

AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



VOLUME 22 • ISSUE #3 FALL 2019

RUSA
volunteers
extraordinaire

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COVER—Bill et Lois disent:

“Allumez vos lumières, s’il vous plaît!”

PHOTO DEB BANKS

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President's Message

As this issue of *American Randonneur* reaches your mailbox, RBAs are planning their 2020 events and submitting their calendar to RUSA.

It's an exercise in satisfying your riders' goals and aspirations, within your volunteers' willingness and capacity, with an event flow that reflects local climate, riders' conditioning ... and the need for variety and fun!

These events will appear on local club websites, be searchable on the RUSA site, and be published internationally by the Audax Club Parisien and Randonneurs Mondiaux, giving them a national and worldwide audience.

Organizations Make a Difference

To me, this illustrates in one small way the value of organizations, and the void that would be left without them.

If you participated in Paris-Brest-Paris this year, perhaps making new friends from across the globe, and

meeting old friends you may only see every four years, you could do so because, as with every other PBP rider, a country organization like RUSA and its event organizers set up qualifiers for you to ride, and conveyed your results to France. And because another organization, the Audax Club Parisien, toiled mightily to organize once again this huge and unique event for you to experience.

Organizations provide a framework for such memorable events to unfold, and for volunteers to make them a reality.

Individuals Make a Difference

I've said before that you can make difference. My point here is that an individual's or small group's ideas and work can be magnified in an organization.

One person—Bill Bryant (RUSA #7)—brought the R-12 and P-12 to RUSA members. These are real challenges you can achieve without lots of miles per year, sleep deprivation, or nighttime riding. You just need grit—against the chill, the sleet, the rain, the torrid heat, the winds—and determination. It brought a new type of rando into our randonneuring fold.

One person—Sophie Matter—spearheaded the ACP's Super Randonnée 600 permanents program. It's a relatively small program, but global, engaging riders and route designers for that special challenge. One that many "Super Six" finishers

never would have considered on their own. But they achieved this!

Lone Star Randonneurs RBA Dan Driscoll is relentlessly on the hunt for motivations to keep us randos inspired, whether it's K-Hound or Rando Scout. How many of us have been sucked in by these elusive yet rewarding goals?

If you are an RBA, you know the impact you can have on building a ridership, and providing events for outsiders as well as your regulars.

If you are a Permanent owner, you know the value you provide to any RUSA member to come and discover a nice route you've created, and for your local rando colleagues to keep up their goals, be they R-12, P-12, K-Hound or an equally valid unnamed personal goal.

All of this is either made possible, or magnified, because we're a part of a successful, well-conceived organization, one that a half dozen individuals chose to create at an important, transitory moment in August 1998. And one that many dedicated volunteers have painstakingly cared for in the ensuing years.

I speak from the heart on this, as one of those riders and one of those volunteers.

I hope that you, like me, have found reward in belonging to our organization, as rider, route designer, RBA, or any other role.

—John Lee Ellis
president@rusa.org



After a big snowfall on Mt. Lemmon.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

From the Editor

You're reading this issue online, and we appreciate your patience and support as the RUSA Board resolves the financial issue that has brought us to this temporary solution. I hope to return to the print issue very soon. I am grateful as well for the continued support of our advertisers. If you need new gear, a new bike, or a gift for a cycling friend...please check out their products and services and support the companies that support our publication and sport.

PBP 2019 has transformed into stories of epic adventures...some of which we will publish in the winter issue. A huge congratulations to all ancien(ne)s on your accomplishment! Chapeau as well to all who showed up for the event even if you did not earn an official finishing time. Your commitment, hard work, and courage are commendable.

Accomplishments of riders completing other challenges are chronicled in this issue. Shab Memarbashi and Hamid Akbarian present a report about the Grand Tour of Italy, a series of four challenging rides, each of 1200km or more, offered sequentially, but only one per year. Congratulations to Hamid Akbarian and Bob Brudvik, the first Americans to complete the whole series. George Swain's book review is about *The World's Fastest Man*, a biography on Marshall "Major" Taylor, an African American cyclist during the Jim Crow era. According to Swain, the author Michael Kranish details Taylor's impressive accomplishments, due not only to his incredible talent but also to his perseverance and drive to succeed.

Other narratives in this issue inspire me to ride just for the pleasure of being out on new roads. Juliayan Coleman, in a report about the

Gambler's 1000, describes the satisfaction of riding lonelier roads and the beauty to be experienced in quiet places. Keith Gates enthusiastically describes the joys of gravel riding that often takes riders back to less populated spaces. Riding on gravel may be slower, but getting away from suburbia and busy roads and back to more scenic vistas makes this kind of riding enjoyable.

Because of the distances randonneurs cover, every ride is an adventure. Paul Ivanov describes a 200km ride in the Bay Area in December. Gardner Duvall chronicles this year's (mis)adventures of DC fleche Team Ambivalence. If a 200km can provide excitement, a 600km is sure to provide surprises. Over this distance, it is certain that one will experience highs and lows, it is certain that the weather will not be wonderful the whole time, and it is certain that the experience will be memorable. Jonathan Fey writes a fine report about a 600 traveling through Colorado and Wyoming. Greg Olmstead details the experience of completing a challenging 300km in Italy, and several participants in this year's Sunshine 1200 join Dave Thompson in remembering the highlights of this epic event.

Columnist Mike Dayton offers helpful advice to randonneurs, but it is advice that also applies broadly. After his bike fell off the roof of a friend's car on the way home from a ride, Mike was naturally concerned about the condition of his bike as well as his ability to continue training for PBP. Things worked out, though, and in retrospect he came to this useful conclusion: *"When Plan A falls to pieces, relax, and look to see if there's a Plan B nearby. And when Plan B finally knocks, open the damn door."*



Riding "little" PBP
(Princeton-Belmar-Princeton).

—PHOTO DAWN ENGSTROM

Finally, Mary Shanklin explains how randonneurs helped another randonneur achieve his dream to qualify for and attend PBP (talk about Plan B!), and columnists Chris Newman and Paul Johnson reiterate the need for and the value of the volunteer work that makes randonneuring happen. One activity that receives little recognition but is crucial to AR is the work done by the magazine's columnists. Four times a year these writers take time to write something that informs or entertains us or perhaps spurs us into action. I am grateful for the commitment of these randonneurs and friends. Paul Johnson has been a key AR columnist for years; however, he is stepping away after this issue so I would like to thank him for all he has given us. I appreciate the time and wisdom he has offered. If you do not already regularly contribute to randonneuring in some way, please think about what you can do in the new year so that our sport continues to grow and provide the enjoyment and sense of achievement that it brings to us all.

Happy randonneuring this fall, and please be safe out there.

—Janice Chernehoff
editor@rusa.org

Adventures with Team Ambivalence

BY GARDNER DUVALL

Fleche 2019 dawned windy for Team Ambivalence. This year's lineup included Emily Ranson, Barry Benson, Earl Janssen, Mike Scott, and me. The riders hedged a lot before and during the ride about lacking fitness, but you have to wonder about statements such as, "I need this for my RUSA Cup, but I haven't been riding much."

The team's goals include; having fun, riding the shortest and easiest distance allowable, and supporting and enjoying each other's company all while getting everyone to the finish. Others may want to ride as far, as fast, and over as many mountains as possible. That's what makes randonneuring truly a big tent.

The winds were gusting out of the north/northwest from early in the morning. Our course starts by heading

northwest for eighty miles from Severna Park to Gettysburg. Early in the day Mike announced that he was slow and would be alone off the back all day and see us at the finish. I explained that is not how we roll and he was hardly slow compared to the rest of us.

At thirty miles we controlled at Dunkin Donuts, and my rear tube failed explosively soon after we stopped. While I worked on the wheel, a huge gust of wind blew away my coffee as

well as a large table umbrella. We had fifty more miles riding into that wind.

Slowly we reached Gettysburg, and because our goals are modest we did not fall behind the average speed needed for a qualifying finish; not to say it was easy. For instance, Barry was blown off the road twice by gusts. The slow, unsteady progress was also hampered by a slit in Earl's rear tire.

Our route goes through Gettysburg because the town offers abundant meal choices in addition to allowing us to ride through one of the most historic and moving places in America. Every year, though, something slows the first eighty miles to the point where McDonalds is the best choice for a stop. I'm no task master as captain, so we had a big laugh last year when Paul Donaldson asked permission to use up some time going to the bathroom, after which we all shared one cup of coffee "to save time."

Even though we again felt pressed for time, we agreed that the slit in Earl's rear tire was a bit dodgy. Thinking it was a wise investment of time to make the swap before the slit tire failed, I pulled out a spare I was carrying and we changed it. We left behind schedule, but the wisdom of riding a short route left us without anxiety—we could keep riding sociably and catch up on the clock.

We built up a time margin without really trying as we turned east after leaving Gettysburg. Earl was hearing ominous noise from his rear hub, and he convinced super friend David Keith



South Mountain near Frederick, MD.

—PHOTO GARDNER DUVALL

South Mountain near Frederick, MD.

—PHOTO GARDNER DUVAL

to bring a spare wheel to our next control in Thurmont. (Mind you, David accepted a 150-mile round trip drive to help a friend, as if he had nothing else to do but evaporate a few hours of his life so that we could achieve our goal of all finishing.)

After the call to David we had forty miles of riding southwesterly into a strong crosswind. In that stretch Earl suffered mightily with a stomach problem, and at Thurmont he accepted a ride home with David. David's parting gifts were a brand new tire in exchange for the beater I had given Earl, and a tube to replace the one I used earlier. That left me hours of planning how to return this unnecessary generosity.

At Thurmont the four remaining Ambivalents headed out into the dark with ninety-eight miles to ride. This was another long leg, ending with the thirty-minute climb from Point of Rocks to Lovettsville. Near the top I felt something on my lip. A rain drop? My last weather check showed a 0% chance of rain for Saturday, and 20% chance on Sunday. But before we got to the top we were in light rain which persisted while we made clothing changes at the control. The radar at that point looked ugly.

