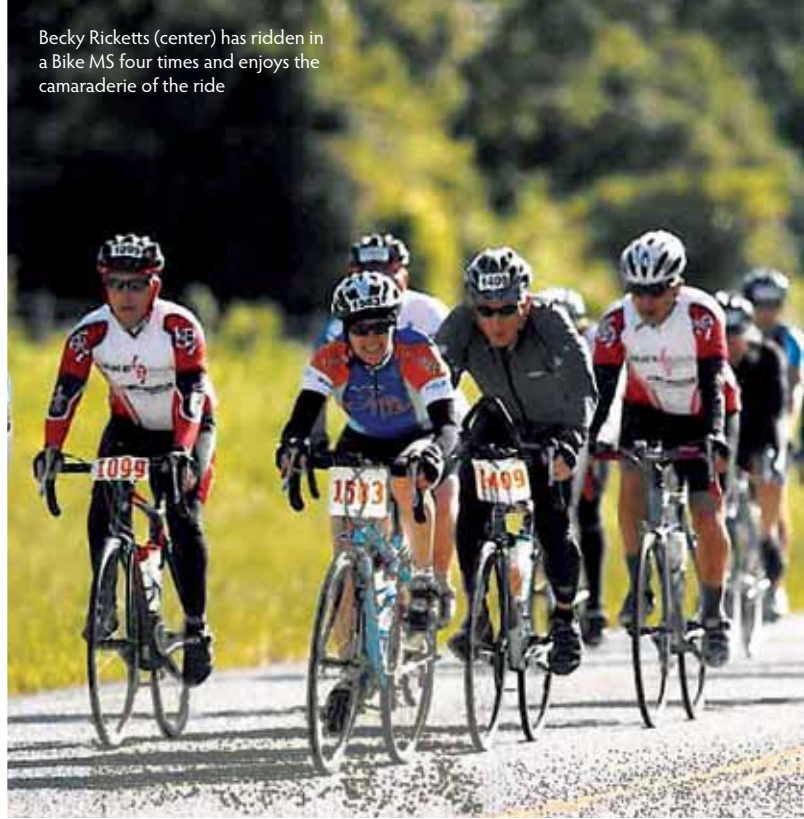




Dr. Scott Balin (left) has ridden in the BP MS 150 for the past seven years



Becky Ricketts (center) has ridden in a Bike MS four times and enjoys the camaraderie of the ride

# CYCLING FOR A CURE

Many cyclists ride in honor of friends or family members with Multiple Sclerosis

Tim Hansford at Cynapse Kreativ





Last year, the BP MS 150 raised over \$17 million for the National MS Society

Tim Hansford at Cynapse Kreativ

## Katyites Ride to Austin to Help Fight Multiple Sclerosis

Written by Kelly Isenberger

Challenging. Difficult. Wearisome. Trying. These are words that describe living with multiple sclerosis, as well as words that could describe a grueling two-day, 150-mile bike ride. Perhaps that is why in 1985 the founders of the first Houston to Austin MS 150 decided to put the two together to form the largest bike ride in the country. The first Bike MS was made up of 237 riders who raised \$117,000 toward finding a cure for this devastating disease. Last April, 13,000 cyclists came together to ride 182 miles from Houston to Austin in the BP MS 150 to raise over \$17 million for those living with MS, and they will do it all over again this year on April 17.

### DECIDING TO RIDE

There are currently 400,000 Americans living with MS, according to Gena Hyde of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. It is a debilitating disease that affects each person uniquely. "There is no known cause, and so there is yet to be a known cure," Hyde explains. Perhaps this is why Katy cyclists commit year after year to ride the 182 miles from Houston to Austin and to raise \$400 or more for the National MS Society.

### RACING FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

For the last seven years, Katy resident Dr. Scott Balin has faithfully served the National MS Society as a rider and a ride marshal. He decided to take up the challenge seven years ago while riding with a friend whose sister has MS. This year he is riding for family friend, Samantha Gluckman, who lives in Israel. As a former cyclist herself, she loves to ride, but can no longer do so due to the affect of MS on her body. Her family brought over a bandana with

her name embroidered on it for Balin to wear. He explains, "Just knowing that I can ride for her is an honor for me, and truly helps me keep going by knowing her winning spirit will be with me the entire ride to that sweet end in Austin."

Local cyclist Becky Ricketts is also familiar with the finish line in Austin. She has ridden in a Bike MS four times, including twice in Houston and twice in Louisiana. Every year, there are 100 Bike MS rides across the country to raise money. Each bike ride varies in the course and the actual mileage ridden. Ricketts was enticed by the challenge of the ride. "I had a cousin that died of MS in her 20's, and so it is very special to my family," she shares. Becky loves the hills and the camaraderie of the ride, but confesses that it can be trying at times. "The hardest part of the ride is sleeping with 200 of your closest friends," she says. "It's cold at night, the lights go out early, and the snores begin." Riders usually camp on Saturday night at the fairgrounds in La Grange. They arise early the next morning to finish up the second day of their ride.

