



Riders on the Storm



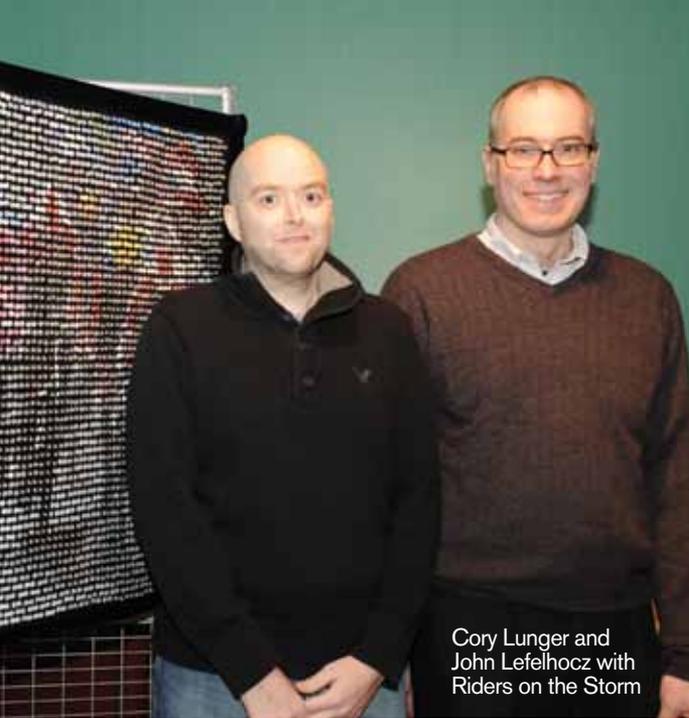
Quilt photos by Robert Colgan

Riders on the Storm, 60 x 33 inches, by John Lefelhocz

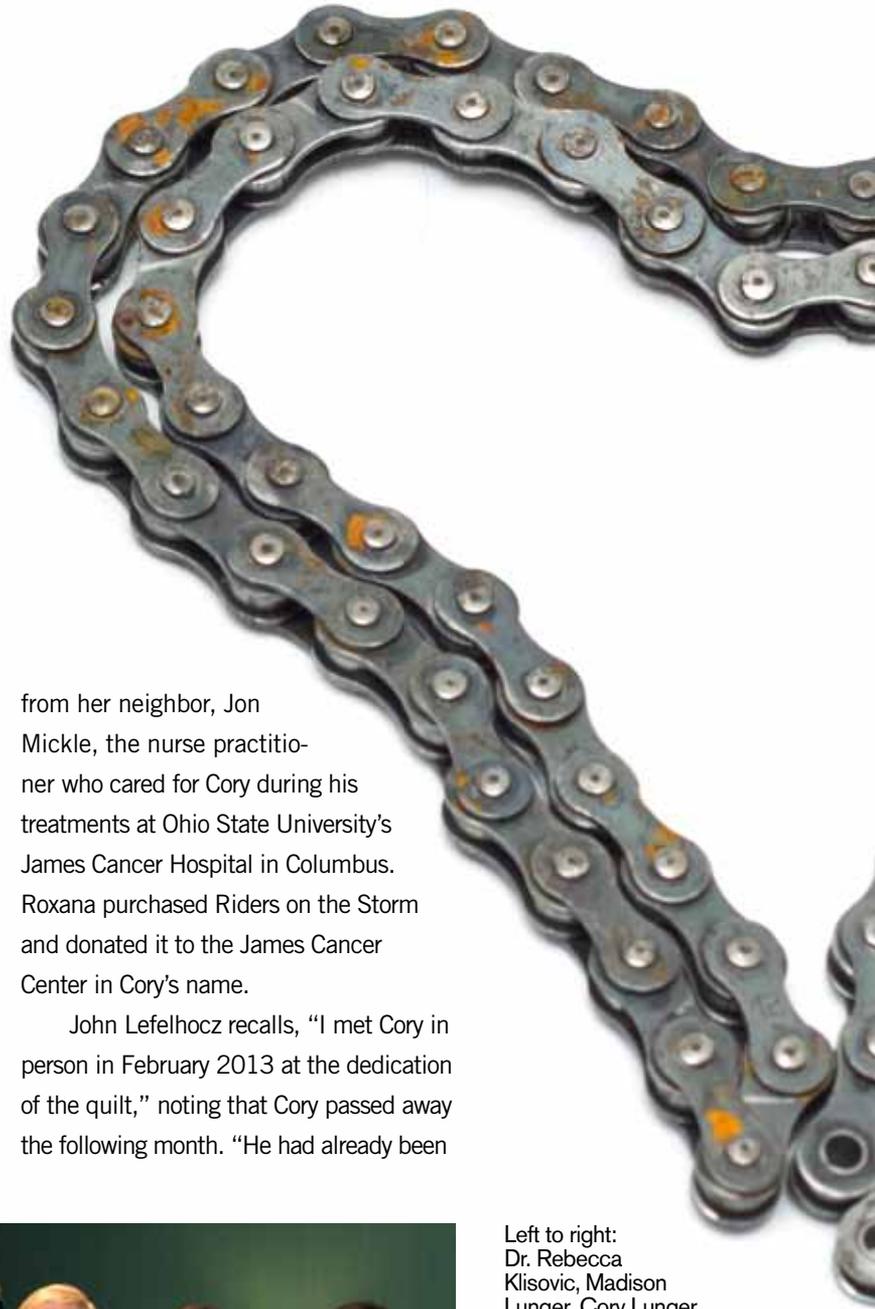


Cory Lunger was a fighter.

