

AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



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COVER— Texas' inaugural Quick and Dirty 1200k
in March. From L to R David Baxter, Brad Tanner,
Sarah Rice, and Holly Diop.

PHOTO DAN DRISCOLL

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President's Message

When I look at all the randonneuring going on in our country, it is an active, diverse scene. There are brevets, populaires, team events, permanents, 8k600k climbing events, gravel rides, and more. During 2022, our members cycled 3,178,274 kilometers in events and permanents – Wow! This year stands out with a large number of RUSA members trying to qualify to ride the 20th Paris-Brest-Paris Randonneur in August. There is excitement in the air, and perhaps some trepidation, as many RUSA members aspire to go to the Big Dance in France this summer.

American randonneuring began with PBP. Back in the early 1980s, after a few pioneering Americans rode the 1975 and 1979 events, a small domestic organization arose called

the International Randonneurs (IR). Its aim was to organize the American PBP qualifiers and send a contingent of American riders to PBP. Every four years IR would process regional brevet results and help riders go to France. Over time, an increasing desire to do randonneuring every year grew in our country, but IR didn't encourage this. Matters came to a head in 1998 and now we have Randonneurs USA and year-round BRM-style randonneuring with thousands of participants. (If you want to learn more about the early days of American randonneuring, go to the online RUSA Member's Handbook and read Johnny Bertrand's history there.) You should also know that there is another major event happening this August: RUSA's 25th anniversary!

But it all began with PBP. It is indeed a big deal in our sport. There are many other 1200k grand randonnées here and abroad, and many of them fine events, but PBP still holds sway as the premier 1200k randonneuring event. The 2023 edition will attract 8,000 participants from 66 countries around the globe. Like Muslims going to Mecca, all randonneurs should ride PBP at least once in their lives. Earning a PBP finisher's medal is indeed a major accomplishment, and I'm pleased to see that our American entries this year are strong.

For our 50 hard-working Regional Brevet Administrators (RBA) and their clubs, a PBP year likely means organizing extra events and processing more results, and the same is true for our tireless crew of RUSA volunteers who will process a big increase in US brevet results, memberships, new route approvals, and awards for members. Suffice to say, a PBP year is a busy year and I thank all of the RBAs and RUSA volunteers who make it all happen for the riders. If you are riding PBP qualifiers, please be sure to take a moment to thank your RBA and any club volunteers. And at PBP, please do the same for the volunteers helping you there. It will only take a moment, but it will mean a lot. Just like the very first PBP in 1891, and the first ACP randonneur PBP in 1931, there were volunteers helping the riders during their long journey. All of us are part of a long, wonderful sporting tradition.

Bonne route à tous!

—Bill Bryant
RUSA President
president@rusa.org



From the Editor

I am writing this at the end of April, and looking forward to the *flèche* this weekend. Initially the forecast called for up to 16 inches of snow in the foothills, and each team prepared an alternate route if icy roads forced us to stay low. But things have improved and the weather is looking good. All should go to plan, and thus kicks off the true start of the 2023 season for the Rocky Mountain Cycling Club.

The challenge with being a *randonneur* in Colorado is there just aren't enough good weather weekends. We don't start our normal SR series rides until May. This year, the *flèche* has been shifted to April to squeeze everything in, and like most years, we all cross our fingers that it won't snow. March and April are dicey months in the Rockies, with the heaviest snowfall of the year. On the upside, it usually melts in a day or two, as warm temperatures in the 50's and 60's are interspersed with snowstorms. But timing is everything.

Following an assortment of friends and acquaintances on the coasts, it is shocking to see most of the randos I know are done with their SR series before we have even begun – see Misha Heller's debut column as the newest member of the #THATSRANDO crew. But while she is done (and PBP qualified) the month of May is crucial for Coloradans; we don't have an ACP-approved 300k, 400k, or 600k before then. Most of us finish our series in the course of these three short weeks, if nothing is canceled due to inclement weather.

I don't necessarily think of this as "brevet season" so much as "sleep deprivation season." Sadly, I just don't sleep when I have a big ride. Not sure if it's the excitement or nerves (though I



should be past that now), but this is the time of year when sleep is hard to come by. And our early starts, trying to avoid afternoon storms up at altitude, mean that my alarm is going off at 1 a.m. each Saturday. So even if I can sleep, I am not getting much.

I have tried everything to get some shut eye before big events: a hot bath, a glass of wine, melatonin, sleeping pills. Nothing works and that means I am riding tired. But I have gotten used to it. I don't even bother to try and sleep during a 600k any more, and on the 1200's? Forget it! I never sleep the night before the longest rides when sleep counts most, so I start out at a deficit – you can see the results in Patrick's photo. Ironically, friends like gravel columnist Jonathan Fey can sleep literally anywhere and anytime – waiting for me on long rides he has been known to catch a bit of shut eye atop rock formations and tucked into roadside landmarks.

The funny thing is I never had trouble sleeping before RUSA, but I also never did things like stay up all night, not even in college.

For those of you who are riding your first 1200k this year and find that you have trouble sleeping like I do,

Trying to nap on the ferry on the first day of Treasure Cove 1200k last year. Failing.

—PHOTO PATRICK CHIN-HONG

please know that it can be done. If you find yourself laying awake in a hotel room, worried about the 3 a.m. alarm you have set, don't despair. You think you need sleep, but I have been shocked to discover that sometimes, rest will suffice. Closing your eyes and relaxing can confer many of the benefits of sleep in the short term. Perhaps that is why we have the *flèche* – for practice?

So grab some sleep if you can, but if you can't, try not to stress. All is not necessarily lost. Give yourself the chance and try to ride. A little caffeine and you might find that you are better off than you thought you'd be. If you find yourself nodding off on the bike, by all means, get off and rest. But lack of sleep is not an automatic deal killer, and it doesn't have to mean your ride is over. Sleep deprivation is just another rando rite of passage.

Sweet dreams.

—Corinne Warren
Editor, *American Randonneur*
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Hostage Takeover on the Amazon

BY LON HALDEMAN

For over 20 years I have been organizing tours to all corners of Peru. Most of our international tours go where tourists don't, and sometimes, we've gone two weeks in the back country without seeing another "gringo." This year was our "Andes to the Amazon" tour. We had ten cyclists from the United States along with us, and five from Peru, working as support staff. Many of our group were RUSA members and all were experienced adventure travelers: Leo Anderson, Noel Howes, Bill Bryant, Lois Springsteen, Kitty Goursolle, and Andy and Renee Speier.

The women of the Peru National Cycling Team organized our trip. The money raised from the tour helps with their travel expenses and entry fees for the coming year. The women's team doesn't receive as much funding as the men's cycling team or other mainstream national sports. I helped them develop a business similar to PAC Tour called "Peruvian Adventure Cycling Expeditions," or "PACE." Alessandra and her sister Samantha, both of whom race, were the main organizers. Alessandra had joined PAC Tour for the Northern and Southern Transcontinental Tours in 2021. They had also joined us on our past five tours across Peru.

After our group arrived in Peru, we flew over the Andes Mountains to the

city of Tarapoto. These tropical foothills on the rainforest side of the Andes offered several long climbs each day.

On Day Four, we rode further east into the Amazon basin. Our road climbed a mountain range with over

100 hairpin turns on the 50-kilometer descent, and it provided access to the most remote sections of jungle heading to the river port of Yurimaguas. It took us two days to reach the river port where we boarded a barge-type riverboat to start a 400-mile journey to the city of Iquitos, on the Amazon River. Iquitos is one of the most secluded large cities in the world, with 400,000 people, and it's only accessible by airplane or riverboat. Along the way, the riverboat would stop at secluded villages to deliver bags of rice and pick up bundles of bananas. I've traveled this way over ten times and it's always been a relaxing trip between challenging cycling days.

Our boat was over 100 feet long and the lower deck was filled with cargo. There were about 110 passengers, mostly locals traveling from Yurimaguas

Spectacular sunset from the deck of our boat.

—PHOTOS LEO ANDERSON



Arriving at the village of Nauta.

to Iquitos. We hung our hammocks on the upper deck and spread foam mats underneath. The boat was packed with luggage, families, and hammocks. It was a giant slumber party and everyone got to know their neighbors. The captain predicted we would arrive in the town of Nauta 30 hours later, in time for us to get off the boat, have dinner at a restaurant, and sleep in a local hotel. We would then ride the final 100 kilometers into the city of Iquitos.

Our first evening on the boat was relaxing as we watched the sunset highlight the silhouette of the trees lining the shore. The river was as wide as the Mississippi River near St. Louis. Watching the jungle float by is one of my favorite pastimes. Everything was peaceful except for the roar of the giant Caterpillar engine on the deck below our hammocks.



The boat's cook prepared a decent meal of soup, rice, and chicken for the passengers' dinner. Traveling on an Amazon riverboat is like camping, it's a good adventure. Our group of riders were exceptional travelers with great attitudes, and they could make the best of any situation, which would be useful in the days ahead.

The next day we made plans to unload our bikes and supplies from the boat in the early evening and transport everything to the hotel. In Tarapoto, we had bought several bundles of notebooks, pencils, workbooks, and other school supplies, intending to deliver them to some village schools where the boat stopped to drop off bags of rice. The captain said there was a village ahead where he planned to meet with

the village leaders for an hour, giving us plenty of time to deliver the donations.

As we neared the village, we noticed three small boats approaching, each full of men with spears and flying sizable Peruvian flags. Some of them were dressed as warriors, in traditional colorful robes and decorated with warpaint and headdresses. I assumed it was a welcoming party to greet us as we docked the boat. However, Alessandra and Samantha informed us we were being forced to stop and would not be allowed near the village. The three boats of village warriors boarded our larger vessel through the rear doorway near the propeller. We heard yelling on the lower deck in the engine room where a fight with the crew ensued. After a few minutes, the yelling, along



Our group of riders were exceptional travelers with great attitudes, and they could make the best of any situation, which would be useful in the days ahead.



Loading the bikes on board was a priority.

oil leakage had polluted the river and caused health problems. The village didn't think they were receiving any benefit from the oil companies drilling on their land.

The passengers were allowed to return to the boat, but Alessandra, Samantha, and I stayed behind with the chief to ask a few questions. The chief's name was Galo, and Alessandra said he must have had some education because he knew the legal terms of taking prisoners. The warriors had been careful not to threaten anyone with the guns they used for hunting during the takeover of the ship. Instead, they only had spears, clubs and machetes.

Alessandra asked the chief what they needed to improve their lives and he was well-prepared with a list of requests. The oil company must first stop polluting the river. They needed

with the roar of the Caterpillar engine, fell silent. We realized the warriors were not a welcoming party and had in fact stabbed one of the crew members and seized our boat's battery, disabling our engine.

Alessandra assured us we were not at risk as the warriors came up to our deck. She told us the warriors were looking for the crew. The captain, along with his crew, were quickly captured and taken back to the village. We were ordered to remain on the boat and told we would be held here for five to six days. Many of the local passengers were angry, but Alessandra kept everyone calm. She spoke with the warriors and encouraged the rest of the passengers not to start a fight.

Not knowing what to expect, I immediately started to inventory our water and cookies to determine if we

had enough to ration. The boat kitchen was closed so we couldn't access any supplies. By mid-afternoon, a few warriors re-boarded and ordered everyone to leave their luggage, exit the boat, and assemble on the island for a meeting. They were actually quite helpful in assisting everyone off of the boat and along the narrow wooden plank to the shore. They even carried a fellow in a wheelchair down the stairs and up the shore bank.

Once assembled, the village leaders encouraged passengers to make videos of the meeting and send it to the television stations in Peru. The speeches went on for about 30 minutes and it was all in Spanish, but we understood they were talking about their village's problems with the trans-Amazonian oil pipeline that crossed their land. For several years,



We realized the warriors were not a welcoming party and had in fact stabbed one of the crew members and seized our boat's battery, disabling our engine.

The river was really beautiful.

medical attention for the villagers with cancer and other problems from contaminated water, as well as a clean water source. They needed more economic opportunities to grow food, and sell their produce, and lastly, better educational opportunities.

In addition to cycling-related activities, Samantha had a job working with the government for economic development in rural jungle villages. She regularly traveled to remote villages and lived with them for several weeks while sleeping in a hammock and living in a basic hut. The chief was impressed she had contacts with the government who could help. We told the chief about the two schools we had built and our continued support of local schools with supply delivery to many river villages, and that we could help his village with more educational support in the future.



We told him about a water purification system we installed which could purify several hundred gallons of drinking water per day at a school with 1,000 students. The chief was thankful for our understanding of his village's problems. Although we were hostages, we felt the chief and warriors had reasonable requests that could be solved.

Now late afternoon, we knew we would be sleeping on the boat again that night. We had limited cell phone coverage, but managed a few calls to

the American Embassy and received many different reports of what would happen. Some said a rescue boat was on the way. Others said the police were coming, but even the fastest motorboat would take 10 hours to reach our remote location.

Fortunately, the cook on our boat was allowed to open his kitchen and prepare an evening dinner for everyone. We had a good meal and a peaceful night's sleep without the rumble of the engines.

The following day we heard new reports about what would happen. During the night, a large boat similar to ours had docked across the river. Unfortunately, it wasn't for us. Alessandra was on the phone with the Amazon Navy trying to find out why we couldn't use the recently arrived boat. These conversations continued throughout the day. Word came that the village would hold our original boat and crew hostage and release everyone else. We heard a few different tourists' embassies were planning to send smaller boats, but they would not have room for our bikes or extra luggage from the tour. Alessandra informed



Boarding the new boat.



The river was really beautiful.

the Amazon Navy that rescuing part of our group and leaving luggage behind was not an option and asked why we couldn't use the big boat that was docked nearby. After several more hours of negotiating, we were told that we could get on the other big boat if we each paid \$35 per person, which most of the locals traveling with us could not afford to pay. Alessandra spoke again with the captain of our original boat and argued that he was responsible for paying everyone's passage to continue their trip to Nauta and Iquitos. Finally, after a long negotiation, our original captain agreed to pay for the new boat to bring us to Nauta.

