mexico. Ever since the first day, it has been cold and rainy during our rides. After stopping for a quick lunch and the climb of the Silver City in the mountains, we began to descend. The roads were good; however, we struggled with flat tires. We are actually running out of tubes and considering setting up an exchange of Desert to Dome T-shirts for Presta tubes. All in all it was a good day. The heavy rains challenge us, but we are getting stronger in our climbs and the scenery is just spectacular. We are looking forward to meeting some Notre Dame alumni in Las Cruces tomorrow, and hopefully a little better weather!

Before we began biking three days ago, the trip down to Tucson was great family time with our two daughters in the back seat for fun and a few friendly tussles. They both appreciate how important this ride is for Notre Dame and for the kids and families affected by Niemann-Pick Type C disease. We thank all of the people we met along the way, especially alumni, who welcomed them so warmly. While their first love is soccer, maybe someday they'll share our passion for pedaling!

*Monday, July 26*



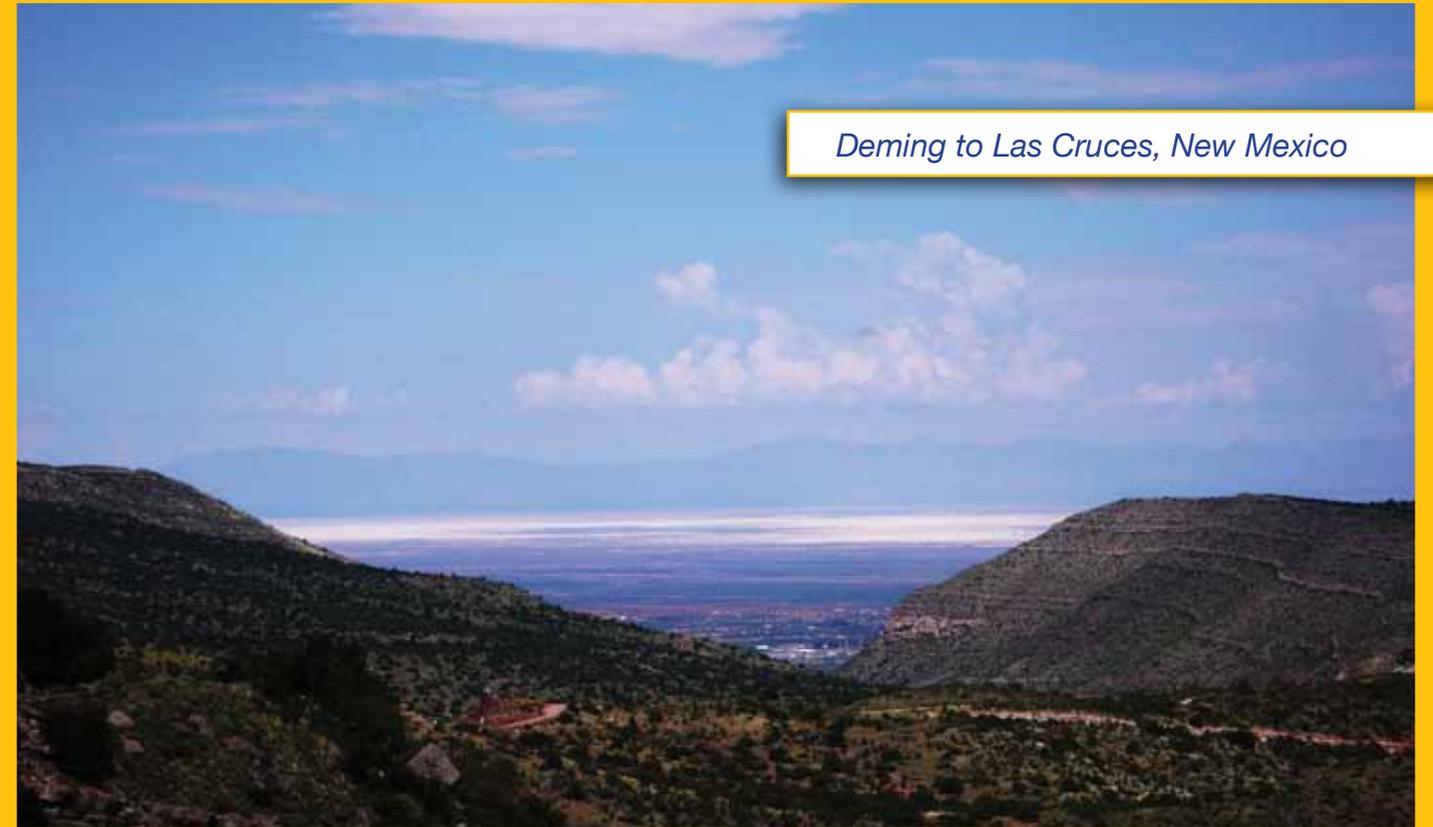
*Lordsburg to Deming, New Mexico*

**T**oday was the perfect day in the desert. After three days of rain and colder-than-normal temperatures, we had a nearly perfect cycling day with the high in the low 90s. The day was pretty uneventful, except for the big German shepherd that decided to come after us. According to our team guide, “You don’t have to be faster than the dog, only faster than your friend.” All joking aside, the dog never caught us and narrowly escaped being injured by an oncoming car. Coming from the west into Las Cruces, we crossed the Rio Grande and descended into the city, ending a spectacular day of riding in nearly perfect conditions. Las Cruces, also known as the City of Crosses, is the new home to New Mexico State University. It is just a beautiful and quaint city. We had a wonderful evening with the Notre Dame club of El Paso at La Posta restaurant. The southwestern food and atmosphere was just terrific. We wish to thank Chris for organizing this event and Arturo for his generosity in sponsoring the dinner, and the entire El Paso Club for their thoughtfulness, kindness, generosity, and for the tourist tips!

Being so close to Mexico has led me to reflect upon where in the ‘world’ Notre Dame Science is going with respect to international programs and how globalization is influencing our research and educational enterprise. The answer to both of these questions is Notre Dame Science is pretty much going everywhere! We are strategically positioned to embrace an emerging model of collaboration that leverages communication technologies in order to develop around-the-globe laboratories where the sun never sets, and where the ease and speed of contact among collaborators has revolutionized research. Our reach is universal.

*Tuesday, July 27*

# DAY 4



*Deming to Las Cruces, New Mexico*

“

Obstacles are what  
you see when you  
take your eyes off  
the goal.

”

— *Henry Ford*

# DAYS



*Wednesday, July 28*

**T**oday was another perfect riding day. We started off with a climb out of Las Cruces and made our way to about 5,700 feet, through the San Agustin pass, and then it was pretty much downhill from there. We rode hard today to work off our big dinner last night with the Notre Dame El Paso Club. And, we finally had a tailwind! Tomorrow will be our biggest climbing challenge of the ride as we leave Alamogordo and travel to Mayhill.

