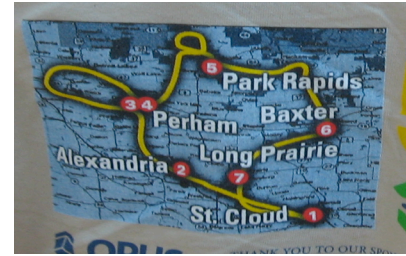


Hello, friends and supporters of Habitat!

Summer is just a memory now and it is long past time for a report about our summer adventure as part of the Habitat 500. Thanks to your generous support, Isaac and I raised \$2406 for the Habitat for Humanity of Madison County (KY) chapter. Here is a recap of the ride as it unfolded:



Our route as it was mapped on our ride T-shirts.



Isaac through the send-off tunnel.

Day 0: July 14. The Saturday before the ride began, Laura's cousin from Norway and family were in town. That was the occasion for a pre-ride ride and a picnic. Before the day was through, I had already ridden 40 miles and Isaac 20 miles, and we got an enthusiastic send off (see photo, left) as we left to catch our ride to St. Joseph, MN.

Day 1: St. Joseph to Alexandria. 61 miles. After a night in the dorm (on the floor, not in a bed) at St. Ben's University, we had breakfast at the trail head and then set out among the wild flowers of the Lake Wobegon Trail. Comfortable riding on a flat rail trail made for an easy start. We spent our night, as we did every night of the ride, sleeping on the floor of a school.



Lake Wobegon trail head.



Almost to Perham—Isaac is smiling again.

Day 2: Alexandria to Perham. 86 miles. After breakfast at a church (typical for every day of the ride) and 37 miles, the off-road trail ended and the going got tough. Besides some rolling hills the pavement had bone-jarring cracks every 10 feet. At about mile 63, Isaac "sagged" out for about 10 miles while I plodded on. Isaac rejoined me for the last 12 miles into Perham.

Day 3: Perham to Perham! 74 miles. This was a choice day—ride, rest or work on a Habitat home. Isaac wanted to work, but the minimum age was 16, so he helped the sag crew instead (and discovered his new hobby—ham radio). I did the 74 mile loop out and back—and decided Isaac had made a good choice—this route had the most hills of the whole trip.



A Minnesota loon—the state bird.

Day 4: Perham to Park Rapids. 110 miles! This was a tough one. 77



Cool biker Isaac with Laura's cousin Marta.

miles against a modest headwind, then a roller coaster 15 miles around Lake Itasca, the headwaters of the Mississippi. An extended family contingent (Laura, Isaac's sisters and grandparents and more) welcomed us at the Itasca rest stop. Isaac skipped the roller coaster (and missed seeing the beaver) but rejoined me for the last 10 miles to Park Rapids.

Day 5. Park Rapids to Baxter. 94++ miles. A mostly flat ride on the Heartland and Paul Bunyan Trails, except for an 8 mile stretch with warning signs telling inexperienced bikers to beware of the grade! As we neared the end of the route for the day, Isaac started thinking (guiltily?) about his sag wagon rides the days before. When we got to Baxter, Isaac kept going for another short loop to complete his first century. At 14 he was the youngest rider on the trip, so he got a standing ovation at supper that night.



The big one double-zero!



Isaac at Rest Stop #1 for the day. Time for the sunscreen.

Day 6. Baxter to Long Prairie. 59 miles. This should have seemed like an easy day, but after the previous two.....



6 AM and time to ride again Hey, Isaac—wake up!



Would titanium and spandex make me fast, too...?



The floor never felt so good.



Some things must be done no matter how long the wait.

Day 7: Long Prairie to St. Joseph. 56 miles. Back to Alexandria, back on the Lake Wobegon Trail, and back to St. Joseph. We did it! On behalf of Habitat homeowners everywhere, thank you!

James Dontje and Isaac Dontje Lindell



Long ride—long shadows.



The wildflowers of the Lake Wobegon Trail.