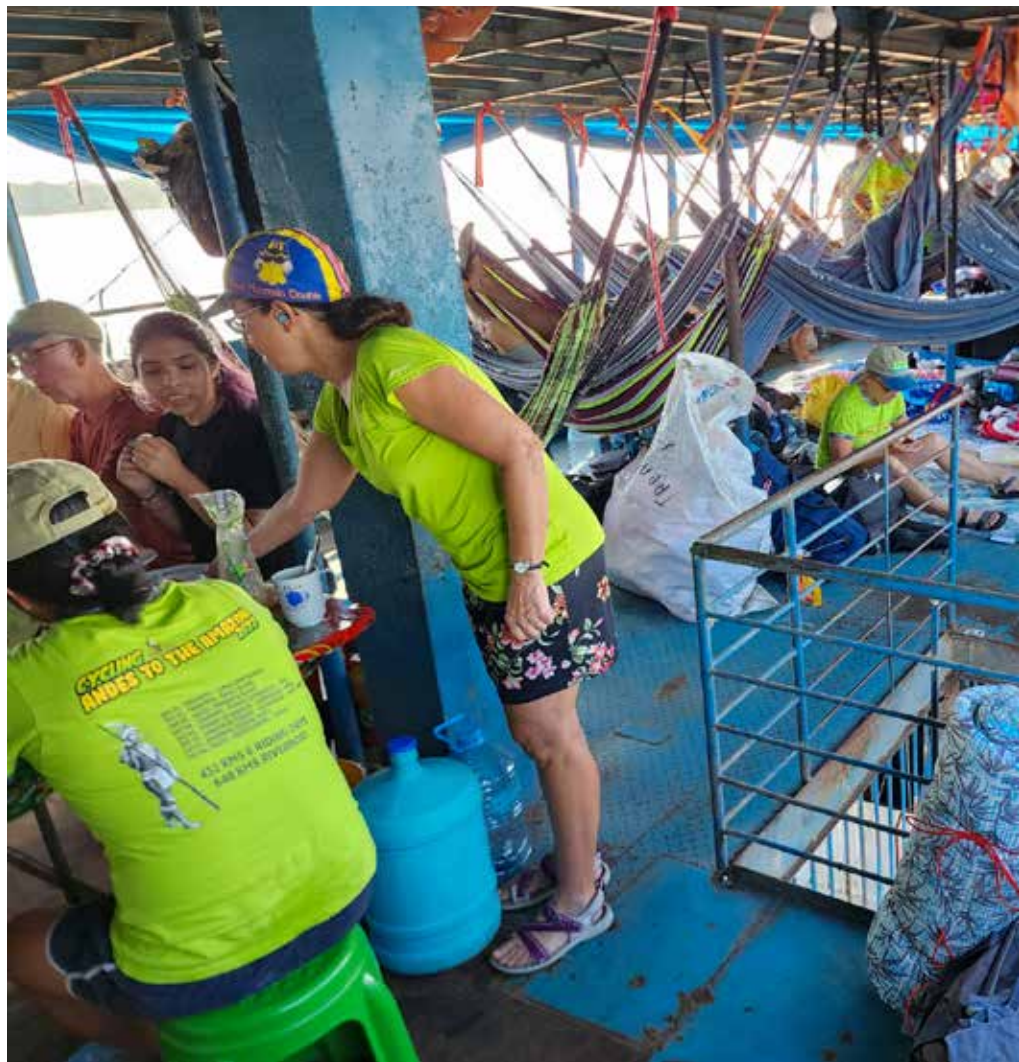
The new boat pulled alongside ours, and everyone started climbing from one boat to the other. The boats were not quite touching, so we had to be careful to avoid dropping luggage and supplies into the river between the boats. Our riders climbed up on the roof, passed the bikes to the new boat, and tied them into a bundle. We found out that the new boat was narrower and shorter. All the hammocks that barely fit on the original boat were even more tightly crammed together. Everyone was trying to find a walkway or empty corner to hang their hammock.

Fortunately, everyone on the boat was friends by now, and we could put

up with some discomfort as long as we were on a boat that would get us moving again. The village warriors helped transfer bags of rice, bundles of bananas, and other cargo from the lower deck of our old boat. Before we left the village, Alessandra and I met with the chief and other leaders and gave them the school supplies we had been carrying for three days. It was a small token of support for their village compared to what they needed, but

they were pleased by the gesture.

Our boat left the riverbank in the late afternoon, and we finally headed toward Nauta. The new boat had a loud Caterpillar engine that shook the upper deck, just like our old boat, but we were relieved to be moving. The new boat had no food, as they were not expecting guests, and we hadn't eaten all day. Fortunately, an hour later, we stopped at another village with a small general store where we bought



Everyone's hammocks were squeezed in.

Our group of experienced travelers.

spaghetti and canned sauce. We were allowed to use the boat kitchen, enabling us to feed our group and some of our fellow passengers. Overall, it was a good meal considering we didn't think we would get anything to eat besides crackers.

We made good progress on the river that night, but we were still over 30 hours behind our schedule. It looked like we would get to Nauta in the late morning – too late to ride the final 100 kilometers to Iquitos. Considering what we had been through during the past two days, everyone was happy to load the bikes on a bus and drive to Iquitos to get there by mid-afternoon. Alessandra had organized a bike race for the next day, and she still had to get riders registered and prizes sorted for the races. We



were all glad to arrive in Iquitos and take a hot shower after three nights of sleeping on the boats.

We were fortunate. Everything worked out. We had a fantastic group on our tour who pulled together to make the best of a bad situation. Everyone was impressed with how Alessandra and Samantha negotiated with the villagers and the other boat passengers to keep everything under control. It is not an experience we want to repeat, but it was an adventure we will all remember.

Alessandra and Samantha are coming to the United States this summer. They will be part of the PAC Tour crew on the Northern Transcontinental and New York Tours. If you have the chance to meet them, you will certainly enjoy listening to their stories about living in the Amazon jungle. 🚲

We were grateful for this simple spaghetti dinner.



Beyond Pavement

BY JONATHAN FEY

Iowa Wind and Rock

The situation is that I'm waiting on a train to arrive and there's a contingency. The contingency being it's up to an Amtrak conductor whether or not the bike goes on the train.

The chaos is inherent to everything I touch; in this case the logistics of traveling by train from my normal address in Denver, Colorado, to a gravel bike race in Iowa. It's not a quickly surmountable expanse of space.

I find mostly fields overnight, having been allowed a space for my bike on the cargo car, even though the station I'm getting off at, in Osceola, IA isn't equipped for a disembarkment of a stored bicycle.

Currently listening to: "Corn" by Arthur Russell.

Enough with that. I've not slept that well, and now am huffing a

somewhat heavy backpack with a fair bit of gear up a series of rolling paved hills from Osceola to St Charles, to the check-in for a gravel race called Iowa Wind and Rock.

Iowa Wind and Rock is, as far as I can tell, a love letter slash distant cousin to the venerable Trans-Iowa gravel bike race. It's a very difficult race, even by ultra-endurance standards. Finishing rates tend to be very low, due in part I suspect to the weather, but also the accumulated elevation. In 2021, the year in which I DNF'd this event, I clocked approximately 24,000 ft of elevation in 260 miles.

Trans Iowa has been written about extensively, and is one of those bedrock gravel races that makes American gravel racing what it is today. Wind and Rock, though relatively young, pays homage to Trans Iowa but forges fresh tracks as one of the few domestic gravel ultra races.

Although IWAR is a gravel race, it is relevant to randonneuring in two crucial aspects:

Self-reliance. This race, though it is technically proximal to Des Moines and some other minor Iowa towns, feels extremely remote. There's a real dearth of support on route, with hamlets spaced as far as 80 to 100 miles apart on the course. You're expected to resolve any mechanical, nutritional, or other logistical events on course.

Navigation. Here's the main way in which this bike race feels like randonneuring to me. The format is this: you follow paper cues to your first checkpoint, at which point you'll receive cues to follow to the second checkpoint, and so on. It's not exactly randonneuring, but most gravel racing has turned to electronic route navigation. IWAR is somewhat unique in this way.

Start: Winterset, IA. 4:00 am Saturday, late April.

One thing that happens at 40 miles into the race is I catch an edge in

Most of the course is rather desolate.

—PHOTOS JONATHAN FEY



With the dawn comes hope
that it will warm up.

a crusty, dried up tire track and hit the deck in a way that is not particularly gentle. This isn't so bad, other than the fact that I've fairly mangled my bike's derailleur hanger. There's a little bit of dermal abrasion that I'll ignore for a while.

Riders pass in one's and two's. They are generally eager to help, but of course no one's mechanically equipped to straighten a badly-bent hanger in the field. What I do is I physically manipulate the entire derailleur with my hands away from the center-line of the bike, to make it mostly straight to the drivetrain. It's not perfect but will get me by.

Then I pedal for a long time. Most of the pedaling in the short term isn't that hard. There's a muddy B road hike, where I pass a few people who lack the tire-frame clearance for accumulating wet soil. This part is hard, but it's not the hardest part by a long shot.

Maybe the hardest part is next, when we're all rolling slowly south into a direct headwind. I do most of this part alone, riding with folks here and there for five or 10 minutes at a time. Another rider from Colorado's Front Range struggles with a mechanical, rendering his front derailleur nearly useless. Meanwhile, I have access to about eight of my 11 gears. Enough to get by on.

The dust encountered is a big contrast to earlier. It's dry, hot, and very windy. Later investigations told me that there's an average wind speed of 26mph with gusts to 40mph.

The roads blare their paleness in my eyes. There's a mix of firm limestone base and loose ballast gravel. Every road is hemmed in with green, mostly grass fields, alfalfa maybe? And young corn stalks. It's all very open. You feel like the only person in a hundred miles, but of course this isn't true.



I reach either the second or third checkpoint, in the early afternoon, and continue south to a sequence of southward and westward 90 degree turns. Eventually, crossing into Missouri, I slowly traverse the length of a soft, rutted B road.

At last coming northward I have a little bit of tailwind, and then cross tail. These cross tailwinds want to blow me toward the right side of the road, which crowns off camber such that I'm forced to fight to keep the bike up coming across the gravel in between the road's tire tracks. It's mentally taxing.

Another checkpoint and a quick stop at a convenience store. After that, I link up with the third rider out on the road. It's nice to ride with someone for a while, and it's soon going to prove imperative that we're together.

Storm clouds construct themselves into large towers off to the west, which is coincidentally the direction in which we're heading. We're not moving very fast at this point. The rollers are interminable, and have taken their toll through the last 200 miles.

The wind swirls some. It's very dark, and there's a sequence of lighting strikes carving a weird morse code across the folds of cloud. On we go into a light, cold rain, then some heavier rain. Eventually the rain is nearing a downpour. This is the last we see of daylight.

I'm reminded of the first time I rode a 600k, a remote foray into the Rockies, into southern Wyoming, and

back across the plains in northern Colorado. During that ride, another rider and I took shelter in the middle of a thunder and hailstorm.

So it's not without precedent when I suggest we roll up a driveway toward the first large structure we see. The lightning is really close now. We're in a large metal garage with heavy farm equipment. Cell service is spotty, but we try to fire off a couple messages. Not moving we're getting colder so we're jumping around trying to stay warm. After about 20 minutes, the rain seems to ease up, and we pedal hard off into the night. The next bit is slow going, but it's good to have company in the dark hours.

We lose a little time fiddling with the navigation. My Garmin has stopped charging, so it's good to fall back on the paper cues. Good practice randoneurring skills keeps me calm on this point. It's hard to tell what time it is, but we move very slowly up the soft dirt hills, and are generally careful with our speed on the downhills. It's nice to just focus on the cues and the patch of headlight on the road after a long day of bright, harsh light.

Eventually, we cross a freeway, make a right turn and another right turn. We're on what used to be a road but is now just grass and mud. I'm able to ride a little bit but mostly push my bike alongside me. My partner is required to carry his bike. My feet are very wet, and I stop frequently to

knock mud off the bottom and sides of my shoes. I'm not aware of it now, but this is going to be a common theme for the next eight hours.

There are a couple people with head lamps up ahead. They're taking photos of us, cataloging our misery.

Finally, we emerge back from this shallow ring of hell. The cue sheet brings us to a large rest stop/convenience store (I think this is on I-80) where the two riders ahead of us have stopped for food and coffee. It must be 4am or so. It's a sort of detente, being all together 60 or 70 miles from the finish. None of us is particularly anxious to get rolling, so we take our time. It feels good to change into dry socks.

The race organizer, Sarah Cooper, sees us off into the early morning. It's still dark when we head out. We miss a couple turns and have to backtrack a little. Eventually, the sun starts to glow in the east behind the flashing rows of red lights, guiding pilots.

The roads are still wet and soft, so we're all moving along pretty slowly, but as the light comes out, we start to push a little harder on the pedals.

Eventually, fatigue takes its toll on my overnight partner, and he falls back. The last three of us push ahead. The hills continue to roll out ahead of us. Eventually I push hard to close a gap ahead of me, and the third rider doesn't come with me. At the same time, I realize I'm losing ground on the rider ahead of me. I push really hard to stay on his wheel, but it's over, he's off 50, then a hundred yards ahead soon enough. I can keep track of him for a while, but eventually he disappears.

Only to reappear behind me. He's made a navigation error, made up the ground he lost, and caught me again. We enter the second-to-last B road together. He's able to shoulder his bike, while I'm forced to walk mine. I struggle here, and he's got ground on me again. This is almost the last I

see of him. This hiking section is very slow. The mud sticks to everything. My lower back hurts from carrying the bike where I have to. Even this doesn't last forever, though.

In hindsight, the last hour or so is a blur, although I'm sure that's not how I felt at the time. There are a few really tall, steep hills, and one more mud/walking section. A stretch of pavement, a short climb on a gravel driveway.

The finish: St Charles, IA. Sunday. Maybe 10am? I arrive second of about six official finishers. A couple more finish after the time cut. My back hurts from having carried my bike so much. A little conversation to deconstruct the ride with my fellow finishers.

I return home, tired, in a sequence of cars and trains.

By the time this article has come out, I hope to have completed my second Iowa Wind and Rock, building toward a first successful completion of Paris Brest Paris. 🚲

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The Midwest Strade Bianche Rouleur Challenge

BY DAWN PIECH, GREG SMITH, ERIC PETERSON,
DOUG MCCLERRAN, AND RANDY ANDERSON

With the approved Rouleur award and introduction of gravel into our randonneuring toolbox, a group of us accepted a challenge developed by Greg Smith, Regional Brevet Administrator (RBA) of Quad City Randonneurs. In this article you will hear from Greg on his idea for this challenge, as well as from some participants of the 2022 Midwest Strade Bianche Rouleur Challenge in Northwestern Illinois and Eastern Iowa.

From Greg Smith

As RBA of the Quad Cities Randonneurs, one of the challenges I face when developing new routes is linking together the sort of quiet roads that we enjoy riding on brevets that don't include sections of gravel. Eastern

Iowa and Northwestern Illinois are farm country, and that means gravel, and, well, not everybody is into riding gravel. However, when the RUSA board approved the Rouleur award, I thought it would be fun to create a series of rides that celebrate cycling's long history

of riding and racing on "white roads" while at the same time highlighting one of the significant characteristics of the region – gravel roads.

With that in mind, I created the unofficial Strade Bianche Rouleur Challenge. The Challenge would include the series of rides required to earn the Rouleur award (100K, 125K, 150K, 200K, and Dart Team event) with the additional requirement that all the rides except the 200K must include gravel. So, Dawn Piech and I set to work developing the routes for the rides. Dawn worked on the shorter routes, which would be held in Northwest Illinois, and I tackled the 150K and Dart routes in Eastern Iowa. For the latter I drafted Mike Fox, who came through with an excellent route that met all the requirements for a Dart team ride.

I decided that a fun way to schedule the rides would be to hold two events per weekend with the shorter ride starting later on Saturday morning and the longer one starting early on Sunday so riders coming from afar would only have to spend a single night in a hotel. This would also allow the all-important get together post-ride on Saturday to discuss the day's ride and how great we are!

Dart Team – Greg Smith, Randy Anderson, Dawn Piech and Doug McClerran – in Elklander, IA.

