

July 19, 2018

My last weekend was totally occupied by the Seattle to Portland (STP) bike ride and though it was exhausting my time as a volunteer was a great adventure. It reminded me how valuable it is to volunteer in the community. It is really true that giving a little time reaps many rewards.

Giving some time to make the ride a little more pleasant, giving a welcoming smile and a little encouragement is all it took to leave a good impression on our weekend guests. As in past years, several thousand riders stayed in Centralia and Chehalis overnight and brought plenty of business with them in a short time. For many this is their first time in the Twin Cities and leaving them with a good impression is good for our community.

The other benefit of being a volunteer is feeling good about giving your time, knowing that riders are grateful and leave feeling a little more refreshed. Time and time again this weekend I had riders tell me how much they appreciated our volunteering our time to make the rider safer and more pleasant.



Photo by Chronicle Photographer Jordan
Nailon

Our little first aid station saw more than 400 riders for everything from Tylenol/Ibuprophen and bandaids to

basic services for dehydration and bandaging scraped knees and elbows. Every one we met was courteous, grateful and might I say exhausted.

THE RIDE:

All the riders started out at the University of Washington about 5 a.m. Saturday and we started seeing riders here in Centralia about 9 a.m. One day riders in particular, leave early and plan to be in Portland by mid afternoon. They bypass a lot of rest stops and many barely stop at the midway point where food is waiting for them. Being a one-dayer is definitely not for the faint of heart. The bike ride can be a one or two-day adventure and for those two-day riders staying in the Centralia area (or even just passing through) these services are much appreciated.

Mr. Blogger and I have volunteered for the last five years at the STP in the First Aid Station and before

that, for several years we volunteered in the luggage sorting or ice cream distribution jobs. The Chamber of Commerce is the organizer for luggage and the ice cream each year, along with finding overnight housing for two day riders.




TO VOLUNTEER:

If you are interested in volunteering next year you should start seeing ads in the paper or on the Chamber's website in about May. If you want to volunteer in the medical station you need to become a member of the Lewis County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Medical training or not they are always looking for volunteers. To learn more about the MRC you can go to their website by clicking [HERE](#).

RIDER PERSPECTIVE:

Read more about the adventures of one rider, a *Chronicle* reporter on his first STP adventure by clicking [HERE](#). He doesn't recommend his methodology (very little preparation and the wrong equipment) but he did finish the ride so he gets bonus points.

Quote of the Week:



**I have found that among its other
benefits, giving liberates the soul
of the giver.**

Maya Angelou