

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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For the fourth year, it was an emotional day, a splendid day. At 6:30 in the morning, we entered a bare gymnasium, with a few friends rubbing their eyes and sucking dregs from Styrofoam Starbucks cups. The crescendo began as tables were set up, tents erected, and food laid out. Then they came, first in a trickle, then in a semi-drove. It was October 3, and the event was the Fourth Annual Lymphoma Research Ride. Rain was predicted for the afternoon, and the morning was a bit chilly, but it rapidly warmed up to be a glorious day. I reflected that a year ago, after the ride, my daughter said that she felt sick and then proceeded to demonstrate that fact in the parking lot. What none of us knew at the time was that she was experiencing the first hint that her daughter Samantha was on her way. This year, Sammy was there helping her mother make sandwiches for the riders and with registration.

We had 228 riders sign up, plus more than a hundred volunteers, and countless other family members, friends, and others there just to support the cause (which, I guess, made them both family and friends). The day had its humorous moments, such as when my mother-in-law arrived a bit too late, or too early as the case may be, and, without noticing what was in front of her, walked right up into the starting lane just as the riders were readying to speed down the road right at her. It took a few yells and hollers to raise her awareness of her impending, but fortunately forestalled, flattening by the peloton. At every busy intersection was a policeman, and at every turn a volunteer, many my patients, directing riders and cheering us on. One was a prankster who had lymphoma with palpable skull involvement, which had rapidly disappeared with chemoimmunotherapy. At each clinic visit, she wore a hat, which I always asked her to remove so I could examine her. At her post-chemo visit, I didn't feel the need to do so because she had just had a negative scan. But she insisted that I ask, and when she removed her

hat, I saw that she had painted a smiley face on her scalp to honor her remission. And at the 43-mile point, there she now was 5 years later with her daughter yelling that it was all downhill from there; but I knew better, and it was, indeed, upwards from that point to the very end.

I finally made it to the finish of the ride to the sight of many joyous people. It took me a bit longer this year than last, another indication that I need a new bike! What else could it be? A young man came over and introduced himself to me. He was going to come see me as a patient the following week. He had heard about the ride, and he and his mother, who came up from Florida for the event, completed the 50 miles. The DJ saw me and cranked up a song he remembered from last year to be a favorite of mine, "Werewolves of London," and we all howled along.

Eventually, bikes began to be loaded onto cars, the crowd slowly dwindled, and the take-down began. My fellows and nurses packed up the medical area—fortunately, once again, unused. The food was donated to the school hosting the ride and to volunteers, signs were pulled out of the ground, trash was bagged and hauled off. We all went home, tired but happy.

The ride has raised \$1.5 million for the Lymphoma Research Foundation over the past 4 years. Perhaps it is not as much as that collected at other centers. But, my wife and I, along with the others from the committee who had worked hard over the past year to organize the event, could not help but be proud of what was accomplished. We have lots of room to grow, but we will get there, and so the planning begins for next year's ride.

Until next month . . .

*Bruce D. Cheson*

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