Things could have been worse, though. The rain was light and never really soaked through our clothing, and it ended in two hours. Ultimately we gritted out the dread of challenging weather that never arrived. The reward at Purcellville was another McDonalds, our third for the day. Once again we shared strategies about how to navigate the menu. We were doing okay with time so didn't feel the need to share one cup of coffee.

Our route takes the W&OD Trail (The Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Trail) from Purcellville to the end, with a detour to the 22-hour



control. We had less than an hour there, which is about perfect (though we did not leave exactly at the stroke of twenty-two hours). We were reminded how desultory the service is at the Amphora Diner, but it was great to share a meal not provided by a convenience store or fast food joint.

It was apparent after Gettysburg that we could finish in time barring any mechanical issues, and the bikes held up well. Earl came to the finish, where it was great to see him and to load David's gear into his arms. The DC Randonneurs' fléche ends with a breakfast, where all the riders and some supporters have a meal together.

Almost every starter on the three participating teams finished in tough conditions and shared the friendly celebration at the end. Bill Beck provided first-rate organization, for which we are grateful.

Fleche 2020? This fun and social ride should be a goal for every rider—on a team with shared goals and a taste for adventure. 🚲

Team photo L to R is Mike Scott, Earl Janssen, Gardner Duvall, Emily Ranson, Barry Benson.

—PHOTO THERESA FURNARI



Let It Ride: Gambler's 1000km

BY JULIAYN COLEMAN

The Great Basin Desert of Nevada is not on the bucket lists of most randonneurs. Hot, dry weather, the possibility of strong winds, and few services along remote roads do not create ideal conditions for many cyclists. However, when I heard that Eric Larsen, RBA of the Humboldt Randonneurs, would be offering a 1000km in western Nevada, I was excited to give it a try.

I had completed Eric's Kingdom of Heaven (Tahoe) 1000km a couple of years earlier, and it was by far the best brevet I've done. I enjoy rides with a low ratio of signs of human life to signs of wildlife, and Gamblers would fit the bill.

Historically and geologically, the Great Basin Desert is a fascinating area. It has a linear series of mountain

ranges known as basin and range topography, created by the stretching and relaxing of the earth's crust. Much of western Nevada was covered by an ancient lake approximately 10,000 years ago, and we rode through this prehistoric lakebed during the first and second days of the ride. The third day of the ride took us through Death Valley, a 156-mile trough between two

mountain ranges formed by intense seismic and volcanic activity. Rocks in Death Valley have been dated at 1.8 billion years old, meaning the area contains material spanning most of our planet's existence.

Another interesting thing about this route is that it had a minimum number of controls: six including the start and finish, which is fewer than for my 200km permanent! There was not a lot of climbing, but for most of the route we would be at around 3900' of elevation, and flat routes often have a lot of wind.... Still, Geiger Grade offered a good warm-up with about 650m of climbing over 12.5km. The other major climb was out of Death Valley, roughly 1100m over 25km. The only real difficulty with the ride was that it was held before any of my local clubs hosted their longer brevets of the season, making it hard to do any serious training beforehand.

Day 1

The ride began at the edge of Reno, so we had minimal urban riding at the start. Geiger Grade was not hard, but being a slow climber, I quickly dropped off the back. Soon, though, I noticed a county line sign ahead and rallied to beat Eric Larsen to it! Geiger summit was the first time I saw snow on this ride, but it certainly was not the last. Virginia City was a picturesque little town after Geiger Grade, followed by

Past and present meet at Middlegate Station.

—PHOTO SERGIO GALICIA



a fun, winding descent into a gorge where I spied some wild horses.

After that, I gave a wide exhale as the route turned onto the vast expanse of US-50, also known as America's loneliest highway. I caught up to Canadian riders Bob and Gary. It was pleasant to chat with them but just as pleasant to ride silently, something I enjoy immensely when it happens. The landscape through which we rode inspired an awed silence, so it seemed appropriate. The skies were overcast, putting me in a mellow mood. Is it possible to say that such a desolate landscape is scenic? It was like riding on the moon. I loved it, actually. No worrying about wrong turns or faffing around at unnecessary controls—just pure, minimal rando. We had a nice tailwind in this section, and I made up a lot of time, following Bob's wheel as closely as possible.

After summiting a few passes and passing by a couple of historic pony express stations, we arrived in the tiny hamlet of Middlegate at 116km.

I had no reason not to believe the sign saying POPULATION 17. Before the ride my friends and I had done our homework, checking on what the control in Middlegate had to offer. My friend Eric Marshall, who has a food blog, noticed that the little restaurant in Middlegate has a burger challenge. Being in the middle of a 1000km as we were, we probably could have swung the burger challenge. However, fate was not on our side. It went something like this: Dan and Eric arrived at the tiny bar & grill. Dan ordered his food. Minutes later, before Eric could place the order for his giant burger, the restaurant's power went out and, along with it, the grill. Snake eyes! Consequently, we were all stuck with cold cut sandwiches. It was a cool place nonetheless. They did the best they could, given that we more than doubled the population.

We rode on and were treated to the most unusual, eye-popping, impossible sunset I have ever seen. We were traveling east and noticed that



Wildflowers along Beatty Cutoff Road; Death Valley Nat'l Park.
—PHOTO DEB FORD

At the finish (l to r): Gary Sparks, Sergio Galicia, Debra Kerns, Dan Beringhele, Juliayn Coleman, and Eric Larsen.
—PHOTO ERIC LARSEN



the mountains in front of us and on the side were turning gold. Looking back, we saw the incredibly saturated oranges, pinks, and purples and stopped to put on our night riding gear.

Getting closer to Austin, the first overnight control, the temperature dropped dramatically, and it was damp as well. My chest felt tight. I was among the last ones to arrive in Austin, but there was plenty of hot food left. However, the tiny hotel no longer had hot water! That was tough because I

was really cold. The town of Austin, NV, had a population of 192 according to the 2010 census, so the twenty-two riders plus several volunteers were seriously tapping the resources of this town. But I had arrived early enough to get four or five hours of sleep, so I was happy.

Day 2

In the morning, Dan and Eric patiently waited for me to get ready, and we left a little later than I had planned. We started the climb out of



Rural scene from day 2 along Hwy 50.

—PHOTO DEB FORD

Austin, entering Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, chatting and climbing. It was crazy to see how much snow was around. Even after we passed through the frozen descent into the Big Smoky Valley, it was still quite chilly, and we continued riding with all our layers.

It is hard to describe the experience of riding through the Big Smoky Valley. Like most of the Gamblers 1000km route, you need to be able to notice subtle changes in the landscape to appreciate its beauty. It is not like most of the northern and central Californian routes I've done where you reach a summit, and suddenly there is a dramatic landscape in front of you. The road through the Big Smoky Valley

Big Smokey Valley; NV 376 to Tonopah.

—PHOTO DEB FORD

was lined on both sides with mountain ranges running parallel to the road, and again we could see for many miles ahead of us. There was a minimum of plant life. The road was silky smooth, and motorists drove like they had somewhere to be (although they were also quite courteous). At long intervals there were tiny collections of trailers and vehicles set far back from the road, and signs noted roads or springs each way. We alternately chatted or stayed silent, and it was one of those days when I felt like the world's luckiest randonneur.

We reached the Shoshone Market, not a control but a suggested food stop at 100km from the day's start. A lady made sandwiches, and a nearby room was full of keno machines with ashtrays.

While we sat and ate, a guy walked by, and we started up a conversation.

He worked in the nearby gold mines. He talked about the process of extracting gold, but when he got to the part about filtering the slurry with cyanide, my eyes started to glaze over. Cyanide? He wrapped up his attempts to educate us, and we asked him what it was like to live out here. He casually said, "Last winter was hard, real hard."

I had been having a hard day myself. It was windy—and not in our favor like the day before. The scenery was no less breathtaking, however. The previous day had been overcast, but this one was sunnier, and you could see the beautiful desert palette: pale pink; tan; sage; some bushes with tiny yellow flowers; other bushes with multitudes of delicate, lacy stems; smooth, light gray pavement; and a pastel blue sky. While we were riding through the Big Smoky Valley, Eric pointed out that changes in the landscape did not come suddenly, but they were noticeable if you paid attention. We had begun the day wearing our down jackets, but by dinnertime, we saw Joshua trees.

I dropped back but caught up to the group in Tonopah. However, I needed a longer rest there and let them go ahead to Beatty, the second overnight



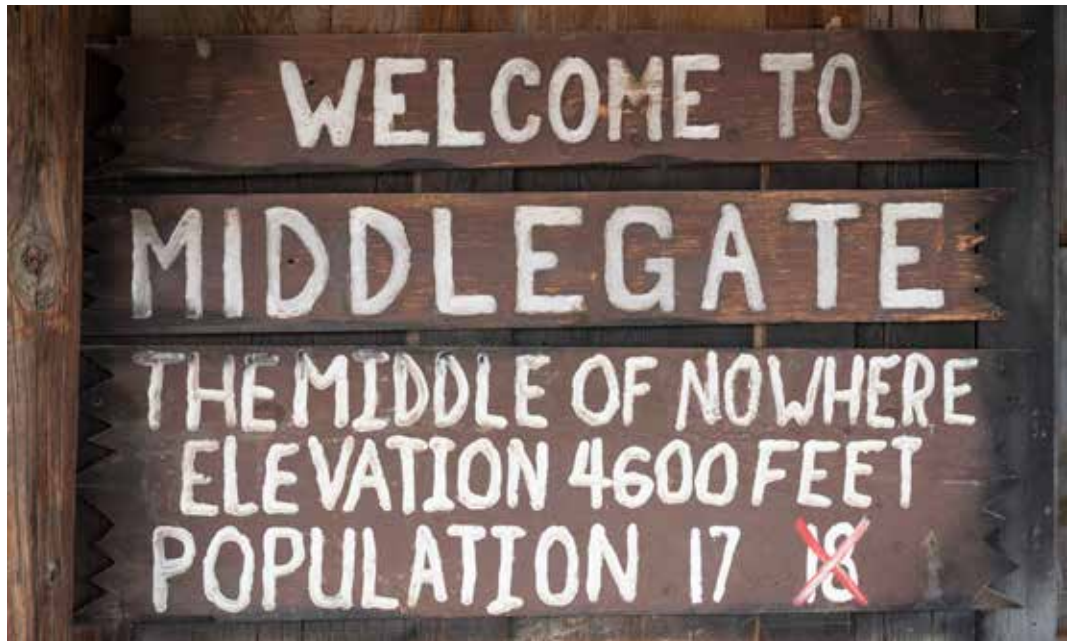
control. There was a spaghetti feed awaiting me there, but I knew I would arrive long after it was over. It was ok; I had a peaceful ride under the desert stars from just after Goldfield to Beatty. Although I was riding on the shoulder of a highway with a 70mph speed limit, I never felt my safety threatened. Truckers and other motorists changed to the left lane to pass me without fail.

