

Local ex-cop off on 4,200-mile coast-to-coast bike adventure

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Wynkoop, left, and his friend Steve Mueller of Lilydale on a recent road trip.

YORKTOWN, Va—A 61-year old Shoreview resident set off on a 4,200-mile biking excursion across the U.S. April 28—partly to raise money for his church’s mission in Ghana.

Bruce Wynkoop was featured in a Press story last September about his self-published how-to-guide, “Re-cycling: Taking Up Bicycling Again as an Adult.” While it’s not unusual for him to ride 2,500 in a year and he often participates in long-distance tours including a 500 mile, eight-day trip along the Mississippi River; he said some might call him “insane” for initiating the cross-country trip.

Retired after a 33-year career as a police officer, Wynkoop got into bicycling about 27 years ago after running became too hard on his knees and back.

“My good friend and cycling buddy Steve...and I have been planning for some time now to ride across America,” he wrote in an email. “We will start in Yorktown, Va. and finish up 4,200-plus miles later in Florence, Ore. We are taking three months to do it as we want to see the country close-up and enjoy the towns in which we stay.”

The duo hopes to return in July. Along the way Wynkoop hopes to raise money for the Ghana Clean Water Project, a mission supported by his home church, Presbyterian Church of the Way in Shoreview. The project drills wells and constructs bathrooms for Ghanaian villagers who otherwise wouldn’t have access to clean water and updated facilities. To date, the church has built the amenities in 12 communities.

He is asking for donations of a penny per mile, or \$42.

The Press conducted an email with Wynkoop on April 27, the day before he left.

Q: *What have you been doing to physically, mentally and logistically prepare for this ride?*

A: Physically staying in shape through a variety of activities. Mentally? That just sort of comes. I know there will be tough times on the ride but also know the good times will outweigh the bad. Logistically, I bought maps through Adventure Cyclist, shipped bikes to Virginia, planned for various contingencies and packed everything we will need for three months into four panniers (bike bags). We tried to think of everything. We are bringing tents and sleeping bags so we can camp when we want.

Q: *What will a typical day be like for you during this adventure? How much ground do you plan to cover daily and where will you stay at night? What will you eat? What if weather is bad?*

A: We plan to do 60 miles a day, which is slow for cycling circles but we want to see and enjoy the area through which we ride and the towns in which we overnight. We will camp some nights and do motels some nights. We'll eat in restaurants. We can ride through most bad weather but if we hit the real bad stuff we will just have to sit it out. We will do more miles on the good days to make up for time lost on the bad ones.

Q: *How much money do you hope to raise? How much have you raised so far?*

A: I didn't have an amount in mind when I first thought of raising money. I think we are at \$2,000 or so right now.

Q: *What will be the greatest challenge for you? Any major apprehensions?*

A: We were told that Missouri is the toughest part of the ride because of the many climbs and descends. The mountains will be tough, of course, as we have to climb three passes of 11,000 feet in Colorado alone. I believe we have to cross seven major mountain passes along the route. The physical part will be a challenge, of course, but I think the mental part (continuing to plod along for three months) will be a challenge too.

Q: *What is motivating you to do this?*

A: I have done numerous (20 or 25) statewide bike rides and have wanted to cross America for years now. I am amazed at how beautiful our country is and seeing it at cycling speed is the best way to do it. The trail we are following, the TransAmerica Trail, was developed for the bicentennial to show a good cross-section of the country. About a month ago I realized this would be a good way to raise money for the Ghana Mission. I brought it up at church and the response was overwhelming. My church has really supported the idea.