

# One Incredible Summer Vacation

## Cochise County Cycling Classic Dedication Recipient Rode 12,000 Miles in 120 Days

By Kari Redfield



On July 31, John Hall finished a bike ride that was 12,000 miles long across 122 days—120 days of riding, one day of rest, and one day of riding a few miles with family and supporters.

The Anchorage, Alaska, resident, who is 62, started and ended in Lompoc, Calif., after traversing the perimeter of the lower 48 states, crossing 31 states.

Richard DeBernardis, president of Perimeter Bicycling, called Hall on the ride's final day to let him know that he had been chosen as the dedication recipient for the 2008 Cochise County Cycling Classic Oct. 11.

"He's inspiring, showing people that you can cover that distance, raise money, see the country, and still maintain your career position," says DeBernardis. "He is a doctor doing what he tells his patients to do — and more."

Hall has exercised all of his life, running marathons in his younger years, riding a stationary bike for about 20 years and road riding for the past 10. He wanted a new challenge after riding from Vancouver to Anchorage three years ago.

"I wanted something above and beyond riding centuries," Hall says.

He took on the challenge during a sabbatical, and his wife drove the sag van every day across the entire journey. They stayed in hotels each night along the way. One-hundred percent of donations went to three charities: the Susan Butcher Family Resource Center at the Providence Cancer Center in Anchorage, the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation and the Lance Armstrong Foundation, as the Halls picked up all of their expenses.

Hall says that they chose the Susan Butcher Family Resource Center at the Providence Cancer Center (named after Alaska's Susan Butcher, four-time winner of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race) because cancer has touched his life. Hall's mom died of pancreatic cancer in 2006 (and is buried in a cemetery at the ride's start/finish), and Hall's wife, Jane, was diagnosed with breast cancer in March 2007 and underwent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. She's doing well. After her one-year checkup, she is cancer free.

"We wanted to get the message out to people to have their yearly mammograms and other cancer screenings," he says. "That hers was caught during a mammogram and caught early is probably a big part of why she's cured."

Initially, another of Hall's goals was to set a new record for the ride around the perimeter of the continental U.S., set by DeBernardis in 1978-'79. While Perimeter Bicycling only issues records for unsupported solo cyclists, Hall's well-documented adventure is indeed a spectacular accomplishment and he will receive special recognition in Perimeter Bicycling's annual journal. (DeBernardis' ride was unsupported.)

"The hardest part was getting up every day and getting on the bike, knowing I would be on it riding seven to eight hours a day, day after day," Hall says.

During the first part of the ride, he had knee problems and felt weak after just 10 days. He was ready to give up, and he cut his mileage from 100 a day down to 60. Then, he started feeling better and decided to try to make up the miles so that he could complete the 12,000 miles in the 120 days. Toward the end of the ride in Northern California, he had made up all the miles.



John Hall rode 100 miles a day for four months, taking only two days off. Photo courtesy John Hall

"Once I made the decision to ride the entire 12,000 miles, it would pretty hard to get me to stop," Hall says. "Sometimes it hurts to work hard — but hard work will get you there."

The second most difficult part? "The wind," Hall says. "Even more so than the hills and heat, the wind."

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