Day 3

I woke up coughing on the last day. 234 miles—almost 400 km—remained to finish this ride. I had no real bailout options, so I forced myself to get out the door as quickly as possible despite not really being able to breathe. But, as so often happens, randonneuring turns out to be the cause of and cure for my physical ailments, and once I had ridden back into the dry air, I felt better.

The sun was rising as we rode toward the state border. Near the California border, we all posed our bikes with the Death Valley sign and got moving again. According to the cue sheet, we were about to start a descent of almost two thousand feet, followed by two thousand feet more. We rounded a bend in the road and saw a huge pyramid-shaped rock. Death Valley! After another bend in the road, suddenly the whole southern part of the valley was visible: shimmering white salt flats for miles, bound by deeply crevassed, eroded rock formations on one side and the Panamint Mountains on the other. We descended on smooth pavement for a long time, eventually arriving at the Furnace Creek Visitor's Center. One group of riders went to a diner for a sit-down breakfast, but Dan, Eric, and I rode on together to the staffed information control at Badwater Basin. Although it is the continent's lowest point, there are 11,000 feet of sediment and minerals beneath Badwater!

The temperature started to rise as we climbed out of Badwater. As much work as Jubilee Pass was, Salisbury Pass was the real killer for me. It was tough going in the heat although



Deb and Marcia diligently positioned themselves to provide us with water and snacks. After Salisbury we had a deep descent into another large basin with the striped mountains of the Nopah Range visible in the distance.

In Shoshone we met up with Eric Larsen and several others at Crowbar, the dinner stop. On the way back from the restroom, I struck up a conversation with a couple of ladies having dinner. When they heard where I had been and where I was going, one of them offered me the rest of her quesadilla!

Almost 200km remained in the ride, and although it was early evening, Dan, Eric, and I were pretty tired. Forty kilometers ahead was the city (yes, a city!) of Pahrump. Dan and I had

Top, Gary Sparks and Eric Marshall descending Beatty Cutoff Road; Death Valley Nat'l Park.

Bottom, the Middlegate Station Control.
—PHOTOS DEB FORD

discussed the possibility of stopping in Pahrump and finding a hotel to take a nap for a few hours. It seemed like a good idea since there was plenty of time on the clock. Death Valley was amazing, but it had taken a lot out of me. When the three of us got to Pahrump, Eric decided to ride ahead while Dan and I stopped off to sleep. That turned out to be one of the best decisions we made on this ride.



We rolled out of Pahrump refreshed. Once again, riding under the desert sky at night thrilled me and made me glad to be on my bike. The road was quiet until we turned onto US-95, a much busier highway with only two lanes and a very narrow shoulder for the first twelve kilometers. Drivers still gave us plenty of room, but I felt a little stressed out by the traffic. However, the two-lane road soon split into a divided highway with wide shoulders, and before long we came to the town of Indian Springs. Because this had been recommended on the cue sheet as a spot to get water and food, Dan and I decided to stop and get some caffeine. We encountered other riders: Sergio, Deb from Seattle, and Gary. They had been at this gas station, with its generous floor space and keno machines with wide-cushioned seats, for a good while. The gas station had other advantages as well: an abundance of microwaveable food and a microwave to boot! The lady working the counter advised us of a roadway hassle ahead, a truck that had flipped on the expressway. I could not conceive

of what to do about that until after getting some warm food and possibly a five-minute power nap at one of the keno machines (the machines' most useful purpose as far as I was concerned). While I was sleeping, Eric Larsen arrived. He roused all of us, and as soon as I caught wind of being able to ride out with him, I snapped into action. If there was going to be trouble down the road, I wanted to be riding with the RBA!

The sun was just peeking over the horizon as we rolled out. I felt refreshed once again but wondered what might happen up ahead. Would we have to detour around the crash? I thought I had heard Eric say the detour would go up into the mountains, something I did not want to hear. However, for some mysterious reason he seemed convinced that we would not have to do that. After a bit we came up to the area where the detour split off. Eric indicated to us that we should hang back while he talked to the officials. Following several quiet minutes, he returned to say that we could proceed on the expressway! We thanked the

Juliayn Coleman and Dan Beringhele, Shoshone Market near Round Mountain Gold Corp., NV.

—PHOTO DAN BERINGHELE

officers and rolled along for twenty-two kilometers on our own two lanes of a completely car-free expressway.

Riding those twenty-two kilometers with five other randonneurs that morning was like being in a fairytale or in the unlikely ending of a cheesy Hollywood movie. Anyway, I was ecstatic. What a crazy and unbelievably sweet way to end this ride. Many thanks to all the seasoned volunteers who knew exactly what we needed and helped us out so much, and thanks a million to Eric Larsen for organizing the ride so we all could enjoy it. 🚲

Sources Cited

NationalParkService.gov
OnlineNevada.org

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:

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This is a Great Road

BY KEITH GATES, RUSA #1445

I can still hear the words echoing in my head amid the steady drone of crickets in the thick night air of a muggy October evening somewhere southeast of Camdenton, Missouri.

“This is a *great* road.”

Emphasis aside, his phrase landed flat, containing neither praise nor dagger, his true message masked by labored breath as he passed. After thirteen hours of pedaling across bone-jarring gravel, the ability to convey emotion had evaporated. Only thinly veiled stabs directed toward the route designer remained, after half-a-dozen flat tires, abysmal food service delays, and a snapped saddle rail. What in the devil are we doing out here? On *gravel*, no less? What is the deal with

gravel, already? Has cycling become so “easy,” so bored with itself that we must invent ways to increase its difficulty? Is it marketing hype? What is it about innocuous pairs of words like “Trans Iowa,” or “Dirty Kanza” that strike fear into those of us with 28mm tires and canvas handlebar bags? *That’s not randonneuring... right?* Let’s not be too hasty. Maybe it’s not fear we’re feeling but curiosity, a connection to history, and perhaps even a dollop of hope.

Many pure roadies, this author

was once included, dismiss gravel for its apparent unnecessary difficulty. However, we may be failing to look beyond the surface and toward the horizons to which these roads lead. I recall the curiosity that lured me onto the saddle in the first place. The curiosity to go beyond the neighborhood for the first time. The curiosity to finally ask that cyclist I once overheard at the bike shop, “You’re riding *how far?*” The curiosity to wonder, after finishing that first century ride, if I could go farther. Could I ride after dark... all night... over that pass, make it to that town, get my card stamped before they closed, finish a 200km ride... a 300... 400? 600?! Gravel can be examined as just another “what if” instead of as a barrier or a cautionary note on a cue sheet; gravel roads can provide another passageway on our

Steven W. climbing into the sunrise on chunky Ozark gravel.

—PHOTO KEITH GATES



individual journeys of self-discovery.

What about the bike? Many of us already have the right bike when it comes to comfort, sure-footedness, and capability. At Camdenton, we all reached the finish hotel together: a rag-tag mix of fixed gears and multi-speeders with tires ranging from 700x25 to 650x47. Ultimately the bike did not seem to matter too much. What did matter was our willingness to try, to wonder, and to “just go.” One does not need to invest in anything special to enjoy (yes, *enjoy*, not endure) gravel, but we are all spoiled for choice should we want specialized equipment. Yes, the industry is selling “gravel bikes,” but these bikes may also be terrific randonneuring bikes.

Regarding questions about gravel riding being a fad, I wonder if critics are perhaps overlooking a larger opportunity. Our own randonneuring history is filled with tales of heroic riders traversing barely improved mountain passes cloaked in clouds of dust. Imagine the roads at the first Paris-Brest-Paris in 1891! A few miles of gravel can reconnect us with the ancients and annieciennes we work so hard to emulate. When suburban sprawl pinches off once-perfect randonneuring routes, the question should not be one of gravel being too difficult, but of the return on investment when one ventures back to the quiet, traffic-free “B” roads. The “B” roads where randonneuring began, where the locals wave back, and the satisfaction of personal triumph is amplified. With new rides added each year, gravel is not going anywhere—and some argue it never left in the first place.

Recalling the Camdenton Dart transports me back to impossibly steep Ozark hills littered with miniature boulders and washboard sections that blurred my vision and challenged my resolve. When compared to the dozens of all-pavement brevets and permanents I have ridden, the ride will forever stand out. Is a gravel brevet difficult? In some ways, perhaps—but



Gary DelNero is all smiles above Lake Niangua.

—PHOTO ADAM ROTHERMICH

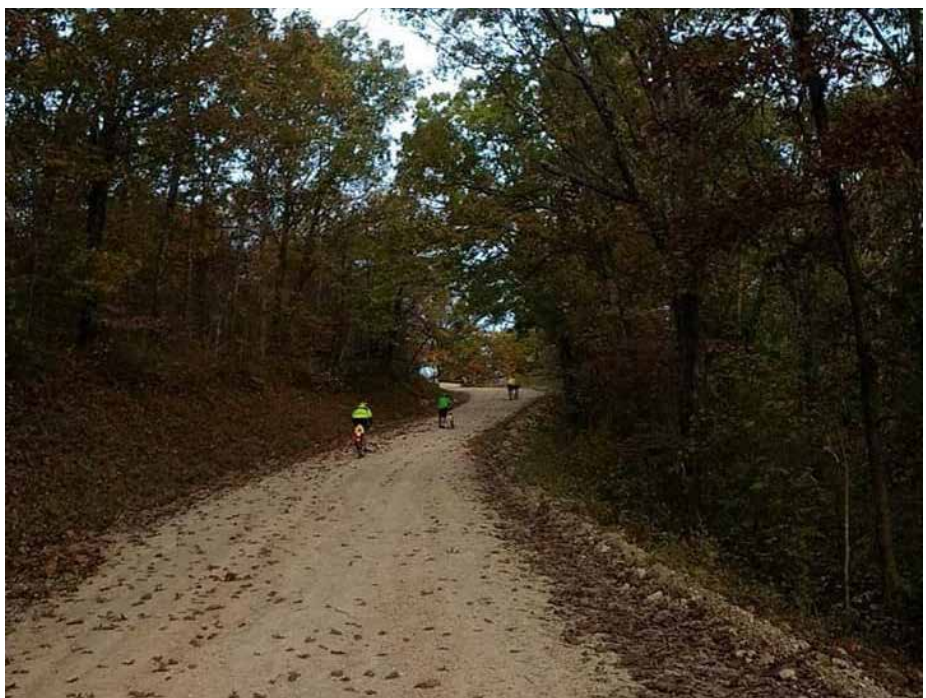
What on earth was I afraid of in the first place?

