

Cross-country cycling tours make stops in RBC

By **HEATHER ZADRA**
Special to the Herald Times

RBC | Rio Blanco County became a stopping point last week for the Road to Discovery ride and the Sea to Shining Sea tour, two cross-country cycling events. While the causes were different and the participants were headed for opposite coasts, both rides symbolized hope — whether for a cure, a breakthrough, or a new beginning.

The first cyclist, who arrived in Rangely on June 12, was Notre Dame Dean of Science Greg Crawford. Crawford is raising awareness and research funds for Neimann-Pick Type C disease, a fatal neurodegenerative disease that affects children and took the lives of three grandchildren of former Notre Dame head football coach Ara Parseghian. While scientists have discovered the cause of the disease, there is still no cure.

Crawford, a physicist, said that while his training doesn't lend itself to researching the disease directly, his ride was one way to further the cause.

"I've cycled since graduate school, and I just love it," Crawford said. "I thought that this way, I could also do something to help."

Crawford covered 330 miles during his three days in Colorado, gaining 20,000 feet in altitude along the way.

"The change in climate and scenery has been amazing," he said. "It's gorgeous here — I love the desert. But the altitude was much more of a challenge than I expected."

Every mile, challenging or not, gets Crawford closer to the Notre Dame science community's common goal.

"There's no magic bullet for this disease, but the scientists understand the biology and the genetics now. They're doing clinical trials now that will extend life."



"We want to be the ones who fight for the underdogs," Crawford said. "No pharmaceutical company is going to try to find a cure for a disease that affects 500 to 600 kids. But we hope that we can do it."

Crawford's ride began in Boston on May 21. He's on the last leg of a tour that will have taken him more than 3,200 miles by the time he arrives in Pebble Beach, Calif., tomorrow, where he will attend the Parseghian Classic golf fundraiser.

Four days after Crawford's stop, 16 veterans riding traditional bicycles, hand cycles and recumbent bikes arrived in Rangely, then traveled to Meeker a day later on June 17. VFW Post Commander Tom Kilduff met the riders as they arrived in Meeker, and the Ladies Auxiliary fed team members dinner and breakfast.

The Sea to Shining Sea ride, a World T.E.A.M. Sports event that covers nearly 3,700 miles and 14 states in two months, began with participants

crossing San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge on Memorial Day and will end in Virginia on July 28. The participants ride an average of 75 miles per day.

The veterans, who represent every branch of the military and include individuals who have served in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, face struggles from cancer and amputation to blindness and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). All are riding in honor of those who have served and given their lives to defend the country's freedom. The veterans also ride, in the words of the World T.E.A.M. Sports mission, to "provide a moving inspiration to other participants and to spectators when they see disabled individuals can reach goals and meet challenges beyond anyone's imagination."

Riders range from 64-year-old Bill Czynewski, a recipient of the Purple Heart and the only Vietnam vet on the trip; to Ivan Castro, who was blinded during a mortar attack in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006 and now mentors newly wounded service members.

Castro's pilot on his tandem bicycle is civilian Bill Lahman, whose father William, a World War II veteran, was Rangely's town manager and the editor of *The Driller*, Rangely's newspaper, in the late 1940s and early '50s. His mother, Betty Jane, taught music in Rangely.

Another rider, Andy Jansen, worked as an Air Force security forces law enforcement professional for four years and joined the ride in memory of friend and staff sergeant Travis Griffin, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2006.

Jansen himself was injured while deployed to help victims of Hurricane Katrina and has struggled with PTSD and panic disorder since his time in the military. He now uses those expe-

riences to help others like him, working as a veterans service officer and helping at Heartland Community College's veterans center in Normal, Ill.

"I'm all about getting the word out to give veterans preference and get vets off the street," Jansen said. "This is one way to help to do that."

Jansen will double-major in nuclear and physical engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this fall, though he's less interested in talking about himself than about those riding with him.

His arms, laced with tattoos, gesture to the group of veterans behind him.

"It's these guys, they're phenomenal," he said. "They're a testament that you can live a normal life, no matter what you've been through."

To follow the riders' journeys or to donate to the causes, go to <http://blogs.nd.edu/gregcrawford/> and <http://www.s2sbikeride.org/>.



SALUTE ...

Bill Lahman, the "eyes" for blind veteran Ivan Castro, saluted local veteran Tom Kilduff as they rode into the White River Inn in Meeker Sunday last as part of the Sea to Shining Sea tour, a World T.E.A.M. Event. The Ladies Auxiliary served the veterans, who represented all branches of the military, dinner on Sunday and breakfast Monday morning before they continued their journey, which started in San Francisco on Memorial Day and will end in Virginia July 28. (Below left) Greg Crawford, Notre Dame Dean of Science, on the last leg of a tour that will have taken him more than 3,200 miles.

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A Sad Happening in Our Cemetery

Over the Memorial Day weekend someone decided to bury some ashes on their own. They were then marked with river rocks which are not acceptable as a suitable headstone for marking a grave. There was no easement purchased for the burial of this person.

All cemeteries are under the State Health Department and therefore have rules and regulations on the burial of remains. All cemeteries in Colorado are considered historical sites, we also have rules and regulations as to how they are kept. We have bylaws governing the cemetery and the burials and setting of headstones. The laws of the state and the rules of the cemetery were both broken by these people.

We will work with anyone under all circumstances to make this process as easy as possible. If we had been contacted we would have worked with the family on this matter. If it were to become a hardship to someone in the future to bury a family member, please contact the cemetery personnel and they will work with you to solve the problem.

Meeker Cemetery District Board

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