

Sports View

Cycle trek for lungs brings out extra effort

Octobertrek, in its fifth year, is an annual ride sponsored by the American Lung Association of Nebraska. The 67 people who participated in the ride solicited at least \$125 each in pledges before the tour. The cyclists, ranging in age from 10 to 49, came from several Nebraska communities, including Grand Island, North Platte, Plattsmouth and Omaha.

Most of the bicyclists participating in Octobertrek, a 100-mile ride for the American Lung Association of Nebraska, had already left Parker's Steakhouse in Denton. They were on their way to Wilber, about 25 miles away, where, hopefully, they would arrive in time for the start of the Nebraska-UCLA game.

Inside Parker's, a few bicyclists remained, either eating hamburgers or drinking pop and cold beer. They seemed to be in no hurry. The game would go on without them.

Two women, in particular, sat at a long table cluttered with dirty dishes. Kris Dewey, 18 and freshman at UNL, slowly ate a hamburger and french fries. Bonnie Gilpin, 43, from Grand Island, munched a snack she had brought along on the trip. They had met just minutes before as they bicycled into Denton.

It had been a tough ride so far. The wind was gusting out of the south, making the uphill difficult. On the downhills, it seemed as if the wind was trying to blow the bicyclists backward. It looked like it might even rain.

Kris said she had come on Octobertrek because she thought it would be an easy ride. Bonnie was riding, she said, because if

her bad knee gave out, at least there would be a sag wagon she could catch a ride on.

Finally, after a long rest, it was time to move on. Everyone had left, except for Bonnie and Kris. Bonnie was having a good ride. Her knee felt fine and she knew she would be able to make it to Wilber without catching a ride. Kris, on the other hand was having a difficult time. Of course going to the Elton John concert and staying out late the night before didn't help.

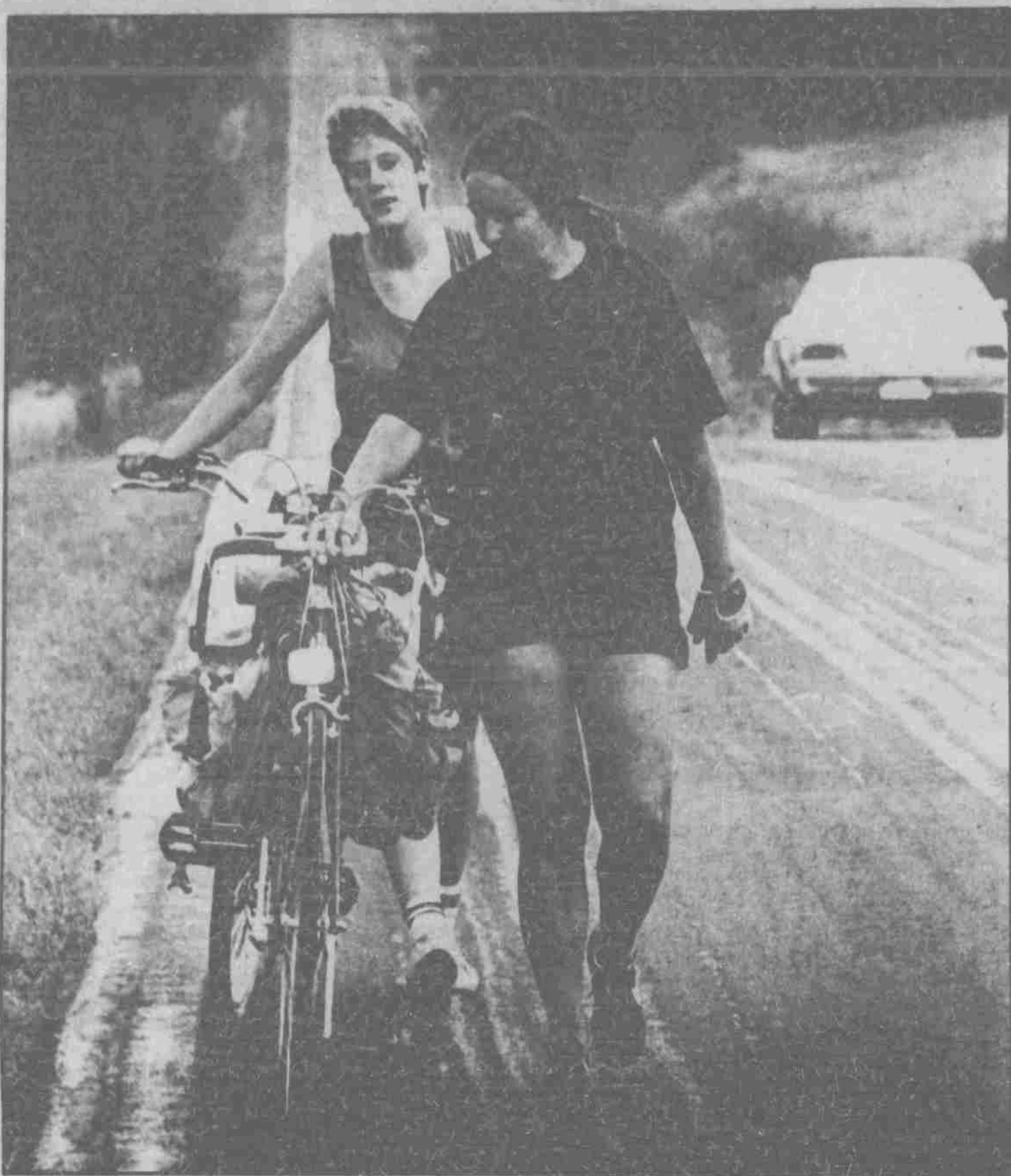
Both women left Denton with a purpose. Kris wanted to make it to Wilber on bicycle, despite her weary legs, and Bonnie wanted to do everything she could to help Kris make it. Bonnie said she knew how important it was to have someone to ride with when the going got tough.

And the going got tough! The hills south of Denton seemed more like mountains and Kris' legs reacted as if they agreed.

Several times the women came to hills that were too difficult for Kris to ride. If she was to continue, she would have to walk up those hills. The sag wagon passed by frequently, like an eagle stalking its prey, waiting for Kris to give up. But Kris did not give up. Instead, with the help of Bonnie, who also was walking the hills even though she could have bicycled them, they pressed on.

Eventually the hills turned into flat prairie and the wind died down.

It took several more hours until Bonnie and Kris made it to Wilber. but Kris had not succumbed to the sag wagon, and Bonnie had given of herself to make sure Kris would make it.



Clockwise from top right: Bonnie Gilpin and Kris Dewey walk their bikes up a steep hill. Kay Galvin and Joe Cabral wait for the repair truck. On the way to Wilber. Reaching for some quick energy. Bonnie Gilpin snacks on an apple during a water stop.

Photos and story by Bill Conradt