But, was it “a great road?” At that moment in time, after enduring the challenges and mechanical issues, perhaps the message was different than it is today. Such is the case with “randonnesia.” Each year, more gravel rides appear on our local randonneuring calendar, and more people come out to try them on all manner of bicycles. Perhaps an equalizer, gravel reinforces the idea that speed doesn’t matter nor does one’s arrival time at the finish. It is then more about the journey, the personal challenge, and the things we discover along the way. Hand on heart, even if the going gets rough, it’s always a *great* road. Gravel is a small part of a grander adventure, and the roads simply are what they are, where they take us is what matters the most. Just go. 🚲

as it is with life: the more difficult the pursuit, the richer the rewards. The curiosity and the wonder—and yes, the fear of the unknown—were paid back. Paid back with a visit to the Ha-Ha Tonka Castle in the predawn light, the astonishing vistas above the Tunnel Dam, the most delicious pie from an Amish bakery, the laughter of friends, and a smile I could not seem to erase, even after the allotted time for our Dart team had elapsed. Somehow, in the dark, exhausted and helping remedy a snapped seat rail, we had already received the validation we’d been seeking. The Camdenton Dart gravel adventure will likely remain the best ride I’ve ever had, despite the DNF. I cannot wait to go back for another try.

Keith, Steven and Gary climbing through a postcard of fall colors and gravel.

—PHOTO ADAM ROTHERMICH



Notes from North Park 600km

BY JONATHAN FEY

Jonathan offers a series of “snapshots” of a challenging and beautiful 600km. His memories so clearly reveal the high and low moments of any ride of this length.

Morning

Wake up at 2:00 am. Coffee, shower, some light snacks. A waffle.

Leave at 2:56am. Drive to start in Louisville (CO). Put on an extra long sleeve wool shirt: temperature at the start is 45 degrees.

Maybe fifteen riders, all doing 600km. New route, developed by RMCC's John Mangin with inspiration from Corinne Warren.

Route

From Louisville, go north through Boulder county, skirt between Horsetooth Reservoir and Fort Collins to Laporte, then left and ascend the fifty-mile grade to Cameron Pass via Poudre Canyon. Descend from there toward Walden. A right turn out of Walden and a gradual rolling climb to the Colorado-Wyoming border. Then a fast, twisting descent into Woods Landing. From there, a low grade downhill run in to Laramie. Leave Laramie on I-80 East for six miles up to Happy Jack Road. A left turn. Then

roll mostly downhill past Kurt Gowdy State Park toward Cheyenne. South at Cheyenne and parallel I-25. Hit Wellington and Milliken before turning West again toward Louisville. 377 miles. 15000 feet elevation gain.

Settling In

Tired but ok. Didn't sleep much, maybe two hours. Mark is there and Corinne, who is the designated ride leader. Other familiar faces: Dave, Matteo, Oksana. Hard to tell in the dark. A couple of new faces, though I am one of the newer ones.

Leave Conoco at 4:00am. Head north through Boulder county. Route jogs around. The group stays together for an hour, then stretches out into small groups, then coalesces again. Nearing Loveland, there are five of us.

Some light coming up on the right. Songbirds.

Legs ok but position on the bike feels off. I shuffle around on the saddle for two hours.

Not as fast as the previous week's 400km, but still fast. Arrive at LaPorte around 6:15am. Move saddle down about three millimeters. Refill water.

Control card signed at Vern's. Eat a pastry.

The Fifty-Mile Climb

Four of us keep a good pace and take turns at the front on the climb up Poudre Canyon. Matteo dropped back at the Laporte control.

Still don't feel great. Knees aching. Position on saddle feels better, though.

Eating a lot on the bike. Mix of solid food and gels, bars, electrolyte mixed heavy with some sugars.

Arrive at Rustic, last week's turn around point. More water. Have control card signed.

Twenty miles left to the top of Cameron Pass. Climb gets steeper. Still rolling well together as a group of four.

120-mile mark. Some steeper ramps. Mark heads off the front. I try to ride with him then decide not to put in too big an effort this early.

Tiny knives behind my kneecaps.

Riding between Mark ahead and Corinne and Nate behind. Then Matteo catches me close to the summit of the pass.

Just above treeline now. A little cold.

High country numbers, Cameron Pass.

— PHOTO JONATHAN FEY



A good stretch of road heading into Wyoming.

—PHOTO JONATHAN FEY



Big Open Sky

12:00pm, eight hours into day one. Sit up, soft pedal, put on rain jacket. Bad, slow descent into a stiff headwind. Pedaling hard to go thirty miles per hour.

A mix of cross headwinds and cross tailwinds as the road follows a small drainage toward Walden.

Come up on Matteo near Walden. He says this is the hardest part of the ride for him. After the big climb, it's mentally challenging. He thinks Mark is about ten minutes up the road.

Matteo doesn't try to ride on my wheel so I push on toward Walden. Legs ok. Knees somehow feel ok.

Arrive in Walden. Mark is there. His knee is giving him trouble.

Matteo arrives. I tell Mark that I plan to ride with Corinne and Nate.

Eat a burrito and have my control card signed. Eat a slice of pizza. Eat some energy chews.

Nate and Corinne arrive. We roll out of Walden as a group of five.

Still feeling ok. A good tailwind. Big rollers. Big sky. Hard to say if it's mostly downhill or mostly uphill.

Riding ahead for a little while, then pull off the front a little further.

Right turn towards Wyoming and Woods Landing. Beautiful stretch of pavement which winds upward through open high country.

Pine trees. Small farms. Small patches of late snow.

Wyoming

Mark catches me and we ride well together to the top of the climb. It takes us probably an hour or so. We talk about our knees.

In Wyoming now. Fast rolling descents into big straight uphill. This

goes on for about ten minutes, then onto the descent.

Fast and twisting. The pavement is bad but the descent is not technical.

Arrive at Woods Landing control. Mark is a minute behind. More water. Corinne, Nate, then Matteo. Corinne makes a fast control stop, so she rolls out with Mark and me.

Halway

300km in. Maybe an hour off 300km pace from two weeks ago.

Corinne and I ride ahead of Mark together into a stiff cross headwind. Pavement is bad.

An hour and a half of this. We roll into Laramie at 5:30pm. Half of a Subway sandwich. I eat the second half rolling out of Laramie.

A Hard Part, Then a Little Easier

I-80. Six-mile climb. Very slow. Corinne drops back. Mark, a black dot up ahead of me.

Road climbs for about forty minutes. Difficult. Right shifter is hard to push. Knees are bad. Trucks every ten seconds in the next lane. A decent shoulder, though.

I wait for Corinne at the top of the climb, mix electrolytes in my one full

bottle. Getting cold so I put the rain jacket on and pedal toward Cheyenne.

A little worried about riding solo in the dark. A little worried about stretching the one bottle out to Cheyenne.

Good light, low and colorful to the west. Some orange. Some red. Some purple. More rolling terrain, gradually down. Quiet. Almost no cars.

A long stretch solo. Big wind farms. The road flattens out. Now dark.

Drowsy. A little bit out of my head. Not thinking about legs or knees.

Cheyenne in the Dark

Cheyenne in the distance. Control at 9:50pm. I suspect Mark rolled through quickly.

I take my time. Worried about riding drowsy. Cold.

Nate, Corinne, Matteo all roll up together around 10:15pm. The gas station has closed so we head over to a Burger King across the street.

Mark is there. He has a bag of food. He says the drive through is open but the lobby is closed. Says he's going to buy a toothbrush and get a hotel. Offers to split if any of us want. His knee is bad. He's going to finish the ride tomorrow.

Another gas station and a change

of clothes. Long sleeve wool shirt
back on. Wind vest on over rain jacket.
Knee warmers on.

Hello Again, Colorado

Heading south, four riders now.
Delirious without sleep. Too warm with
everything on.

I unzip just barely. Headlights
cross, bob, weave. Distracting.

More headwinds.

Big globs of rain, intermittently.

Nate and I roll away from Matteo
and Corinne.

180km left. Legs ok.

1000'-tall storm clouds light up
with lightning way off ahead of us.
They look like lilac bushes.

Power plants, their byzantine
layers of pillars and lights. The storm
clouds, pillars, too.

Delirious. I slap my face. It
doesn't help.

Nate tells me to keep eating, keep
drinking. I eat something. I drink.

He gives me a caffeine pill.

We turn pedals, sometimes side
by side, sometimes him ahead,
sometimes me.

Lightning closer to us.

A right turn toward Carr. Midnight.
Smells like afternoon rain.

Sky opens up, big time. I regret
taking the fenders off. Super big gloppy
sky tears. Cold. Wind swirling. We're in
a toilet bowl.

Lightning intermittent but closer.

Frequent lightning now. Loud
cracks of thunder.

Where We Get Hailed On

At first, small specks of hail,
then bigger. Getting pelted hard on
knuckles, forearms, helmets. Dimes,
then nickels.

We stop next to a small white

house for shelter from the hail.
Frequent lightning strikes. Everything
lights up. A limbless, dead tree in the
yard. Feet are soaked. Rain spills over
the gutter of the house and all over
everything. Trying to think about this
as value-neutral.

No Corinne, no Matteo. Worried
for them. Envious of Mark's decision to
stay in Cheyenne.

