

# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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## Cali to D.C. on two wheels

By Sarah Szuminski  
THE BATTALION

Most people wouldn't want to drive 4,000 miles across the country cramped in a car, let alone attempt to pedal their way from coast to coast on a bicycle. But for people such as John Herrington, a senior management information systems major, biking the distance from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., is a way to celebrate mobility and raise funds and awareness for people with disabilities.

Every summer, members of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity make the two-month-long journey, averaging about 75 miles each day.

"Sure, 75 miles is a long way to ride each day, but you'd be surprised how fast you can ride on a road bike without even trying," Herrington said.

After seeing the Journey of Hope teams cycle into Washington, D.C., two years ago, Herrington said he was inspired to participate.

"It was an incredibly moving experience," he said. "I knew from that day on that I wanted to do this."

Along the way, teams will visit with local groups that serve people with disabilities, playing wheelchair basketball and performing puppet shows on awareness, Herrington said. In addition, the 70 cyclists who are participating this year are raising a minimum of \$5,000 each that will go toward projects and services for people with disabilities.

"At first, the fund-raising goal seemed a little overwhelming, but as soon as my letters were sent out I began to receive checks made out 'Push America daily,'" Herrington said.

Fund raising is only the begin-

ning of his challenges. The daily schedule for the Journey of Hope starts with a quick breakfast at 5 a.m. before the teams hit the road. The schedule includes 100-mile century rides one day each week — a distance many cyclists train and prepare to complete just once. Still, Herrington said he is optimistic about the challenge and working for its cause.

"Push America is an integral part of what being a brother in Pi Kappa Phi means," Herrington said. "It is about serving others and giving your time and energy to a cause that is greater than yourself."

Giving to a cause through biking is not solely a Pi Kapp phe-

nomenon, though; people across the country pedal their way various distances to raise funds and awareness for a wide range of charities. Steve Bolline, a graduate student studying construction management, will make the 180-mile trek from Houston to Austin in April to benefit research on multiple sclerosis.

The ride, the MS 150, takes two days of riding 100 and 80 miles each with a campout overnight in La Grange, Texas. Bolline said he got into biking for exercise after running became too stressful on his body.

"I like biking better because you can stay on a bike a whole lot longer," he said. "I'm in a lot better shape than when I used to run."

To train for the ride, Bolline cycles several times a week. About three days each week, he rides with the A&M cycling team anywhere between 35 and 60 miles, and he completes longer training rides of 70 to 100 miles alone, sometimes riding for up to six hours. He hopes to maintain a pace of 22 mph during the MS 150.

"I'm taking it pretty seriously," Bolline said. "I don't want to just finish it; I'm out there to ride it hard and finish well."

Aggieland Cycling Owner Rod Wagner said students' involvement with programs such as these not only benefits the charity but also promotes bicycle awareness in the community.

"(They're) bringing cycling to the forefront," Wagner said. "It's good for cycling in general."

This awareness makes it safer for bike riders across town, he said, whether they are serious cyclists or just someone who likes to ride his bike around the neighborhood. This is important in College Station, he said, where many students use bikes for recreation and to commute to campus.

Wagner has opened his store and advice to Herrington and his challenge, providing him with a reasonably-priced bike along with support and maintenance.

"I appreciate what he's doing and how hard the task in front of him will be," Wagner said. "I think he'll do fine."

