

## **Peddling Lemonade to Pedalers**

STP: Elliott Townsend Has Manned A Lemonade Stand On His Family's Property in North Centralia for the Past Six Years

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**By Eric Schwartz**

The Chronicle

### **29th Annual Group Health Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic**

When: Saturday and Sunday

Where: A 200 mile route that begins at the University of Washington in Seattle and ends at Holladay Park in Portland Ore.

How Many: According to organizers, this year's STP sold out in record time and will draw about 9,500 participants who range in age from 2 to 85 years old.

Who: According to organizers, there will be riders from 44 states and eight countries, including Nepal, Ireland, Australia and Switzerland. Approximately 310 riders have participated in ten or more STP rides, and two cyclists have ridden in them all. Of the 9,500 riders, nearly 2,500 will make the entire 200-mile trip on Saturday in one push, arriving into Portland on Saturday evening.

### **Are the Riders Coming Down Your Street?**

For maps and lists of exactly where the STP riders will pedaling this weekend, visit [www.cascade.org/...p\\_2008.pdf](http://www.cascade.org/...p_2008.pdf).

Centralia teen Elliott Townsend hopes to capitalize on the hundreds of bikes that will be pedaling through Lewis County as part of the Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic Saturday.

In fact, if all goes well, profits from a lemonade stand Townsend has been manning for the past six years will help him buy a bike of his own.

"I make between \$200 and \$300. Last year I made about \$350," said Townsend, 13. "I think I'm going to try for a dirt bike this year."

Hoisted above the ground on a trailer, Elliott plays tunes on his guitar next to a batch of Country Time lemonade as weary bikers move past his North Centralia home. It's an entrepreneurial endeavor that he inherited from his 18-year-old sister Nadia, who was the first in the family to sell the lemonade.

In past years Townsend charged \$1 for as much lemonade as a biker could drink. This year, he said he hopes to boost his profits by allowing participants to pay whatever they want for the cool refreshment.

Every year, he goes through about 20 gallons of lemonade, he said.

Bill Townsend, Elliott's father, said his son is responsible with how he spends his money each year. Last year he bought a remote-controlled helicopter.

"He'll put some of it in savings, some of it he'll keep and some of it he tithes," Bill said. "He's really good with it."

To be exact, Elliott Townsend said he keeps 50 percent, puts 40 percent in savings, and tithes 10 percent at Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Centralia.

Townsend, who is home schooled, said he often makes a few extra bucks completing odd jobs around his family's farm. However, nothing holds as much financial promise as the annual STP race, he said.

Signs advertising his lemonade are staggered at different mile markers before arriving at the Townsend residence on the Bucoda Highway. He's hoping to entice thirsty riders with a theme based on the old "Burma Shave" road signs: "½ way there / You've got it made / Time to stop / For lemonade."

Townsend said he enjoys seeing a lot of the bikers year after year. He said he'll begin selling lemonade early this year, likely before 10 a.m.

"I want to get started early this year," he said. "It's a lot of fun."

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*Eric Schwartz covers municipal government and health for The Chronicle. He may be reached at 807-8245.*



**Courtesy photo**

Elliott Townsend, 13, paints signs in preparation for the Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic. Townsend will sell lemonade from a stand on his parents' property north of Centralia for the sixth consecutive year. Last year, he made about \$350.



**Mike Salsbury, The Chronicle**

Things are quiet on Thursday at the Townsend family farm where Elliott Townsend looks forward to the Seattle to Portland bike race this weekend. Elliott sells lemonade to riders and plays his guitar for tips. His dog, Jazz, is always present to pick up some treats from the cyclists.