



Tania Finlayson, the wife of Machinists District Lodge 751 member Ken Finlayson, is greeted at the union hall of Machinists District Lodge W24 in Gladstone shortly after 4 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, as she completes a nearly 300-mile journey that started Saturday morning, June 8, in Everett, Wash. Finlayson embarked on the journey to raise money for Guide Dogs of America.

## Wife of Machinist completes 300-mile journey from Kirkland to Gladstone

### 'Oregon Dash for Puppy Cash' raises funds for Guide Dogs of America

By BRYAN CORLISS

After traveling 275 miles on highways, byways and bike trails, Tania Finlayson wasn't about to let something like a blistered chin stop her from completing her "Oregon Dash for Puppy Cash."

Finlayson — confined to a wheelchair her entire life with cerebral palsy — uses her chin to control her electric-motor wheelchair, and when the pain from her rubbed-raw chin got too bad, she drove the last 25 miles with her cheek.

"I'm impressed, but not the least surprised," said Tom Wroblewski, president of Machinists District Lodge 751. "Tania's determination has been the most-important factor throughout all of this effort."

Finlayson arrived in Gladstone shortly after 4 p.m. Wednesday, June 12, after completing a nearly 300-mile journey that started Saturday morning, June 8, at the District 751's annual Flight for Sight fun run in Everett, Wash. She was greeted at the Machinists District Lodge W24 Union Hall by Wroblewski, officers and staff from IAM Districts 751 and W24, and by a handful of guide dog puppies in training and their handlers from Guide Dogs of America.

Finlayson's marathon ride was a fundraiser for the California-based charity, which provides guide dogs and training in how to work with them free of charge to people who are blind or

have impaired vision from across North America.

It was a grueling journey for Tania, said her husband, Ken, who accompanied her on the trip on his bicycle. Ken Finlayson works as an information technology staffer at District 751.

"She was really in a lot of pain there toward the end," he said. "Her chin, her lips, her neck. But she didn't let it slow her down at all."

The Finlaysons originally had planned to travel from Seattle to Spokane, but decided to make Oregon their destination after the Washington Department of Transportation said it wouldn't allow Tania to travel along Interstate 90 in her wheelchair. Rather than give up, Tania re-routed, and went south instead of east.

"My Dad said, if you cannot change the direction of the wind, adjust your sails," she explained, speaking through a computer that she controls by typing Morse code with her head.

Her journey started with the 10K run at the Flight for Sight in Everett. After that, she and Ken traveled on bicycle trails from Everett to Redmond on Saturday, then retraced their route on Sunday to come back through Bothell into north Seattle on the Burke-Gilman Trail. After making their way through Seattle traffic on Sunday, they ended Day Two in Auburn.

After that, they followed the route of the annual Seattle-to-Portland Bicycle Classic through Southwest Washington. They ended Day Three in Centralia, then pushed on the next day to St. Helens, Ore., after crossing the Lewis and Clark Bridge over the Columbia River.

Day Five's journey was all in Oregon.

The river crossing — on a narrow bridge with heavy truck traffic — was

one of the worst parts of the trip, Ken Finlayson said. "The bridge was an experience that I don't think anyone who was involved in that will ever forget," he said. "I've never been so stressed out in my life."

In contrast, one of the best parts was the reaction from people they met along the way, many of whom had heard about Tania's trek from media reports and came out to cheer her on as she and her support team rolled through their towns.

"We even had people reach into their pockets and pull out \$20 bills for Tania," said Ed Lutgen, a District 751 staff officer who was part of "Team Tania," the support group that followed her on the ride. "That kind of support made us all feel good."

Finlayson's goal was to raise \$42,000, which is what it costs Guide Dogs of America to breed, raise, train and pair one service dog with one blind person. It appears she has fallen short of that goal. At presstime she had raised more than \$26,000, which would still make her "Oregon Dash" one of District 751's biggest-ever fundraisers for Guide Dogs of America.

"I'm OK with it," Ken Finlayson said. "But Tania says she's not going to stop fundraising til she gets the whole \$42,000."

To support Tania and the Oregon Dash, go online at <http://DashforCash.kintera.org> or [www.IAM751.org/Dash4Cash](http://www.IAM751.org/Dash4Cash).

(Editor's Note: This article is from the *Machinists News*, a blog focused on news of interest to members of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers District Lodge 751.)



### STAT OF THE MONTH

America's most typical income-earners, analysts at Sentier Research are now estimating, took home this

past January 7.3 percent less, after inflation, than they earned in January 2000 — and 4.5 percent less than they earned in June 2009, the year the Great Recession officially ended.



Sharon Maynard

• Social Security Disability



Nelson Hall

• Personal Injury  
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BENNETT, HARTMAN,  
MORRIS & KAPLAN, LLP  
ATTORNEYS

"Working hard for hard working people"

210 SW MORRISON STREET, SUITE 500  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97204-3149

503 227-4600

WWW.BENNETTHARTMAN.COM

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