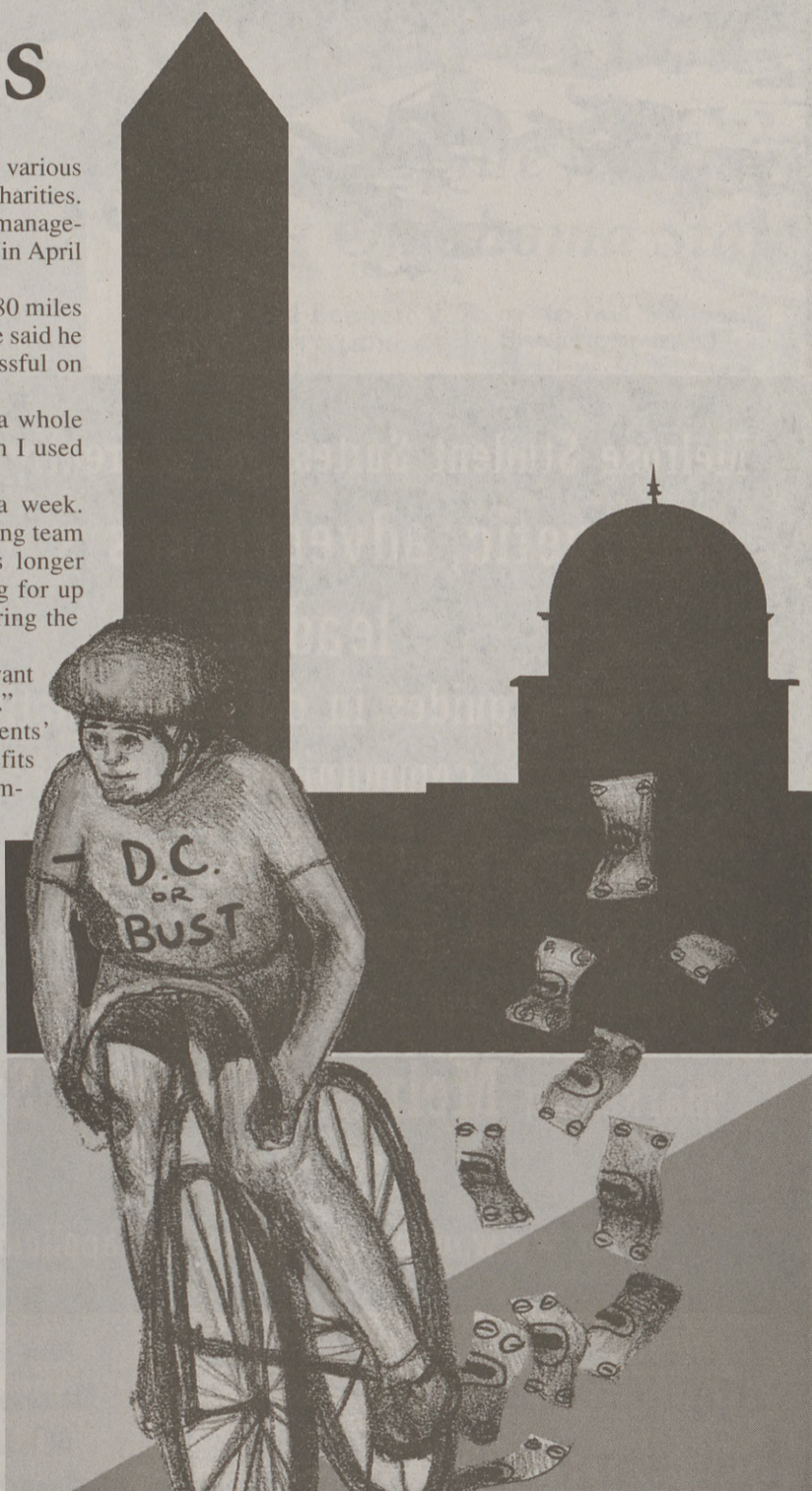
As the event draws near, Herrington said he will increase his riding to 50 miles each day to prepare for the rigors of the trip. Most people don't even drive that distance in a day, but Herrington's attitude is undaunted.

"I'm looking forward to losing some extra pounds, getting a wicked farmer's tan and spreading hope across the country," Herrington said. "It will be a summer I'll never forget."

More information on Push America can be found at [www.pushamerica.com](http://www.pushamerica.com), and donation inquiries can be sent to [John@sweepaway.com](mailto:John@sweepaway.com). Those interested in finding out more about the MS 150 can log on to [www.ms150.org](http://www.ms150.org).

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— Steve Bolline  
cyclist and graduate student



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