Last night at the El Paso Club dinner, someone asked me: “As a science dean, what is your passion?” The answer comes easily: entrepreneurship. I am talking beyond starting a new enterprise to the pursuit of opportunity, idea generation, and value creation. These aspects of entrepreneurship permeate our teaching and research mission in science, including the new Engineering, Science, Technology, Entrepreneurship Excellence Master’s (ESTEEM) program created in collaboration with the College of Engineering and the Mendoza College of Business. The ESTEEM program enables science and engineering graduates to create value out of intellectual property at Notre Dame, engage in innovation and entrepreneurial practices, and learn high technology and business principles from that perspective. We also launched an innovation Ph.D. program. With Innovation Park as an outlet for our inventions and discoveries, we hope that our findings, both basic and translational, can be turned into products, therapies, with societal and human health value.



**M**y colleague in the Department of Physics, Professor Umesh Garg, started us off today with this saying in a morning email: “The mountains bow before high spirits fueled by a good cause.” All day today, we kept thinking about these words during the climb. Although a short day in terms of miles, only about 50, it was a massive uphill climb to about 8,700 feet for the first half. I’m not sure if the mountains bowed to us today, but they certainly kept us very cool. And the scenery was just spectacular.

I thought a lot about the topic of preparing students for the medical profession today. I’m not sure why, perhaps I thought I might need a doctor at the top. We train a lot of future doctors in the College of Science, and I am often asked how our program is evolving to address the needs of future doctors and the future of health care. The short answer is: our strong preprofessional program. We are developing and launching a new program focused on interdisciplinary science that maintains the flexibility of the preprofessional degree but incorporates a contemporary look at interdisciplinary science in the context of biomedical research. We are also building the Ruth M. Hillebrand Center for Compassionate Care, which will focus on caring science where students can learn more about the human aspect of medicine and how it integrates with basic science. We are very excited about the impact these initiatives will have on our students.

Tomorrow, we will be cycling about 70 miles – all downhill – back to the desert.

Today was perfect. As we descended to Artesia, New Mexico over the next 72 miles, it never felt too hot and not a cloud in the sky – it was one of those days you wish would never end. The landscape coming through the mountains looked like a landscape architect designed it. We both feel so fortunate for being able to do this bike ride for the Parseghian Medical Research Foundation and Notre Dame. There are a couple of hot and long days ahead of us but we are thankful for each mile that brings us closer to our goal.

Our goal is to raise awareness and funding for Niemann-Pick research through this ride; but, our ultimate goal is to find a cure or therapy for Niemann-Pick through research and discovery. Some people still wonder: Can you do science at a Catholic university? Yes! Our scientists operate with the same rigor, curiosity, and freedom as any scientists.



Friday, July 30



Our research at the College of Science is mission-driven with a focus on diseases and improving the human condition, medicinal chemistry, sustainability, and the environment. The approach is always: Think big! Our new partnership with the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation is a perfect example of our mission and aspirations, our thinking-big attitude, and our passion to find solutions for some of the most complex science problems of our day.

P.S. We had dinner in Roswell, New Mexico, tonight – interesting town!

DAY 7



*Saturday, July 31*

*Artesia to Hobbs, New Mexico*

**I**t was another beautiful day in eastern New Mexico. Today's word: oil. The landscape was sprinkled with oil pumps as far as the eye could see! We saw some disturbing danger signs, such as "DANGER: H<sub>2</sub>S Poison Gas May Be Present." We also started a few new traditions during our ride. Every leg of the trip we finish, we put an interlocked ND sticker on the window, identify the city, and then write one word to describe the day.

Yesterday, I reflected on our "think big" approach. That's not just a slogan – it's what we really

do in the College of Science. We are leaders and collaborators in several internally funded strategic initiatives, including global health, biomedical imaging, the environment, energy, nano, and advanced diagnostics. These areas represent strategic directions for the college through investigation, cooperation, and translation to the marketplace. With strong academic leadership in the Dome, we are ready: ready to dream big, ready for the next discovery, ready for the next invention, ready to address the big problems of our time.



““

Every turn of their bicycle pedals will help bring us closer to developing a therapy for all the children who struggle with NPC disease.

””

— *Cindy Parseghian*

**W**e did it – we finished our “Tour de New Mexico”! New Mexico is a beautiful state, from the desert to the high altitudes in the mountains, with a rich variety of scenery. The people were so welcoming and courteous on the roads and everywhere we stopped. We even picked up some donations along the way from people interested in our ride and its purpose. Thank you, New Mexico! As we make our way to into Texas, temperature forecast for the week: HOT! But, we are looking forward to the Dallas alumni event on Wednesday. We hear a lot of great things about the club. Throughout our trip and during the club stops, there is a lot of curiosity about Notre Dame Science. We have had a great year and are moving full speed ahead. We have a big vision: We will succeed because of our common vision and direction, our unity of purpose, our sense of camaraderie and cooperation, and our spirit of commitment to the values and vocation that have always guided the College of Science. We share a desire to make a difference in the world, in the lives of others, in our community and neighborhoods, in our families and in our disciplines. The challenges are great, the blueprint is bold, and we are ready. We are fully committed to Our Lady and her mission, and we believe in everything she represents. It is our time. We are Notre Dame.

*Hobbs, New Mexico to Brownfield, Texas*

**DAY 9**



*Sunday, August 1*



Monday, August 2

We rode 100 miles today and the temperature crept over 100 degrees before we were done for the day. There is no way to sugarcoat today's ride – it was a grind. Everything was unfavorable: the temperature, the sun, the wind, the road surface, the climbs, and the flies. We are getting stronger every day. And, although it was a very tough day, we raised awareness and more dollars for our cause: Niemann-Pick research and our relationship with the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation. We are 100 miles closer to the Dome and one day closer to our goal. And, we are one day closer to seeing our girls! The photograph of Marcia, Christa, and Michael Parseghian on the side of the van gives us strength. Renate painted her nails purple, Christa's favorite color – the color of hope and therefore the color for the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation. This is a daily reminder of why we are doing this. The photo was our girls' idea and a very symbolic one.