— PHOTO DAWN PIECH





Driftless region of Illinois on the 100k.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH

Doug McClerran, Dawn Piech, Greg Smith, and Eric Peterson on a 125k mixed terrain route out of Stockton, Illinois.

—PHOTO DOUG MCCLERRAN



- The brief for the routes was:
1. Must include a significant portion of gravel.
 2. Should be rideable on a regular road bike with 28mm tires or larger by riders that were new to riding on gravel.
 3. Some segments of walking were OK, but nothing too long.
 4. Loop routes so we wouldn't have to worry about transporting riders and bikes.
 5. Reasonable opportunities to restock food and water on the ride. This was challenging since there aren't a whole lot of convenience stores on gravel roads!

The general idea was to give “dyed in the wool” roadies (I count myself among this group) a taste of riding gravel, so no “Unbound Gravel” terrain. I felt the combination of relatively short distances required to earn the Rouleur with gravel roads that were friendly to those who were new to riding gravel

would be a good intro and might pique the interest of both experienced randonneurs and new riders.

Detailed here are the 100k, 125k, 150k, and the Dart. Each of the participants in the Midwest Strada Bianche Routler Challenge completed their respective 200k on their own. A Q&A with the riders follows, where they discuss the pros and cons of this terrain, their gear and bike set up, as well as final thoughts on this particular series.

100K (8-20-22, Stockton, Illinois)

This was the opening weekend. Greg Smith, Eric Peterson, and Dawn Piech started later than normal (10:00 am) so those who lived farther away could drive to the start on the morning of the ride.

The route started and finished in Stockton, IL. This was a relatively easy gravel route with 3,226 feet of

elevation gain, but 28mm tires or greater were recommended for easier negotiation of the gravel sections. Roughly 23% of the route was on gravel, including some gravelly climbs, so all participants got the full experience. We used the RUSA “gravel timer” to account for the somewhat slower pace on the gravel segments.

There were ample stops to refuel and refresh water bottles along the route, including optional but needed stops at the Pecatonica Tap House in Warren and Lena Brewery in Lena.



Greg Smith, Dawn Piech and Eric Peterson at Lena Brewery on the 100k.

— PHOTO DAWN PIECH

32.4 miles of gravel (33%), and 66 miles of pavement (67%). Although it was a sunny day, they had to fight a brutal headwind for the first half of the route. As Doug stated, “Randy Anderson was very kind, pulling me the entire first half into a brutal cold wind on the 150K ride. Once we had a tailwind, I encouraged him to continue at his ‘in-shape’ pace while I took a few scenery pictures.”

Q&A

What did you find most enjoyable about the ride(s)?

Eric Peterson: I liked riding in new areas and the challenge of a different kind of terrain. With the mix of gravel and paved surfaces, I know this was not a true gravel ride, but it was a good introduction.

Doug McClerran: I enjoyed the almost-zero car traffic of the Stockton 150K route and the two-rides-in-one-weekend format.

Dawn Piech: I enjoyed the low-traffic routes and the scenery in the

All riders who completed the route received credit for 36k of gravel, which counts toward other gravel related RUSA awards under development. Unfortunately, we missed the time cut off because of getting caught in a bad storm, changing a flat tire a few miles from the finish, and too much time at both Pecatonica and Lena Brewery. Greg listed the ride again in early October, and we finished in ample time.

125K (8-21-22, Stockton, Illinois)

This was the second ride in the series and also started and finished in Stockton, IL. Greg Smith, Eric Peterson, Doug McClerran, and Dawn Piech tackled this challenging 81-mile route, 37 of which were gravel with 5,820 feet of climbing. This route was considerably tougher than the 100K route the day before and included more gravel sections with just about half of the route on gravel. The route included several steep climbs and descents on gravel, so wider tires (32mm or greater) and good brakes were a must.

DART (9-24-22, Eldridge, Iowa)

The third ride in this series was a team event. As we did on the first Strade Bianche weekend, we started later so participants who lived farther away could drive to the start without having to stay in a hotel beforehand.

We had one team, which included Greg Smith, Doug McClerran, Randy Anderson, and Dawn Piech. The route was 83.5 miles, with 2,961 feet of climbing, 24.5 miles of gravel (29%), and 59 miles paved (71%).

150K (9-25-22, Eldridge, Iowa)

The final gravel route was a new route, “Give me a Clearance for Clarence,” that both Doug McClerran and Randy Anderson completed. The route was 98.4 miles, 3,456 feet of climbing,



Driftless region of Illinois. It's a pretty spectacular area to ride in. I think in two days of riding, maybe 10-15 vehicles passed us the entire time.

What did you find most challenging about the ride(s)?

Eric Peterson: There were some gravel sections where it was difficult to keep rolling because the gravel was pretty chunky. There were also some washboard sections that were not that great to ride on.

Doug McClerran: In Stockton the hills, in Iowa the wind.

Dawn Piech: I would have liked more gears than offered on my Surly Moonlander fat bike. Although I was able to complete the rides without having to walk up the steep pitches, some of the grades were quite challenging. Truth be told, you could hear me yell some "not so nice" words as I tried to get up the crest of some of the climbs on the 125k out of Stockton. But hey, I developed the routes, so I had nobody to blame but myself.

Thoughts on gear/bike set up?

Eric Peterson: Since I don't have a gravel bike, for gravel I use an old Trek

7000 hardtail mountain bike with 1.9" tires, Kenda Small Block. This bike has a triple with a 22T granny gear, so with a 28T cassette I had a nice low gear. This bike has GripShift shifters, which are great for maintaining control while riding. Since these were pretty short rides, I only needed a seat-post bag for tools/spare tires and a small handlebar bag for bars. Everything else I was able to stuff in my jersey pockets. This is not a tubeless set up, so I had to carry spare tubes, which is a pain since they are heavy and bulky.

Doug McClerran: Bike choice, there's no wrong answer – we had rando, gravel, mtb, and fat bikes, and everyone did fine. I rode 40mm smooth tread tires with low psi for comfort and flat prevention. I wouldn't attempt this with less than 32mm tires. As far as gearing goes, even with a 30x34 low gear, I struggled on a few hills on the Stockton course. Greg's 42T cassette and Eric's mtb triple were wise choices. Sometimes loose gravel will take away the option of standing, so I suggest bringing lower gears than you think you'll need and walkable shoes just in case. The routes from Stockton are remote with few chances for food/

water, so carry more than you think you'll need.

Dawn Piech: I liked the stability of my Surly Moonlander fat bike on the downhill. The 4.2" tires offered me more confidence on those fast descents.

In our new gravel program, what makes this a nice change from typical all pavement routes?

Eric Peterson: Since brevet routes typically avoid gravel, these rides opened up new roads for rides. There did seem to be less traffic on these roads, which was a nice change. I think Iowa probably has better potential for all-gravel routes while Illinois probably has more options for mixed terrain rides. If underlying tools (e.g., RWGPS) did a better job of differentiating gravel from pavement, it might be easier to plan such routes.

Doug McClerran: The differences that I see from usual rando rides: tires, gearing, pacing, and water/food. As for pacing, it's natural to equate time and food/water to distance, but loose, hilly gravel will require a "recalculate."

Dawn Piech: The low-traffic roads were a nice change from typical rando routes. I always bring more food/water than I anticipate since the pacing on these routes tends to be slower than routes on 100% pavement. My fat bike also made me slower.

We hope this gives you an idea on how to challenge yourself by doing a gravel Rouleur series. We all also welcome you to come to the Midwest to play gravel and rando with us. You will find that our region is not flat and boring. And stay tuned, as you will find some epic rando excursions on the horizon here in 'da Midwest! 🚲

Blue skies on the 150k outside of Elklander, IA.

—PHOTO DOUG MCCLERRAN



Paris-Brest-Paris: A Few Good Ideas

The year I attempted my first PBP was 2007. It did not go well. This was predictable as I was relatively new to randonneuring and mistakenly thought finishing one rather flat SR series would satisfy most of my training needs.

I returned in 2011, better trained, having finished a hilly 1000k the previous year and with invaluable knowledge of the logistics peculiar to riding PBP. I finished in 2011, 2105, and 2019, and now find myself in a peculiar situation, that of being a PBP 2023 observer. Having attended four iterations of the ultimate brevet I thought I should share a few bits of hopefully helpful information.

Some general, common-sense information first. The temperature

along the route can vary greatly and I think I have been rained on a least a little bit every year. The climb out of Brest is often foggy enough to drench your clothes. Bring along a rain jacket and multiple layers to keep you warm.

Wool is the best – it is lightweight, quick drying, doesn't hold odors and will insulate even when wet. If you don't have any wool or live in a climate where it is never needed, consider purchasing one or two items – Ibex, Icebreaker and Smartwool all have

reliable and well-made products.

Fenders are also an integral ingredient for remaining as dry as possible. My PBP bike had beautiful aluminum fenders that gave me so much trouble in 2011 that I removed them during the ride. In 2015 I went without them and in 2019 I removed them just before the start.

If you are not adept at placing your aluminum fenders on your bike or you do not currently use fenders, you may want to consider purchasing a quick release version such as the SKS Speedrocker. These are easy on, easy off, very simple to adjust, lightweight and will very effectively protect you from road spray.

Efficiency at controls is the major method I employ to improve my overall average pace, but this can be tricky at PBP. Some controls are famous for their long lines while others will appear relatively empty. Here is my quick and dirty control primer:

In general, most controls have seated dining options and also a take-away sandwich option. Sometimes it can be much more efficient to purchase a few sandwiches and supplement that with food bought along the route.

Vegetarians/vegans may also find that options are limited at some controls – you will pass many markets, bakeries and cafes which are usually worth a stop if you find yourself having trouble with the control food.

Nigel Greene outside the starting corral.

—PHOTO PETE NEWMAN





Famous crepe and postcard control – not to be missed!.

—PHOTO CHRIS NEWMAN

OUTBOUND

Mortagne-au-Perche – has not traditionally been an official control but at 120 kilometers into the ride you may want to stop as the first official control is another 100 kilometers away. It is also (usually) nighttime, so services may be limited. Depending on your start time there may be a line for food.

Villaines-la-Juhel – a.k.a. Party City. Be ready for rock star treatment. This is a large control and services are quite spread out. The main dining area is across the street from control check-in. Locals will carry your food tray for you and there is also a sandwich station in the main dining area.

Fougeres – also sprawling. You will pass the dining area on the way to check in. I have never had to wait long here for food.

Tinténiac – in four attempts I have never found the dining room at this control. Strictly a pickup a sandwich place for me. Can be very crowded.

Loudeac – an absolute zoo. Many folks will stop here to sleep so parking is crowded, and the food line can be very long. I think there is a sandwich stand outside.

Carhaix – last control before Brest. May be crowded and in 2015 they ran out of food for the slowest returning riders. There are restaurants and a lovely bakery just past the control along the outbound route.

Brest – a sprawling control. I have never found the food here and I have never eaten at this control. The best idea is to stop at the little town of Sizun several miles before Brest, which is at the top of the big climb and right on the route. There is a market, several restaurants, roadside stands and a bakery which sells Breton Butter Cake, or kouign amann, which is truly one of the best deserts I have eaten in my life. I still think about it. Stop and get a slice.

INBOUND

Mortagne – an official control on the way back. Lots of folks sleeping here, parking can be very crowded, but food line is usually not too long.

Dreux – you're almost done! Loads of food and pastries, no waiting and plenty of tables. If you are at the back of the pack, consider hanging out here for a bit to finish in Adrian Hands territory of over 88:55.

The French fans are lovely and generous, and many will offer you food and snacks along the way. This is a fabulous way to supplement your calories and interact with the locals whose cheering will lift even the most dispirited rider.

And, don't miss the crepe stand in La Tannière, east of Fougeres. I only stopped last time which made me regret not having stopped on previous rides.

All the crepes you can eat in return for sending a post card when you get home. Look for my submission on the famous "wall of cards." Even if you are pressed for time, this is a must stop!

Personal hygiene

A warning for all the women headed to PBP: there is no such thing as a women's rest room at PBP. The sign may say Dames/Madames but men apparently lose their ability to read when confronted with a line at the Hommes restroom.

And everyone, please, tuck some toilet paper in your pocket as the controls tend to run out as the ride progresses.

Showers are available at many controls but my one experience using them was bleak with very limited availability and a long line. If you think you might shower at a control, bring along a quick dry chamois towel; the towel they provided me was an oversized paper towel.

Sleeping

I recommend it! I have taken many naps along the route and have never been forced into sleeping in the proverbial ditch. You will pass through many villages and there is always a bench, bus stop, church, or ATM lobby where you can nap safely. Sleeping at controls means sleeping in a room with dozens if not hundreds of other riders who are snoring, talking, and folding up their excruciatingly noisy emergency space blankets. AGGHH! Bring along ear plugs or earphones and eye shades. Blankets, mats, and pillows are provided.

PBP is a grand adventure and one I am sorry to be missing this year. I hope you all stay safe, have fun, and thoroughly enjoy the adventure of a lifetime! Bonne Route! 🚲

