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## Bosom buddies helm charity bike ride

The Boob Ride, started by Jennifer Carey and Anna Chimowicz, raises money for breast cancer charities

By Pam Kragen (/staff/pam-kragen/) 06:00a.m. Apr 14, 2015



Early Saturday morning, dozens of bicyclists — perhaps including a few men in festive pink bras — will hit the road in Solana Beach for a 30-mile cycling event known as The Boob Ride (<http://theboobride.org>).

As funny as that may sound, the purpose of the sixth annual charity ride is deadly serious: to bring an end to breast cancer. Co-founders Jennifer Carey and Anna Chimowicz have both been touched by the disease, so the ride on April 18 is a way of reducing the chance that it touches others.

“There’s nothing funny or cute or pink about breast cancer. It’s a horrendous disease,” said Carey, whose mom, Peg, is a seven-year survivor. “In my family, the way my mom dealt with it was humor. We could either burst into tears or burst into laughter. Laughing was how we got through it.”

Since 2010, the annual Boob Ride has raised nearly \$15,000 for breast cancer charities. This year, Carey and Chimowicz hope to nearly double that amount with the expansion from one to two 30-mile rides, including a one-way route from Irvine to Solana Beach and a round-trip between Solana Beach and Las Pulgas. There are also 60- and 90-mile routes for more experienced riders.

Although the Boob Ride is noncompetitive, its tongue-in-cheek awards have become much prized by riders (who often pedal in pink attire or wear bras outside their shirts). To parody the yellow jerseys of the Tour de France, the Boob Ride offers six perpetual plaques decorated with bras. The first to complete the 90-mile course wins the yellow bra plaque; the “youngest” rider (last year’s recipient was 86-year-old Link Lundquist) gets the training bra plaque; and the biggest fundraising team wins a double-decker, double D bra plaque.

Cinda Flynn will be among the riders assembling Saturday in Solana Beach. Three days before her 44th birthday in October, she was diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer. On Dec. 15, she underwent a double mastectomy. She said participating in the Boob Ride is a way of reclaiming the joy in her life.

“People get their happiness in different ways,” said Flynn, of Huntington Beach. “This is a new sport for me and I love it, and there’s such a great community out there who supports this cause. I’m very excited to be a part of it.”



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Anna Chimowicz, left, and Jennifer Carey pose with some of the boob ride trophies they created for The Boob Ride. — Bill Wechter

Carey and Chimowicz, both 39, have been best friends since they were freshmen roommates and sorority sisters at the University of San Diego. Today, they work at the same company, Toshiba Corp. in Irvine, and their friendship has grown even tighter since their moms were both diagnosed with breast cancer.

In 2009, Carey's mom had a second mastectomy after a yearlong cancer battle. The experience was so traumatic, Carey said she wanted to find a positive outlet for her grief.

"There was a lot of waiting-room bargaining with God," said Carey, who lives in Laguna Hills. "As soon as my mom was healed, I was determined to find a way that nobody else had to go through what we went through."

While researching the disease in 2009, Carey found out about the Susan G. Komen 3-Day, the annual 60-mile walk through San Diego that raises money for breast cancer research. Preparing for the walk that year with a team nicknamed "Walking and Wine-ing" proved to be a healing experience.

"On a 19-mile training walk, you've got your friends beside you to share our lives and struggles with. It brought me an immeasurable amount of good," Carey said.

To take part in the November 2009 event, Carey's team had to raise \$2,300. But the next year, she didn't feel comfortable tapping her friends and family again for donations. Instead, the avid cyclist decided to start a fun bike ride to raise money for team walk registration fees.

With Chimowicz by her side, and organizing advice from fellow cyclist Paul Self, Carey launched the first ride, initially called Biking 4 Boobs, in April 2010. The low entry fee, \$50, and the minimal training required has allowed it to attract a different audience.

"Susan G. Komen is for hard-core dedicated-to-the-cause people," Carey said. "This is a really fun destination ride that targets people who would be on the couch and not motivated by any emotional connection to a cause."

The first ride drew 30 cyclists and raised enough to cover the team's Komen 3-Day registration fees. Since then, the number of riders and the amount raised has nearly doubled each year. Last year's ride drew 111 participants and \$6,200 in donations. This year's goal is \$12,500 and proceeds will fund walking teams for both the local 3-Day and the Avon 39 Walk in Santa Barbara. The Boob Ride will also expand this year to the East Coast. A breast cancer survivor in eastern Pennsylvania is hosting her first Boob Ride in July.

From the beginning, riders nicknamed the event "the boob ride," so Carey and Chimowicz bowed to tradition last year and trademarked that name and created a new website ([theboobride.org](http://theboobride.org)).

Chimowicz, who lives in La Costa, gave up pedaling in the Boob Ride after her son, Kai, was born three years ago. Instead, she focuses on marketing the events and hunting down prizes for the raffle that takes place at the post-ride party each year in Solana Beach. Her connection with breast cancer goes back two generations.

Her maternal grandmother died from the disease, and last September her mom, Maria Chimowicz of Clairemont, got the diagnosis and had a double mastectomy. Maria recently finished chemotherapy and, like her friend Peg Carey, is hoping for a full recovery.



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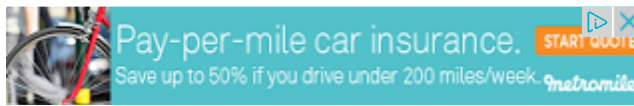


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