DAY 10

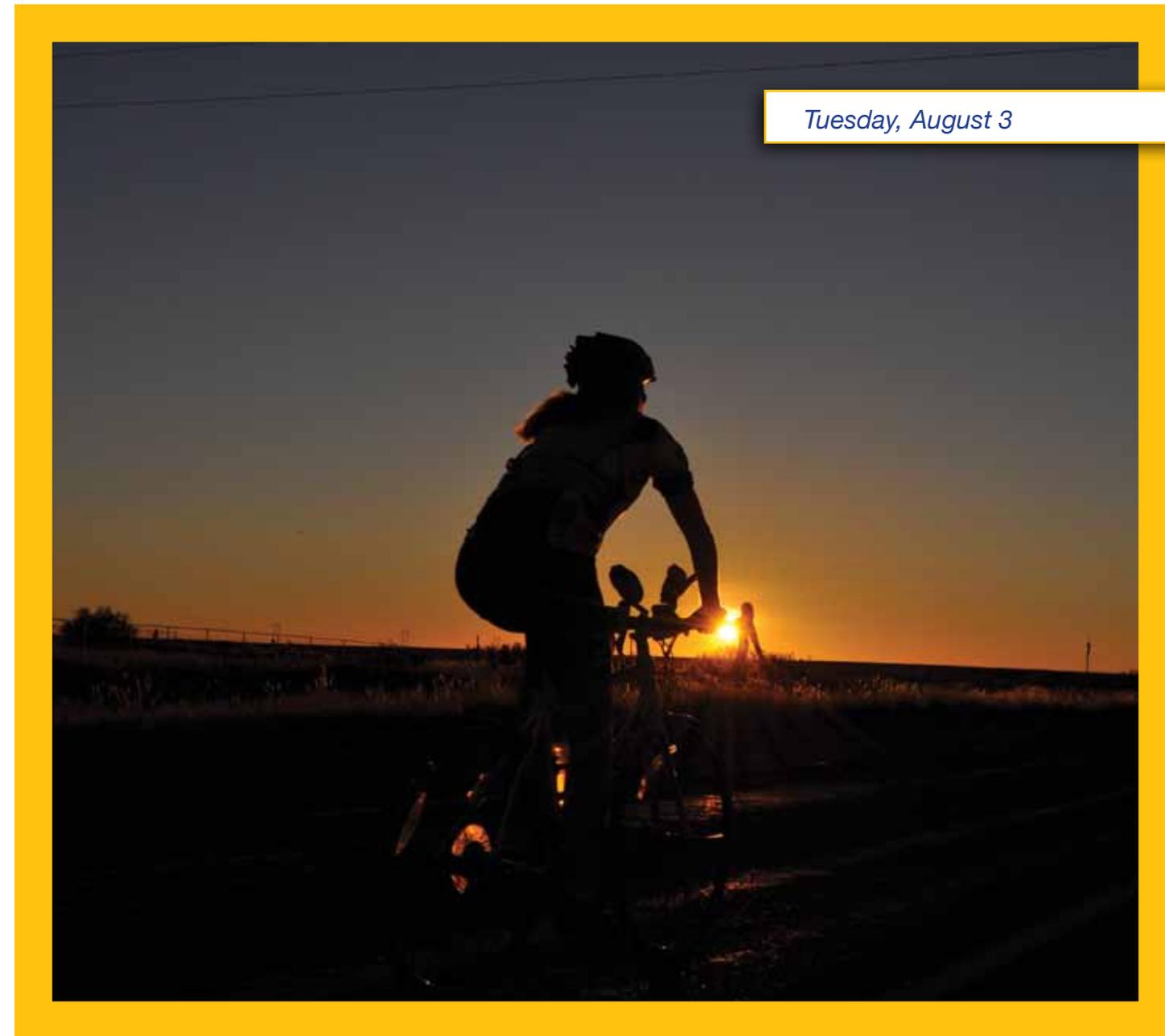
Brownfield to Snyder, Texas

**T**oday was our longest ride so far and the longest planned – we road 120 miles! We started earlier in the morning and finished by noon. We felt very strong today, and perhaps this was our fastest ride. We met a little boy and his sister at a convenience store along the way. He loves Notre Dame and will only cheer against them if they played Texas Christian University. They were curious about all the signatures on the van and wanted to write a little message themselves. We told the little boy to ask his mom and that got a little lost in translation and she came outside on guard, ready to deal with the strangers who wanted to give her son a ride in their vehicle. But, we cleared up the confusion, the kids signed the van and we gave the little boy a Desert to Dome T-shirt. He was thrilled to have an ND shirt!

As we approached our stop today, Breckenridge, a big, beautiful lake appeared – Hubbard Creek. It was simply gorgeous to behold. Renate wanted to swim across the lake, but Ironman triathlons will have to wait. Instead, we jumped in the pool (with no time to change) as soon as we reached our hotel. It was a wonderful day!

*Snyder to Breckenridge, Texas*

**DAY 11**



A wide-angle photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is a bright, glowing orb on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow light across the sky. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds that are illuminated from below, creating a silhouette effect. The horizon line is dark, and the water below is also dark, reflecting the light from the sun. The overall mood is serene and powerful.

“ Energy and persistence  
conquer all things. ”

— *Benjamin Franklin*

# DAY 12

*Breckenridge to Mineral Wells, Texas*



*Wednesday, August 4*

**O**ur ride was a little shorter today. It was still really hot, but the landscape was beautiful—a lot of rolling hills and a lot of stares from cows along the way. It looks like we have a few more days of above-normal temperatures. As we were riding through Texas, we saw some interesting contrasts in the way energy is obtained: oil wells and windmills in the same field.

It got me thinking about the way Notre Dame Science works with other units on campus on renewable energy projects, both in terms of research and education. We have the Sustainable Energy Initiative and the College of Science Committee on Sustainability, which address the need for renewable energy around the world and probes ways we can demonstrate concepts of sustainability to our students, the University and the outside world.

In the evening, we had a big Texas dinner with the Dallas-Fort Worth Notre Dame Club – it was great to get an “injection” of ND spirit to keep us going in this heat. We met at the Love & War in Texas BBQ restaurant. After long days of riding, we certainly appreciated the great Texas steaks with all the sides!

**Thank you, Dallas-Fort Worth, for your great hospitality!**

# DAY 13



*Thursday, August 5*

*Mineral Wells to Bowie, Texas*

**A**fter riding in one direction — east — since leaving Tucson, today we made our first turn left to head for the Dome. We will be heading north for the remainder of our trip. Today was an interesting day. Overall, it was a very nice ride today, with many beautiful animals, rolling hills, plush green landscapes, and a few small towns. We saw many animals you don't see often in South Bend: ostrich, emu, donkey, and Brahma bull along with the typical horses and cows. I started a stampede when I whistled at a bunch of cows! Even better, we had tailwinds today! We were very fast and beat the triple-digit heat, finishing our ride with a “mild” temperature of 99°F at 11:00 a.m.



It was a big day for us: we're halfway there! As we crossed over the Oklahoma border, knowing that we passed beyond our halfway point, the Bon Jovi song, "Livin' on a Prayer" came to mind – and we played it loudly on the iPhone. The winds tried pushing us back to Texas, but we fought through them and made it to Duncan, Oklahoma.

Riding 2,300 miles, always thinking about rain, heat, altitude, smooth roads, timing, etc., you start to do a lot of mental back-of-the-envelope calculations. We have a very exciting new initiative this year – a brand new department with a BIG vision and great mission fit for the College of Science. In this new department, the partnership of applied mathematics, computational mathematics, and statistics brings together the tools of modeling, simulation, and data analysis to bear on real-world problems, producing solutions with the power to predict and explain complex phenomena. We are so excited about this new department for so many reasons, but most importantly it will allow us to cooperate in deep and meaningful ways with the other colleges and schools on campus.

Friday, August 6

DAY 14

Today,  
we remember the life of  
**Marcia Parseghian**  
who lost her battle with  
Niemann-Pick Type C  
disease  
on August 6, 2005  
at the age of 16.



Today was a beautiful riding day. We started out at 5 a.m., and the temperature only got into the low 90s and the roads were very smooth, with large shoulders to ride on. The road we biked down for several miles was full of small and large companies. By the looks of it, technological and entrepreneurial activity is really hopping. We had the opportunity to ride through Norman, Oklahoma, on the way to Moore – what a beautiful city! I was impressed with the large research campus (the University of Oklahoma) that we passed, the technology park, and the entrepreneurship center.

