



# Positive TRACTION

February 2007 [www.pospeds.org](http://www.pospeds.org)



## POS PEDS MEMBER DISCOVERS COURAGE, STRENGTH IN UNITY

A message from Chris Cole

**J**une 4, 2006 changed me.

The prior day, during the Roadie orientation for AIDS/LifeCycle 5 in Bay C of the Cow Palace, I was moved by emotion to come out as HIV-positive to 400 people. The overwhelming love and support that I experienced that afternoon led me to share that information with the AIDS/LifeCycle community the following morning.

I had already planned to introduce and recognize **Positive Pedalers** as courageous, inspirational role models – embodying the very meaning and purpose of AIDS/LifeCycle. Those words became very real to me as I told my story during the Opening Ceremonies.

**Positive Pedalers** —this group of people with whom I had worked for years— were an inspiration to me. You gave me courage to stand before nearly 2,000 people and say, "I'm positive." There they were, the words on the T-shirt I wore that day, out there. I spoke of the deep shame I felt as a man who had spent his entire professional life fighting HIV, yet became HIV-positive. I spoke of my ability to fly back East to tell my family and know that it would be OK. I knew hundreds of people who had done it before me, and for many, the news was worse.

What changed me was the response I received in the moments, days, week of the ride and continuously since. The shame went away and I discovered that I had enormous personal power and strength and a community of support all the time. I began to dream again and envision a bright and possible future.

Now, eight months later, I again thank and recognize **Positive Pedalers** for the impact you have had on my life, on so many lives. I am proud to count myself among you as a **Positive Pedaler**. I am proud of what we do to support one another. I am proud of the awareness we raise, and the personal, positive face we put on this disease.

*See back page*

## Let's Ride!

**March 31**

Paul Hulse Pos Peds Century  
Valencia to Ventura and back

**April 21-22**

Jonathon Pon  
Memorial Ride to the Russian River

**May 18-20**

Pos Peds Russian River Ride

**June 3-9**

AIDS/LifeCycle 6

**'Say . . . want a date?**  
Yeah? How about  
365 of 'em?'

See Page 2





## Positive **TRACTION**

**POSITIVE TRACTION** is the free monthly newsletter for **Positive Pedalers**.

**Positive Pedalers** is a group of people living with HIV/AIDS committed to eliminating the stigma of disease through our positive public example.

Visit [www.pospeds.org](http://www.pospeds.org) for information and to become a Positive Pedaler.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*Co-Chairs*

**JOHN FASESKY**

[jfase@aol.com](mailto:jfase@aol.com)

**PETER LAVOIE**

[pospedspeterl@yahoo.com](mailto:pospedspeterl@yahoo.com)

*Members*

**NICK BRINKLEY**

[hrnicholas@pacbell.net](mailto:hrnicholas@pacbell.net)

**DAVID DUNCAN**

[duncanowens@gmail.com](mailto:duncanowens@gmail.com)

**TRENT MAGGARD**

[trentmagg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:trentmagg@sbcglobal.net)

**NATHAN MENARD**

[nathan.menard@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nathan.menard@sbcglobal.net)

**WILFREDO ORTIZ**

[wortiz8485@aol.com](mailto:wortiz8485@aol.com)

**ROSS PAPISH**

[rosspapish@aol.com](mailto:rosspapish@aol.com)

**SEAN RAY**

[seanray@comcast.net](mailto:seanray@comcast.net)

**GABRIEL ROCHA**

[gabo291969@yahoo.com](mailto:gabo291969@yahoo.com)

**PAUL SERCHIA**

[pserchia@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pserchia@sbcglobal.net)

**BEAU THOMSON**

[mwtbeau@hotmail.com](mailto:mwtbeau@hotmail.com)

*Emeritus Members*

**DALE FREEMAN**

[dcflaw@pacbell.net](mailto:dcflaw@pacbell.net)

**BOB KATZ**

[bobkatz96@aol.com](mailto:bobkatz96@aol.com)

*POSITIVE TRACTION team*

**DAVID DUNCAN**

**BOB KATZ**

**PAUL SERCHIA**



What are you waiting for? CLIP ME!

# Enjoy Ginger all year round!

Act quickly, boys and girls, and you just may be able to get your paws on **Ginger Brewlay's ALC 6 Calendar**, a fabulous way to help you keep the dates of your upcoming trail riding in order. Proceeds will help Ginger, L.A. Roadie #8404, reach her \$10,000 goal for ALC 6. \$25 includes shipping.

Email [brewhahaposped@sbcglobal.net](mailto:brewhahaposped@sbcglobal.net)

And don't forget to watch your in box for the **Brew-ha-ha with Ginger Brewlay**, the official weekly update from Positive Pedalers!

# FAITH FUELS POS PEDS MEMBER'S AIDS/LIFECYCLE 6 COMMITMENT

By PAUL SERCHIA

For most of the 25 years that **Tom Keep** has been HIV-positive, he has been quiet about that part of his life.

"I've always been kind of secretive about my status," Tom said, "but as time goes on, I realize that there shouldn't be a stigma to it." And being more open about his status may help lift that stigma that others perceive, Tom believes.

At a recent social gathering at his church in Santa Monica, Tom announced to a group of parishioners that he has been living with HIV since the days when AIDS was called Gay-Related Immune Disorder (GRID), and that he is participating in AIDS/LifeCycle this June. And then he prepared himself for the reaction by members of the congregation.

"At the end of the evening," Tom said, "a guy came up to me and said 'I'm so glad that you shared that. I've been positive for two years. And I've been so scared. Now I can see that I don't need to be scared. You've given me hope.'"