New RUSA Members

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
15966	Campbell, Christopher P	Anchorage	AK	16104	Patel, Vishal	San Francisco	CA	15950	Bojda, Michael	Chicago	IL
15931	West, Blair Taylor	Odenville	AL	15970	Pazuchowski, Danny	San Francisco	CA	15942	Geilen, Frank	Chicago	IL
15922	Lozano, Victor W	Goodyear	AZ	16105	Schneider, Jordan	San Francisco	CA	16014	Haley, W	Chicago	IL
15956	Moran, Jim	Goodyear	AZ	16009	Zelikson, Dina	San Francisco	CA	16035	Ketsides, Rafael	Chicago	IL
15955	Wollgast, Mark T	Goodyear	AZ	16022	Hallimore, Leslie	San Gabriel	CA	15954	Leyh, K	Chicago	IL
15967	Mckinley, David N	Peoria	AZ	16093	Hanley, Josh	San Jose	CA	16012	Reid, Stephanie E	Chicago	IL
15975	Drzymalski, G	Surprise	AZ	16248	Kratzer, Frank	San Jose	CA	16150	Frye, Christopher A	Evanston	IL
16067	Burris, Ashton	Tucson	AZ	16049	Nguyen, John P	San Jose	CA	16047	Galarza, Edwin	Kildeer	IL
16201	Rapier, Andrew	Delta	BC	16018	Raghunathan, Amarnath	San Jose	CA	16130	Couwenhoven, R W	Mokena	IL
16091	Moloney, Luke	Vancouver	BC	16015	Tan, Wangda	San Jose	CA	16100	McVey, Lewis	Oak Park	IL
15991	Tough, Murray	Victoria	BC	15988	Jackson, Jacob Roy	San Luis Obispo	CA	16165	Miller, Forrest Anthony	Oswego	IL
16129	McCall, Hugh S	West Vancouver	BC	15986	Robinson, Alan A	San Mateo	CA	16052	Schweikert, Dave	Carmel	IN
16005	Price, Michael R	Alameda	CA	16084	Varro, Adam	San Mateo	CA	16004	Lemley, Kent York	Columbus	IN
16043	Boerst, Uwe	Altadena	CA	16160	Smith, Ben	San Pedro	CA	16206	Ashburn, Kris	Crawfordsville	IN
16089	ODonnell, Mike P	Arcata	CA	15958	Martinez, Julio	San Ysidro	CA	16185	Anderson, Anne	Indianapolis	IN
16020	Ryan, Kerry	Bakersfield	CA	15943	Rudin, Adem E	Santa Clara	CA	16177	Silverman, Daniel	Indianapolis	IN
16134	Mirocha, Claire	Berkeley	CA	16088	Varro, Krisz	Saratoga	CA	16025	Taylor, John A.	Indianapolis	IN
16142	Walton, Alex	Berkeley	CA	15953	Mardinian, Olivier	Sunnyvale	CA	16187	Welcher, Brian	Indianapolis	IN
16053	Naranjo, Michael	Burlingame	CA	16161	Teunissen, Joost A	Tulare	CA	16172	Clark, Ryan T	Noblesville	IN
16146	Holtan, E	Carlsbad	CA	15993	Lasley, Kyle L	Visalia	CA	16181	Southwood, Thomas	Westfield	IN
16135	Fink, Torsten	Castro Valley	CA	16200	Bourvie, Lukas Jordan	Boulder	CO	16199	Bentley, Gary B	Carlisle	KY
16023	Mendez, David	Claremont	CA	16205	van den Boogaart, Monique	Boulder	CO	16145	Smith, Derek B	Owensboro	KY
16024	Mendez, Elaine	Claremont	CA	16184	DuPont, Aimee	Castle Pines	CO	16109	Abbasi, Saad	Arlington	MA
16013	Nowakowski, Jacek	Escondido	CA	16210	Corson-Rikert, Tyler	Denver	CO	16086	Hickey, Jason L	Athol	MA
16087	Nafel, Gloria J	Huntington Beach	CA	16220	Fulmer, Madeline I	Denver	CO	16107	Borgono, Robert	Belmont	MA
16040	Ao, Chi O	La Canada Flintridge	CA	16221	Sunset, Timothy Oluf	Denver	CO	16227	Wolff, Andre G	Belmont	MA
15965	Domitrowich, Amanda	Los Altos	CA	16225	Henry, Derek A	Highlands Ranch	CO	16244	Stearns, David	Bolton	MA
16121	Huston, Charlie C	Los Angeles	CA	16216	St Germain, David	Littleton	CO	16111	Abbe, Nathan	Boston	MA
15944	Landers, Patrick	Los Angeles	CA	16097	Geiger, Steve Glenn	Thornton	CO	16169	Guha, Rajarshi	Boston	MA
15952	Tnasuttimonkol, Michael	Los Angeles	CA	16140	Libasci, Donald	Westminster	CO	16118	Gutierrez, Helmer Andres	Boston	MA
16114	Gracey, James	Mill Valley	CA	16079	Anderson, Eric Z	Andover	CT	16217	Semenov, Daniil	Boston	MA
16021	Vangilder, Maria C	Monrovia	CA	16075	Pavelchak, John	Bristol	CT	16240	Tyson, Mitchell R	Boston	MA
15977	Teter, Darius	Mountain View	CA	16120	Lemcoff, M	Simsbury	CT	16098	Kaminski, Keith	Brighton	MA
15918	Beck, Ryan J	Nevada City	CA	16239	Elderen, Cas Van	Stamford	CT	16246	Clemons, Rose	Brookline	MA
16196	Levine, Carrie	Nevada City	CA	16238	Vugs, Lotte	Stamford	CT	16162	Meyer, Stan	Brookline	MA
15969	Joslin, Terry	Novato	CA	16036	Adamsen, William	Wilton	CT	16119	Payette, Pierre D	Cambridge	MA
16095	Angel, Brooke N	Oakland	CA	16212	Bauman, Peter Aron	Washington	DC	16131	Ruttenberg, Robert	Cambridge	MA
16094	Escajeda, Arturo M	Oakland	CA	15936	Marble, Noah	Washington	DC	15933	Kessel, Clyde	Carlisle	MA
15979	Hill, Jos	Oakland	CA	16208	Sacks, Daniel	Washington	DC	16063	Bandi, Rachel S	Concord	MA
16137	MacDonald, Kate	Oakland	CA	16148	Meier, Joshua	Middletown	DE	16138	Elms, Frank W	Concord	MA
15947	Mejia, Lucio	Oakland	CA	15996	Lopes, Rodrigo M	Miami	FL	15971	Youngberg, Crispin D	Greenfield	MA
15959	Mueller, Rae H	Oakland	CA	16059	Rose, Michael T	Palm Beach Gardens	FL	16037	Lillie, Peter	Leominster	MA
16139	Phan, Hank	Oakland	CA	15927	Sturtz, Scott	Palm Beach Gardens	FL	16116	Prentiss, Neil	Medford	MA
15921	Charton, Robert B	Petaluma	CA	15929	Sturtz, Scott	Palm Beach Gardens	FL	16103	Cote, John P	Monson	MA
16048	Carillo, Christian R	Rancho Cordova	CA	15928	Wissinger, Sandra	Palm Beach Gardens	FL	16198	LaGrone, A Welling	Natick	MA
15995	Jennings, Matt	Redwood City	CA	15930	Wissinger, Sandra	Palm Beach Gardens	FL	16123	Adkins, Tom	Newton	MA
16033	Dela Cruz, Bobby	Sacramento	CA	16192	Barron, Keith	The Villages	FL	15919	Mansoor, Mark	Newton	MA
15990	Lucas, Beth	Sacramento	CA	16191	Barron, Suzanne	The Villages	FL	16159	Kraime, Mike	Newton Upper Falls	MA
15926	Mccorkell, Peter	San Diego	CA	16010	de Souza Costa, Thiago	Windermere	FL	15968	Dakan, Myles Louis	Northampton	MA
16156	Cona, Christopher	San Francisco	CA	15925	Gable, Robert W	Decatur	GA	15935	Weatherwax, Erin C	Pittsfield	MA
15941	Fernandez, Jessie	San Francisco	CA	15972	Riddle I, B. R.	Leesburg	GA	16234	MacRae, Duncan C	Roslindale	MA
16136	Gilles, Matthew L	San Francisco	CA	16115	Wood, Daniel D	Norwalk	IA	16127	Peat, Jennifer B	Salem	MA
16141	Higgins, Alexandra	San Francisco	CA	15978	Fletcher, Andrew C	Horseshoe Bend	ID	16108	Rasulov, Hikmat	Sharon	MA
16133	Hipkin, Sean J	San Francisco	CA	16031	Udas, Ken	Moscow	ID	16232	Schultz, Karl	Shomerville	MA
15997	Imperial IV, George L	San Francisco	CA	16195	Gruman, James	Aurora	IL	16163	Williams Jr, Robert	Sudbury	MA
15940	Ng, Kyle	San Francisco	CA	16237	Kirkwood, Jacob	Bartlett	IL	16072	Vandermark, Patria	Waltham	MA

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
16066	Roy, Tanya M	Wellesley	MA	15964	Niles, Dustin	Brooklyn	NY	16211	Ference, Brandon	Pittsburgh	PA
16113	Wilder, T	West Newton	MA	16056	Rea, Joshua	Brooklyn	NY	16143	Rymar, Adam	Pittsburgh	PA
16099	Duffy, Fintan A	Westborough	MA	16039	Colbert, David R	Camillus	NY	16007	Davis, Blake A	Plum	PA
16046	Castor, Robert W	Westfield	MA	15949	Jamir, Jeryl Castro	Elmhurst	NY	15932	Sallee, Lisa	Jamestown	RI
16028	McGrail, Timothy	Worcester	MA	16077	Goldman, John D	Elmira	NY	15989	Guichemerre, Romain	Johnston	RI
16011	Arwood, Ash	Aberdeen	MD	16125	Walters, Keith	Geneseo	NY	16016	Callahan, Cole	Wakefield	RI
16207	Barkei, Kurt J	Abingdon	MD	16188	Engineri Jr, Paul J	Interlaken	NY	15948	Young, Jessica L	York	SC
15924	Hale, C A	Baltimore	MD	16044	Dodici, Gian	Ithaca	NY	16157	Christensen, Al D	Sioux Falls	SD
16057	Holtzman, Jonathan	Baltimore	MD	16154	Gruen, Nancy	Ithaca	NY	15992	Inocente, Edmund M	Saskatoon	SK
16092	Siegel, Sheryl	Grand Rapids	MI	16226	Joyce, Rob	Ithaca	NY	15983	Rajcani, Peter	Arlington	TX
16209	Ewald I, John David	Hazel Park	MI	16230	Naeem, Kamal	Ithaca	NY	15987	Sanchez, Isaac A.	Austin	TX
16080	Riedle, Bradley D	Northville	MI	16231	Ogbonna, Gerald	Ithaca	NY	16034	Dyer, Larry	Cleburne	TX
16166	Schwark, Paul	Royal Oak	MI	15946	Poles, David J	Ithaca	NY	15937	Bernardo, Raphael	Irving	TX
16000	Tyrrell, Frances C	Royal Oak	MI	16243	Wayman, Sondra	Ithaca	NY	16112	Eggleston, Jeff W	Bountiful	UT
16153	Dimercurio, Annette R	Sterling Heights	MI	16061	Chakraborty, Ritam	Jamaica	NY	16193	Klinger, Sam A	Clearfield	UT
16152	Dimercurio, Fred J	Sterling Heights	MI	16117	Tafta, Jeffrey	Long Beach	NY	16082	Higgins, Patrick James	Eagle Mountain	UT
16197	Brady, Steven T.	Blaine	MN	16151	Elman, Natan	New York	NY	16229	Tyson, Jim	Layton	UT
15934	Moen, Phil	Eden Prairie	MN	16158	Jacome, Ramiro	New York	NY	16223	Goldenberg, David P	Salt Lake Cit	UT
16194	McCrea Jr, Dale	Glencoe	MN	16001	Lagache, Elsa	New York	NY	16175	Beall, Christopher D	Salt Lake City	UT
16124	Baker, Chris	Golden Valley	MN	16164	Puckett, Todd	Setauket	NY	16174	Birky, Donovan K	Salt Lake City	UT
16070	Myers, Luke E	Minneapolis	MN	16241	Surrena, Keith M	Trumansburg	NY	16242	Fraser, George	Salt Lake City	UT
16182	Neel, Christina M	Minneapolis	MN	16186	Fitzsimmons, Brian L	Warwick	NY	16171	Rasmussen, Logan	Salt Lake City	UT
16180	Noble, Jack	Minneapolis	MN	16045	Schlatter, Robert L	Columbus	OH	16081	Shiple, Patrick	Arlington	VA
16222	Rata, Cristian G	Minneapolis	MN	16071	Eifel, Paul	Dublin	OH	16101	Asel, Paul J.	Falls Church	VA
16247	Rude, Chris	Minneapolis	MN	16176	Jackson, Kevin	Medina	OH	16096	Hampton, Patrick	Henrico	VA
16183	Schuetz, Justin Anthony	Minneapolis	MN	15982	Hargraft, Jane	Shaker Heights	OH	16026	Anderson, A	Woodbridge	VA
16042	Watson, William R	Minneapolis	MN	15951	Henderson, Michael J	East York	ON	16027	Anderson, M	Woodbridge	VA
16204	Bushman, Brendon J	Saint Cloud	MN	16218	Haggith, Darcy Lee	Lasalle	ON	16233	Burt, Nathan	Middlebury	VT
16213	Brink, Cristy M	Saint Paul	MN	16102	Bhatti, Moez	Toronto	ON	16030	Duignan, Kel	South Burlington	VT
16214	Brink, Darin R	Saint Paul	MN	15973	Iromoto, Goh	Toronto	ON	16006	Caldwell, James C	Westminster	VT
16202	Yuska, Tom	Saint Paul	MN	15976	Walz, Anthony B	Klamath Falls	OR	15945	Patel, Sapan K	Bothell	WA
16060	Dorow Hovland, Elliot	St. Paul	MN	16144	Baenziger, Mark	Portland	OR	16106	Ohnhaus, Ron	Bremerton	WA
16147	Marshall, Sandy	Wayzata	MN	15984	Bene, Mike	Portland	OR	15961	Fosberry, Brendan	Fall City	WA
16215	Arrowsmith, Frank A	Woodbury	MN	15985	Cooper, Kathryn	Portland	OR	15963	Martin Jr, John D	Issaquah	WA
16090	Taylor, John M	Springfield	MO	15981	Garth, J. Stuart	Portland	OR	16085	Hansen, Erik Orum	North Bend	WA
16219	Thornton, Joshua G	Bozeman	MT	15974	Larson, Brian C	Portland	OR	16126	Pulliam, Robert C	North Bend	WA
16168	Turner, Alexander James	Aberdeen	NC	15962	Larson, Johnmark	Portland	OR	16065	Semivan, James M	Olympia	WA
16003	Wolfe, R. Brooks	Asheville	NC	15960	Lee, Malcolm	Portland	OR	16189	Boeschoten, Paul	Redmond	WA
16228	Neary, B	Asbury Park	NJ	16051	Selvig, Brett W	Portland	OR	15920	Martin, Kael A	Seattle	WA
16068	Carter, Hank	Bloomfield	NJ	15980	Young, Todd M	Portland	OR	15998	Meyer, Marcus	Seattle	WA
16069	McKean, Jess	Bloomfield	NJ	16008	Zielinski, Josh B	Salem	OR	16017	Sanders, Michael D	Seattle	WA
16235	Colonel, Bladdymir	Bloomington	NJ	15994	Niederberger, Bryan R	Ardmore	PA	16128	Vaughan, Michael R	Seattle	WA
16173	Stanton, Jeffrey	Chatham	NJ	15957	Bard, Cheryl	Lancaster	PA	16074	Broadrick, Aaron	De Pere	WI
16019	Dvorozniak, Matthew J	Cresskill	NJ	15939	Arnold, Austin	Lebanon	PA	16110	Pass, Jonathan	Madison	WI
16170	Baitinger, Craig	East Hanover	NJ	16032	DePaolis, Robert J	Milford	PA	16224	Bergman, Kenneth	Twin Lakes	WI
16190	DiLallo, Chris	Leonia	NJ	16078	Bahri, Sanjeev	Murrysville	PA	16073	Gross, Clemens	Berlin	DEU
16167	Wong, Oitak Allen	Livingston	NJ	16055	Godbey, Graham	Philadelphia	PA	15938	Avramoiu, George	Bucharest	ROU
16155	Dalik, Bryan	Matawan	NJ	16083	Johnson, Sarah E	Philadelphia	PA	16038	Tanaka, Yoshihiko	Kawasaki-city Kanagawa	JPN
15923	Hong, Won	Metuchen	NJ	16149	Mattingly, Ronnie	Philadelphia	PA	15999	Stuart, Kevin	Leeds West Yorkshire	UK
16179	Capone, Leonard	Turnersville	NJ	16245	Pfeiffer, Mark	Philadelphia	PA	16203	Valentin, Herve	Orleans	FRA
16076	Kovalenko, Yevhenii	Wayne	NJ	16054	Powers, Dan	Philadelphia	PA	16236	Arias, Andres	Santiago	CHL
16122	Kruth, Matt	West New York	NJ	16050	Real Jr, Michael E	Philadelphia	PA				
16029	Durica Jr, Richard E	Westville	NJ	16002	Sanchez, Humberto	Philadelphia	PA				
16132	Lemann, E	Binghamton	NY	16041	Sparacio, Kate	Philadelphia	PA				
16064	Klink, Jacob K	Brooklyn	NY	16058	Starger, Jesse Lev	Philadelphia	PA				
16062	Nicholson, Kate	Brooklyn	NY	16178	Thomson, Maria	Philadelphia	PA				

RandoVeganism: Is it Difficult to be a Vegan Randonneur?