Tonight we had an intimate gathering with the Oklahoma City Club. We made the *Sulphur Times* August 5, 2010 issue (page 8)! Thank you, Chris and Ursula, for your hospitality. Their daughter Marie is following in her father's footsteps and will join the Notre Dame family in the fall.



Saturday, August 7



Duncan to Moore, Oklahoma

# DAY 15



Moore to Stroud, Oklahoma

Leaving Moore, Oklahoma, today we had some issues: some road construction and closed bridges put a damper on the morning. However, after finding our way out of the city, we moved on to the famous Route 66. The rolling hills are the most impressive sight on Route 66; and, we mean they *roll*. Although challenging most of the day, the scenery was pretty spectacular for the entire 80-mile ride. With all of the rolling hills, we could not help but think about training at Knollwood prior to our departure. Thanks KCC for prepping us so well! We miss you all and look forward to seeing you all in a few weeks again. Wish we had some more playlists, as listening to the same music for eight hours can get boring – and Greg’s singing leaves something to be desired!

Tomorrow, we have a big day with the Tulsa Notre Dame Club – we are looking forward to meeting you all!

– Renate Crawford

Sunday, August 8

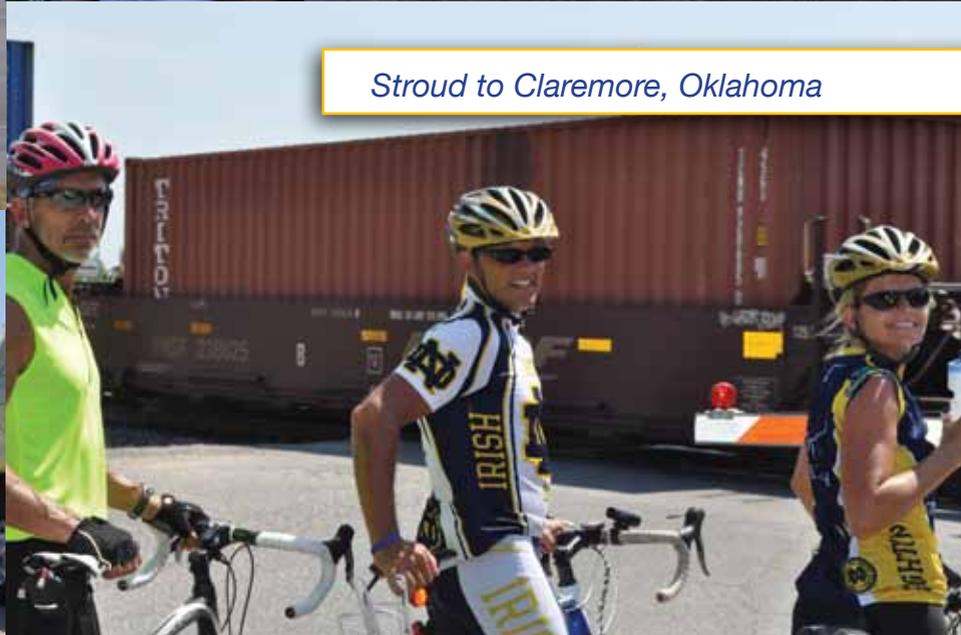
DAY 16

We started off bright and early from Stroud, Oklahoma, and biked to Kellyville where we met with three Notre Dame riders from Tulsa: Tim, Scott, and Curt. We rode together for about 30 miles right into downtown Tulsa where we visited the Holy Family Cathedral School and then on to Claremore where we were interviewed by the *Claremore Daily Progress* newspaper and the ABC affiliate, KTUL. We were a bit nervous because it was live, but Renate and I did okay (we think). You are awesome, Tulsa! We are deeply honored and highly appreciative of all that you have done for Desert to Dome. You rolled out the red carpet for us and showed us your passion and commitment to the Notre Dame mission and to the Notre Dame family. You really made us feel special and showed us the spirit of Notre Dame.

A very special thanks to Lamar and Erin. You did so much for our visit and for Notre Dame. Thank you for all of your time and effort and for all of the hard work you put into our day to make it so wonderful!

Monday, August 9

# DAY 17



Stroud to Claremore, Oklahoma



Claremore, Oklahoma to Joplin, Missouri

# DAY 18

Tuesday, August 10

On our way out of Claremore, we stopped at a convenience store in White Oak and the attendant recognized us from an article in that day's *Tulsa World* paper! It was a very nice article on our ride, and the store attendant was very excited about seeing us in person. She came out from behind the counter, gave us a bag of goodies for the road, wished us well on our journey, and signed the van. We gave her one of our Desert to Dome T-shirts to thank her for her support and generosity. Now THAT is Oklahoma hospitality for you!

We had a 100-mile ride today — it went pretty well. The beautiful rolling hills that started in Oklahoma continued into Missouri, the “Show Me State.” We have a busy club schedule in Missouri this week: Kansas City, Columbia, and then St. Louis. The club events really help keep us going. It is great to interact with the alumni, tell them what we are up to, and hear some of their memories from Notre Dame.

## A NOTE FROM CINDY PARSEGHIAN:

Looking back to the fall of 1994 when Michael, Marcia, and Christa were diagnosed with Niemann -Pick Type C (NPC) disease, we never expected the incredible outpouring of support from so many individuals. Our family has experienced the ultimate in human kindness, and it has been the Notre Dame community that has been with us each step of the journey.

Throughout the years, the Notre Dame community has shed tears of understanding when our three children succumbed to NPC. Members of this community have held us up while our hearts have broken and have said many prayers of support. Greg and Renate are tremendous examples of the Notre Dame spirit. They have taken on the challenge of the Desert to Dome bike ride in an effort to aid the NPC research efforts by raising awareness and donations.

Notre Dame is unique among research institutions in its willingness to tackle rare diseases. Notre Dame has never shied away from helping the most underserved in the world. The NPC Drug Discovery Core at Notre Dame has become a resource for researchers worldwide who are working on developing therapies for the disease.

Notre Dame brings expertise and dedication to the NPC field, which gives children with the disease, and their families, hope for a brighter future.



**F**iguring we'd have an easy day today – only 70 miles – we decided to actually enjoy the breakfast at the hotel prior to our departure. Only minutes into the trip, we knew this was not going to be an “easy” day after all. All of our sophisticated navigation devices wanted us to go on the highway, but we tried desperately to stay off the main roads. We carried our bikes through the brush. It became more of an adventure race than a bike trip. We are now at 39 flats and 9 slashed tires. We feel that today was a test of determination. We are more determined than ever to reach the Dome (we are far from the desert now) and to have the world take notice” of Niemann-Pick Type C, the partnership with the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation, and of course, the University of Notre Dame.

Our day did end very well, though. When we arrived at the Country Inn and Suites in Nevada, Missouri, the manager asked Wendy (from our support team) what we were doing and then asked if he could have a reporter come out to meet with us. Of course! This is about raising awareness (and research dollars) for Niemann-Pick Type C disease. We had a nice interview with the *Nevada Daily Mail* newspaper while the manager went out shopping and presented us with cases of water and Gatorade, bananas, granola bars, and many goodies. That was awesome!

