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Cycling for Ewing's

by **Daniel McDermon**
Staff Writer

Elizabeth Shriver does not drive.

When she was doing research at Hewlett-Packard and living in Palo Alto, Calif., several years ago, she had no other way to get around, so she started cycling - an experience that would prove valuable in the coming months. The 36-year-old, who now lives in Jersey City, N.J., will be joining the four-day, 200-mile Cycle Zydeco bike tour in Louisiana on April 10. "It's not a charity ride," she said, "but we're turning it into one."

Liddy, as her friends call her, will ride as part of Team Sarcoma, a group of cyclists devoted to raising money and awareness for research on Ewing's sarcoma. Shriver was diagnosed with the condition a year ago. Frequently considered a children's cancer, Ewing's is rarely seen in people over 25. Most doctors familiar with the disease are pediatricians, making treatment more complicated for adults. Shriver is too old to be included in the pediatric clinical trials of new treatments. And a variety of factors, including young adults' generally poor insurance coverage and a lack of information about Ewing's, make it difficult to find adult subjects for extensive clinical testing. These are problems Team Sarcoma wants to address.

Shriver noticed the first symptoms of Ewing's nine years ago. She was pursuing a doctorate in computer science at NYU and involved in interesting research. But she could not sleep. Shriver's ankle throbbed with pain for a couple of hours before settling into a dull ache. She consulted a series of doctors over the next six years, and they diagnosed her with several different conditions. But none of the therapies really worked - not the tarsal tunnel decompression surgery, the orthotic devices designed to correct irregular walking patterns or the "nerve block" injections of anti-inflammatory steroids.

Walking on it helped. Shriver paced back and forth in the middle of the night in her apartment, wearing the pain down so she could get back to sleep. Cycling was even better. After she graduated from NYU in 1997, Shriver developed a routine: an hour of biking in the morning, a day of work at Bell Labs in Murray Hill, N.J., an hour of biking in the evening, followed by a sound night's sleep - interrupted by another hour of biking.

Shriver's cancer was discovered in 2002. Since then, she has gone through rounds of chemotherapy and radiation treatments and participated in new therapy trials at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan and Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia. She is determined, but faces a serious battle. The cancer has spread to her lungs, which will gradually make her breathing more difficult.

Before that happens, Shriver wants to complete the Cycle Zydeco tour, and another tour in Denmark this summer. Both are aimed at raising funds and awareness for both Ewing's and the need for young adult clinical trials. According to Shriver's father, Bruce, the Cycle Zydeco tour has raised about \$10,000 so far and the Danish tour has raised about \$15,000. "For the Danish tour, we have a goal of \$25,000," he said. "At that level, the Sarcoma Foundation will endow a research grant in Liddy's name."

Team Sarcoma is composed largely of Shriver's family - her husband Tom, her mother and father, her brother Mark and his son Daniel. For the Shrivens, the

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From a small town

"The more famous people they say are in a project, the more I think that I'm not going to get it."

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Pictures of protest

Stefan Cornibert, a senior in the College of Arts and Science, has taken an unusual approach to war photography.

Professor's year an intellectual whirlwind

When the public was in the dark last year, groping for answers to explain the unexpected, it turned to professors like Bernard Haykel and placed a large microphone in front of Middle Eastern studies scholars and departments.

bike tours will be a kind of homecoming. The family lived in Denmark and then moved to Lafayette, La., for 11 years, until Shriver was 17. Old friends from all over are coming to join them.

Today, Shriver is on leave from Bell Labs. She divides her time between training for the bike tours with her husband, meeting with her doctors and keeping track of developments in Ewing's research. "A lot of people are comfortable with their doctors making the calls, but not me," she said.

Shriver has always been determined. Her dissertation advisor at NYU, computer science professor Alan Siegel, said, "I was ready to sign off on her graduating long before she was ready to say she'd done enough work. She has very high standards for herself." The work she produced, an analytic model for disk performance, won the Janet Fabri Award, given annually for the most outstanding dissertation.

Shriver is also part of an online network of Ewing's patients who share information about new research.

She keeps a detailed diary of her treatment on the family's Web site, www.theshrivers.us. "Liddy's been a valuable resource for other patients in two dimensions," her father said. "Someone may approach her for information, and a bond is established that goes beyond that, to comfort and understanding."

Shriver is looking forward to the bike tours and the chance to see her old friends in southwestern Louisiana. Completing a long-distance bike tour has been a longtime goal. "I'm at the point," she said, "where I'm starting on that list of things that I'd like to do."

Interested readers can go to the Shriver family's Web site for information on the tours, how to make donations or to contact Liddy Shriver. •