Wait for a half hour. Less rain now
and no hail. Head out, pedaling hard to
keep warm.

Caffeine pill has done the trick.
Body tired but mentally ok.

Problems navigating. We ride
down a dirt road for five minutes, turn
back, overshoot our turn, then are back
on course.

Corinne texts to say they're ok, that
they camped out in a good samaritan's
truck and that they're going to hunker
down in a post office in Carr.



Late sky near Curt Gowdy
State Park, WY.

— PHOTO JONATHAN FEY

First light near Loveland, CO.

— PHOTO JONATHAN FEY

Riding Through

Rough, rocky dirt road with sticky mud under the rocks. Pushing on the pedals hard. Road crosses under I-25 two or three times, then parallels it. Big puddles under the freeway. Almost lose front wheel in soft edge.

Glad to have taken fenders off now, given the mud.

Feet wet. Worn out dish sponges, or medium-sized trout maybe.

Back onto pavement, going mostly south. A right turn toward the Rawhide Power Plant, then a left on CR9 to Wellington, nine miles away. Good tailwind. Mostly soft pedaling. More food.

Control in Wellington after more backtracking. Everything is funny.

2:00am. Twenty-two hours on course.

A cheese danish and an Espresso Doubleshot. They're two for \$5. I buy two, drink the first one, save the second for later.

2:15am. Head off. An option to sleep in the Wellington post office, but we're both feeling ok so push on toward Milliken, thirty-seven miles mostly south through Severance. Some familiar turns from last weekend.

We talk about things other than the bike. I pick Nate's brain on gardening.

We talk about the bikes, about long rides. He's doing PBP. I still don't know if I will.

A small climb out of Windsor. Still with a tailwind. Make good time to Milliken.

It's very quiet, except for the dried-out drivetrains, chirping.

Day Two

The sounds of birds. Morning light is gray and there is a low fog settling in over the fields.



Some yellowish orange lights on tall wiry structures in the distance to the south east.

4:45 am or so. Milliken.

Second burrito, this time with egg and potato and cabbage.

At mile 340 and will ride through Mead, Firestone, and Erie toward Louisville. We can finish in a little over twenty-seven hours. Both very tired rolling away from Milliken.

Knees hurt. Saddle hurts. Legs feel heavy. Turn the pedals slowly. Pedaling sloppy. Feet moving like triangles.

Boycott Sleep

Drowsy again. Yawning.

Miss a couple of turns but get back on course easily. Mead. Fifteen miles out.

We both feel bad but start to push harder. Ready to be off the bike. I tell Nate I'm going to buy a tall can of Tecate at the Conoco.

Erie.

A few last rollers. I tell Nate we can do 27:30. It will be close.

A little bit harder now. We sprint up the last two hills, then make the left turn onto McCaslin Boulevard.

Fin

7:30am. 27h30m on the nose.

A few bonus miles for getting turned around. Garmin says 382.6.

A pack of Haribo gummy bears at the Conoco. I eat all of them but skip the Tecate.

Body numb. Brain hurts. Moving slowly as we pack Nate's bike in my car, then mine on top. Put on dry shorts. Lucky to have packed dry socks.

Remaining riders will trickle in in pairs over the following hours. No DNF's.

In the hard daylight, things come into fuller relief. Medians with grass in them. Small trees. Slabs of cement form the edges of a tall parking structure near a multiplex theater, near a freeway, where people are coming and going. 🚲

Marshall “Major” Taylor was no randonneur. Following an early and dramatic showing in one of the six-day races in 1896, he did not seem to particularly enjoy long distance cycling, specializing in races of one mile or less. From humble beginnings, and against incredible odds, Major Taylor rose to become the “world’s fastest man.”

As Michael Kranish makes clear in his new biography, what Taylor endured as a Black athlete at the height of the Jim Crow era was practically superhuman and certainly establishes him as one of the most successful athletes of all time.

Kranish, an investigative reporter for *The Washington Post* and author of several biographies of renowned and notorious political figures, frames his account of Major Taylor’s rise to cycling superstardom as both biography and

social history. His tale illuminates many of the factors that led to and supported the initial bicycle craze that swept America and Europe at the end of the nineteenth century as a way to better understand Taylor’s life and rise to fame. Kranish’s decision to tell this dramatic story in a non-chronological manner pays off as a technique to build momentum and suspense towards key events in Taylor’s life.

Through good fortune and incredible perseverance, Major Taylor became one of the most famous athletes of his time. Introduced to the bicycle through a wealthy friend with whom he spent considerable time as a young boy while his Civil War veteran father was laboring on an estate in central Indiana, Taylor’s natural skill and ability were soon recognized by bicycle manufacturer “Birdie” Munger, whose own star was fading as a bicycle racer just as Taylor’s was about to rise. While key sponsors such as Munger provided important access and



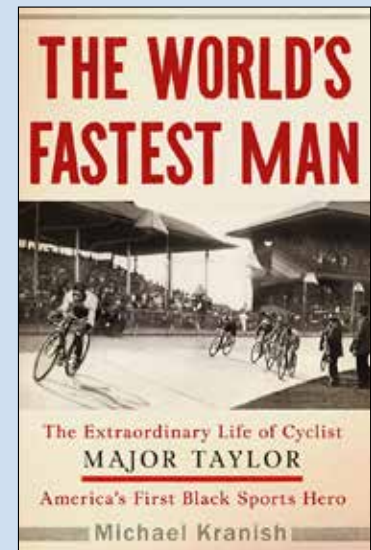
Marshall “Major” Taylor.
—COLLECTION JULES BEAU/
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The World’s Fastest Man (2019)

BY MICHAEL KRANISH

366 pp. Scribner.

\$30.00 paper, \$14.99 digital



opportunity, Kranish is convincing in his claim that Taylor’s success, both on and off the track, was his alone.

During the late nineteenth century, not only were bicycles all the rage for both transportation and recreation, but bicycle racing as a spectator sport was more popular than baseball, crew and boxing. Events held on newly-built velodromes drew crowds of thousands who would watch racers chase speed and endurance records under frightfully dangerous conditions. In his autobiography, for instance, Taylor lists eleven fellow racers who were killed in action and admits that he was increasingly concerned about his own safety, noting the additional risks he faced as a Black man whom many white racers saw as an affront. While most of these races were sprints, the epic six-day races, such as the one in 1896 at Madison Square Garden in which Taylor raced, combined

endurance with close spectator access.

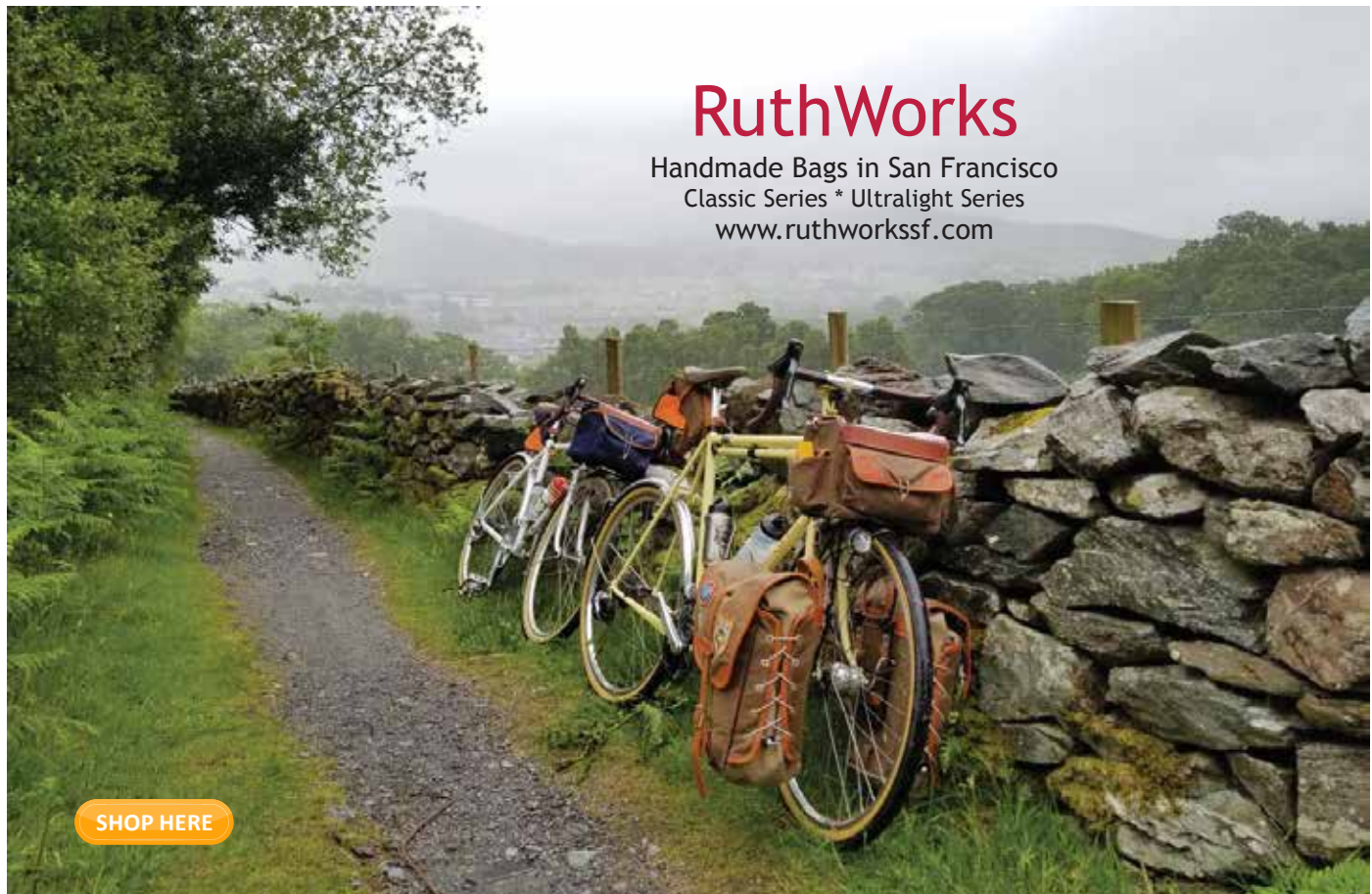
Major Taylor was not only fast on a bicycle, he was also remarkably driven to succeed and he endured in the face of tremendous adversity. Kranish reminds readers that the pervasive racism of the Jim Crow period was found in both the North and the South and in urban and rural areas alike. After all, 1896 was the year of the Plessy vs. Ferguson case in which the Supreme Court ruled in favor of legal segregation. Even pioneering national cycling advocacy organizations like the League of American Wheelman (LAW) created obstacles for Black cyclists like Taylor who were forbidden from competing in LAW-sanctioned races. Hostility from fellow racers and organizers as well as the death threats he periodically received would have discouraged many, but Taylor persisted.

