

# Bike Ride, Not Race, Inspired By Tour-de-France

**By Leslie Rott**

When Greg Drawbaugh and his brother Doug began organizing the Zoo-de-Mackinac 15 years ago, they never imagined that what started as a "51-mile bike bash" with eight of their closest friends would turn into a "51-mile bike bash" with 2,000 of their closest friends.

"We had no intention of ever turning it into a business," said Mr. Drawbaugh of the success of the event. The event got started by accident, he said, when he and some friends went skiing at Boyne over the Thanksgiving holiday and there was not enough snow on the ground. So thoughts turned to bicycles and a ride on highway 119, along the picturesque shore of Lake Michigan.

The first year of the event, they tried out new mountain bikes on a trip from Harbor Springs to Mackinaw City, but today, the ride begins at Boyne Highlands and ends on Mackinac Island for an evening of good food, good music, and good company.

After the first year with a few friends, Mr. Drawbaugh

sent flyers to a few other people and by the next year, the eight participants grew to 80. The event has grown each year since then.

"If it weren't such a good, fun thing to do, it never would have gotten beyond eight," Mr. Drawbaugh said.

He attributes the success of the race to a number of things. The trip is a beautiful one and highway 119 was voted one of the most scenic roads in the country by National Geographic Magazine. He also said there is something about combining physical exercise and partying that really makes people enjoy themselves. One other factor of success, he said, is that the event is highly organized and that he has been able to "make it real easy" for people to do.

The name of the event was inspired by the Tour-de-France, even though it is not a race. At Boyne Highlands, the Zoo Bar is where the participants party Friday night and since the event ends on Mackinac Island, that is how it got its name.

The event costs \$39 for advance registration and \$45 for late registration. The entry fee includes a party on Friday night, Saturday lunch, round trip ferry to and from the Island, and luggage transport for participants. Mr. Drawbaugh said that the fee also includes the cost of security along the event route.

"We're a pretty low budget operation," he said. "We have a good working relationship with everyone," which also helps keep the cost down.

Zoo-de-Mackinac attracts young professionals, from 30 to 45, mainly from the Metro Detroit area, but also from the surrounding Midwest states. Children and senior citizens also take part.

"Our event is more than just a bike ride," Mr. Drawbaugh said. "It is a great social event." And according to Bob Lazzari, who has participated in Zoo-de-Mackinac for 14 of the 16 years it has been run, he knows 10 people who met at the event and are now married.

It's "really a social thing," he said.

'When Life Hands You Lemons...'

# Lemonade Stand To Raise Money Saturday

**By Jessica Delaney**

The idea came from almost nowhere. Sarah Johnson, who works for the Adult Services for Ishpeming/Negaunee/Nice during the winter months and on Mackinac Island for Ryba's Fudge during the summer, was driving down the highway when she noticed billboards of celebrities ranging from Christopher Reeve to Whoopi Goldberg to Kermit the Frog, all with one thing in common: a positive message and a Web site for ordering posters.

From the Web site, Ms. Johnson ordered posters for her classroom at an alternative high school. One depicted an 8-year-old girl sitting behind a lemonade stand.

Alexandra "Alex" Scott was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a childhood cancer, when she was just six months old. When she was four, she decided to raise money for her hospital with a lemonade stand. In July 2000, she raised more than \$2,000 for Connecticut Children's Medical Center. The lemonade stand grew in popularity over the years and was featured in newspapers and television shows, and in 2004, raised more than \$1.5 million. By this time, Alex wasn't working alone. The young girl had started a national campaign to raise money for cancer research, and volunteers across the country set up lemonade stands and hosted fundraisers for the hospital. The campaign has attracted corporate sponsors and now includes children's books.

In Ms. Johnson's classroom, the poster stood as proof of what positive thinking can do, and she encouraged her students to reach for their dreams and "have their own lemonade stands."

Alex died August 1, 2004, but her lemonade stand contin-

ues to raise money. One of those stands will be on Mackinac Island this Saturday, set up by Sarah Johnson to commemorate the start of the national Lemonade Stand campaign for 2005. "Her story is lovely," Ms. Johnson said of Alex. "She could have taken what she was given and been lonely and miserable, but she chose to do something about it."

The goal of this year's national lemonade stand effort is to raise \$5 million. Ms. Johnson doesn't have any particular monetary goal, but she wants to help in any way she can.

She will operate her stand Saturday, June 11, beside Trinity Episcopal Church on Fort Street, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine. Offered with the lemonade will be baked goods from local people wanting to help. Lemonade will be delivered to those unable to get out, and proceeds will be sent to the nonprofit national center for Alex's Lemonade Stand.

There will be no cost for the lemonade, but donations of all sizes will be accepted, and Ms. Johnson is optimistic.

"This is such an incredibly giving community," she said, "and all you have to do is ask for help and people are generous. I want to get the community together and involved, and to have fun."

A few years ago, Ms. Johnson raised almost \$9,000 for AIDS from the island community by riding her bike through Alaska. Though she does not have such a high goal set for the lemonade stand, she said that the experience made her realize how generous her community is.

For more information on the national campaign for Alex's Lemonade Stands, visit the website at [www.alexlemonade.com](http://www.alexlemonade.com)

**Jerry Murray**



**Scott's Cave Trail  
Mackinac Island MI 49757  
[www.murrayrealtyle.com](http://www.murrayrealtyle.com)**

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