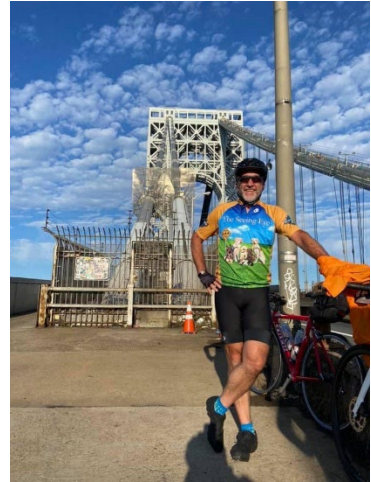


Thank You to Friends and Family for Amazing Support!

Going the Distance
for the Puppies at
the Seeing Eye –
Biking Across the
State of New York



I want to reach out to all of you wonderful friends and family in the afterglow of my ride across New York to thank you on behalf of my family and The Seeing Eye, Inc. What a powerful tribute this event turned out to be in honoring my brother John through your help in this fundraiser! Thank you all for your support!

For those of you who may not have seen some of my posts on social media about the ride, I thought I would give you a bit of a summary and a few pictures of the beautiful countryside I was fortunate enough to see in my successful crossing of the state.

On Saturday, October 3rd, poignantly my brother John's birthday, my wife, Cari dropped me off in Manhattan at Battery Park on a clear and chilly morning. Having never done a long bike ride, I started my journey with some excitement and nervousness! After taking a few photos, Cari left and I found my good friends Barbara and Dean who drove in to the city and volunteered to ride day 1 with me up through the Hudson Valley. It was a wonderful boost to get most of the first day done with good friends. Thanks guys!

Day 1 turned out to be a 93 miler to a hotel north of Poughkeepsie. The ride took me up the West Side Bike Path in Manhattan to the George Washington Bridge which we crossed to the west side of the Hudson and then up Route 9 all day north toward Albany. New York Bike Route 9 had us crossing back over the Hudson to the east again at Bear Mountain. Dean, Barbara, and I continued on this route to Beacon, NY where we had a late lunch and split up. Dean and Barbara hopped on a train back to New York City and I continued north another 23 miles to finish off my day just north of Poughkeepsie. The first day was great and I topped it off with a big, Italian dinner to close out the first leg (big dinners is a theme for this ride, it turns out!).

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Day 2 started cold and crisp, with an early start, using my bike lights. Every morning from Day 2 forward, I got on the road before dawn - typically an hour before the sun rose - to get a jump on the day and frankly, to experience all of the awesome sunrises! Most of Day 2 involved steady progress to the north on Route 9 from Poughkeepsie to Albany. At Albany, I crossed the Hudson for the last time on the trip. I had a hearty lunch downtown at about the 65-mile mark for the day and then rode another 10 miles north along the Hudson and Mohawk Bike Trail to the first lock of the Erie Canal. This lock is located in Waterford New York and is the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers. After a bit of site seeing, I started my long trek to Buffalo via the Erie Canal and ended up about 26 miles west of Waterford at Schenectady. The mileage to the hotel gave me a solid day of 100.1 miles and a huge Mexican dinner and a good night's sleep followed!

Day 3, again, was an early one and started with another hour of bike lights. This day was all about the canal, which was built utilizing the Mohawk River and locks to overcome shallow areas and moderate size waterfalls along its course. I made many stops to talk to lock operators and to explore old stone structures from the original canal (as many of you may know the original canal, built in the 1820s, was rebuilt much larger and deeper and if you ever travel the canal way, you will see the old and the new at various points all along the 363-mile route from the Hudson to Lake Erie). The weather, like the first two days, was near perfect with the exception of some prevailing headwinds. Day 3, I also came to grips with the Erie Canal Trail which I knew was mostly a cinder surface. It meant a big mileage day would require a lot of hours in the saddle as 12 mph was about my top speed on this type of surface. The ride came to a close in Rome, New York after a solid 103 miles. Rome, it turns out, is very close to the end of the navigable section of the Mohawk River. From here on to Buffalo my ride would follow the part of the canal that was mostly dug from woodlands and farm lands by immigrants and local farm labor. Fitting end to the day, as the scenery would change and an opportunity for another huge Italian dinner!