BY BOB DYE

Actually, veganism and randonneuring go together quite nicely, based on my experience.

Living meat and dairy free has become a lot less unusual today. Here in the Northeastern US, stores and restaurants cater to the meat and dairy free population more and more. The organizers of the NY-Montreal-NY 1200k and Endless Mountains-Liberty Bell 1000K both provided vegan offerings (the lentil chili was ideal) to fuel hungry cyclists – something I encourage all organizers of long rides to consider.

I won't proselytize regarding the advantages of veganism except to recommend the book *72 Reasons to Be Vegan* by Gene Stone and Kathy Preston. For me, it's been a quality of life upgrade both on and off the bike, not to mention the positive vibes I get from helping Mother Earth. I'm certainly not a nutritionist and can't speak to the food science here but I am the fortunate beneficiary of my wife's dedication to and knowledge of delicious plant-based

cooking. I can, however, refer to personal performance. Last year, at age 65, I completed five centuries, four 200k's, a 300k, 400k, 600k, and a 1200k, all meat and dairy free. I can't recall bonking, even once.

My go-to stop for a meal during a ride is an independent deli. I'll ask for all the veggies they offer on whole wheat with oil and vinegar. I politely decline the inevitable suggestions for meat and cheese to be a good ambassador for vegans and cyclists as well. There's no lump-in-the-stomach sensation afterward and the nutritional boost is real.

Those big rando handlebar bags are great for packing plenty of food. They make it easy to snack while clicking off the big miles. Sandwiches (love the PB&J's), bananas, apples, nuts, raisins, and nutrition bars always give me a lift. There's a recipe below for vegan energy balls which make for a perfect in-ride boost.

Plant-based milk is often an option at a café stop and tastes great, too. The frequent upcharge is unfortunate but someday plant-based food should be the cost effective alternative as more of us insist on non-dairy options. Non-dairy smoothies always taste great in the summer heat.

Jennifer and Michael Povman volunteering for NY-Montreal-NY 1200k.

— PHOTOS KATIE MARSHALL



Harvie Porter offering plenty of complex carbs to fuel a long ride.



Corporate convenience stores serving as brevet controls are a bit more challenging. The prepackaged food in the coolers seems to always contain meat or dairy. There's usually a selection of nutrition bars but you need to check those ingredient listings. Sometimes, I'll just grab fruit or a dark chocolate candy bar (or two).

Many of us have a beloved leather saddle and can't imagine using anything else. When mine (from pre-vegan days) needs replacement, I'll choose from a

wide array of great synthetic offerings and have a weather-proof, long lasting, animal-friendly perch. I love the fact that almost all modern cycling shoes are made from synthetic materials – just the opposite of street shoes.

Everyone's dietary choices are certainly very personal. If you're wondering how a plant-based diet may impact your cycling, I can only say it's been beneficial for me. As a vegan, I feel great and know I'm making the world a slightly better place. 🚲

Vegan Energy Balls

- 3 tablespoons vegan chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons green banana plant
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup or agave nectar
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts

Melt chocolate in the microwave in 15 second increments, stirring in between.

Combine above ingredients, adding in walnuts last. Roll into balls and refrigerate.

Attention Members

The RUSA newsletter is mailed via third class mail to the address on file of all current members. It is critical that you inform the membership office of any change of address, so that your newsletter will reach you in a timely fashion.

Update your address online at:

www.rusa.org/cgi-bin/memberaddresschange_GF.pl

...and to renew your RUSA membership!

Memberships run from January through December.

Renew online at:

www.rusa.org/cgi-bin/memberrenew_GF.pl



Bike Lust

BY JEFF NEWBERRY



I discovered randonneuring and the French constructeurs, Alex Singer and Rene Herse, in 2006 when I bought Jan Heine's excellent book, "The Golden Age of Handbuilt Bicycles." Soon after, I subscribed to his magazine, *Bicycle Quarterly*, picking up all the back issues as well.

By June 2007, after reading a review in *BQ*, I'd assembled a Heron Randonneur, and rode my first 200K brevet in December. By October 2010 I'd acquired a Rivendell custom rig, riding my first 1200K in Texas in 2011. Later that summer, before riding my first PBP, I found myself back in the work area of the legendary Alex Singer shop in Paris, shaking hands with Jan while he made adjustments to his brand-new Rene Herse randonneuse, built by Mark Nobilette, who also built my Rivendell.

THE BIKE: 2019 Thompson Randonneur



By 2014, I was convinced I wanted a Rene Herse; I had a serious case of 650b envy. My friend in Seattle, Andy Speier, told me about a buddy of his, Corey Thompson, a master frame builder, a true constructeur in the tradition of Singer and Herse. When Andy forwarded me an astounding 99-photo documentation of the build-up of his new bike, I became a true believer.

I happened to meet Corey in 2015 in St. Quentin on the way to PBP packet pickup. I looked to my

right, saw a beautiful, classic Randonneur bicycle, and exclaimed, "Oh, a Thompson!" Looking up at the bearded rider, I laughed, "Oh, you ARE Corey Thompson." Chatting with Corey in line at the National Velodrome, I had no idea that a year later we'd ride the entirety of Cascade together, a peak experience, and the quickest way I know of to form a friendship.

In June of 2019, after extensive correspondence dialing in the details, I flew out to Olympia to pick up



the dream bike he'd built me, the culmination of everything I'd come to believe that began 13 years before, thumbing through the pages of a book. 🚲

Left, the first, fast-paced evening of PBP.
—MAINDRU PHOTO

Chateau Thompson: In front of the Chateau du Rambouillet a few days before Paris-Brest-Paris 2019.
—PHOTO JEFF NEWBERRY

Do you think your bike should be in the spotlight?

If so, please send one photo and a brief description of what is special/unique to your ride, to Corinne at editor@rusa.org. If your bike is chosen to be featured, you will be contacted for more information. Not all submissions can be published due to space constraints.

THE COMPONENTS:

HEADSET: IRD Dual Roller Drive

FENDERS: Honjo GB Special Hammered

BOTTLE CAGES: Silca Titanium

FRONT LIGHT: Schmidt Edelux II

REAR LIGHT: Rene Herse seat tube mount

DECALEUR: Rene Herse

BELL: Tomii Cycles, hammered

PUMP: Silca Impero Ultimate

STEM TOP LIGHT SWITCH: Matchak

FRONT HUB: SONdelux SL Widebody 28h

REAR HUB: White Industries T11 32h

SKEWERS: Paul Components

RIMS: Pacenti Brevet

SPOKES: Sapim

TIRES: Rene Herse 650Bx42

BABYSHOE PASS EXTRALIGHT

HANDLEBAR: Rene Herse Randonneur 44cm

BAR WRAP: Maware leather

SADDLE: Berthoud Aravis, ti rails

SEATPOST: Nitto S65

PEDALS: Ultegra SPD-SL

BRAKES: Rene Herse Centerpull, post-mounted

BRAKE LEVERS: Modolo Master Pro w/anatomic hoods

SHIFT LEVERS: Dura-Ace 7900 10s down tube

BRAKE CALIPERS: Rene Herse

FRONT DERAILLEUR: Ultegra braze-on

REAR DERAILLEUR: Ultegra short cage

BOTTOM BRACKET: SKF 68x107

CRANKSET: Rene Herse 46-30 171

CHAIN: Ultegra 10s

CASSETTE: Sram PG-1070 12-28

THE CUSTOM BITS:

FRAME/FORK: Thompson Rando

STEM: Thompson chrome threadless

HBAR BAG RACK: Thompson chrome

LOWRIDERS: Thompson chrome

REAR RACK: Thompson chrome

Stretch Break

BY SARAH RICE PHD DPT, AND PHIL FOX (RAAM #658)

Randonneurs sometimes experience soreness and stiffness on rides. We certainly have, as Phil Fox (RUSA #12365) can attest after winning the Longhorn 500 and finishing the Race Across America in 2022. Sarah Rice (RUSA# 9480), a physical therapist at Athletico in Chicago, IL, was his medic on those adventures.

In December together they rode a new permanent route that Phil authored (Route #4586, Chicago-New Buffalo-Chicago), doing some helpful stretches and exercises along the way. After an eventful 2022 and with 2023 being a Paris-Brest-Paris year, they are looking forward to staying healthy on more long rides.

Here is their helpful advice:

On the Bike

The best thing you can do to improve your position on the bike is to get out of it. Moving your hands from the tops to hoods to drops changes the pressure points on your hands¹ and standing periodically to alleviate saddle discomfort (20-30s every 20 minutes) has been recommended based on clinical research.²

Phil and Sarah after Phil won the Longhorn 500 in Fredricksburg, TX, April 3, 2022.

—PHOTO TONY MOGUEL

Standing at a Control Point

Cervical retraction: The lower segments of a rider's neck tend to flex forward while the upper segments extend to bring the rider's eyes up toward the road (Image 1). This exercise reverses that neck posture, opening up the spaces between your neck vertebrae and giving the nerves that supply your arms and fingers a bit more breathing room. Think of nodding your head to

flex the upper segments of your neck while the lower segments extend back, like you are surprised while watching a scary movie. If you do it right you get double chins. Muscles in the front of your neck should be relaxed, but you will feel muscles deep within your neck working. Try 10 repetitions, with a 10 second hold.

Hip flexor stretch: Cyclists sit to ride with their hips flexed for hours (or in Phil's case, days!) at a time (Image 1). The main muscles responsible for flexing the hips connect to the low back, so keeping your hip flexors limber may help both your hips and your low back. To stretch the hip flexors, stand with feet staggered, tighten your abdominals, and bend your front knee. Be sure that you are not leaning forward and that your pelvis is not tilting forward. Make your upper body tall. You should feel a stretch in the front



of the hip on your back leg. Do this for 30 seconds on each side.

Sitting at a control point

Upper trapezius stretch: When a tired cyclist supports weight on their hands or forearms in a forward head position, their shoulders tend to elevate toward the ears (Image 2). The muscle that elevates the shoulders and extends the neck is the upper trapezius muscle. Stretching it can help to alleviate tightness and soreness in the back of the neck and in the upper shoulder. To stretch your right upper trapezius, sit on your right hand with your palm facing upward. Reach your left hand over the top of your head so that your left fingertips touch your right ear, and gently stretch your neck forward and tilting to the left. Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat on the left side.

Lying Down at a Control Point

“T” stretch: Cyclists typically have handlebars that are shoulder width apart and/or narrower aerobars. The pectoral muscles help to steer the bike in this position (Image 3). Stretching these muscles can help a cyclist to bring the shoulders down and back, improving both neck and shoulder posture. To stretch the pectoral muscles lying down, extend your arms out in a “T” with shoulders down and away from your ears. Hold this position for 1 minute.

One leg up, one leg down: The hamstrings muscles are critical for a cyclist to retain power through the bottom of the pedal stroke, but they can tighten up during a ride because they are shortened at the top of the pedal stroke.³ Stretching these muscles can help with tightness in the hips and back, and also smooth out your pedal stroke. A vertical corner at a control stop is perfect. Lie down with one leg up on the corner and one leg down, as close to the corner as you can comfortably get (Image 4). After at least 1 minute, switch your legs.



Image 1: Top Left, Phil Fox on Day 10 of RAAM (June 23). Note the extended position of his neck and flexed position of his hips. Shoulders are in a good position, down and away from his ears. Above, left hip flexor stretch. Left, cervical retraction.



Image 2: Left, Phil Fox on Day 10 of RAAM (June 23), enjoying one of May Fox's homemade cookies. Note the elevated shoulder position. Right, Phil doing an upper trapezius stretch.

Alternative Versions of These Two Stretches if You Can't Lie Down

Corner pec stretch: To stretch your pectorals while standing up, find a corner or doorway. Raise your shoulder 90 degrees out to the side and hold the edge of the corner or wall while pressing your chest forward. Do not press until your shoulder hurts – it should gently stretch your chest. Do this for 30 seconds each side (Image 3).

Seated hamstring stretch: To stretch your hamstrings while sitting, place one leg out in front of you with your knee straight and lean toward it. Support your hands on a table or on your thighs as you stretch for at least 30 seconds on each side (Image 4).

When and How to Contact a PT:

Advice from Sarah Rice PhD DPT: Randonneurs and other long distance cyclists frequently experience pain in the neck, back, shoulders, saddle area, knees, and feet, and can have numbness in the hands, feet, or genital area.⁴ While these issues are common, you don't have to live with them. Physical therapists treat all of these problems and can get you riding more comfortably. Many physical therapy clinics offer free assessments, and in most states you do not have to have a referral from a physician before seeing a PT. If nagging issues are negatively impacting your riding or if you have pain or numbness that persists after your ride, come and see us! We are here to help. 🚲

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Image 3: Top left, Phil Fox says hi to a crew member on Day 4 of RAAM (June 17). His left pectoral muscles are working to steer the bike. Above, Sarah does the "T" stretch lying down at a control point. Left, Phil does a corner pec stretch at a control point.



Image 4: Left, Sarah does one leg up, one leg down on an ice machine at a control stop. Note she is doing the "T" stretch at the same time. Right, Phil does a seated hamstring stretch.

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- Comments Georgi Stoychev

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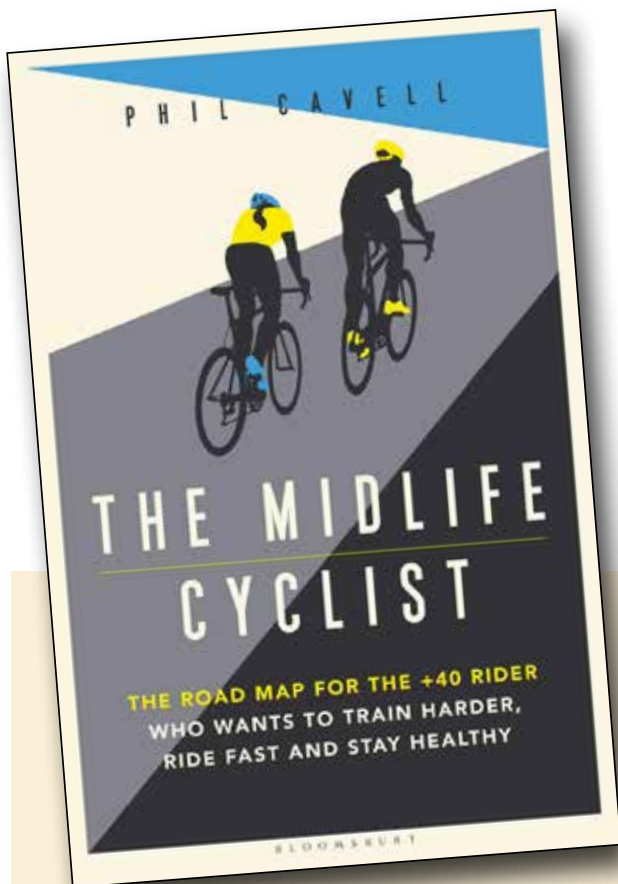
The Midlife Cyclist

For the first 200,000 years of human existence, no one really had to worry much about physical conditioning after age 50 since the average life expectancy was less than 35 years! For thousands of generations, our human hardware simply didn't hold up against the myriad challenges and risks our ancestors encountered. With many in the US now living well into their 70s, 80s, and 90s, performing athletically well into our 50s, 60s, and 70s is not an unrealistic goal.

book, he provides a fresh look at what it means to ride hard into midlife and beyond.

