# KHS Grad Departs on Cross-Country Bike Adventure

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{audio}/images/stories/mp3/johns_america_bike_tour_may_23.mp3{/audio}

John McDonald hours before his ferry departure. Jennifer Canfield photo

Jennifer Canfield/KMXT

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Endurance is more of a mental exercise than a physical one. So it makes sense that McDonald's trip is fueled by a mission. He's on a trip to find "his America."

"I believe 100 percent that people truly do still love this country to the utmost and I feel that the media message -that our economy is in the gutter and we're not the country we used to be or we're being passed by all these other countries, we're not great- I don't believe that at all."

McDonald says he started to become disillusioned with the advice teachers at school would give him. He grew concerned that his generation wasn't being given a chance to pursue their own idea of the American dream.

"In school I feel like my entire class was told that we need to have great grades in math, science, language and if we didn't have that then it was going to be impossible to have a career. It was, ‘You have to go to college and get a degree to be anything in the world,' and so I really wanted to develop my own future plan. I wanted to do something that I really wanted to do and have a passion for."

So he started to develop a plan to bike across America. After a youth mission trip to New York, McDonald started to get more serious about the idea.

"Everything just came together and I went, "Ah! If I can do this and all the tools are here for me, this is how America's is built, this is what America was built on and we're not being told that anymore so this needs to happen. We can't just go through the humdrum of ‘follow this career and go get that job."

With him on that trip to New York was local businessman and Subway franchise owner Dan Roher. Roher told him about how Subway was founded and suggested that he get other franchises along

the way to sponsor his trip. McDonald decided he could produce short commercials for Subway stores along the way in exchange for their sponsorship. He figured he could produce the commercials in addition to a full-length documentary about his bike trip. Both the commercials and the documentary would focus on what makes America
great--- and what people's favorite Subway sandwich is.

It's a
big, crazy dream, but with the help from some friends and support from his family, McDonald is on his way. To get started, he invited six friends over to his house one day and contacted over 500 Subway franchises.

"We each had a list and we called them all, told
them about the trip and then every Subway we got a hold of I'd put them on a list. Then I made little pamphlets for them and mailed them; 515 little things that gave a summary of my trip with a map, a piece of paper to say, ‘Yes, I will do this," and then I gave them an envelope to send back to me. I think I had about three that sent the letter back. Now that I've actually gotten close to leaving, I've gotten so many calls just in the last 48 hours of people saying, ‘Hey! Stop by mine. Put me on your list.' Right now, officially, I have about six. We'll see how many of them change their minds. I'm sure some of them will because a lot of them just did not think I was going to do it."

So,
McDonald left early yesterday morning and will be spending a few weeks on the mainland. After that he'll take the ferry to Bellingham. He expects to finish the trip in about three months. As for a back up plan...

"Back up plan is ... I'll sell
penny art, art made from pennies. I'm really confident that this trip will work out."

And after he finally makes it to Key West, he'll

start film production classes at Full
Sail University
where he's been awarded a generous scholarship.

"I don't tell a lot of people
this- because they think I'm crazy when I do- but if the trip does go
successfully and all that I said does actually happen, I really, really want to
be the first man to bike across Antarctica. They've got the technology now and
all the equipment to do such a trip and I think it would really be something
fantastic to do a documentary of biking across Antarctica, because that's just
incredible."

You
can follow McDonald's trip on his website .