This book provides the reader with a wealth of information about American society between the Civil War and World War I. We are reminded, for instance, that bicycles far outnumbered

cars at the dawn of the twentieth century and things we now associate with cars such as paved roads, pneumatic tires, and basic gears were innovations first developed for use by bicyclists who were, for a short time, the fastest humans on earth. Despite learning a great deal about the social history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I found myself wanting to know more about Major Taylor the man. Somehow, Kranish just does not seem to go far enough to probe Taylor's motivations and emotions and, in the end, he presents us with a man who seems somewhat wooden and distant. While it's not impossible for white writers to offer a sophisticated and nuanced examination of complex racial dynamics and non-white subjects, I wonder what a writer of color would have done with this story.

Taylor gained considerable recognition both during and after his life as the "world's fastest man," despite the treatment he faced from organizers,

referees, and fellow racers. While the names of his competitors have long been lost to history, Taylor's name continues to inspire equity and excellence in cycling and beyond, with statues, racing leagues, cycling clubs and even one of the few remaining functioning velodromes in America not far from his birthplace in Central Indiana all bearing his name. Taylor has been an inspiration to countless cyclists and non-cyclists alike as someone who fought relentlessly in pursuit of a dream despite significant barriers long before Jesse Owens and Jackie Robinson made the scene. Readers unfamiliar with the details of Taylor's accomplishments, as I was, will likely be mesmerized by this story. It is a tale that all Americans, and certainly all cyclists, should know. While *The World's Fastest Man* may be limited in some ways, sections of it are real page-turners and it provides a good overview of the subject and is well worth the read. 🚲



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Two American Randonneurs Complete the Grand Tour of Italy

BY HAMID AKBARIAN WITH SHAB MEMARBASHI

According to the website 999miglia.it, “Traveling in Italy has distant roots. Ever since the Middle Ages, pilgrims, merchants, artists, priests, students and adventurers have beaten a path through Italy.... The Italy of the Grand Tour (IGT) is a “Gran Brevetto ARI” that follows on the tradition of the Grand Tour via an updated, bicycle tourism version.”

Organizers continue, “Four outings of 1200 km are each offered every four years, after which one can truly claim to have toured Italy in its entirety. Anyone finishing all four tours receives an honorary diploma of ‘Gran Randonneur d’Italia.’ The tours can be completed in any order and there is no time limit for the completion of all four. Recent cycling trips include the 1001 Miglia that took place in 2016, the 999 [in] 2017, the Alpine 4000 in 2018 and the 6+6 Islands in 2019, after which the cycle starts again in 2020.”

Hamid Akbarian writes: from my first ride in Italy in 2010, I knew that I wanted to come back and ride in Italy again. During the 2016 Miglia Italia registration, Shab (my wife) saw a big banner about Italia Del Grand Tour, Four Grand Randonnees of over 1200km where riders cover all of Italy including the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. This is how the adventure started. My cycling partner at the time, Dave Thompson, was also happy that

we would be coming back to Italy every year until at least 2019.

Miglia Italia covers south of Milan to north of Rome as well as the Tuscany area. The night start is a different experience to most rides. I rode fast with a bunch of Italian riders for the first 100km and then slowed down a bit but still covered more than 500km in less than twenty-four hours. From that point the ride became hilly and remained hilly for the next 950km. I

had the pleasure of riding with a Seattle group for the last couple of days and finished 125 hours after I started.

The next event was the 2017 Roma-999, another 1000-mile ride from Rome covering the south of Italy. This time we started at 7:00am on a hot July day, and there were long stretches without services. We rode to Pompeii on the first night and then to the beautiful Amalfi coast. After Amalfi, we rode east to Matera. This route passes through many historic Roman cities that were interesting enough to help us forget the excessive heat. Dave and I finished this ride after pedaling through rain for several hours. This was the hardest ride I ever attempted. The first 1200km includes 45000’ of climbing; the next 200km has 15000’, and the last 200km climbs about 5000’.

We did the third ride in 2018—the Alpi 4000. This ride covers Alps, hence



Hamid Akbarian and Bob Brudvik...
the only Americans to complete
this series of Italian rides.

—PHOTO SHAB MEMARBASHI

At the start of Alpi4000 last summer with the greatest Italian rider who is the president of ARI Audax Randonneur Italia and his name is Luca Bonechi.

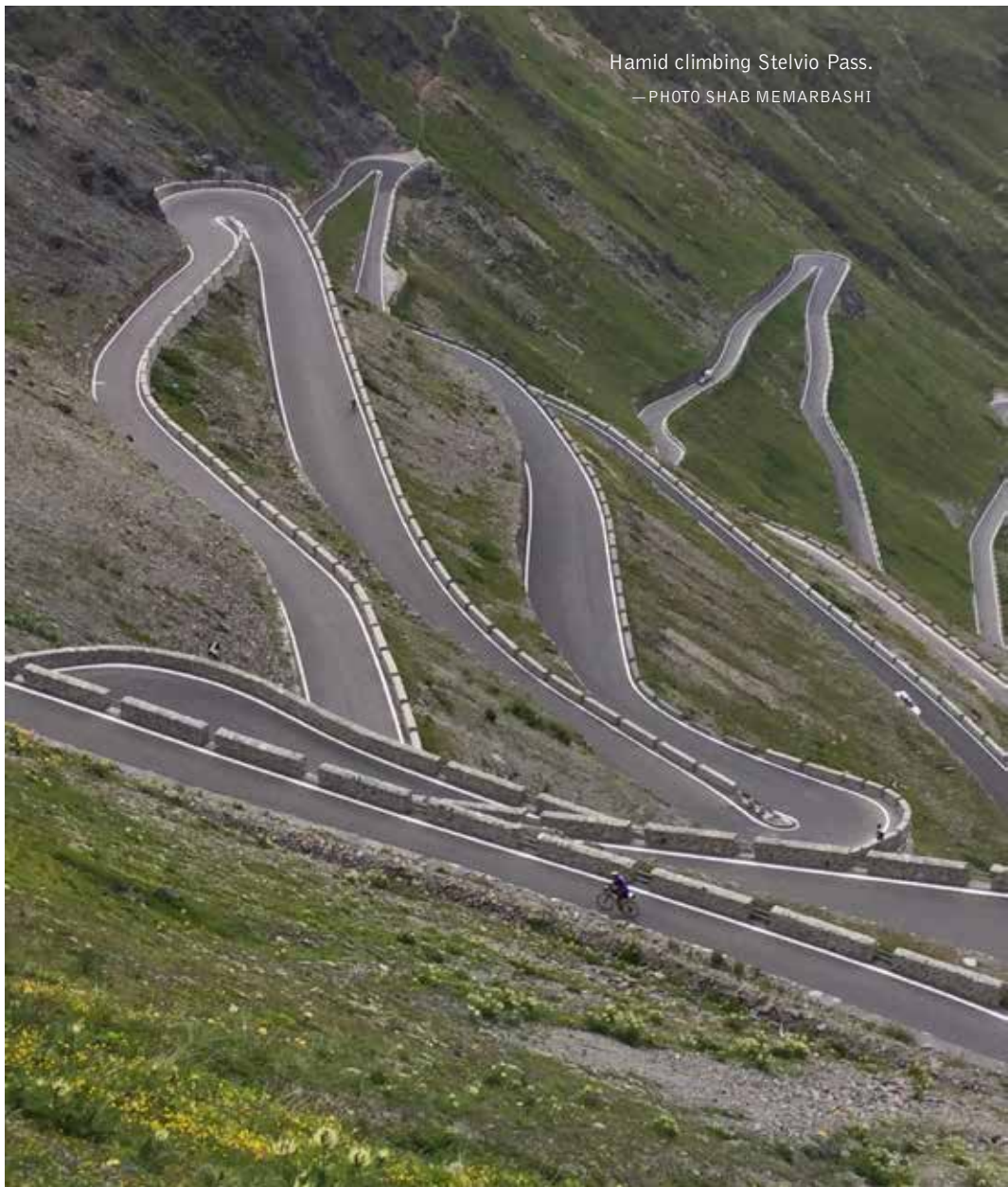
—PHOTO SHAB MEMARBASHI

the name “Alpi.” And the ride is called the Alpi 4000 because the route travels along 4000-meter mountains. We had beautiful weather; it was comfortable during the day and chilly after midnight. Because of the difficulty of the route, I only slept 2.5 hours per night instead of my preferred four hours per night. This ride began in a ski resort town in the north of Italy. The third day we exchanged the mountains for flat roads and hot temperatures. On the fourth day, however, we returned to the mountains, and on the last day we climbed Passo dello Stelvio, one of the most famous climbs in the Alps with an elevation of 2,757m (9,045’) above sea level. It is the highest paved mountain pass in the Eastern Alps, and the second highest in the Alps. This is by far one of the most beautiful and epic views that I have ever seen in a ride.

The fourth ride was in April of 2019 and covered the two biggest Italian islands: Sicily and Sardinia. The route on each island was an ACP 600km. The Sardinia ride was nice but windy with lots of climbing. At the end of this ride, we took a ferry for twelve hours to Sicily for the second 600km which was hot and traveled along busy roads. Despite all of the challenges, both Islands were beautiful, and we tried to enjoy the routes as much as we could. Food and pastries were good and cheap. I am not sure how many cannoli I ate.

It was rather a bitter sweet final day for me when my dearest friend Dave Thompson crashed eighty miles from the end, but I am grateful that he is fine.

