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Subject: 4,200 Miles! Coast-to-Coast Wrap Up
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Hello All,

It's been just over two weeks since we dipped our front tires in the Atlantic Ocean at Gloucester, MA. This symbolized the completion of our 4,200-mile Coast-to-Coast journey that started June 16 in Everett, WA with the dipping of our back tires in the Pacific Ocean.

After a busy move down to Stamford, CT (new contact info is below), I wanted to share some final reflections with you. I have to admit, re-entering this world has been difficult! Many people ask, "So, how is it, back in the Real World?" I struggle with this – The Real World doesn't seem so real anymore. The bills, appointments, phones, and media seem to cloud the simplicity of this summer: bike, eat, sleep, and enjoy the outdoors. I miss the comfort of the yellow Cycle America route arrows guiding us to our next town. I miss the picnic stops around mile 40 each day where the purple Nantucket Nectars van was waiting with a cooler full of lemonade, tangerine orange, and apple juice. Most of all, I miss the camaraderie of the 44 other Coast-to-Coasters. We were an amazing group of cyclists by the time we had reached the Atlantic; not 'riders,' but 'cyclists!' After 55 riding days and 4,200 miles, we had earned the privilege to call ourselves Cyclists and jump up and down in the cool Atlantic water, showing off our distinctive tan lines.

I feel proud and honored to be a part of this wonderful peloton of 45. They are one of the most determined and enthusiastic groups I have ever encountered. After riding around Stamford and Westchester last week, I realize that I am a bit lonely on my bike now without the other cyclists, yellow arrows, or picnic stops. But, I also realize that 'Cycle America' runs deep through me. I have developed an appreciation for cycling greater than I ever thought was possible, courtesy of all the other seasoned cyclists. And, I have acquired a much deeper understanding of America.

Seeing and smelling America at 18 mph, rather than through a car or airplane window, created a strong sense of patriotism for me. So, while it is back to loop routes and finding my own food and Nantucket Nectar on the road, the past two months were absolutely remarkable – physically, mentally, and culturally. I plan to always carry my lessons learned and the spirit of our fabulous peloton with me on my bike.

As you may recall, at the halfway point we were in dire need of a respite from the headwinds and heat of South Dakota. Week #6 provided exactly that. Biking through the beautiful Wisconsin farmland with cooler weather seemed to revitalize all of us. Wisconsin truly was a cyclist's dream: rolling hills, well-paved county roads, very little traffic, and mild weather. Of course, in any cyclist's dream, there is a culinary highlight as well! We found this in Osseo, WI at the Norske Nook, a restaurant famous for its

delicious (and large) slices of homemade pie. This was the one dinner where I didn't immediately pack myself with pasta and salad, but rather, I saved space for dessert. And, wow, was it worth it! I had three huge pieces of pie – apple, raspberry, and banana cream – and left the Nook wondering how I would ride the 90 miles from Osseo to Wisconsin Rapids the next day. Fortunately, the three slices of pie served as good training food as I used our longest ride of the summer, 105 miles from Wisconsin Rapids to Menasha as a big Ironman training day. I did the ride straight through (thanks to the Nantucket Nectars Juice Guys handing me my lunch on the fly), and then followed it with a 14-mile run. So, the workout ended up being eight hours of continuous exercise and roughly 6,200 calories; barely burning off the three pieces of pie! In addition to feeling re-energized after the great Wisconsin week, we got our first whiff of getting closer to the east coast. Coy, whom you may recall from my first email, gave the group a little ferry when he left after week #1 this year because he said in 2000, when he went Coast to Coast, he smelled the Atlantic for the first time on the Lake Michigan ferry and he knew he was getting closer. Coy was right. We ended the week crossing Lake Michigan by ferry, and entering our fourth and final time zone, EST. We smelled the Atlantic!

Week #7 was characterized by long, flat rides through Michigan and then Ontario, when we went international mid-week. We logged 499 miles for the week, our highest since week #1, and we crossed over the 3,000-mile mark. We started off the week by celebrating Alana's 23rd Birthday at the local bar in Farwell, MI after a long, rainy 94-mile ride. Then, it was onto our second (and final) Bavarian village of the trip. We stayed overnight in Frankenmuth, MI, where even the local Conoco and McDonald's are done with Bavarian architecture. We spent the latter part of the week in Canada, cycling along the shores of Lake Erie. This provided another unique training opportunity as one day at lunch I swam for 20 minutes in Lake Erie and then hopped on my bike to finish the last 40 miles of the ride into Port Dover, Ontario. My reward? The best showers of the trip! The showerheads at Port Dover Middle School were twice the normal size, and they seemed to have an endless supply of hot water. To us nomads of men's locker rooms across the country, these showers seemed like the Ritz Carlton! Our week concluded with a 67-miler into Niagara Falls, a pleasant destination for a rest day.