### MOTIVATED TO BIKE MS

Perhaps your life has been affected in some way by multiple sclerosis or maybe you would just love the challenge of riding 182 miles over two days. The Katy community has many ways to support you. Bike Barn's Andy Gonzalez urges, "Get out and ride as a group as early as you can. The more you do it, the more you get used to it and the safer you end up being." Bike Barn leads rides for riders of varying levels every Saturday and Sunday at 8 a.m. starting from the store. They also have maintenance classes where you learn how to maintain your bike and how to change your tires, which is very important when you are out on the road. Many of the local



More than 13,000 cyclists will ride in the BP MS 150 in April

Tim Hansford at Cynapse Kreativ



Tim Hansford at Cynapse Kreativ

The 150-mile race takes cyclists from Houston to Austin

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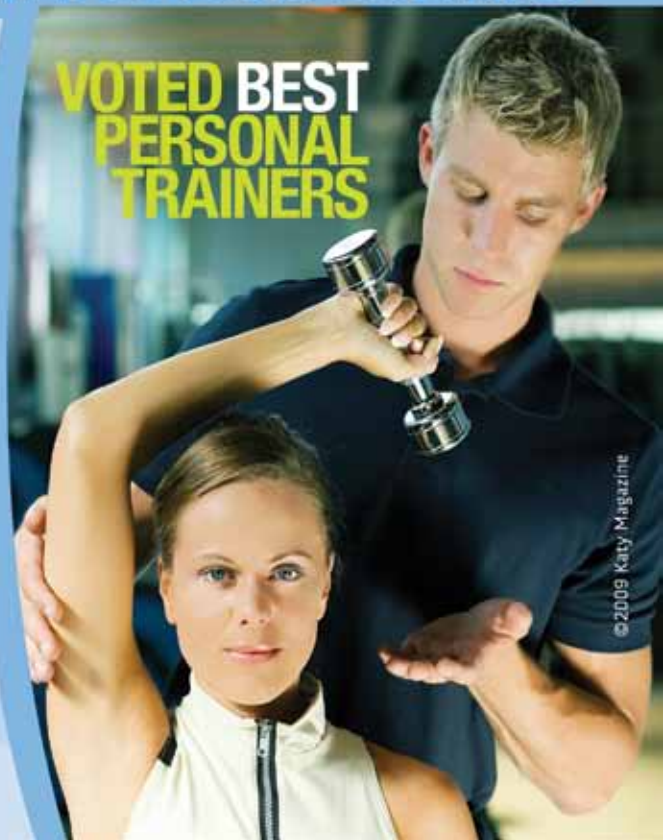
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corporations, such as BP, Conoco Phillips, and Sun and Ski Sports also have bike teams where they will host bike rides, offer training schedules, and provide tents for the night. In most cases, you do not have to be an employee to participate.

There are many ways to be involved in the BP MS 150, whether that is riding the 182 miles yourself, or donating to and supporting another rider. Whatever the case may be, all over the country, Bike MS is raising millions of dollars to find a cure for MS. Balin says of his ride, "I only pray that every mile I ride brings us that much closer to finding a cure for multiple sclerosis." Hopefully, that prayer will be echoed in April, when 13,000 riders hit the road from Houston to Austin to change the futures of those living with MS. **KM**

*KELLY ISENBERGER is a local runner and cyclist. She has never ridden a Bike MS before, but hopes to one day.*



## PREPARING FOR THE TOUR

*Tips for Training to Ride the MS 150*

- ★ Check with your bike store about rides they may host and for specific cycling questions
- ★ Participate in recommended group rides prior to the BP MS 150
- ★ Keep track of your mileage and times, assessing how you've improved
- ★ Start with short rides, taking a week to work up to a moderate ride of 15 miles
- ★ Once a week, attempt an endurance day, doubling your average miles
- ★ Incorporate hills and interval sprints into your daily rides
- ★ Maintain a nutritious diet, stay well hydrated, and eat several energy bars on longer rides

-Adapted from ms150.org

## Where to Find Katy Magazine

Look for Katy Magazine at these fine-area establishments:

<b>Atami Steak and Sushi</b> 549 S. Mason Rd. Katy, TX 77450 281-398-8885	<b>Comfort Inn &amp; Suites</b> 22025 Katy Fwy Katy, TX 77450 281-392-8700	<b>Pump It Up</b> 923 S. Mason Rd. Katy, TX 77450 281-829-5711
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<b>Cinco Ranch Pediatrics</b> 3030 S. Mason Rd. Katy, TX 77450 281-395-4300	<b>Katy Family YMCA</b> 22807 Westheimer Pkwy. Katy, TX 77494 281-392-5055	<b>Walgreens</b> 6802 S. Fry Rd Katy, TX 77494 281-392-0077
<b>City of Katy</b> 910 Ave. C Katy, TX 77493 281-391-4800	<b>Katy Mills Mall</b> 5000 Katy Mills Circle Katy, TX 77494 281-644-5000	<b>Walgreens</b> 3120 N. Fry Rd. Katy, TX 77449 281-829-5080
	<b>La Quinta</b> 22455 Katy Fwy Katy, TX 77450 281-392-9800	<b>Walgreens</b> 5161 Fruit Rd. Katy, TX 77493 281-391-3410
	<b>Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital</b> 23900 Katy Fwy Katy, TX 77494 281-644-7000	<b>KATY magazine</b>



Sit back, relax and enjoy a cup of coffee with your Katy Magazine.

*The following locations:*

<b>Starbucks</b> 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd. Katy, TX 77494 281-395-4010	<b>Starbucks</b> 22020 Westheimer Pkwy. Katy, TX 77450 281-578-6606	<b>Starbucks</b> 19914 Park Row Katy, TX 77449 281-398-5680
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