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## Ridley completes his solo ocean journey

### BHS grad rows 3,000 miles to aid cancer fight

By George Basler • gbasler@gannett.com • Staff Writer • March 30, 2009

The posting on Paul Ridley's blog was short, written in capital letters, with exclamation points at the end.

Day 88: HE DID IT!!!

PAUL HAS LANDED SAFELY IN ANTIGUA!!! THE ROW HAS BEEN COMPLETED!!!

The posting signaled the end of a journey of 3,000 miles that began on Jan. 1 when Ridley, 25, a Binghamton High School graduate, set out from the Canary Islands off the African coast on a solo rowing trip across the Atlantic Ocean in his 19-foot boat.

He undertook the voyage to raise money for cancer research in honor of his mother, Katherine Raub Ridley, who lost her life to the disease in 2001.

Ridley landed at 2:30 p.m. Sunday on the Caribbean island of Antigua, 20 pounds lighter than when he started, CNN reported. A total of 19 - his canary-yellow rowboat Liv was 19 feet long - of his friends and family members were on hand to greet him, Ridley's blog said.

Ridley could not be reached for comment, but his father, the Rev. Mark Ridley, sent the Press & Sun-Bulletin an e-mail from Antigua.

"I can't tear Paul away from the party going on in his honor, but I'm happy to give you a brief response myself," wrote the elder Ridley, who is pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Vestal.

"Paul has promised us that this is his last ocean row, and we're so grateful! Even though he looks great, the row has taken a lot out of all of us!

"But we're thrilled that he and his sister, Joy, will continue the mission of Row for Hope with additional fundraising efforts in support of cancer research. The way they've turned the tragedy of losing their mother to cancer into a way to help others is truly inspiring. And, wow, is it good to



Paul Ridley is helped out of his boat, Liv, by his sister, Joy, on Sunday afternoon in Antigua. Ridley completed his 'Row for Hope' Sunday after spending nearly three months alone in the boat.



Paul Ridley celebrates completing his journey

have Paul back on dry land!"

The e-mail ends by thanking the newspaper for keeping Row for Hope in front of people in the Southern Tier for the past three months.

Only 85 people have attempted the nearly 3,000-mile east-to-west crossing, and most didn't make it. Paul Ridley is the youngest - and only the third American - to complete the voyage by rowing.

"It was incredible," he told CNN in an interview Sunday. "The whole Island of Antigua came out to greet me. The harbor was swarming with boats; a big crowd on dry land. It's really been an amazing reception."

Ridley, who lives and works in Connecticut, has raised about \$100,000 toward his goal of \$500,000 for cancer research. He plans to keep raising money and hopes more contributions will be forthcoming as media attention increases.



Paul Ridley, left, hugs his father, Mark Ridley.