- By Renate Crawford

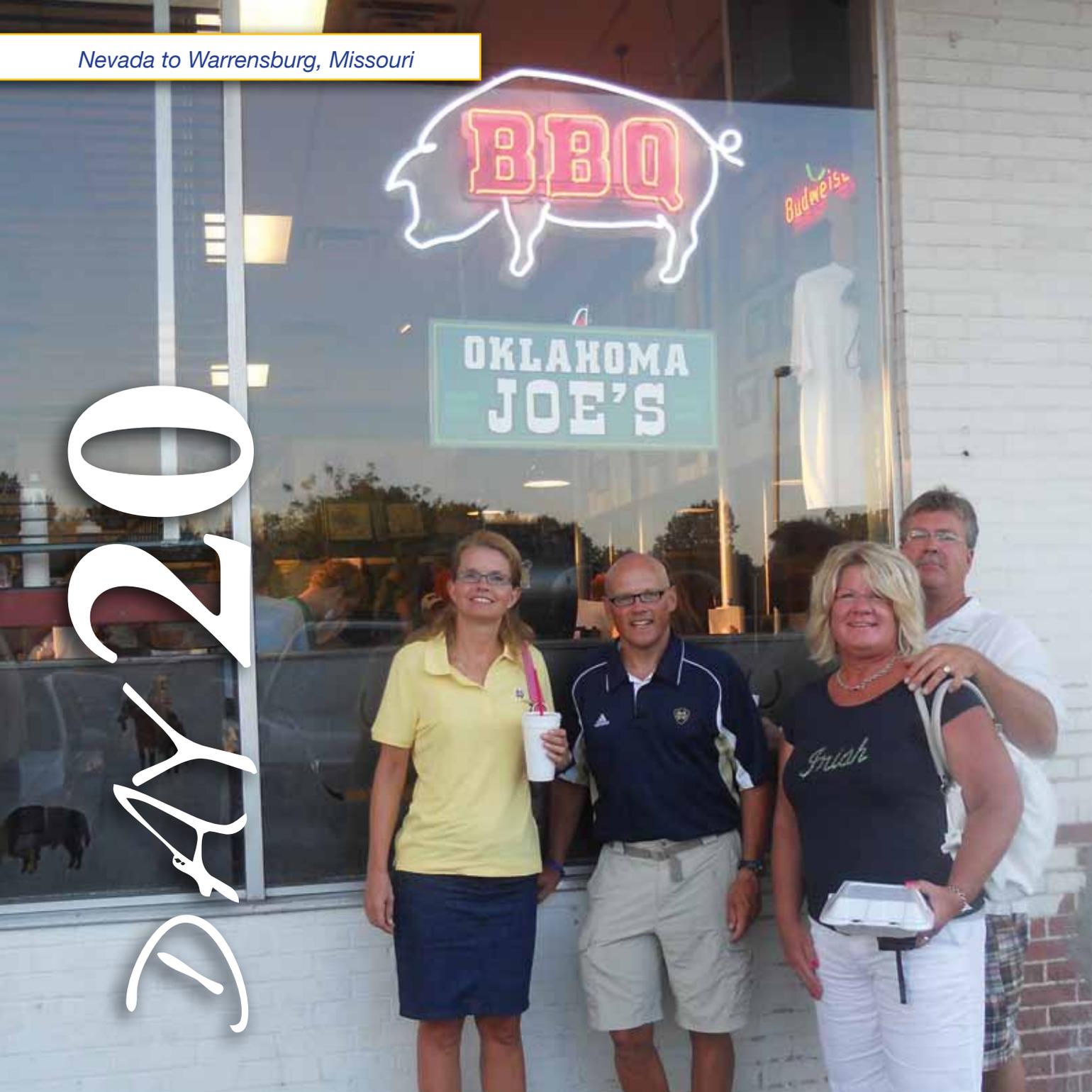
*Joplin to Nevada, Missouri*

# DAY 19

*Wednesday, August 11*



DAY 20



Today was a beautiful biking day. Since we had upwards of 100 miles to ride and a forecast of excessive heat, we started at 3:30 a.m. The morning sunrise was absolutely breathtaking as we rode east. We crossed over Truman Lake, which was stunning and full of wildlife. The rolling hills in Missouri are beautiful, but after the ride today, we had to purchase more Bengay for our sore and tired quads and hamstrings. We worked really hard today on those rollers, and even though they presented us with a challenging day, we had a great sense of accomplishment by the end of it. Tonight, we are staying in Warrensburg, Missouri, which is right outside of Kansas City. We met with the Kansas City Club tonight during their monthly business meeting and we had the opportunity to tell the club members about the new partnership with the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation. Afterwards, they came out to sign the van; and, Notre Dame parents Brian and Jeanne took us to Kansas City, Kansas, for Kansas City BBQ at Oklahoma Joe's. It was awesome! The restaurant was quite unique and we knew it had to be good with the line of customers stretching out the door.

We are off to Columbia, Missouri, tomorrow. Go Irish!

Thursday, August 12

All in all it was a very nice ride today. The rolling hills remain a challenge, but it was such a pretty landscape that it felt like the ride went by quickly. At one point today, we thought we might be getting pretty close to Indiana. We are getting more and more friendly car horn beeps as we are getting closer to the Dome. People are certainly taking notice. That type of encouragement is great and we always wave back.