“Italia del Grand Tour” is all done and over for me, but if you decide to do it talk to me and I may be able to change your mind. 🚲



Hamid climbing Stelvio Pass.

—PHOTO SHAB MEMARBASHI

Thanks to Blackbeard

I have to rank this year's 300km as one of the very finest rides I've ever done. Good roads and great camaraderie added up to another great day on the bikes. I drove home with a buddy, and we talked about the good times we'd just had. We talked about the good times that would be heading our way in a few months.

And then my bike fell off the roof.

Where to begin? It all started decades ago, when I came of age in rural Virginia. After my '54 Ford broke down, I began to pedal the nine miles to Bluestone High School. That's when I developed a soft spot for Virginia's quiet chip-seal back roads. That's when I fell in love with cycling. I may

be decades older now, but I still love Virginia's roads.

In the spring, as I looked through RUSA's online calendar, I saw a 300km near Tidewater, VA, just north of my home in North Carolina. All I needed to complete my SR series was a measly 300km. Piece of cake. Keith Sutton, the local RBA, had devised an elongated oval route on the back country roads of Virginia. That was my kind of route. I contacted local riding buddy Branson Kimball and we both signed up.

Ideal Start

Talk about an ideal start: Keith's route launched and finished at the front door of our motel. We rode a few miles on arterial roads in Suffolk, but we soon found ourselves on Virginia's exceptionally quiet lanes.

The forecast had called for a dry, cool day, but forecasts don't always get it right; Branson and I pedaled through

an hour of misty rain before the sun finally showed itself. But who cared about a little rain. Life was grand. Here and there we passed through small towns—Boykins, Branchville, Jarrat—before returning to country roads that were skirted by fields and farms and forests.

Yes, it was another great day on the bikes. Have I mentioned that the 300km happened to be my final qualifying event for PBP? I shared that news with Keith and Branson as we rolled into the finish. We passed cool drinks and high fives all round.

Next morning Branson and I savored lattes and cinnamon buns, then packed our bags and secured our bikes on the car's roof. Soon we were heading south, triumphantly, to our homes in central North Carolina. I smiled inwardly as we neared the highway: ready or not, PBP here I come.

And then it happened—it being the unthinkable.

Holy S*it!

We were driving just outside Suffolk when I heard a strange thud on the car's trunk.

Branson instantly shouted: "Holy s*it! Your bike just fell off!"

Branson jammed on the brakes and parked on the highway median. I could see my PBP bike, my prized Coho, laying like a confused turtle in the middle of the four-lane road. The only good news? My bike had not been run over by another car. But it would only be a matter of time before that happened. I scrambled back and quickly moved my Coho out of (further) harm's way.



Rider Brad Waffa flashes a smile during Blackbeard's Permanent in eastern North Carolina.

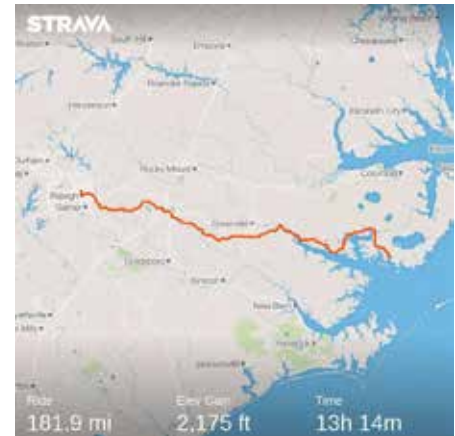
—PHOTO BRAD WAFFA



After several hours of night riding, the day's sunrise was a welcome sight.

—PHOTO BRAD WAFFA

Blackbeard's Permanent stretches 283 kilometers from the capital city of Raleigh to a ferry landing in Swanquarter, NC (below).



Once I had the bike clear of the road, I inspected it for damage. It was clear the fork had hit the highway first—there were two obvious bends in one of the fork blades. The saddle had been ripped open where it had struck the road surface. Also, the rear wheel was whacked completely out of true.

Branson and I tried to figure out what had gone wrong. The bike had been attached to the car rack by its front fork. Somehow the rack's fork binder had pulled open, allowing the bike to fly free. Branson put the bike back on the rack. He retightened the fork clamp, thus ensuring the bike would not come loose again.

My reaction to all this excitement? I was as cool as the garden cucumber, "No worries," I said. "Thank goodness this happened *after* the ride."

There was no question that this would affect my PBP training. But a little time off the bike wouldn't hurt me, I reasoned. In fact, the break might be a good thing. I relaxed. Life was still grand, even if it was a little dented.

The next day I took the bike to my buddy Ed, a mechanic who has worked on my rides since... since forever. I had no doubt that Ed would fix it. He sized up the damage in a brief inspection. Ed pointed to the fork's pronounced

bends. "Looks look like you'll need another one of those," he said.

It's All in The Timing

The accident could not have been better timed. As it turned out, a lung bug kept me laid up for a few weeks. I truly needed a break. Physically. And mechanically. And spiritually.

As I logged time on the living room sofa, Ed and his partner Minori went to work. They searched around and found a fork that would work. When it arrived at the bike shop, Minori closely matched the frame's blue color. Minori also turned a true clinician's eye on other adjustments the bike needed. She replaced the chain, the big chain ring and a worn-out headset bearing. She trued the rear wheel and replaced all the cables. As a final touch, she installed a new and improved brand of bar tape.

And voila! The bike was ready to roll again.

Test Ride

Just a month after the Virginia highway incident, I got my prized Coho back, none the worse for wear and tear save for that rip in the saddle. I took it out for a test ride on the local greenway. The verdict: the Coho had never ridden

better. The fork was actually more responsive on turns and climbs than the original one. Plus, a lot of new parts.

I began taking short rides again. Sure I knew that life had thrown me a curve ball, but I gave myself kudos for not panicking—at least, not yet. I also knew I needed to kick-start my training, but when and where?

Knock, Knock....

That's when opportunity knocked.

At a Wednesday-night dinner with several buddies, I moaned that I was falling behind on my PBP training. Truth be told, I was fishing for a few pity points.

As if on cue, an email arrived on my smartphone. A local rider, Brad Waffa, confirmed he was riding my 283km Blackbeard's Permanent, on Friday night—mere two days away. Brad also mentioned that other riders had bailed. He said he'd ride it solo, unless, of course, I was willing and able to join him. "Well, there you go," one buddy said. "What are you waiting for?"

And he was right—a chance to do



The author, wearing his prized BMB jersey, crosses the Intracoastal Waterway near Belhaven, NC.

— PHOTO BRAD WAFFA

Below, left: Waffa kicks back after reaching his final destination on Ocracoke Island, NC.

— PHOTO BRAD WAFFA



a long night ride had just landed in my lap. The ride would be good distance training. And the nighttime start would be similar to my PBP start time.

Blackbeard or Bust

Ahh, Blackbeard's Permanent. That was the very first permanent I'd designed. The route was intended to pay homage to one of the all-time baddest pirates on the Seven Seas.

Allow me to do a little pirating of my own. Following are excerpts from an article I wrote for the August 2005 issue of *American Randonneur*:

- The route draws its name from Edward Teach, aka Blackbeard, dubbed "the most notorious pirate in the history of seafaring," who rose to dubious fame during the Golden Age of Piracy (1689 to 1718).

- Randonneurs can appreciate one

of Blackbeard's skills—he was apparently an early pioneer in nighttime visibility. Wrote one historian, "[H]e would strike terror into the hearts of his victims, according to some early accounts, by weaving wicks laced with gunpowder into his hair, and lighting them during battle. A big man, he added to his menacing appearance by wearing a crimson coat, two swords at his waist, and bandoleers stuffed with numerous pistols and knives across his chest."

- Blackbeard's Permanent passes through one of the pirate's former haunts (the town of Bath) and ends a short ferry ride from another (the island of Ocracoke).

I simply could not ignore this slice of history. The day after Brad emailed, I accepted his invitation. I was in. And just like that, my PBP training was back on track. Two days later, Brad and I left Blackbeard's start at 9:30 p.m. We rode through the night toward the eastern North Carolina ferry town of Swan Quarter, finishing about 14 ½ hours later. Life was again grand.

Open Door Policy

I draw the obvious moral from my Big Adventure. When Plan A falls to pieces, relax, and look to see if there's a Plan B nearby. And when Plan B finally knocks, open the damn door.

As luck would have it—mostly bad luck—two riding buddies had their own trials and tribulations before PBP. Mark broke a collarbone. Meanwhile, Capn reported a bad case of gout in a big toe. I asked them both how they dealt with extended time off the bike.

Mark's response: "I'm dealing with the [lack of] training by:

1–Not fretting about it.

2–Assuming that a few weeks off the bike won't cost me any of my endurance.

3–Convincing myself that the rest will be just as valuable as the speed work I might have done.

4–Trying not to get fat(ter)."

Capn's response:

- "I agree with all of Mark's points.

- I have a general idea about how I want to train for a ride similar to the general idea about how I want to complete the ride. If things don't go as planned I work with what I've got. No sense in worrying about things we can't change.

- Having everything go according to plan should be accepted as very good fortune, but expect setbacks.

- I realize that things could be worse, way worse, so I try to be thankful for whatever comes my way.

- In my case I'm also trying to be patient with my injury so that I don't damage it more.

- Patience is a virtue."

Amen to that, and many thanks to Blackbeard for getting my ship sailing again. 🚲

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Uvas Gold 200

BY PAUL IVANOV

Uvas Gold 200k starts and ends in Fremont, CA and was held on Saturday, December 1st, 2018. The ride frontloads the climbing by going nearly half-way up Mount Hamilton, the tallest peak in the San Francisco Bay Area, and then leads

down south as far as Gilroy, “Garlic Capital of the World.” Our RBA, Rob Hawks, sent this note the evening before the ride: “While we once had 75 riders signed up, we are now down to 59 even though a number of new names have been added since this was sent out on Monday.” It had been a foul weather week, and by the time we were ready to start in rain at a balmy 48 degrees Fahrenheit, there were fewer than thirty people who would brave the cold wetness. The rain was at its worst the first half of the ride, so my memories are skewed toward that portion, with the poem content reflecting that. Call it Inverted Randonesia, the second half of the ride was just spent processing how I made it through the beginning of the day and how epic it was. 🚲



Mount Hamilton Road on the way to Grant Ranch Park.