One of the longest (and most compelling) chapters in the book is entitled simply "Will I Die?" which gets right to the heart of the matter. Through surveying recent research and interviewing several cardiologists, Cavell brings us face-to-face with some of the most basic (and terrifying) questions facing serious athletes as we age. Will this activity that I love so much actually kill me, or less dramatically, is it even good for me? While there have been some distressing reports in recent years and each of us probably knows someone whose heart simply stopped working while exercising, the bottom line (it appears) is that in the final analysis, the benefits of consistent endurance exercise more than outweigh the risks. As a male reader, I am yet again a bit discouraged by the reminder that I am statistically likely to die before my female counterparts for a whole host of reasons, but I also take comfort in the fact that sudden death from cardiac arrest is not

With this new book, Phil Cavell sets out to explain how cyclists might be able to do this safely and enjoyably with some elements of grace and dignity. Cavell is an accomplished British bike fit specialist with experience working at the highest levels of professional cycling alongside teams such as Trek-Segafredo and others. In this new



The Midlife Cyclist

BY PHIL CAVELL

Bloomsbury, 2021, 282 pages



Author Phil Cavell
— WWW.CYCLEFIT.CO.UK

Will this activity that I love so much actually kill me, or less dramatically, is it even good for me?

all that much more likely to happen while riding a bike than it is while pushing a shopping cart through a supermarket.

Not surprisingly, there is also a very helpful chapter on biomechanics in the book that draws on the author's long and successful career as a fit specialist. We are reminded of the importance of fine-tuning our physical relationship with the bike especially as we age. As the body changes and breaks down over time through injury and natural aging, it is very easy for us to develop bad habits and patterns that lead to preventable outcomes like chronic pain or more serious injury. I know that following the fracture of my hip, for instance, I developed patterns on the bike that led to the dramatic overuse of my hip flexors at the expense of my glutes so that even after a total hip replacement, which solved the mechanical problem, I continue to work through the muscular implications of asymmetric repetitive motion.

Readers in search of detailed training plans will not find them here, though, as the book feels a bit more like an owner's manual than a training manual. In fact, Cavell offers a more simplified approach to training than most in common circulation. He argues that riders should basically break down their training into two basic categories,

Low-Intensity Training (LIT) and High-Intensity Training (HIT) with far more emphasis on the former than the latter. He also observes that amateur athletes typically train at a consistently higher level relative to their limits than do the pros, which leads to frequent injury and overtraining. We are much better off, he contends, when we throw in an extra loop on a long training ride than when we ride the whole day at a higher level of intensity. It is a message which will likely resonate with randonneurs.

The word "senescence" always surprises me when I encounter it. It's not in common usage (at least in my circles) yet it has a familiar ring, and I can usually figure out the meaning in context. I wonder if this word seems so odd and finds such little use because our youth-obsessed society cares so little about the aging process and older people in general? Does our cultural obsession with youth diminish the importance of not only this word but also the entire concept behind it? The word senescence makes several appearances in the book and is central to Cavell's approach to understanding the needs of and demands on aging cyclists. We're not getting any younger, as the saying goes, and our bodies are always changing. Understanding how these changes can influence the choices

we make as older adults can make a world of difference. Our opportunity, he argues, is not to try to stay young, but rather to use the available research to develop sensible ways to continue to center cycling in our lives as we age. What seems so groundbreaking to me about this book is that Cavell accepts the natural deterioration and decline we all experience with age as a given and suggests that rather than fight the headwinds, we simply reorient ourselves to share the work and enjoy the tailwinds.

Cavell covers a lot of ground in this book, but not all areas are explored with an equal level of attention. The sections on health risks and biomechanics, for instance, are three times longer than the chapters on nutrition and bike hardware. Regardless, the book as a whole left me feeling that I got what I needed rather than wanting more. His self-described "Big Lebowski" or "barefoot cycling" approach to training will no doubt appeal to many, yet his vast experience and use of contemporary research also add legitimacy to his arguments for those who may doubt his conclusions. If you're a cyclist over 40 years of age, or hope someday to become one, do yourself a favor and read this book. 🚲

8k600 Brevets – A New Challenge!

BY JOHN LEE ELLIS

What is an “8k600”? It’s a 600k brevet with 8,000 meters of climbing. But why?

In 2022, the Audax Club Parisien swapped out one of the required rides for its Randonneur 10000 award. Instead of a Super Randonnée 600 (SR600 or “Super Six”) permanent ride, riders would need to finish an ACP 600k brevet with 8,000m (26,246 ft.) or more of climbing. Rides fulfilling these requirements are being offered by some organizers around the US this year.

SR600s - A Bit of Background

The ACP started the Super Randonnée 600 program in 2009. These were ACP Permanents, whose routes needed to have at least 10,000m (32,808 ft.) of climbing, and riders had 50 hours

to finish in Randonneur mode, later extended to 60 hours. (Tourist mode gives riders more time than that.) This became a popular challenge for some riders.

When the ACP created the Randonneur 10000 award in 2011, they included the SR600 as a climbing-oriented requirement. This was the first climbing requirement for any ACP BRM award.

The New Requirement – In 2022, the SR600 program parted ways with the ACP and is now managed by Provence Randonneurs in the south of France. So as a replacement, the ACP

settled on requiring an 8000m ACP 600k. (SR600s aren’t going away – you can still ride them in many countries around the world, and get RUSA credit for riding domestic ones – they just no longer count for ACP credit.)

“8k600” brevets can have 20% less climbing than SR600 permanents, but riders have only the standard 40 hours to finish. That is 20% less time than the original SR600 limit of 50 hours, to put things in perspective.

RUSA organizers offering 8k600 brevets can have them listed on the RUSA home page. At this writing, five are listed: California, Colorado, North Carolina, Ohio, and Wisconsin. In the future, there are plans to make 8k600’s searchable on the RUSA website.

Comparison – If you’ve ridden SR600 Permanents, you know the extra time means riders can take most of three days at 200 km/day average. This gives riders more leeway with weather conditions, and more recovery time. Riders have their choice of when to ride, optimizing for the best weather, and can come back and try again some other time if need be. On the other hand, SR600s prohibit support, including at checkpoints.

By contrast, 8k600 brevets are scheduled events, with dates determined the previous year. If the weather or other conditions are dangerous, they can be postponed a week like any brevet, but not arbitrarily. And the



On the new 8k x 600s, scenic roads are often the main point.

— PHOTO RASHID KHAN

40-hour limit may make for less sleep. But the organizer can choose to provide support, and you can have personal support at checkpoints.

Choosing an 8k600 – Criteria for choosing brevet(s) to ride are much like for SR600s: altitude (the Colorado route is higher, with thinner air, than the Ohio one); grades (typically steeper grades on the East Coast vs. out West); weather challenges specific to region; and services en route (how remote does the route get?) Then you'll need to find dates that work with your schedule. And organizer-provided support may be a factor.

For R-10000 – You have six years to complete the requirements for the ACP Randonneur 10000 award, so potentially plenty of chances to ride and finish an 8k600 brevet.

For Fun – Just as with the Super Sixes, you don't need an award to want to ride an 8k600. Just being keen on a new challenge, over a new route, in a place new to you! 🚲



The mountains can be stunning after a rainstorm.

— PHOTO RASHID KHAN



Colorado 8k x 600s can get up pretty high.

— PHOTO MIKE TUREK

Winter SR Series: Never Say Never

I haven't been rando'ing long enough to know how "normal" it is to complete a series before the vernal equinox, but I know myself well enough to say that it's something I would have said I'd never do four years ago. For context, years ago I eked out my first PBP-qualifying 600k at the end of May, and it took me several months to complete a series. To be honest, I probably didn't even realize what a series was until 2021! Then we had a pandemic and last year, the earliest I did a big ride really wasn't until April – depending on how you define "big ride."

But I'm coming back from an injury and what better way to come back than to rally all your best rando pals for a winter party train? Of course, let's be very clear here. There must be parameters, we do have our limits. First, the routes must be flat-ish; no one wants to ride in the middle of winter until 2 or 4 a.m. because they've spent all day doing more than 10,000 feet of climbing (famous last words). Second, the weather must be (somewhat) cooperative – i.e., please no snow and fingers crossed, no freezing rain. Third, even if the route is hosted by Asheville International Randonneurs – located in the mountains of western Carolina – the ride **MUST** not traverse a single mountain of Appalachian origin. If

you, dear rider, can loosely follow these guidelines, you are on your way to teeing up a proper winter series filled with Type 2 rando fun.

I always start my winter riding in Florida under the care of Central

Florida Randonneurs RBA Paul Rozelle, who graciously hosts back-to-back 300k/200k weekends over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, offering a delightful respite for anyone living in a northern latitude such as myself. I welcome the opportunity to escape the frozen hellscape that is literally anything north of the state of Florida. However, these silly central Florida rides always seem to deliver some kind of sloppy weather, and despite my hopes of setting PRs on these routes, they always seem to take me longer to finish than what it would take me to cover the same distance on a hillier and potentially more challenging route back home (worry not, 10/10, would do it again.)

This year's Big Ride Weekend did not disappoint: to be exact, central

Misha with her twin Luke on a seasonally appropriate ride.

—PHOTO MISA HELLER



The author and her winter crew.

—PHOTO MISHA HELLER

Florida delivered temperatures in the low 30s with headwinds, and there were shoe covers, lobster gloves, and wool jerseys galore. Care not, you're riding in Florida in January with some of the most fun randos on the planet.

That said, I do think someone poured some weak sauce in my burrito Saturday night, because instead of riding 200k on Sunday morning, I found myself riding a casual 50k around some central Florida lake with some pals. Still, no regrets.

Fast forward to the beginning of February. RBA Tony Goodnight out of North Carolina was hosting his tried and true winter series. I did his 400k in 2019 for the first time and it was my first encounter with tree monsters – ask me one day for the true story. I like to rally my D.C. friends to come to North Carolina when a good ride is thrown on the calendar. I advertised all the rides as “easy”, i.e., they met the criteria set forth in paragraph No. 2 above.

However, we all know that rando is a most humbling sport, and even the “easy” rides will still present challenges. This one's soup du jour was a 22 degree Fahrenheit ride start and temperatures that never rose above 40. Because I cannot generate any power in such conditions, this ride took three more hours than it should have. Kudos to the two brave ride buddies who stuck by my side as we pedaled through the night in solidarity until our nearly 5 a.m. finish.

But this was all in prep for the big dance – the two-day ride to test whether my shoulder was up for multi-day rides.

Trees may be blooming, but it can still be pretty cold.

—PHOTO MISHA HELLER



In my version of the story, my twin brother, RBA Luke Heller, obliged me and put together a route that met the aforementioned winter ride criteria (thanks Luke.)

When I lobbied my ride buddies from across the RUSA-verse to come join us, I characterized the ride as

“easy” but I cautioned riders that there would be zero support, zero drop bags (on an out and back), and no basmati rice – shoutout to NVR RBA Hamid Akbarian and Shab Memarbashi who always provide the most delicious food on their rides and spoil me and other riders.



Party train up the road.

—PHOTO MISHA HELLER

I cajoled fellow D.C. riders Chris Gross and Frank DiCarlantonio into joining for the fun. New Hampshire riders Brad Tanner and Steve Lavoie also made the trek down to join the party train. Olga Huber and John Peltier from New York joined and Wes Johnson and Luke remained the only “local” riders to toe the line after a couple of friends had to back out due to illness or work commitments.

Olga and John foreshadowed that they would be the lanternes rouge and advised that we should not wait for them. Frank took off like a bat out of hell and I only saw him after his turn around. The rest of us assembled a small but fun party train and made our journey from outside of Charlotte to the beach and back. It was not, of course, without some weather – cold rain in the morning and wool jerseys all day Saturday.

But by Sunday, for me at least, and me alone, bib shorts got their first peek of warm weather. We made it to the beach before daylight ended and then found ourselves smiling and telling stories over chips and salsa in a local Mexican haunt.

This no support, no drop bag, no basmati rice ride provided ample opportunity to test out one’s equipment for a no support, no drop bag, no basmati rice Paris-Brest-Paris. In 2019, I had the amazing support of a friend’s sister on course; this year I won’t be so lucky and will be responsible for schlepping all my stuff on my own tiny XS sized bike frame.

I installed a frame bag where I managed to stash some pajamas and a change of clothes for the next day. Success! We rode about 420k or so the first night, got about six hours of sleep, and then just had a casual 180k to finish the thing on Sunday. Spirits were high despite not a drop of sunlight for the entire 601kilometers – we were



surrounded by our pals and doing the thing that we love.

All riders finished at a rate they were seemingly satisfied with. In the end, there were three different cohesive groups that ushered one another through the night and to the eventual finish.



I suppose the moral of this particular adventure is that rando allows us to always keep surprising ourselves. At first I had convinced myself that instead of not riding in winter at all, I could do so as long as it was only during daylight hours. With time and some smart and tested clothing choices, and good pals to share the kilometers with, I learned that I can in fact ride in winter after dark.

I’m not going to do it every weekend and it might be a slow slog, but mind over matter gets the job done. Attitude is everything and rando mind tricks are game changers. If you can surround yourself with some good peeps, it makes suffering through the highs and lows of winter riding that much sweeter. And you might just get the privilege of saying you finished a series before most people have dusted off their bikes from last season. 🚲

Wool is protection against the cold.

—PHOTO BILL BECK

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Do you have a story to share?

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Or a ride gone comically wrong?

If so, we'd like to hear about it!

SUBMISSIONS should be up to 2,000 words, include photos or other visual elements, and be saved as a Word file. (No PDFs, please.) Please send photos as separate files.

The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, brevity, and accuracy.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Spring issue – December 15 Fall issue – June 25
Summer issue – March 25 Winter issue – September 25

QUESTIONS? Please contact Corinne at editor@rusa.org.

A Chat About Paris-Brest-Paris with RUSA #8

RUSA INTERVIEW

Longtime randonneur Lois Springsteen has been with RUSA since its inception. She has worked tirelessly at RUSA HQ at many jobs, including time spent as RUSA president. Lois is also co-RBA for the Santa Cruz region in northern California with Bill Bryant. As another PBP rolls around, we thought it would be good to sit down for a chat with this legend.

Lois, you have earned seven PBP finisher's medals. What about this event is so appealing to you?