Week #8 offered a bit of nostalgia for me as we biked through the Finger Lakes region and the rest of upstate New York, not too far from my alma mater, Cornell University. Unfortunately, our week got off to a scary start when our Penske (baggage truck) flipped onto its side on a curvy road en route to the picnic stop outside Albion, NY. Many of the riders, including myself, were quietly enjoying our lunch on the shore of Lake Erie when we heard a loud, "bang." It turned out the Penske and Ben, the staff member driving it, had flipped over on the road leading up to the lunch stop. It was a terrifying scene with our bags pouring out of the top of the truck, and the driver's side pinned to the ground, and nobody knowing how many riders were around the accident. Fortunately, some riders sprinted over and pulled Ben from the truck; and luckily the two riders around the area were unscathed. Ben ended up only needing a few stitches in his arm, and we replaced the Penske quickly; but it was quite a scare. It was also a true display of the teamwork and community of the group. Once the accident happened, everyone immediately offered

help to Rich, our tour leader. It was hard to believe that by dinner that night, things were essentially back to normal. Rich said it well, "Today was a great day as far as I'm concerned. We have Ben safe. The riders are safe. Our bags are fine, and we have a new Penske." He was right, we had persevered.

The remainder of the week was, thankfully, less eventful. It was great to see a familiar face in Fulton, NY; so thanks for the visit, Marc Effron! We had one of the funnier days of the tour on a short, 65-mile day from Fulton to Dexter, NY. Golf was the theme of the day as we rode to breakfast at a country club, and then right before lunch, there was a driving range on the side of the road. So, a few of us decided to practice our swings, and soon, the whole row of tees was filled with spandex-clad bikers. The man selling the baskets of balls was a bit surprised by the traffic on a Thursday, and was probably thinking, "These people should really stick to their day jobs." In the latter part of the week, it was nice to have some hills again as we meandered our way through the Adirondacks. Week #8 officially ended in Lake Placid, although I chose to extend the ride a bit further in order to surprise Julie, my girlfriend, for her birthday in New York City. So, in Lake Placid, I picked up an overnight pack and headed another 45 miles to Burlington to catch a flight to NYC. I ended up biking 115 miles and using six other forms of transportation to get to the city, but she was surprised!

When I rejoined the tour in Burlington, it was difficult to believe but we were down to the last five days of our amazing journey. The complexion of the group had changed a bit because nearly 50 additional riders had joined us for our final week through New England. The heat and humidity had found us again as we encountered near-record temperatures climbing through the Green Mountains in Vermont and the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Fortunately, near Stowe, VT, we were able to cool down slightly with ice cream from the original Ben and Jerry's factory. But, the last week was about much more than the heat, humidity, and hills. Gloucester was in sight, and we were starting to feel our Coast-to-Coast Tour come to a close. At Star Lake, NY, we had a roundtable among the Coast-to-Coasters about what we had learned over the summer, and Alana made the point that even though we were all on the same journey of 4,200 miles, we were taking different tours. In the last few days, this really showed as the Coast-to-Coasters did what they needed to in order to complete their individual tour, and the collective journey. Nearly all of us stopped at a lake en route to Freyeburg, ME for a quick pre-lunch swim. "Peloton Latte," as they were affectionately known, continued their tradition of sipping mocha and milk at every coffee stop opportunity. And, we paused for all of those last minute historical markers and photo opportunities. Then, finally, after 54 days in the saddle, our last day had come. The 64 miles from Durham, NH to Gloucester, MA had a ceremonial feel to them. Alana and I arrived in a pack with 10-12 of our closest friends around Noon at Gloucester High School. I vividly remember getting goose bumps when we turned the corner into the parking lot and I saw Julie and my cousins Phil and Alex and all of the other riders' friends and family. It was quite an emotional, "Congratulations, you've just finished biking across the country!" An hour later, we had a police escort for our last mile down to the beach at Gloucester. Then, alas, came the true rite of passage – dipping our front tire in the Atlantic Ocean!

It still has not completely set in that I, along with 44 others, cycled across our beautiful country. We sliced the journey into so many pieces to make it seem smaller and more manageable – 4 time zones, 9 weeks, 13 state borders, and water stops and picnic stops each day. Then, all of a sudden, we had done it. Every link in the chain, as our mechanics and routers would say, had come together and we had completed our entire, grand journey.

I will relate one final story that, for me, ties the beginning and end nicely together. On our very first dinner in Everett, WA, Alana and I sat next to Mark Oncale, the 72 year-old retired fisherman from New Orleans who had already crossed the country in 2000. Mark told us that this trip would change our lives, and that we would never forget it. Indeed, it has; and it is an adventure that Alana and I will always take with us. But, Mark also developed an expression that is worth noting, EFI. EFI stands for “Every F***in’ Inch.” While the language may be a bit crude, we Coast-to-Coasters hold this expression dear. We are proud of our accomplishment!

Thank you all for your support throughout the trip. I hope you have enjoyed reading these letters as much as I have enjoyed writing them. Below is my new contact information, websites with pictures from the trip, and Coast-to-Coast 2002 By The Numbers for some quirky stats.

Best Regards,

Josh

Contact Info:

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Websites:

www.fredbradshaw.com
(Great Pictures!)

www.BikeCoasttoCoast.com
(Group Journal Entries)

www.cycleamerica.com
(The official website)

Coast-to-Coast 2002 By The Numbers:

0	Times I replaced my front tire
1	Jewish Center spotted
2	Countries visited
4	Time zones
5	Flat tires
13	States
21	Grade of steepest hill (en route to Burlington)
45	Coast-to-Coast Cyclists
54	Biking days
243	Hours in the saddle
4,096	Total miles
9,666	Elevation of highest point (Powder River Pass)
11,892	Dollars we raised for The Kids Fund at BMC
1,166,400	Estimated pedal rotations!