

Bikers' mission hits home for Jasperite

This September 10 the Jasper Rockhoppers will embark on a 95 km trip through the mountains as members of the Hinton MS Bike Tour.

This is not your grandma's MS road ride. This is an adrenaline-packed, two-day mountain bike tour that blazes through the wilderness on single and double track routes. That's OK though because the Rockhoppers love challenges. Team captain Greg Van Tighem has a fundraising goal this year of \$50,000. That number may seem ambitious, especially considering the myriad of worthy causes in competition for fundraising dollars, but thanks to the astonishing generosity of Jasperites, the Rockhoppers have consistently been amongst the top fundraising teams in the country. If you want to keep them there, go to www.msbiketours.com and search



Rockhoppers Team Captain **Greg Van Tighem** is once again raising an obscene amount of money in the fight against MS. Help him reach his goal of \$50,000 by September 10. Go to msbiketours.com and search his name.

Greg Van Tighem to make a tax-deductible pledge.

This ride is particularly relevant to readers of The Skinny because Canada has the highest rate of Multiple Sclerosis in the world, Alberta has the highest rate of MS in Canada, and the 20-40 age group has the highest rate of anyone. This disease most often strikes young people just beginning to find their place in the world.

In writing this article, I didn't have to research all of these statistics. I have them all memorized because I was diagnosed with MS in 2005. At the time, I was 19-years-old, just entering college. I was terrified that this thing called MS would ruin my life.

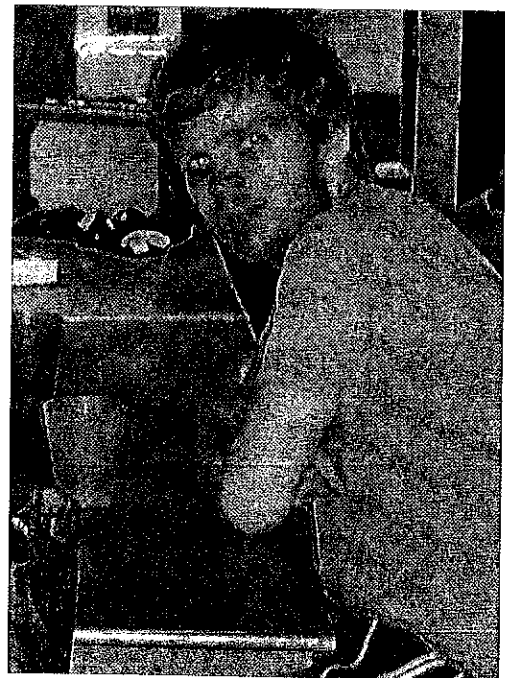
I graduated four years later and it hasn't managed to ruin my life yet. That is not to say that physically, MS hasn't taken its best shot. It has, in fact, taken a huge toll on my body. I've gone from an extremely active

high school student whose life revolved completely around sports to someone who struggles to walk 50 feet with a cane. However, through it all, one thing has kept me sane and that is a steadfast belief that someday a cure will be found.

In the meantime, my friends and family have played the crucial role of not letting the fact I have MS define me as a person. People like the Jasper Rockhoppers and their many supporters keep me confident that it's not a matter of if but a matter of when a cure will arrive.

In the spirit of The Skinny's current issue, I wish I could describe just how big of a "service" these people have done for me by giving me hope. However, I don't think there are enough pages in The Skinny for that.

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The author, **Allie Jenkins-Bennett**
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