It must be the camaraderie of the randonneurs and the friendships that I have enjoyed as a rider. My first PBP in 1991 was very hard since I had never ridden that far, so I was sure that it was "one and done" for me. My toes were numb for six months and after the event, when I could finally sleep, I would frantically wake up with nightmares about oversleeping and wondering if I had missed a secret control. I was genuinely afraid that I would not get my finisher's medal. It seems somewhat silly now, but in those days, we didn't have RUSA. Information in English was still hard to come by, and there was no internet presence for the event.

Lois at the start of her first PBP, in 1991.

—PHOTO BILL BRYANT

I spent much of my first PBP riding with Brian Regan and Warren McNaughton. I knew them only a little from the Davis brevets, but I was not fast enough to ride with them during the qualifiers. Somehow, we banded together in Loudéac outbound. By Nogent-le-Roi near the finish, I was hopelessly bonked and sleep deprived, but Brian's encouragement got me through it. He said, "We could walk

and make it on time!" Of course, that was a lie, but I credit him for my success that first year.

You rode consecutive PBPs from 1991 to 2015, all without a DNE. Do you have distinct memories from each edition?

Yes, I have very distinct memories from each of my PBPs. In 1991, I got to Brest a lot faster than I had ever dreamed of, only to struggle in a very strong headwind all the way back to Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. A group of Colombians allowed Brian and I to draft them near the end, as long as we stayed out of their paceline rotation.

In 1995, I had no intention of riding another PBP, but during a California brevet I met Marcia Gibbs, Susan Gishi, and Anne Schneider. They changed my thinking about doing it again. I hadn't



Lois today, with seven PBPs under her belt.

—PHOTO BILL BRYANT

done any brevets in 1994, but because I was a PBP *ancienne*, I could get in with one-year qualifying so that is what I did. Women have always been outnumbered in our sport, so meeting those women changed my course and they became life-long friends. I developed Shermer's neck that year during the last 100 miles and finished the ride by drafting fellow Davis Bike Club (DBC) rider Pierre Neu, who acted as my "seeing eye rider," patiently guiding me to the finish.

In 1999, I rode PBP on a tandem with Bill Bryant. We had gotten our tandem in 1997 when I stupidly shattered my wrist while walking in bike cleats. We rode that bike almost exclusively during my wrist recovery and then into the brevet season for 1999. It was very challenging. Riding tandem is a team sport that requires compromises that we don't think about when riding solo. Bill and I were a great team and very supportive of each other as we learned to ride together. I had some very low moments during that PBP, along with a bad attitude (bonked, no doubt), but Bill patiently talked me through those episodes. We had mechanical issues, too – two broken spokes and a jammed chain that added to the suspense of finishing. We also got a chance to ride with Dave Buzzee (RUSA #14) that year. We made it and I always think of that one as my sweetest PBP because I was able to do it with Bill.

In 2003, I had my best fitness and fastest time. Bill met me at the controls and he was able to speed up my acquisition of food, in addition to providing moral support. I had a chance to ride with many people that I had met over the years during the course of that event. I finished with DBC pal Amy Rafferty and actually shared a dorm room in Tinténiac with fellow RUSA Board member Tim Sullivan

without realizing it until later. It was the only place in all of my PBPs that I found a shower, but the dorm room was dark and I could not figure out how to keep the water on and it was cold. I was also trying to be quiet so I wouldn't disturb my sleeping roommates. I took sleep stops in Carhaix and Tinténiac and finished feeling good overall. The nights were especially cold, but it didn't rain. A deadly heat wave snapped just prior to the start which was a big relief to all of us.

In 2007, the rain made the ride very challenging. It rained most of the time except for the leg between Carhaix and Brest, which is exactly the opposite of what one might expect of the weather. One of the charms of the event is the spectator enthusiasm for cheering the riders. In 2007, it felt much more serious, with fewer people willing to come out in the rain for the riders. Outbound in Fougères, I met Bill at the control for lunch and people were already quitting. Seeing Bill always elevates my mood. I decided I would not quit unless I ran out of time and an official took my card. There was a high DNF rate that year and the mood among the riders was not light or carefree as we persevered along the route. I was very happy to finish and like many riders, I had sore feet from being wet for so long.

In 2011, I was terrifyingly close to lightning as I finished the climb out of Loudéac on the outbound leg. There was a lot of deep water on the road, too, so I had to find shelter. I generally don't like to stop unless I am too sleepy to continue. I found a bar that had mattresses in the back for riders that needed a break so it seemed like a good idea to sit out the storm and sleep a bit.

In 2015, I had the A-Team supporting me all the way. Johnny Bertrand (RUSA #2) and Bill Bryant



met me at all the controls. They took care of my fueling and provided cheerful encouragement and strategy advice. They anticipated my every need. One of them was always there to greet me when I got to each control. I don't know how they did all that or why anyone would want to, but I'm forever grateful to both of them for supporting me during my last PBP. The only time I've ever taken a fall at PBP was near Dreux that year. I hit a curb in a dark tunnel before dawn and broke my bad wrist again. I knew it was cracked because of the swelling, but I was too close to the finish to stop.

Besides the number of participants always growing and some route differences, what other changes to PBP stand out?

These days there are riders from about 65 nations, a huge increase from my first events. Back when I started, there wasn't much English spoken



Lois and Bill: RUSA #8 and RUSA#7.

—PHOTO BILL BRYANT

but now it has become the common language shared among many riders. The other thing that stands out is how much bicycle lighting has improved! Also, though not required at PBP, I would estimate over 90% of riders choose to wear a helmet, another big change.

Which was your hardest edition to finish, and why?

I don't have any talent for going fast, so they were all hard for me to finish except for 2003, when I had pretty good fitness. Perhaps 1991 was the hardest because I didn't know what to expect; my longest ride before that was 600k. 1995 was hard because of Shermer's neck for the last 100 miles. 1999 was hard because I thought we might run out of time. 2007 was very hard because of the constant rain, and 2011 and 2015 were hard because I was in the process of aging out of the sport.

What got you started with randonneuring and PBP, and why did you pursue it for so long?

I heard about PBP in 1983 when I met Bill Bryant. I really had no idea what it was all about but in 1990 he suggested that I try to qualify and maybe go to the centennial edition in 1991. I'd done some hard California events and the Davis Double Century so I decided to give it a go. For me, it was about exploring my limits. I decided

to just try and see how far I could go and take it one brevet at a time. That became my mantra – try to reach the next control in time, and then complete one event at a time. Trying to keep an entire brevet, or doing PBP, in your mind is too daunting.

The vast majority of PBP participants are male. What is it like to do it as a woman? Are there any problems or disadvantages that seem to repeat from year to year?

For my first PBP, I was a bit shocked about the restroom situation, which has improved. In that first year, not all the toilets had commodes. They were rather primitive, and in the places where there were flush toilets, the women's restrooms were overrun by men. I also found that some of the men would force themselves in front of me while we were in line for bathrooms or food at the controls. I quickly learned to be more assertive and hold my ground and that helped me enjoy the event more. Of course, when I rode with Bill on our tandem in 1999, that didn't happen since he knew the ropes too. (A French friend once told me that "We don't do lines well." I find that true of many PBP participants.) I don't think women have an inherent disadvantage in randonneuring, but non-male participants are definitely outnumbered everywhere in our sport. However, there is nothing about the rules or customs of our sport that should limit female participation, and the PBP organizers definitely encourage women to ride. If you can do the distance in time, randonneuring and PBP can be a great experience for everyone.

In addition to riding PBP 1991-2015, in 2019 you volunteered for three days at the Fougères control, along with working at the tech inspection in Rambouillet the day before the

event began. Most RUSA members will think about PBP from the rider's perspective. What was it like to see it as a volunteer?

I loved being a volunteer and it provided some closure for me as a former PBP rider. We met some great volunteers at Fougères and if I could beam myself over there without the long flight from California, I would do it again. I worked in the cafeteria for a while because they needed English speakers there. It was a bit humorous, though, when they gave me a badge that said "Translator" since I don't speak any language other than English. That badge got me into a little trouble while trying to be helpful, but all in all it was a wonderful experience. Seeing my American friends come through the control was great, and especially grabbing a quick hug from Canadian Deirdre Arscott as she rode her 9th PBP was a high point. Go Deirdre!

Do you have any advice to Americans going to ride PBP for the first time? Any advice for women in particular?

I honestly do not have any gender-specific advice. I suggest that all riders try to talk with PBP *anciens* during their qualifying brevets and take advantage of any educational PBP sessions that might be available in their region. There are online chat lists and social media pages that readily provide a lot of information that was hard to come by when I first started riding brevets in 1990. The one piece of advice that I would give to everyone is the advice that Bill Bryant gave me in 1991, "Finishing is everything!" Longtime PBP organizer Bob Lepertel said, "To not finish is the worst possible outcome" and that is the way I've always approached this very special event. Having my name in the Big Book of PBP Finishers means a lot to me. 🚴

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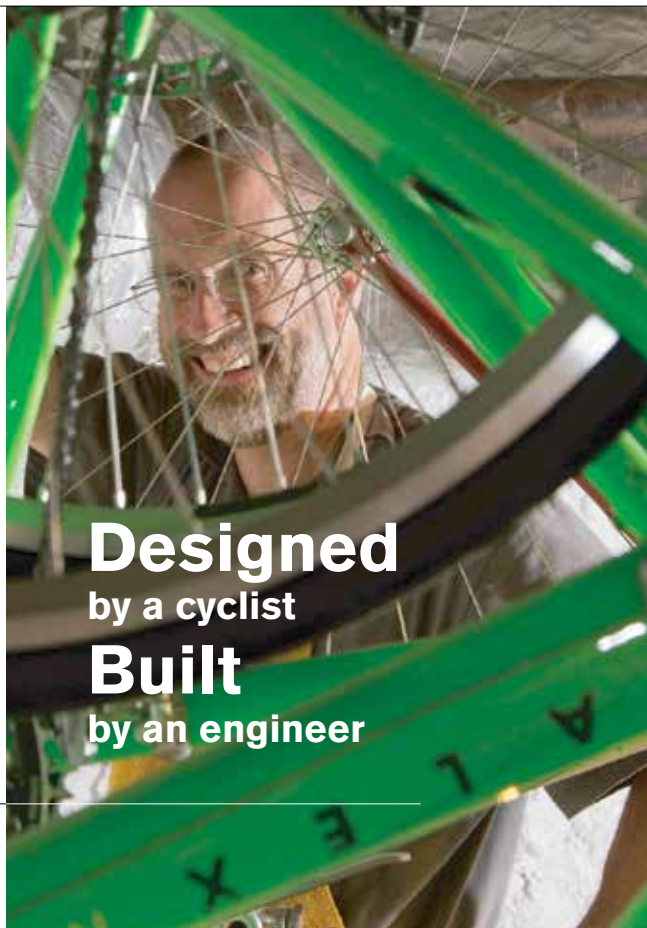
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Paris Focused, Part Two, or Redefining Highs and Lows

BY BILLY EDWARDS

In 2019, Billy was aiming for another Charly Miller time at PBP – a sub 56:40 ride. This is the second part of his story of an eventful ride.

Four years ago, 20km into PBP, I was lying on the ground, and I thought that my preparation was all wasted. For a moment, I thought I was done.

Two hours before the ride with my bike 98% ready, I politely asked this tall Italian gentleman with a Trans Am Bike Race (unsupported race across the US) sticker on his camper-van if I could borrow his floor pump. He kindly obliged, and his energy was part of what was sending me down the road.

The days prior to the ride had been fun, and the start was relatively organized compared to 2011. The ride started with some crazy surges, but I was prepared. I was rolling along when a very nasty set of road furniture caused the group to narrow. I was forced to a near stop and went over my bars. The highs of PBP had crashed down unexpectedly early.

When I got up, after probably just a couple seconds lying on the ground, I assessed my body, then my bike. My left arm was in a bit of pain, and it appeared to be bleeding, but my body felt pretty good for the hard crash I had taken. My bike had taken the brunt of the damage. Both my shifters were pushed in, and the bars were a bit skewed from centerline. My friends helped me gather my bottles. (I had five bottles, including a spare in my jersey. PBP is HOT with an afternoon start, so you gotta really hydrate to make it to 200km without a true stop.) I quickly muscled my

shifters to a working position and then assessed my shifted handlebars; I could tolerate them for at least a couple of hours. I was betting this took me about a minute. Upon checking, it was actually just 50 seconds.

My new motivation was getting back to the groups that would carry me up the road to my goal. I needed the emotional camaraderie and the physical assistance of the faster groups. I pushed for seven minutes at an average of 360 watts (over 5 w/kg) and then settled into a chase that lasted about an hour before I regained part of the group I had been with previously. This first catch was a new high. However, once I was in the group, I realized I was bleeding quite a bit. I ignored it, but many of the other cyclists asked about it or pointed at the dripping blood. This would have to be addressed.

At the first controle in Mortange, I took the time to actually fix my bike. The French are awesome, and a gentleman on the side of the road held my bike while I used my own small multi-tool to adjust my bars and fix my shifter angles. I stopped for approximately seven minutes to make these adjustments. This was another win, and I felt like I was truly back in the ride. As I rode with another group, I found that I had no ability to get to my small front chain ring. I was distressed and hit a new low but not without a plan ... I would get a mechanic to check my bike in Loudeac.

At 200km, in Villaines, you have to get your card stamped. I lost the main group here in 2011, but this year I was just celebrating still being in the ride. As I walked through the controle, a volunteer forced me to go to the infirmary. After a debate between the medical staff and me, in a mix of French and English, they put several stitches in my arm. I cursed a lot, but this became another high. I was getting through and navigating the many unforeseen obstacles.

At Loudeac I found a mechanic who worked on my bike as I found my drop bag and put on a new bike kit. Although my left shifter could not be fixed, he could quickly install a new Ultegra shifter. It was Shimano Di2, literally just plug and play. The next comedy was riding to the mechanic's shop with his young helper to use a credit card machine. This was another highlight of overcoming obstacles and experiencing an amazing part of human nature, strangers working together. It was just a bike ride, but the people coming together to help me was the high.

Many anciens know the hills beyond Loudeac are gnarly and long. I was relishing the use of my small ring and finding new groups and new friends. The ride to Brest and back to Loudeac was relatively uneventful. However, I got to see Colorado friends, quickly eating something with John Lee Ellis and watching Vernon and Paul as they were pondering an evening nap. I was riding a high of accomplishments without certainty of completing my mission. Getting to see friends on the same journey in a far-away land helped



Billy clowning around at check-in with Mark, Corinne, Jim, and Mike.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

me continue on a high and towards accomplishment.

I did another refit in Loudeac, but the adrenaline highs were fading, and the second night was looming. I was a bit scared and launched out with fellow US rider Phil Fox, but then I stupidly turned back for an extra battery. This foolish move would leave me on the road by myself from Loudeac to Tinteniac.

The lows came in waves as the lights of oncoming riders were welcoming but also blinding. I stopped several times to urinate. The last time I stopped, I was straddled over my bike precariously. I fell, literally pissing on myself in the dark on the side of a quiet road in France. The sad part is that no one was there to laugh me out of this.

I was wallowing and found yet a new low. I knew this feeling was a potential problem as I pedaled weakly to Tinteniac, where I would stop and get some warm food. I was hallucinating and thought I had texted my wife, asking forgiveness for putting myself out there on French roads by myself. The hole I dug emotionally was huge. I knew I needed to find friends.

