

## Day 19 Update

September 27, 2007

Day 19: Georgetown, PA to Atlantic City, NJ

The excitement was palpable amongst the riders of the Alumni Bike Race on the final morning of the trip. The conclusion of a seemingly endless cycle of riding, eating, sleeping, and riding again waited only 110 miles from sleepy Georgetown, Pennsylvania. The junior riders of the Bucknell group stacked luggage in an established configuration that provided the easiest access to cycling gear, their minds fully trained in the pre-departure routine. Not until Frank and Walt geared up to ride from the start-point did the riders talk to one another about the realization that the 3,050 mile race would be over by sunset. Within five minutes the heavy fog that had enveloped the van and the road before it burned off to reveal a peaceful landscape of Amish farmland. The rising sun brought with it clarity and the promise of an incredible day.

The riders of the Penn team, Ted, Mike and Bruce, began the final leg of their trip heading southwest from the Old Amish Inn towards their beloved Penn University in Philadelphia, where their fellow alumni and race supporters awaited their arrival. Mike and Bruce rode into UPenn proud and grateful for having completed 3,000 miles in only nineteen days while raising over 240,000 dollars in scholarship money. Ted, too was elated and proud to have played a large part in the team's success, helping the team through the Midwest and over the grueling mountains of West Virginia. While the race was finished for the Penn team, the more important goal of fundraising for scholarship continued through the night's reception party.

Having parted ways with the Penn team, the five Bucknellians felt their camaraderie grow even stronger as they knocked off miles through southeastern PA and Delaware, the 13th state of the race. The smallest state of the trip offered a brief but pleasant tour through The University of Delaware's campus before leading the team to the Delaware Memorial Bridge. Frank and Walt committed to riding all of the final 110 miles, while the junior riders Pat, Kyle, and Jay split the miles up into thirds. As he crossed into New Jersey, Frank reflected on the meaning of the race ending in the state where both he and Walt were born. While the race was an unforgettable adventure for the junior riders, it held a deeper significance for the senior riders, whose trip was one of reflection and fulfillment. Having both traveled extensively during their lives (Walt has been to 110 countries) Frank and Walt appreciated a joy for having journeyed back their beginnings after so many years, places, and people.

Clouds began to gather overhead and a powerful headwind blew in from the Atlantic Ocean 30 miles out from the finish, carrying with it the invigorating smell of saltwater. An avid cyclist and supporter of the Alumni Bike Race, Jay's father Jim arrived in Atlantic City with his bike and offered to drive 15 miles from the coast so that all five riders (who had since been sharing four bikes ) could finish their adventure together. Before mounting their bikes for the final time before the finish, Walt, who was a cheerleader at Bucknell, led the team in a Bison cheer. With ear-to-ear smiles, the five riders rolled down busy route 322, onto Albany St. When the road ended at a dune leading to the Boardwalk, they felt an odd sense that something had been misplaced. The end had arrived abruptly and there was nothing left to do but dismount,

strip off the bike shoes and walk in the sand. Waiting for the team on the beach was Walt's wife Isabel, Frank's son, his granddaughter, Lucia, film crew members Jake and Jesse, Jay's father, and several other family members and supporters. As the five figures stood clad in their light blue and orange cycling uniforms, the clouds moved swiftly towards the mainland and revealed the soft light of the setting sun. At nearly 4:30 pm, Thursday, the twenty-seventh of September, Walt, Frank, Jay, Pat, and Kyle ran into the outstretched arms of the Atlantic. Only nineteen beautiful days before their toes hit the ocean waves, the riders rode out of Santa Monica, California. From West to East, sunrise to sunset, from strangers to life-long friends, from a distant dream to a timeless adventure, nineteen days had profoundly changed the lives of five people while. At the same time, these days brought over a million dollars in funds to create opportunities to change the lives of many future Bucknellians. For all these things, the Bucknell team laughed, splashed, and hugged each other, then breathed deeply with a king's peace and full heart.

A very grateful Jay Kosa, Bucknell '07

Photos by Jake Alba, Frank Arentowicz, and Drew Arentowicz