Day 4, much like Day 3, was an early start and wonderful sunrise and another 104 miles in the saddle to Newark, New York. A chillier day, but clear and not much wind. Couldn't have asked for better weather overall during the first 4 days! (I learned how good the weather was on these days when I got a taste of Day 5!). Day 4, like Day 3, was full of exploring and riding. Amazing history along the canal.

A note I wrote during my ride on this day follows:

The Erie Canal is nearly unimaginable to me now that I've seen a great deal of it. The audacity to build it in the early 1800s blows me away. The locks, the aqueducts, and other specific structures are amazing in their engineering and number and scale, but the vastness of earth moving between the famous structures just astounds me.

I guess, as my impression of the canal was forming mile after mile riding along its banks for three days, I connected it to the Seeing Eye and what this organization has accomplished over the years with service animals to help sight-impaired people. To me, it's in the same scale of amazing that these dedicated people and gentle animals can achieve together to change people's lives like my brother's.

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Riding across New York is epic. It's a great memory for me. But epic at a much different scale to these other observations this week!

Newark, NY was a welcome sight after my first four days and an aggregate 400 miles. I checked into my hotel and pushed the limits on eating with a big steak, two appetizers AND desert! Like I said, this trip had an eating component to it!

So, Day 5 was now upon me after a good rest in Newark. I awoke to strong winds and a hard, cold rain. It was time to test out my rain gear! The day was brutal. Not many pictures and really not a very long day of riding, to make it to Brockport, New York, a ride of 57 miles in total. At times, I was buffeted by 45 mph headwind gusts. I got to ride through a hail storm late in the day as well. The trail was flooded and I carried a lot of mud along with me from point A to point B! Man, was I glad to call that one a day! Got to my hotel early afternoon, warmed up, washed my bike off and went to have a great meal and a long rest before the final press to Buffalo on Day 6.

Day 6 was a better day, maybe the coldest start but no rain until the very end of the day. Beautiful sunrise again on the trail, with lots of miles of gravel to Lockport New York, Had a breakfast for lunch in town and then pushed on along some paved bike trails to my Daughter Mary's house in North Tonawanda, New York. Mary was my awesome virtual crew-mate for my ride across New York. Each day we would touch base with each other a few times and she would figure out where my hotel would be, based upon how my day and mileage was going. She made my trip easy and fun, she planned, I rode and we even shared a bit of time each day talking on the phone while I rode. So, this was a solo ride but I had Mary just a phone call away! Thank you Mary, I love you!

At Mary's house in North Tonawanda, Mary hopped on her bike and joined me for the last 17 miles in to Buffalo. She staged her car near the finish and we enjoyed the last few miles together. They were slow miles as I was getting tired! I was glad to be at the end! We finished riding, took a few pictures and the sky opened up and it was a cold rain! It was a chilly (hypothermic!) ride to the car after I was officially done!

The ride ended during the afternoon of October 8th, on the sixth day, and the total for the trip ended up being 538 miles for a daily average of 89.7 miles per day. **More importantly, during this six-day ride, all of your combined efforts helped me raise an awesome total of approximately \$13,000 for The Seeing Eye in my brother's memory! Such a great ride for many reasons! I love you all for your support!**

Best to you all,

Jim.

P.S. Here are some pictures from the journey, I hope you enjoy them. New York is a spectacular state!

Thank You to Friends and Family for Amazing Support!



Cari dropping me off in NYC, Statue of Liberty behind us!



My awesome friends, Dean and Barbara



Heading up Rte. 9



Made it to Albany!

Thank You to Friends and Family for Amazing Support!



All along the Hudson for 2 days



The first of many locks – Waterford, NY



View of the Mohawk – Schenectady, NY



The old canal in fall colors



Lock 8 at sunrise



Lock 15 – Rolling along!

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Well-marked, mostly

Lots of cool ruins



General Herkimer's home



Little Falls, NY – Nice town

Thank You to Friends and Family for Amazing Support!



Trail is long and changing from paved to cinder to single-track



Fall was in the air



More stonework



Stunning sunrises every day!

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And it's a wrap for the Puppies!!!!