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Stratham man conquering cancer one bike ride at a time

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Stratham's Scott Joy, left, said his bicycling adventures after his cancer diagnosis are inspired by world famous cycling legend Lance Armstrong, right. Courtesy photo

By **Hattie Perkins**
newsletter@seacoastonline.com
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STRATHAM — Scott Joy lives his life emphasizing the "survivor" part of his cancer survivor title.

Having already participated in 13 cancer rides since his initial diagnosis in 2003, he's gearing up for his 14th ride with the TD Bank Five Boro Bike Tour in New York City, the nation's largest bike tour event.

Joy will be one of 32,000 bikers riding in the 42-mile event as a member of the Livestrong team, an organization he's supported for years. He found the organization online shortly after his diagnosis and "was immediately drawn in by what they do and the attitudes that they have."

Although Joy had occasionally enjoyed recreational biking throughout his life, it was his diagnosis of testicular cancer in 2003 that got Joy into serious riding.

"I got the call from my urologist, 'Yup it's cancer.' That's when everything started spinning," Joy said.

Shortly after his diagnosis, Joy became a forum administrator for TC-Cancer.com, a Web site that provides education and support for people with testicular cancer. After a few more months and a reading of Lance Armstrong's book, "It's not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life," Joy hopped on his mountain bike and started riding.

"Absolutely it was Lance that got me into cycling. The big thing is the whole survivorship attitude ... that we each need to be responsible for the decisions we make," Joy said.

Being a member of Livestrong and speaking openly about his illness has brought out many people to Joy.

"Because I'm so open about it, I hear more often from friends and colleagues" who've been diagnosed with cancer, Joy said. "Nearly everyone instantly relates. Whether it's a different cancer, there's still something there."

He said he enjoys the connection he makes with people, but hearing so many people's struggles with the disease can take a toll on his emotions.

Joy has found healing in riding, both physically and mentally.

"Pedaling gives you time to think," said Joy, who said he likes to reflect and remind himself why he's doing what he's doing.

It also gives him time to keep in touch with one of his other passions: musical theatre. He's directed musicals for Stratham Community Church and has sung with chamber chorus Amare Cantare at its spring

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concert.

"I've been singing my whole life, sometimes I sing when I bike," he said.

Joy is married with four children; his oldest child is 18 and the youngest are 12-year-old twin sons. While the kids enjoy riding the roads on two wheels with their dad, they're not quite as dedicated to the more than 20-mile rides.

"They don't like the longer rides so much," said Joy.

Joy said he's looking forward to the 5 Boro Tour because it will be a great way to see New York City, minus all the vehicular traffic. So far he's raised \$1,000 for the event, and Livestrong has exceeded its \$65,000 goal for the race, raising \$67,048. Thirty-four other local and national charities are partnering with the tour. Joy has raised more than \$100,000 for the Livestrong charity group.

Bike New York Chief Executive Officer Ken Podziba said the city will closed to vehicular traffic while the riders venture through the city's five boroughs. There will be lots of entertainment throughout the city, including musical performances in the Bronx, Harlem and on the subways. "We wanted the entertainment to reflect the nature of the people," said Podziba, which he describes as "authentic and gritty," much like the city itself.

Joy has a few biking events lined up for this year. After the TD Bank Five Boro, he'll be riding for the Granite State Quest July 9, Livestrong Challenge Philadelphia Aug. 21, Dempsey Challenge in Lewiston, Maine, on Oct. 9 and the Livestrong Challenge Austin, on Oct. 16.

Although Joy has found Livestrong to be his favorite charity support group, he encourages other cancer survivors to explore all the services out there.

"Find other people to talk to, don't try and do it alone. Take advantage of those services to find the support you need," he said.

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