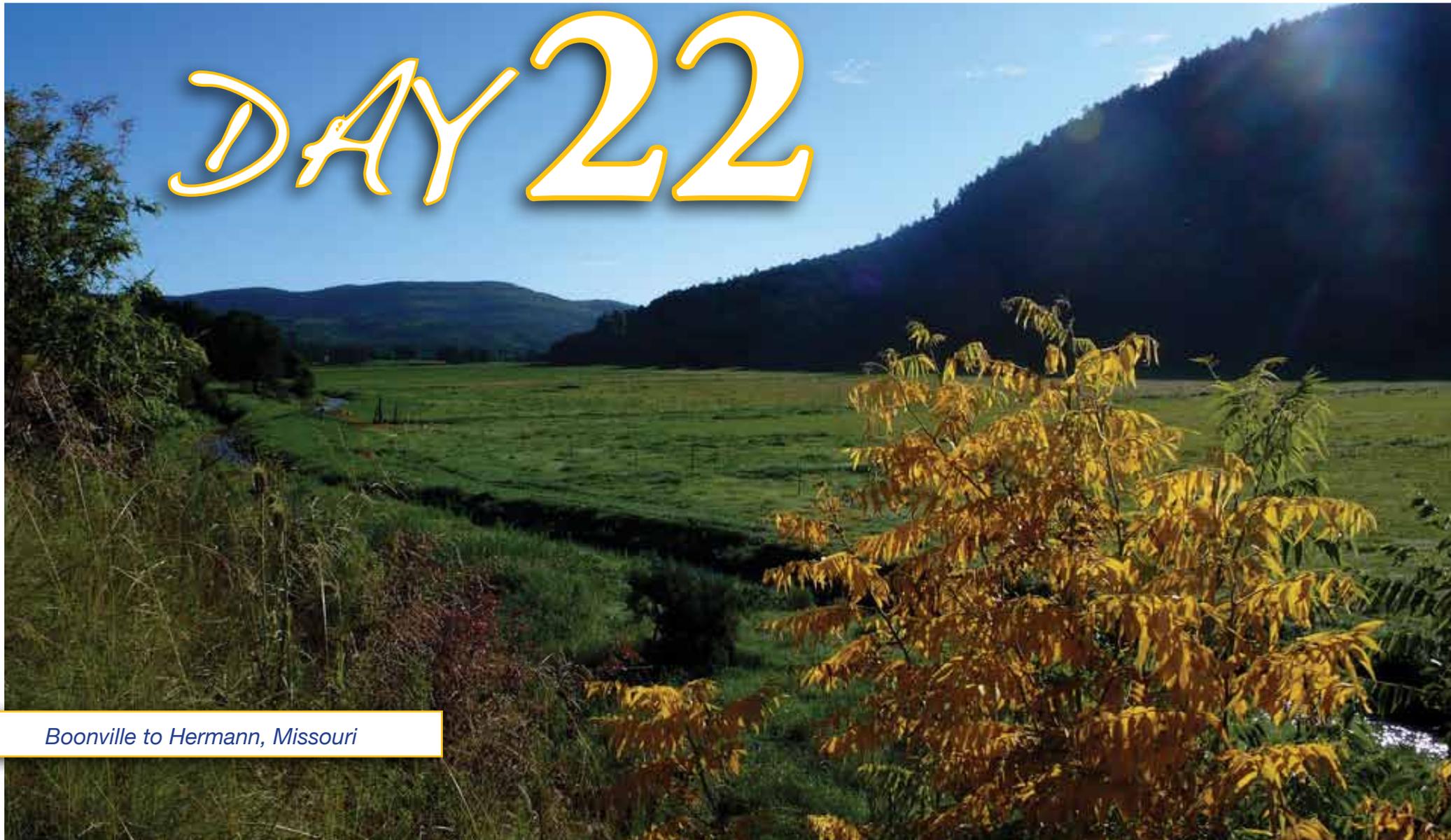
We are staying right outside of Columbia, so we met with the Central Missouri Club tonight. Barry, the club president, has been keeping a close eye on the blog, so he knows much about our ride. He dropped off a few bags of fresh fruit, water, goodies and some Bengay. Perfect timing! The dinner gathering with the alumni was at the Les Bourgeois Vineyards — a beautiful setting overlooking the mighty Missouri River. After dinner, Barry brought out a cake for us to celebrate our journey, Renate's birthday, and for our 20th wedding anniversary.

It was a wonderful gathering with the Notre Dame family tonight. We deeply appreciate the time and effort Barry and the Central Missouri Club put into organizing the evening and making us feel so special. GO IRISH!

*Warrensburg to Boonville, Missouri*

DAY 21





*Boonville to Hermann, Missouri*

**W**e followed the Lewis and Clark Trail for most of the day. They had Sacagawea and we had Mary (our name for our GPS system) to guide us. And, today was the first day since the early days of the ride when temperatures did not reach triple digits. It's probably the nicest weather for biking we have had thus far.

During this trip, we have witnessed some of the most beautiful scenery and that got me thinking a lot about environmental efforts. Three of our professors of biology are a part of the Notre Dame Environmental Change Initiative (ND-ECI), which aims to tackle the interrelated problems of invasive species, land use, and climate change by focusing on their combined impact on water resources. The ND-ECI will provide innovative solutions that minimize trade-offs between human welfare and environmental health where trade-offs are unavoidable. These professors' interdisciplinary research programs will influence public policy and discover win-win solutions whenever possible.



*Hermann to Maryland Heights, Missouri*

Overall, it was a great biking day! More steep hills slowing us down to 5 mph and downhill slopes flying us at 40 mph or more (or, in Renate's case, a steady 25 mph). It started to flatten out a bit when we closed in on St. Louis where we spent the evening with the local Notre Dame club. The St. Louis Club event opened with a mass at St. Anselm's, a beautiful and unique church with a circular design. Afterwards, we all went to the local pub. We are very thankful to Jack, the club president, and Tim for organizing the Mass and social event.

It was great to meet the club members, many of whom had interest in drug discovery and a lot of questions regarding our efforts at Notre Dame. One of our major research initiatives in the College of Science is the Chemical Genomics and Drug Discovery Group, which runs highly productive programs focused on discovering and developing new therapeutic leads to treat cancer, stroke, infectious diseases, and rare diseases such as Niemann-Pick. In recent months, members of the group have received significant funding from the National Institutes of Health to support their groundbreaking research in infectious disease and cancer.

Tomorrow we will start our final week of biking. We are so excited to get back to the Dome!

*Sunday, August 15*

*DAY 23*

“ “ When the road becomes  
hard to travel and it feels as  
if you will never reach the  
end...

look deep inside your heart  
and you will find the strength  
you never knew you had. ” ”

— *Jason Blume*

# DAY 24



*Maryland Heights, Missouri to Carlinville, Illinois*

**W**e made it to Illinois today — we are getting closer and closer to the Dome! As coach Parseghian would put it, we are in the fourth quarter. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and temperatures were reasonable. We crossed the Mississippi River as we crossed the Missouri-Illinois border. Apart from the great riding day, the only thing to report is that there is a lot of corn in Illinois — miles and miles of it! Tomorrow we head to Springfield where we have a Notre Dame club gathering.



*Monday, August 16*



Tuesday, August 17



This was probably one of our fastest days in terms of average speed. We had two rough aspects to our day: first, we had a very bumpy 10-mile stretch on Route 66 (not cyclist-friendly); and second, our hotel did not have any hot water. And, after being on a bike all day, a shower is a must, so cold water it is! Tonight we met with the Central Illinois Notre Dame Club. We wish to thank them for hosting us — we had a wonderful evening. There were some big Notre Dame families in attendance. We have run across some fanatic Notre Dame football fans — from tattoos to a basement full of ND memorabilia — but we found the winner tonight. A gentleman that shall remain nameless (to protect the innocent) made sure that his wedding was scheduled on the off-week of Notre Dame football because he did not think anyone would pay attention to the wedding if the game was on.

It was a really fun night. Notre Dame Science student Hannah (Class of 2013) was in attendance and told us about her experiences volunteering in emergency rooms and her summer mission trip to Cotija, Mexico. I am always amazed at how much mission work our students at Notre Dame do, and I am very impressed with their passion to do such work. We had a great evening and came away with many happy memories.

