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Crossroads Depot
Transportation Manager Thom
Pelk

Personal Challenge: Thom Pelk Will Bike 600 Miles for Aids/HIV Benefit

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(May 13, 2004) People who may be thinking about the challenges they could face during "Bike to Work Week", May 20, will appreciate the personal challenge Thom Pelk has committed to.

Pelk, transportation manager at Crossroads Depot Division 2, plans to ride his bike 600 miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles, next month, as a participant in the AIDS/Lifecycle fundraising event.

Pelk got the idea from a recent television show on PBS.

"A fellow on TV told an inspirational story about his AIDS ride experience," Pelk says. "I found it intriguing and thought riding from San Francisco to Los Angeles would be a challenge that I would want to take."

He also likes the idea of participating in a worthy cause. "I believe it is the responsibility for anybody with reasonably good health to do something to help people who aren't in that situation."

Pelk began cycling when he passed the 50-year mark.

'A more enriched life'

"Things you do in your 20s and 30s may not be as important to you as you get older and you want a more enriched life," he says. "This is the concept I am going for with exercise and diet – I'm just trying to enjoy every moment of life."

Pelk has been riding very seriously for about a year. "Then I felt the need for speed so I got a road bike, which I paid more for than some of my cars, but the need for speed was filled."

After he saw the documentary, Pelk found himself talking about

Pelk is training hard for the 600-mile ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles.



If you would like to help Thom Pelk raise money for this cause, you can contact him at (213) 533-1501, or log onto his Aids/LifeCycle homepage at <http://aidslifecycle.org/2125> to make a donation on-line.

the ride and entertaining the thought in his mind. He discussed the idea with his wife and other family members, who encouraged him to go forward with his plan.

Soon enough, he found himself going to the site to sign up.

"When I went to sign up for the ride, I saw a \$2,500 minimum that you had to raise in order to participate," Pelk says. "That kind of put a lump in my throat, but I thought, why should there be an obstacle. So I decided, there will be no obstacle because I am going to do this."

To train for the event, he has been riding approximately 40 miles during the week and tries to ride about 100 miles a day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Hopes to raise \$2,500 minimum

Pelk hopes for donations from family members, friends, co-workers and others to not only raise the \$2,500 minimum, but to collect as much money as possible for a serious cause.

In addition to raising money, the AIDS/Lifecycle event helps educate the public that the rate of HIV infection is increasing, particularly in communities of color and among individuals under the age of 25. In California, alone, more than 47,000 people are living with AIDS, and another estimated 94,000 to 130,500 living with HIV.

The Aids/LifeCycle ride begins, June 6, at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and will last six days, covering about 100 miles a day. Participants will [camp along the way](#) and are provided with food, tents, hot showers, medical services and rest stops.

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Pelk plans to write an article about his six-day experience when he returns from his journey. The story will be posted on myMetro.net.

When he's not in training for the AIDS/Lifecycle fundraising event, Pelk is transportation manager at Crossroads Depot Division 2.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THOM PELK