



Photo by Sam Grotte

Kiters and barge in a river drama

Sam Grotte of White Salmon enjoys taking scenic photos and his close-ups of hummingbirds are true micro-examinations of the world around us.

But on June 24 Grotte's camera captured something farther away, and with a drama of its own, when he heard five blasts from a barge late in the afternoon. He looked from his window overlooking the river.

"A kiteboarder had fallen into the river and was struggling but probably was too exhausted to get back on the board," Grotte said.

"The tug had already started a left turn to avoid a collision and the distance to the downed kiter was less than 100 yards," Grotte said. "Not

much time since they were headed downstream." He said it was "certainly not enough time to actually stop the tug and barge."

Then another kiter came to help. He was close enough to make a dash in the hopes of helping his fellow kiter. Then another kiter came along.

"The first kiter made an effort to boost the stricken kite into the air, while the second seemed to be trying to mark the position for the barge pilot," said Grotte, who watched the action for about 10 minutes.

"It all worked, and the barge slid past the kites to continue on his way down the Columbia, all of them a bit wiser."

— Kirby Neumann-Rea

Cyclist rolls through Hood River on cancer-fighting 'Victory Tour'

By PATRICK MULVIHILL
News staff writer

A New Orleans man pedaled through the Gorge last Friday — part of a 7,200-mile cross-country bike ride across the United States honoring his wife's battle with pancreatic cancer.

Eric McIntyre, 58, completed the Oregon leg of his journey over the weekend. The ride took him from Klamath Falls to Portland, then from Government Camp to Hood River, where he arrived Friday morning. From there, he headed east to The Dalles and shot north to Spokane.

Next up are the "dog days," as McIntyre described them, the long slog east across the entire Midwest.

Liz was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in fall of 2012.

"When Liz was diagnosed ... it was a gut punch but we very quickly went into communal and spiritual fighting mode and decided we would do whatever we could, whatever seemed right in our eyes as people of faith," said McIntyre.

McIntyre said he and Liz participated in a couple marathon events in the past for charity, but he was never a professional

athlete until now. "I was not a cyclist. I was not an endurance athlete."

However, he knew he wanted to do "something big" to raise support for his wife and other cancer patients. So he decided to go an epic bike ride, one of such proportions that it "sounded crazy."

The original concept for the tour was to ride around the entire perimeter of the United States over six months, but his plans ultimately "crystallized" into a three month loop that started at McIntyre's home base of New Orleans then took in as much of the United States as was possible in 7,200 miles.

He's dubbed the adventure the "Pancreatic Cancer Victory Tour," and has teamed up with many sponsors, most notably the Lazarex Cancer Foundation. A non-profit foundation, Lazarex matches end-stage cancer patients by connecting them with FDA-approved clinical trials, and covers the cost of travel for each patient.

Eric McIntyre said the clinical trial Liz is enrolled in at the National Institute of Health in Washington, D.C., has slowed the progression of the disease, and her basic health is "very good."

"Her journey has been amazing. Other than that initial pain, she never had disease symptoms."

Liz has even accompanied Eric on portions of the journey from the tour van — but separation is still a harsh factor on pieces of the three-month tour.

"That's been very difficult sometimes," said McIntyre. "But we believe that our marriage can handle the separation."

The couple has been married for 20 years. McIntyre is a grandfather, with a school age granddaughter in New Orleans.

For the last portion of his tour, McIntyre has journeyed with his media teammate, Tod Hillman of Hollywood Media Services

based in Los Angeles. Hillman has managed social media, photography and video for McIntyre so he can focus on the road ahead of him.

Hillman described the tour as an exciting one. "The people we meet along the way are a reason to keep going," said Hillman. "We're meeting so many supportive, loving and caring people that it gives wind to our sails."

For more information about McIntyre's journey and the Lazarex Cancer Foundation, visit www.lazarex.org/events/pancreatic-cancer-victory-tour or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Pancreaticcancervictoryfoundation.



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

"HEROIC CYCLIST" Eric McIntyre, 58, made a stop in Hood River June 26 as part of a 7,200-mile cross-country bike ride to honor his wife Liz's ongoing battle with pancreatic cancer.

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