Carlinville to Lincoln, Illinois

# DAY 25

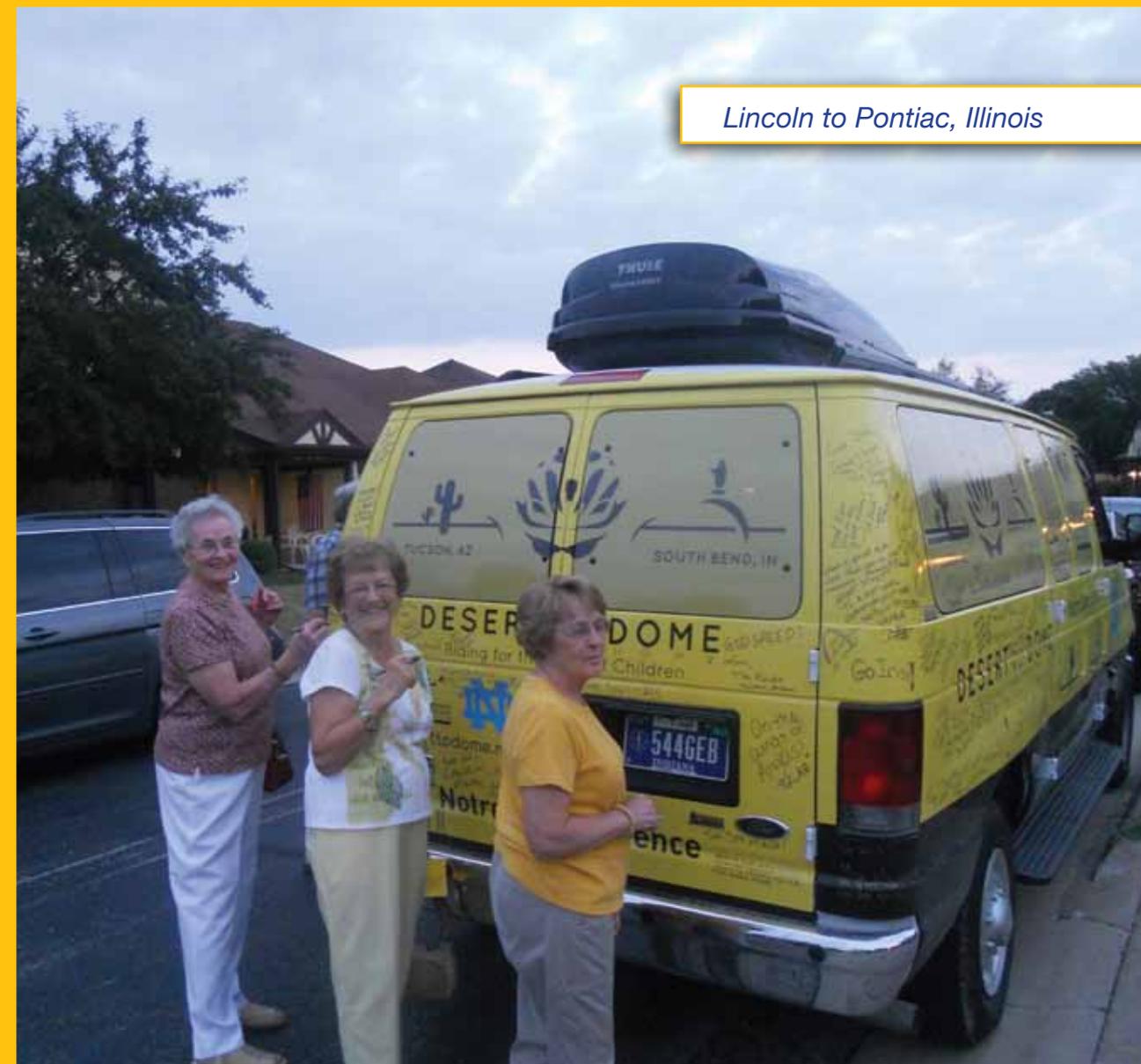
An uneventful biking day. We followed the historic Route 66 for most of the way with a strong headwind through most of the ride. We even had very good biking weather. Last night, Ray, a Central Illinois Club member and Notre Dame alum, told us about his mom Toni, who lives in Pontiac, Illinois. Her late husband graduated from Notre Dame, and Ray suggested that his mom would love to have us visit on our next stop. Well, on such short notice, Toni not only invited us over, but she also invited 25 of her closest friends. It was a fantastic evening! We met many kind people tonight interested in our ride and our cause. One family had a child with a rare condition and greatly appreciated what we were doing. Toni would not let us leave without a care package of ham sandwiches, cookies, and brownies. We are looking forward to lunch tomorrow!

Thank you very much, Toni, for your hospitality and for welcoming us into your home. We had a wonderful evening meeting all of your friends and we were touched by the interest in our ride. We hope to find a way to bottle your energy and take it back to campus with us.

*Wednesday, August 18*

*DAY 26*

*Lincoln to Pontiac, Illinois*



# DAY 27



Thursday, August 19

**H**ard to believe it is almost over. We are looking forward to arriving at the Dome at noon on Monday. And we made it to Chicago! It was a spectacular day in terms of weather, wind, and our excitement to arrive here. The morning started out with a beautiful sunrise. We just knew it was going to be a great day. Only a mile or so from Chicago, Renate got a flat tire. We are now up to 45 flats! We've been keeping track throughout the trip by sticking a leprechaun on the window with each flat tire we get. Patrick and Wendy leave us from Chicago this weekend, and Peter will bring us home to the Dome on Monday. It seemed like a long ride, getting up every day and riding 80-120 miles a day, but today seemed to go quickly!

Throughout the trip, the photograph on the side of the van of Michael, Marcia, and Christa Parseghian has kept us motivated and focused on the ride — and made everyone we met aware of Niemann-Pick. It is our “Play Like a Champion” sign, a reminder to us how important awareness is for Niemann-Pick. We cannot cure or find therapies for Niemann-Pick without your help. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts for your support and generosity!

Pontiac to Chicago, Illinois

**T**oday we slept in for the first time in a long time: nine whole hours! Then we rode around Chicago along the bike path next to Lake Michigan. It was a beautiful day for biking. In the evening, we met with the Chicago Club downtown. We had a wonderful dinner at a very hip establishment right in downtown; they even had a spot reserved for the van! The Chicago club members were sure to leave their mark on the van — now more gold (from the pen) than yellow.

We also had some great surprises during our night out with the club: John, the ND club president of Iowa/Cedar Rapids, showed up with two inner tubes to make sure we were all set for our final ride to Notre Dame. We met John on our very first stop nearly five weeks ago! Our daughters also rode over from South Bend with Renate's mom. It was the first time we saw them in four weeks!

Thank you Chicago Club for a very pleasant evening.

*Friday, August 20*



# DAY 28

*Chicago, Illinois*



*Saturday, August 21*

**W**e spent the day in Chicago with our family: our girls Michaela and Ally, Renate's mother Anneke, Renate's sister and brother-in-law Debby and Matt, and their two young children, Jake and Julia. The day was filled with shopping and a Millennium Park visit. I also got to speak with the incoming freshman class at Notre Dame from the Sante Fe building in downtown Chicago. This Notre Dame building is largely used for the executive MBA program and is beautiful!

*Chicago, Illinois*

*DAY 29*

# DAY 30



Chicago, Illinois to New Buffalo, Michigan



Our family convened around the van this morning to wish us well on the last two days of our biking journey. We had perfect weather — sunny and cool, but with strong crosswinds. The first nine miles of our ride was on the Chicago bike trail. It had a great view of the lake and the city. After leaving Chicago, we had a lot of trouble with the route but figured it out eventually. We got a little lost in Gary, Indiana, before finding our way back to Route 12. We went right by Michigan City's outlet mall. Renate was proud to report she didn't stop there. The van wasn't big enough.