The avid bicyclist from Columbus, Ohio, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in 2008. After his first round of cancer treatments—chemotherapy, full-body radiation, and a bone marrow transplant—he felt well enough to ride in the Pelotonia, a 180-mile ride across Ohio in which participants raise money for cancer research through pledges. Despite having to undergo a second bone marrow transplant in 2011, Cory continued to ride when he was able. It was a roller coaster ride for Cory, who pedaled through every remission, determined to live what life he had left to the fullest. He also created the Cory Lunger Endowment Fund, dedicated



Cory Lunger and John Lefelhocz with Riders on the Storm



to funding research and clinical trials for adults with ALL.

Serendipity stepped in when Roxana Deadman organized an art quilt exhibit, Pushing the Surface, at the Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum in Coshocton, Ohio. One piece in the show was an amazing quilt by John Lefelhocz, Riders on the Storm, made out of links of bicycle chain—yes, actual metal links, not fabric similes. It so happened that Roxana already knew about Cory

from her neighbor, Jon Mickle, the nurse practitioner who cared for Cory during his treatments at Ohio State University's James Cancer Hospital in Columbus. Roxana purchased Riders on the Storm and donated it to the James Cancer Center in Cory's name.

John Lefelhocz recalls, "I met Cory in person in February 2013 at the dedication of the quilt," noting that Cory passed away the following month. "He had already been



Left to right: Dr. Rebecca Klisovic, Madison Lunger, Cory Lunger, Gary Lunger, Carol Lunger, Jon Mickle, William Deadman, Roxana Deadman, Elisa Deadman

Photos courtesy Cory Lunger Fund



through several years of treatment, although you wouldn't have known unless someone told you." John agreed to allow the quilt image to be used on a poster and other fundraising materials for the foundation, and he assisted with the creation of the logo and the graphics. "One of the things I took away from my brief interactions with Cory was that he didn't want a lot of melodrama associated with his condition. Cory was a doer. He played an active role in fundraising for cancer research and setting up his fund. Knowing this, I just treated him as a normal guy."

John is a serious bicyclist, a bike-shop owner, and a quilt artist. "In 1997, I went to see Quilt National. I saw the many different approaches to the medium and asked myself, 'How would I make one of these?' My first quilt was made with nontraditional materials—window screening, Domino sugar packets, and plastic flies. It was hand-illustrated with the image of a \$100 bill and was sewn together

with dental floss (mint flavored). That piece was accepted into Quilt National in 1999," John says. "All of a sudden I had a much bigger audience for my art, and more works followed."

Riders on the Storm is John's second quilt made using bicycle chain links. He explains, "I started by superimposing an image of bicycle racers on a computer drawing of a grid of 3,000 chain links. This allowed me to get a feel for how the image would come out. Next I disassembled the links from bicycle chains. After removing all of the oil and grease from the links, I coated them with metal primer. I then used fabric glue to adhere the links to the quilt top, a piece of black velvet. I painted each individual link with acrylic paint, using the computer drawing as a road map.

"Next I sewed the links to the top and through the back of the quilt. Each

link has two holes with clear Czech glass beads sewn to each hole. The image is bicycle racers in the rain, and the clear glass beads add to the feeling of water droplets. The back is cotton duck, as this work is plenty heavy, with all of the links and beads." He adds, "Even though this was the second piece I've made like this, I wasn't sure of the outcome. There are too many variables in play. I'm also never happy doing things exactly the same way twice so I usually set myself up for uncertainty. The computer sketches do help take some of the guesswork out of the equation."

Staff members at the James Cancer Center have told John that visitors to the treatment center are amazed once they realize the quilt is embellished with bicycle chain. "Just having it hanging in a person's home would be very special," John says, "but knowing that it's providing a positive distraction for cancer patients and their families raises the pride I have for my art to a higher level." **TQL**



How You Can Help

- Visit CoryLungerFund.org and make an online donation.
- Riders on the Storm posters and T-shirts, as well as candles displaying the fund logo, are for sale at the 11th floor clinic at the James Cancer Center. Online ordering is planned, but was not available at press time—please check the website. A portion of the purchase price supports cancer research.
- Participate in a fundraising walk or ride. Information will be posted on the website when events are scheduled.