That night at Tinteniac, I spent the longest time I'd ever spent at a controle in my two PBPs. I think I lay down on a bench, but I also thought I texted my wife, which I now know I did not do. I do know that I got some coffee and warm food and then saw the sun again. As I was preparing to leave, a very loud Italian was rallying a group that included a US rider named Matt Roy.

The group was full of energy, and I soon made friends with Matt. Matt and I did not know each other but had many friends in common in the biking world. The highs of PBP were ramping up, perhaps because they had been preceded by such a pathetic low.

As we rode towards Rambouillet, "a Paris," the Italian rode up to me and mentioned our previous meeting. He had lent me a pump in the final moments before the ride on Sunday afternoon. Mind-blown to be re-introduced to this one gentleman among 5,000 other riders, I was certain I could accomplish my Charly Miller goal. I was able to ride the high over the nasty hills and into the third night, successfully finishing with a great group of 10, including three US riders who also accomplished Charly Miller.

PBP, much like life, is a ride of highs and lows, and everyone will experience them. But it is holding on through the lows and riding the highs that will make it magical. I wish everyone headed to France "Bonne Route." Embrace the highs and the lows, and relish how you navigate the physical, emotional, and mental obstacles. 🚴

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RUSA Awards

RUSA Coast-to-Coast Award

The Coast-to-Coast 1200km award is earned by RUSA members who have successfully completed four different Randonneurs Mondiaux 1200km-or-longer randonnées held in the United States.

A member may earn multiple Coast-to-Coast awards. No event or different editions of the same event may be used more than once among multiple awards. For example, if Boston-Montreal-Boston 2002 is used in a member's Coast-to-Coast award, BMB'06 (or other edition) may not be used to claim another award.

The four events needed to qualify can be completed at any time and over any number of years.

RUSA congratulates the riders who earned and applied for the Coast to Coast 1200km Award.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
4/9/23	Misha Marin Heller (F) [2]	Alexandria, VA
EVENTS	2022 Cascade	
	2022 Coulee Challenge	
	2023 Golden Falcon	
	2023 Quick and Dirty 1200	
3/30/23	W David Thompson [4]	New Smyrna Beach, FL
EVENTS	2021 Northern Virginia Clover	
	2022 Treasure Cove	
	2022 Western NY Waterfalls	
	2023 Golden Falcon*	

RUSA Cup Recipients

The RUSA Cup is earned by completing at least one of each type of RUSA calendared event, comprising 5000km in total, within a two-year period.

Riders must complete, within two years of the first counting event:

- a 200k, 300k, 400k, 600k, and 1000k brevet
- a 1200k or longer Grand Randonnée
- a RUSA team event (Dart, Dart Populaire, Arrow, or Flèches-USA)
- a Populaire
- any other calendared events—including Populaires—to achieve the required 5000 km.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Dan Driscoll [14]	Arlington, TX	3/21/23

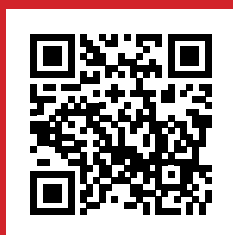
Galaxy Award

The Galaxy Award is for RUSA members who have successfully completed at least 100,000 km in RUSA events.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Paul A Foley	Golden, CO	2/15/23
Kitty Goursolle (F)	San Ramon, CA	3/3/23
Michael R Sturgill	Phoenix, AZ	2/14/23

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RUSA American Explorer Award

By definition, a randonné is a long ramble in the countryside. The American Explorer Award recognizes the achievements of RUSA members rambling across the United States. The award is earned by riding events that cover at least ten (10) different U.S. states and territories.

This is an ongoing achievement program that recognizes continued exploration of additional states and territories. The maximum achievable number of states and territories will depend on the availability of routes and the member's desire to explore. Once a rider has credit for all 50 states (territories and DC are 'extra credit'), they can start again.

NAME	CITY, STATE	TOTAL STATES	APPROVED
Borba, Philip S	Stamford, CT	10	3/8/23
Fambles, Millison D	Olympia, WA	31	4/8/23
Foley, Paul A	Golden, CO	47	1/21/23
Maglieri, Christopher	Weatogue, CT	24	2/24/23
Martin, Charlie A	Sunnyvale, CA	26	3/20/23
McLerran, Douglas	Aurora, IL	43	4/7/23
Newman, Christine (F)	Skillman, NJ	30	3/31/23
Ray, Joseph	Bernardsville, NJ	15	3/13/23
Sexton, Robert B	Nashville, TN	30	4/10/23
Staats, David N	Columbus, OH	10	2/4/23
Warren, Corinne Downs (F)	Monument, CO	10	4/4/23

Challenge Lepertel

This award commemorates former ACP President Robert Lepertel, who reinvigorated Paris-Brest-Paris and was instrumental in the founding and early development of Les Randonneurs Mondiaux. Riders achieve the award by completing four different events as follows:

- A 1200 km or longer event in each of 4 consecutive calendar years.
- Eligible events are Paris-Brest-Paris, or any event sanctioned by Les Randonneurs Mondiaux.
- Not all four events may start in the same country.
- The first event can be in calendar year 2019 or later.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Akbarian, Hamid	Lanham, MD	12/3/22	Martin, Charlie A	Sunnyvale, CA	11/25/22
Anderson, Randy T	Peoria, IL	11/29/22	Muoneke, Vincent	Federal Way, WA	12/1/22
Brudvik, Robert	Edmonds, WA	12/3/22	Newberry, Jeff	Austin, TX	11/29/22
Clayton, J Andrew	Powell, OH	12/6/22	Nguyen, Thai	Bothell, WA	12/1/22
D'Elia, John	Middletown, CT	1/11/23	Perman, Frederic	Pierrefonds, QC	12/3/22
DeMarco, Mimo	Arlington, VA	12/1/22	Smith, Vernon M	Monument, CO	12/6/22
Driscoll, Dan	Arlington, TX	11/29/22	Sturgill, Michael R	Phoenix, AZ	12/1/22
Foley, Paul A	Golden, CO	12/3/22	Tanner, Bradford D	Concord, NH	12/3/22
Heller, Misha Marin (F)	Alexandria, VA	12/2/22	Thomas, Mark	Kirkland, WA	11/29/22
Ishihara, Mitch	Issaquah, WA	12/6/22	Thompson, W David	New Smyrna Beach, FL	11/29/22
Kenny, Stephen P	Calgary, AB	12/5/22	Todd, Joseph H	Decatur, GA	11/29/22

RUSA Awards

R-12 Award Recipients

The R-12 Award is earned by riding a 200km (or longer) randonneuring event in each of 12 consecutive months. The counting sequence can commence during any month of the year but must continue uninterrupted for another 11 months.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Jon Batek [2]	Batavia, IL	3/20/23	Gary Kanaby [8]	Salado, TX	4/18/23
Jeffrey S Cannon [4]	Los Angeles, CA	2/8/23	Matt Kreger [3]	Woodinville, WA	2/18/23
J Andrew Clayton [7]	Powell, OH	3/22/23	Casey M Kreilein	Fort Lee, VA	1/21/23
Gary M DelNero [7]	Leawood, KS	1/23/23	Jacob Virgil Layer	Dedham, MA	3/13/23
Dan S. Diehn [5]	Black River Falls, WI	4/7/23	Richard Lentz [6]	Vineland, NJ	2/6/23
Jon Dowling	Canton, MI	3/25/23	Daniel Plechaty	Washington, DC	1/19/23
John Lee Ellis [16]	Lafayette, CO	4/15/23	D W Rodgers [3]	Becket, MA	4/18/23
Paul A Foley [9]	Golden, CO	3/5/23	Bill Scanga	Brooklyn, NY	2/12/23
Andrew Gavenda	Burbank, CA	3/19/23	Mark S Schenkel [8]	Orlando, FL	3/10/23
Christopher M Gross	Washington, DC	2/1/23	JinUk Shin [2]	Santa Clara, CA	1/30/23
Jason L Hansen [3]	Seattle, WA	1/30/23	Bennett M Sigmond [4]	Broomfield, CO	3/14/23
Mark A Harrison [2]	Naperville, IL	3/26/23	Michael R Sturgill [6]	Phoenix, AZ	1/30/23
Stephen Hazelton [11]	Garland, TX	3/2/23	Benjamin L Thompson	Brooklyn, NY	2/20/23
Stephen Hazelton [12]	Garland, TX	3/2/23	Mick Walsh [5]	Seattle, WA	2/14/23
Betty Jean Jordan (F) [9]	Monticello, GA	3/14/23			

Mondial Award

The Mondial Award is for RUSA members who have successfully completed at least 40,000 km in RUSA events.

Mondial: French adjective meaning worldwide or global. The name relates to the fact that the circumference of the Earth is approximately 40,000 km.

This award is achieved by a member for the completion of every 40,000 km in RUSA rides. (That is, after achieving 40,000 km, 80,000 km, and so forth.) It is automatically recognized upon completion of the required distance.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Jan Acuff (F) [3]	Seattle, WA	4/8/23
Kerin Huber (F) [3]	Pasadena, CA	2/14/23
Bryan Kilgore	Richmond, CA	4/21/23
Hugh Kimball [4]	Seattle, WA	1/22/23
Chris Nadovich	Easton, PA	4/8/23
Jeff Newberry [4]	Austin, TX	2/27/23
Andy Speier [2]	Olympia, WA	2/15/23
Bradford D Tanner	Concord, NH	4/12/23

P-12 Recipients

The P-12 Award is earned by riding a sub-200km randonneuring event in each of 12 consecutive months. The counting sequence can commence during any month of the year but must continue uninterrupted for another 11 months.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
John N Benson	Bothell, WA	2/12/23
Keith Burt	Cullman, AL	4/5/23
Ramona G Burt (F)	Cullman, AL	4/5/23
Greg Cardell [2]	Valencia, CA	2/22/23
Janice Chernehoff (F) [6]	Lyon Station, PA	1/20/23
J Andrew Clayton [7]	Powell, OH	3/22/23
Dan Driscoll [14]	Arlington, TX	3/8/23
John Lee Ellis [10]	Lafayette, CO	4/15/23
Paul A Foley [5]	Golden, CO	3/5/23
Geoffrey Hazel [5]	Bellevue, WA	3/23/23
Stephen Hazelton [4]	Garland, TX	3/2/23
Stephen Hazelton [5]	Garland, TX	3/2/23
Erin Laine (F) [7]	Sacramento, CA	2/19/23
Angela Lakwete (F) [7]	Auburn, AL	4/14/23
Albert B Lutz [3]	Tigard, OR	1/19/23
Albert B Lutz [4]	Tigard, OR	1/19/23
Albert B Lutz [5]	Tigard, OR	2/5/23
Jeffrey Mangieri	Lexington, MA	3/12/23
Kyle R McKenzie	Falls Church, VA	2/23/23
Ted Meisky	Columbus, OH	2/7/23
Christine Newman (F) [11]	Skillman, NJ	3/23/23
Shan Perera [12]	Seattle, WA	4/2/23
David N Staats [8]	Columbus, OH	4/10/23
Tibor Tamas [7]	Fort Worth, TX	2/20/23
Peter C Wick	Granby, CT	2/3/23

RUSA Rouler

The RUSA Rouleur award is earned by completing at least one event within each type and distance range of event listed below. Recipients must complete, in the same calendar year:

- 100-124 km populaire
- 125-149 km populaire
- 150-199 km populaire
- 200-220 km brevet
- and an 8-hour Dart populaire team randonnée of 120 km or longer. At least three team members must finish the ride together for this event to count for the award.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Andrew James Lyons de Andrade	Seattle, WA	3/1/23
Dan Driscoll [3]	Arlington, TX	2/5/23
Neal K Finne	Seattle, WA	3/14/23
Gary P Gottlieb [3]	Aledo, TX	2/5/23
Shaun Ivory [2]	Woodinville, WA	3/1/23
Joe Landry	Dallas, TX	2/5/23
Audunn Ludviksson [2]	Seattle, WA	3/1/23
Dana A Pacino (F) [3]	Aledo, TX	2/5/23
Daniel Park [2]	Kirkland, WA	3/1/23
Shan Perera	Seattle, WA	3/10/23
Gary Prince [2]	Seattle, WA	3/14/23
Owen Richards [2]	Seattle, WA	3/1/23
Kiel M Safstrom	Bothell, WA	3/1/23
Susan M Shields (F) [3]	Fort Worth, TX	2/5/23
Sharon Stevens (F) [3]	Richardson, TX	3/12/23

RUSA Awards

Rando Scout Awards

Created to encourage exploring new routes, the Rando Scout recognizes RUSA members who have ridden at least 25 distinct routes in brevet, populaire, or grand randonnée (1200km and longer) RUSA events. (Permanents do not count.) The route must be in the RUSA Brevet Routes database and be linked to the event ridden by the member. There is no time limit to accumulate routes.

NAME (25-49 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Achilli, Andrea	Tucson, AZ	2/13/23
Allen, James	San Diego, CA	2/13/23
Altemus, Thomas E	Tucson, AZ	3/14/23
Arita, Jeffrey Glenn	Claremont, CA	2/13/23
Arita, Lori Ann (F)	Claremont, CA	3/12/23
Brahman, Manoucher	San Jose, CA	4/12/23
Cannon, Jeffrey S	Los Angeles, CA	2/7/23
Close, Matthew D	Woodinville, WA	4/17/23
Colvin, Dan	Dripping Springs, TX	4/1/23
Cruce, Gary	Seattle, WA	3/27/23
Daniel, Sharan L (F)	Seattle, WA	2/14/23
Dye, Robert	Nyack, NY	3/9/23
Gross, Christopher M	Washington, DC	3/21/23
Lind, Carl R	Seattle, WA	3/14/23
McCurry, Nicholas	San Diego, CA	2/13/23
Ngo, Christopher	Fresno, CA	3/6/23
Reilly, Becky (F)	Dallas, TX	3/12/23
Schreck, Daniel T	Zephyrhills, FL	4/2/23
Shields, Susan M (F)	Fort Worth, TX	3/20/23
Ueek, Mark	College Place, WA	3/14/23
Williams Jr, James D	Clemmons, NC	2/14/23

NAME (50-74 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Blanco, Jose A	Owings, MD	1/30/23
Frey, Steve	Seattle, WA	3/27/23
Goursolle, Kitty (F)	San Ramon, CA	2/21/23
Heller, Misha Marin (F)	Alexandria, VA	3/21/23
Manning, Scott	Jacksonville, FL	3/1/23
Mason, Tim	Davis, CA	4/12/23
Salyer, Kevin D	Lafayette, CA	3/5/23
Sapuntzakis, Andrew P	Seattle, WA	2/14/23

NAME (75-99 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Dussler, William	Issaquah, WA	2/7/23
Martin, Charlie A	Sunnyvale, CA	2/7/23
Moore, Keith	Woodinville, WA	3/14/23
Russell, Amy L (F)	Waco, TX	2/19/23
Sexton, Robert B	Nashville, TN	1/25/23

NAME (125-149 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Huber, Kerin (F)	Pasadena, CA	4/17/23

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