We are staying in New Buffalo, Michigan, tonight. We thought after traveling seven states, we should add on another one for good measure. Three states in one day is pretty neat! New Buffalo is a cute little beach town. We stopped by Oink's Ice Cream where 15 teenagers from the Little Flower Catholic Church in South Bend were very excited to hear our story and sign the van. We gave them all Desert to Dome T-shirts, and as we were backing out of the parking lot they ran over to give us a donation for our cause. Very touching!

We can't believe we are almost home!

Sunday, August 22



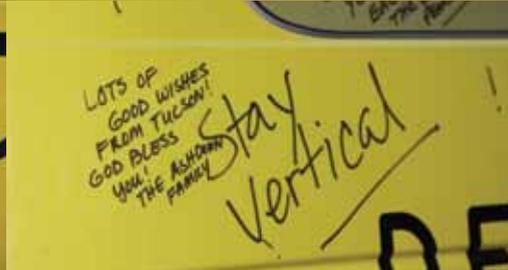
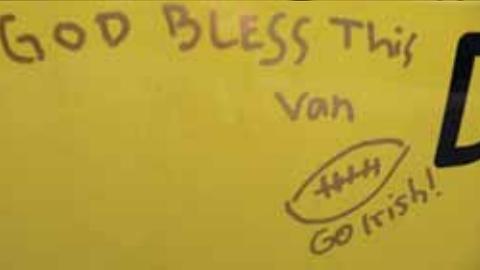
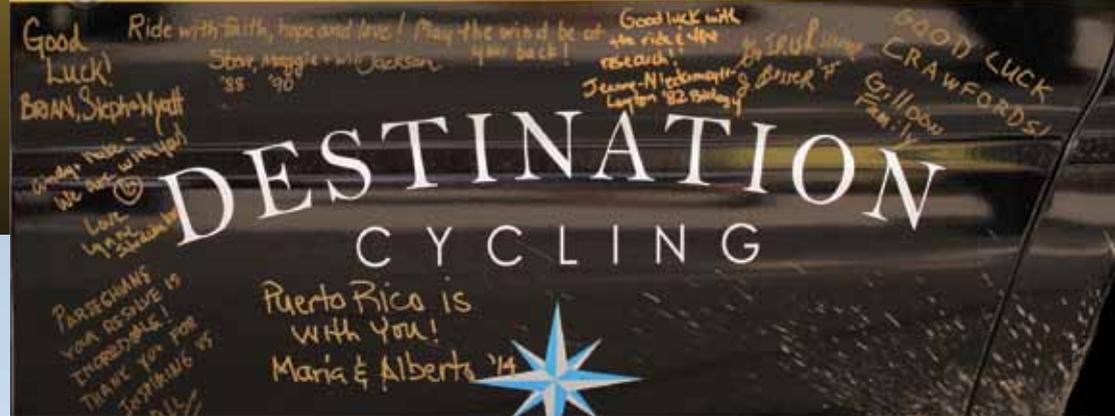
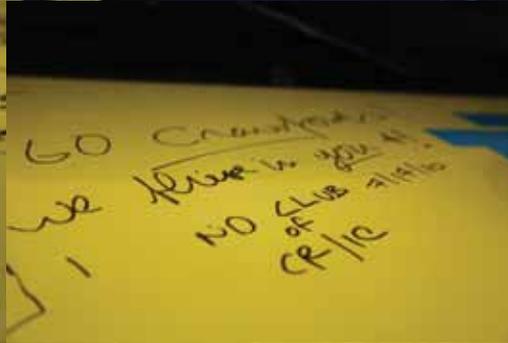
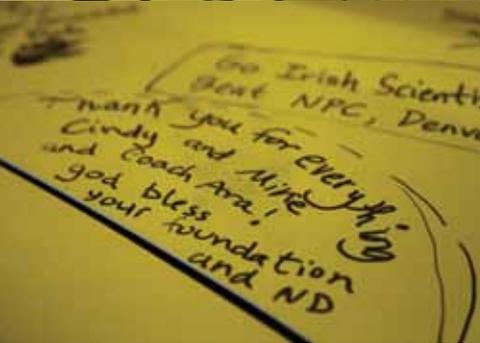
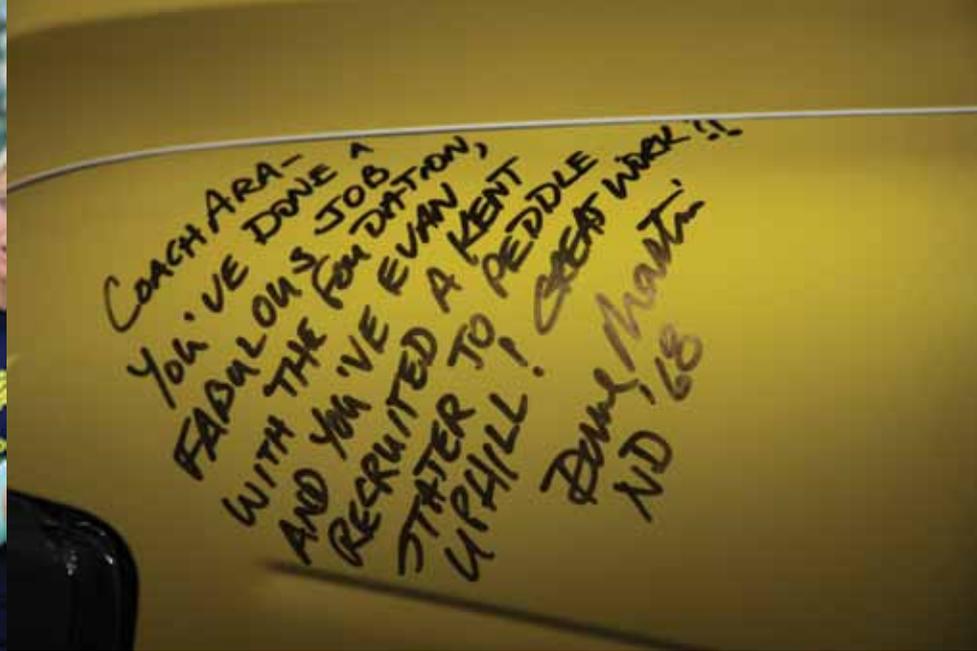
*New Buffalo, Michigan to South Bend, Indiana*



It's hard to describe the feeling we had as we were riding down Notre Dame Avenue and were greeted and welcomed so warmly by everyone at the Main Circle at the Dome. We've never felt so much support from the Notre Dame family as we did yesterday. Surrounded by Notre Dame students, staff, faculty, cheerleaders, athletes, and the Notre Dame Band, being in the company of President Jenkins and coach Kelly and having coach Parseghian and Cindy Parseghian at our side — we were at once overwhelmed by the reception we received and empowered by the very strong spirit that brings with it hope for overcoming Niemann-Pick

Type C (NPC) disease. When we began this bike ride a month ago, it was with the intention of bringing more hope to the children and families who are fighting this devastating disease. Renate and I sincerely appreciate all of your support and encouragement throughout the ride as we together seek to find a cure for NPC. With all of your help and good wishes, this has been a truly remarkable adventure, and we are so lucky to have been a part of it.

**GO IRISH!**





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