

# My 600,000<sup>th</sup> Lifetime Mile

by Danny Chew

On September 10, 2006 at age 44, I rode my 600,000<sup>th</sup> lifetime mile on the Little Miami Bike Trail near Cincinnati, OH. It was towards the end of my late summer, 3 week, 2,906 mile trip from Pittsburgh to Louisville, KY and back to Pittsburgh. Near Louisville, I stayed with 51 year old Cathy Hill who rode 178 miles at her first ultracycling event – Calvin's 12 Hour Challenge back in May. Unlike most people who let their jobs dictate where they live, Cathy & her husband Kirk (also a cyclist) searched long and hard for a cycling paradise where they could safely ride from their doorstep on beautiful, lightly traveled, hilly roads. They ended up in Southern Indiana in a tiny little town (on Indiana State Route 335) called Crandall, which has no Wal-Mart, no gas stations, and no grocery stores, but an active railroad line, a church, and a post office offering free coffee.

Riding through Crandall, you seem to get transported way back in time - before any American ever won or even rode the Tour de France, before Race Across America existed, and before Wal-Mart Supercenters, personal computers, e-mail, laptops, the Internet/www, cell phones, Ipods, mp3s, VCRs, CDs, DVDs, TiVo, GPSs, SUVs, STI, clipless pedals, cassette hubs (before them, I used to break two rear axils per year), 10 speed clusters & triple chainrings, aerobars, aerowheels, beam bikes like Softride & Titanflex, and titanium, aluminum, & carbon-fiber frames existed – changing our world into a much different place today than it was when I rode my first double century (Midwest Double Century in Ohio) on my first 10 speed bike (a heavy Sears Free Spirit steel frame) way back in July, 1973 at age 10.

Back to the day of my milestone: I started that 153 mile ride on a hot, hazy day with Bob Rich who I stayed with for 3 nights with his wife Terri. Bob was on my 2000 RAAM Chew Crew, and made it 1,074 miles across the country in the 2004 solo RAAM. Bob led me on a ride to and from Rocky Fork Lake & State Park, but after 125 miles, he left me (and climbed a one kilometer hill up to his house) on the Little Miami Bike Trail. On the trail, I met 53 year old Dave Copley who was riding a retro, one inch steel Bob Jackson bike. Dave was with me when I rode my 600,000<sup>th</sup> mile at dusk, on the trail, 149 miles into my ride.

It took me just under 5 and a half years to go from a half million miles to 600,000. I expect to reach a million kilometers (621,371 miles) sometime late next year (2007), and my long awaited million mile goal around age 75 (in the year 2,037) if I am not taken out by a vehicle first like my friends Bob Breedlove, Dave Holmes, & Al Hein – all killed while riding their bicycles on the open roads of America. Unfortunately, these roads are becoming less safe as our population increases (we just went over 3 million people), and suburban sprawl continues to

engulf what used to be our favorite, quiet, country roads. I congratulate Reed Finfrock for finally getting over the deaths of his cycling friends, and getting back on his bike. Welcome back to the ultracycling family Reed! Don't you think our dead comrades would want us to keep on riding in their memories?

Considering how much the world has changed since my first double century 33 years ago, I can hardly imagine what it will look like when I get my millionth mile in about 31 years from now. I bet the bicycle will still have two wheels. I hope that RAAM and ultracycling will still be around, and I'm still a part of it.