The man confided to Tom, "I've never shared this with anybody. No one knows that I'm positive. But now you do."

St. Monica Catholic Church is at the heart of Tom's AIDS/LifeCycle 6 participation. Tom is the captain of a team of four parishioners – Lynn James, Mark Misch and Jonathon Ramirez are the other members— who have made a joint commitment to raise \$21,000 for ALC 6. They set that sum as their team's fund-raising goal because it represents the annual cost of medication for one person with HIV.

Tom, ALC Rider #1432, recalls a time when treating HIV was much different than it is in 2007. In the early days of the epidemic, treatment options were scarce and opportunistic infections were common. And surviving with HIV was rare.

Tom's own experience with HIV has been different. Aside from a bout of shingles early on, he has remained healthy.

"I've been really, really lucky," Tom said. "I'm just a regular guy who happens to be HIV-positive."

Tom doesn't simply take his good fortune for granted. He

has compassion for those who struggle with HIV and that is one of the factors that motivates him to participate in AIDS/LifeCycle and raise funds for the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center:

"I need to do something to give to the community, or show that surviving with HIV is possible," he said. "A lot of people think that [AIDS] is the end of the road, like I did 25 years ago. I never expected to live to see 40, and I will be turning 50 this year. I'm very proud of that."

ALC 6 marks Tom's return to long-distance cycling and fund-raising. In 2000, Tom rode in California AIDS Ride 7, and the following year he was a Training Ride Leader for CAR 8.

Last year, Tom was part of the volunteer team that supported the display of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt at the closing ceremonies for ALC 5. "I was so moved by that experience," Tom said. Watching hundreds of riders arrive at the Veterans Administration grounds reminded Tom of his experience with CAR 7. "I decided that I need to do the ride again. So I signed up."

Tom expects that his experience in the upcoming ride will be much different than it was in CAR 7.

"When I signed up for CAR 7, I had not been on a bike in 20 years," Tom recalled. "I didn't even know what clips were!" He bought a bike in the fall prior to the ride and trained over the following nine months. He completed the ride, but it wasn't smooth sailing for the entire route. On the second day fierce winds blew him off the road and into a field of lettuce—he says that people still tell that story—and on Day 4 he injured his Achilles tendon.

He rode out of the CAR 7 opening ceremonies with **Positive Pedalers**, and wore a Pos Peds jersey. This year, Tom has stepped up his involvement in **Positive Pedalers**. And as the only HIV-positive member of Team St. Monica, he believes that he can help the other team members and his congregation members better understand what it's like to live with HIV.

"I can do something to help remove that stigma that some people have about HIV," Tom smiled. And to other people with HIV, Tom said, "I may represent hope – that diagnosis does not equal death."



‘I’ve been really, really lucky. I’m just a regular guy who happens to be HIV-positive.’

**TOM KEEP, POS PEDS MEMBER**

Hey riders!

## Take a peek at the Pos Peds '07 jerseys!



### Presenting the 2007 Positive Pedalers Jerseys! Yes, there are TWO this year!

The first jersey, shown at the top of this page, is an edgy, black-grey-white version of last year's "WE ALL HAVE AIDS . . . IF ONE OF US DOES" jersey, updated for AIDS/LifeCycle 6.

The second jersey, while available to ALC 6 participants, comes out of a request for a "generic" Pos Peds jersey from many positive riders around the country who are not affiliated with the AIDS/LifeCycle ride in California. This design comes out of a strategy within the Pos Peds Board to be more visible and "out there" in our efforts to eliminate the stigma of disease, particularly around HIV. The simple statement "i'm positive" can be construed several ways while also being very direct, especially when the Pos Peds logo is superimposed next to the statement.

This jersey will be available first-come, first serve, but we encourage positive riders outside California to order your jersey as soon as possible.

The jerseys will be available for \$40 each, plus tax for California residents only. Delivery will be to Pos Peds at the beginning of June and will be available for ALC 6 participants on Orientation Day. Jerseys will be shipped (shipping charges will apply) to non-ALC 6 participants after ALC 6. Please reserve your jersey NOW with David Duncan at [duncanowens@gmail.com](mailto:duncanowens@gmail.com).

## Chris Cole

From front

Nowhere else in my life do people regularly ask me, "How are your numbers?" Nowhere else did anyone really understand the emotion and consequences of when my doctor recommended that I go on meds, and then did. Nowhere else have I found a group of positive people who are living their lives so healthfully, focused on others more than themselves, choosing to be out and open about their status and to be fully and openly who they are.

Four months from now we will embark on AIDS/LifeCycle 6. It will be the most successful AIDS/LifeCycle yet. Already we have registered more cyclists than we registered all year last year. As a community we will raise more money than ever before to enable the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center and San Francisco AIDS Foundation to provide essential, lifesaving services to assist people with HIV, to educate all of us and to truly focus on ending the AIDS pandemic. I am so proud of what we've accomplished in six years, the community, the staff, the Foundation, the Center, and most importantly, each of us as individuals.

On June 30, I will say goodbye to AIDS/LifeCycle as Director. I have decided to move back East, be close to my family and follow my dream of adopting and loving a child. I am abundantly confident that AIDS/LifeCycle will continue to grow, inspire, serve and remain one of the most amazing communities. AIDS/LifeCycle will forever be a huge part of my life.

**Positive Pedalers** will forever be my heroes. The community that has become known as AIDS/LifeCycle will forever be the example of the world I want to raise my child in. So, once again, I simply say: Thank you.