



## SPORTS

**Capinho: Brazil's 'Forrest Gump'**

Print Page

**By Jerry Schultz, Special to the Green Valley News**

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Renato Capinho turned 37 on Saturday.

He is celebrating the occasion with a group of Southern Arizona organic farmers and marking the first 436 days of his planned five-year bicycle trip around the world to save the planet.

Known as "Forrest Gump" in his native Brazil, he pedaled past Green Valley on Mother's Day on a northward trek he said will take him through Canada, Alaska and the Bering Strait on his way to Siberia.

No, he allows, his bicycle doesn't float. While he will use no other conveyance on land, he will ferry across expanses of water.



JERRY SCHULTZ | SPECIAL TO THE GREEN VALLEY NEWS

Renato Capinho passes through Southern Arizona during his five-year quest in order to raise environmental awareness and to break the Guinness record for cycling the world.

He earned the Forrest Gump reference while spending two years running up and down Brazil and neighboring countries promoting ecological considerations in transportation choices.

"I was advocating using the body instead of motor vehicles to move from one place to another," he says. He has been promoting ecological issues since he turned 19 and says he logged more than 20,000 miles on his runs.

Capinho, pushing 5-foot-7, has a compact, athletic build, and a ready smile. Portuguese is his native language. He speaks a little Spanish, and less English. When fully loaded at 70 pounds, his modified Italian street bicycle probably weighs half as much as he does.

He says the bike has five gears, enabling him to climb any hill he has encountered so far.

Painted green, the bike sports a rectangular, wooden platform in front of the handlebars to carry his tent and cooking utensils, a small, water tight barrel behind the seat to carry food and water and a thick, tubular frame with heavy-duty, balloon tires.

A duct-taped, six-foot-high display panel on the back is assembled to resemble a man with a revolving globe for a head with a black line connecting the continents and countries Capinho plans to visit.

Tubular "arms" on either side of the panel hold flags of several of the countries he has visited. The panel, front and sides of the bike display news clippings about his journey.

After entering the United States from Mexico, Capinho pitched his tent on the 155-acre organic farm on the Santa Cruz River near Tubac operated by members of Global Community Communications Alliance, a faith-based organization with communities in the Santa Cruz Valley and Sedona.

"We were contacted by a woman in Mexico who was acquainted with our interest in the environment who told us Renato was headed our way," said Centria Lilly, a GCCA liaison minister. "We have invited him to stay with us in Sedona, as well."

Capinho was interviewed at the organization's Out of the Way Gallery in Tubac. Dalina Gracia, a GCCA member, assisted as interpreter.

One of 15 children, who says he has 60 nieces and nephews, the single Capinho began his bicycle quest March 24, 2007, determined to call attention to what he believes is man's mishandling of the earth's ecology and to break the Guinness world record for cycling around the world.

If all goes as planned, his journey will cover some 125,000 miles.

He was raised among farmers near Sao Raimundo Nonato, and says he has a primary school education. Capinho says began his quest because there are too many cars on the road and he would like to see them replaced with public transportation and bicycles.

He believes man is causing extreme temperature variations that did not exist when he was a child and he feels refineries, timber harvesting and other industrial enterprises are polluting the air and water.

"I started this trip because I am worried about nature being destroyed because there's too much pollution," he said. "Timber operations are destroying the trees and medicinal plants in the forests."

He believes man's carelessness is changing the weather, but the trend can be reversed because, "If we all get together, we can improve the situation." Those who debunk man's ability to influence climate change "are not very conscious," Capinho maintains.

His reception here has been the best of any he has experienced during his journey. His diet is mainly fruits and vegetables, although he does consume goat milk and cheese.

While he found food in some of the countries he has visited "quite toxic," he very much enjoyed the fare on the farm here because it was all organically grown and natural. He said he has found the Southern Arizona weather "very agreeable."

His travels through South and Central America have been without incident. Although he was told not to go into Mexico, he went anyway.

He says most people he has met have been very hospitable and generous and encouraging. He has no sponsors, but hopes to attract the attention of environmental groups which may help support his travels.

When traveling he says he can log more than 100 miles in 12 hours. While he has no specific travel plan, he lists Russia, China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar, Africa, Patagonia, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay on his itinerary.

He says he can be tracked through [www.renatocampinhoandarilho.spaces.live.com](http://www.renatocampinhoandarilho.spaces.live.com), his web page. His email address is [campinhoandarilho@hotmail.com](mailto:campinhoandarilho@hotmail.com).

While he doesn't carry a computer on the road, he says he gets on line at cyber cafes and libraries.

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[«] Return to Home

| [x] Close Window