—PHOTO MEGAN ARNOLD



“Or... I could still be riding my bike in the rain.”
Eric Walstad enjoys an alternate ending to the Uvas Gold 200k at Bijan Bakery & Cafe, San Jose, CA.

—PHOTO MEGAN ARNOLD

Weaving upstream the icy slush
Mount Ham—no cheese
Rough grind of gears and teeth
Steam locomotive breath
The paceline I abandon
Time stretched—warm pizza dough
Intent, attention rising
I take a pull
Thick spray across my rhythmic fogging glasses

Our feet make Revolutions, Randonneur!
With pavement gliding under top tube
It’s all the same to you
Mile-marker Marxist
Unbound by thermal fear
“Fair-weather cyclist” you are not

A dreamy cold wet blanket smoky charcoal skyscape
High pitched frying sizzle
Tire fully splashing
The tug of war of winds where we’re the rope
Off camber turn, soprano yodeling disc brakes yards ahead
Refreshing wafting garlic wake up—dreamy ride continues
Alert again in the slow slither through Coyote Creek

K-Hound chasing, headwind facing
Camaraderie, half-way in Gilroy supermarket shack
Then on the road again, occasional “Car back!”
December, Northern California, Reign of Rain

New RUSA Members

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
13307	McCaskill, Gina M	Birmingham	AL	13334	McFarlane, John	Chicago	IL	13288	Tate, Jesse H	Greenville	SC
13309	Woodfin, Elizabeth	Prattville	AL	13300	Smith, Michael B	Rockford	IL	13311	Driscoll, Jack	Arlington	TX
13305	Tickner, Chris	Altadena	CA	13283	Christenson, Teresa Joy	Leawood	KS	13306	Stewart, William Walker	Austin	TX
13281	Leach, Rick G	Monterey	CA	13308	Osorno, Tomas	Brookline	MA	13324	Shields, Susan M	Fort Worth	TX
13314	Walker, S	Morgan Hill	CA	13299	Cote, Sean	Hamtramck	MI	13318	Reilly, Brennan	Houston	TX
13280	Burkard, Chris	Pismo Beach	CA	13282	Bialik, Brian E	Oakland Township	MI	13328	LaFoy, Jody J	Howe	TX
13326	McCutchen, Devin Shane	Sacramento	CA	13333	Milbank, Aaron	Eagan	MN	13290	Maruyama, Yasuaki	Katy	TX
13295	Milsom, Dave	San Diego	CA	13278	Sisson, L	Minneapolis	MN	13310	Ditto, D	Sherman	TX
13325	Simpson, David R	San Francisco	CA	13302	Heath, Brad D	Springfield	MO	13286	Quill, Sean D.	Salt Lake City	UT
13327	Glasheen, Shannon	San Francisco	CA	13320	Klafehn, Joseph W	Springfield	MO	13321	Rieber, Tom	Salt Lake City	UT
13329	Thiede, Jacob Daniel	San Francisco	CA	13315	McHone, Steven	Asheville	NC	13292	Christensen, Andrea Ludlow	Saratoga Springs	UT
13312	Mirjan, Hasan	Santa Monica	CA	13313	Bergeron, Donna M	Raleigh	NC	13316	Beck, Kevin	Bellevue	WA
13294	Dugal, Amardeep	Vista	CA	13330	Hervieux-Moore, Zachary	Princeton	NJ	13317	Skelly, Sarah	Bellevue	WA
13332	Markovits, Yair	West Hills	CA	13323	Cummings, Dan	Westfield	NJ	13296	Grace, Mike	Bremerton	WA
13303	Gavin, Elizabeth J	Washington	DC	13285	Blickstein, Susan	New Paltz	NY	13322	Coale, Gordon	Greenbank	WA
13331	Lucas, Scott	Fort Lauderdale	FL	13297	Grym, Martin	New York	NY	13287	Mendelson, Charles R	Seattle	WA
13304	Townes, Eric L	St Petersburg	FL	13298	Harris, Frederick S	New York	NY	13301	Wilson, Alex	Seattle	WA
13293	Arrott III, Reed Tenney	Honolulu	HI	13284	Pyle, Jeffrey R	Philadelphia	PA	13289	Wehmeyer, Mike	Tahuya	WA
13279	Henning, Linda J	Jefferson	IA	13319	Sindler, Owen B.	Philadelphia	PA				

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**Designed
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Wanted: New Volunteers!

If you are a devoted randonneur, one who racks up the kilometers with permanents and brevets and completes a series on a yearly basis, you may have noticed that the roster of riders increases substantially every four years as folks try to qualify for PBP. This can turn a perpetually sleepy 600km, which usually attracts 15-20 seasoned riders, into a logistical challenge when fifty eager randonneurs sign on for the event.

It's kind of like Christmas Mass—who are all these people and why can't I sit in my favorite pew? This year, New Jersey Randonneurs ran our flat 600km, which always attracts a full field owing to its...flatness. Also, New Jersey has a reputation for superb rider support and routes that have out-of-state folks declaring, "This is New Jersey?"

We set the rider cap at fifty. If we could have secured more hotel rooms, undoubtedly, we could have signed up another handful. The previous three years we had run our very challenging and hilly 600km, and so the flat course was something of a relief. As with most local groups, NJ Randonneurs has a relatively small and dedicated group of volunteers who keep the series alive and growing.

It has been several years since I wrote a column about the joys of

pitching in with your local club. So, it feels right to once again share my experience to encourage those of you who have not jumped into the volunteer pool to give it a go next year when things assuredly will be quieter—a good year to get your feet wet, so to speak.

I also learned a valuable lesson about volunteering this year—never tell the organizer, "I don't really care where you put me; I can be available for any control." I'm certain this is how I ended up at two finish controls, waiting for riders in a hotel lobby until very early morning and working overnight on the 600km. To be fair, I was given the option of the first shift at the 600km overnight control with the chance to head home at midnight, but I figured if I were going to be awake at midnight with an hour's drive ahead of me, I might as well stay until morning. I had never worked the sleep stop of a 600km and will reluctantly admit it was really my turn. The last 600 that I rode on the day of the event rather than as a pre-rider and volunteer was in 2014. Therefore, I may have forgotten or perhaps never really knew how much

Volunteers are all about meeting riders' needs.

—PHOTO MIKE GORMAN





Cafe Greene on the NJ 600 prepped and ready for riders.

—PHOTO MAC VERGARA

work is involved in running a sleep stop on a long ride. Now, as a survivor of the sleep control volunteer squad, I am here to tell you that a well-run sleep stop requires an almost inconceivable amount of preparation and stamina.

The sleep stop is assigned to that volunteer who needs to visit the restroom during the annual organization meeting. You have a bit too much coffee, and the next thing you know, you are making a shopping list for fifty hungry riders. Bill O. and Nigel G. organized the 600, which required twisting their friends' arms to staff the many controls and to get them to agree to an unsupported "carry all your own stuff on your bike" pre-ride. Nigel corralled an impressive posse of eight riders for this no-frills adventure. Therefore, we were thrilled when our friend Katie R. offered to bring our drop bags to the sleep stop and to cater the stop for both dinner and breakfast. Thanks, Katie!

I suspect Katie's organization and gut-busting musette bags inspired Nigel on his foray to Costco to provide enough calories for approximately 150 riders! He arrived at the hotel with a van full of prepared and to-be-prepared food. The "East Creek Café" menu offered mac and cheese, meat or veggie lasagna, chili and rice, sandwiches, pulled pork, three kinds of breakfast sandwiches, an oatmeal bar with assorted toppings, freshly brewed coffee, croissants, an assortment of cold drinks, and I'm sure I'm forgetting something. When riders arrived, we

took their food order and prepared a plate with anything and everything they wanted. Mac V. and I had the first shift. It was quickly apparent that I had zero server skills, and it was going to be a long night. But Mac's good humor, constant smile, and yeoman's attitude kept the café running efficiently, and we fed perhaps half the field before Mac's shift ended at midnight.

Next up in the kitchen were Nigel, his wife Joyce, and their daughter Vivian. The Greene family had been prepping for the event for days because they were responsible for food purchase, transport, and pre-event food preparation, which included making the mac and cheese and cooking, assembling, and wrapping fifty breakfast sandwiches. Joyce and I served the remainder of the riders, who arrived tired and hungry and went to their rooms stuffed and grateful. Nigel headed out to retrieve a rider who realized she was falling asleep on the bike. I think we all were able to take brief naps before it started all over again.

That's right—all those folks who had eaten dinner a few hours earlier had showered and slept and were hungry again. I honestly had forgotten about this part. I was planning on a nice rest when all these freshly scrubbed and slightly zombie-like riders started reappearing. So, we made the oatmeal, brewed the coffee, whipped up some sandwiches, and knocked on every door at 5:00am to let folks know they needed to be back on the road. By

that time the sun was coming up, and the birds were cheering us on. We had some coffee and started the clean-up process, which took just as long as the set-up process.

We re-packed food; cleaned crock pots; toted a dozen bags of garbage away; emptied coolers; packed up chairs, tents, and tables; and left the volunteer hotel room almost as clean as we found it. It was a great feeling to know we had helped so many riders complete the 600, some for the first time and many to qualify for PBP. Also, working the overnight control gave me an overdue appreciation for the folks who always seem to selflessly take this shift. It was hard work, but we had fun and a well-earned feeling of satisfaction. So, if you have come into an overnight control feeling shaky, hungry, and tired, and you have been fed, nurtured, and sent on your way in better shape than you arrived, think about stepping up next season and volunteering. Just be careful about drinking too much coffee before the 600km organizer is selected! 🚲



The glamorous volunteer life.

—PHOTO MIKE GORMANN

Rando Emperor Ride Report

BY GREG OLMSTEAD

Some time around 2014 I became aware of the International Super Randonneur Award that is given to riders who complete a SR series, with each ride being completed in a different country. The only ride remaining on my list was a 300km. However, it had been a few years since I had even completed a 200km brevet. I felt that my best cycling days were behind me, and the only way I could finish a 300km was if it were some combination of flat and downhill. A bit of online sleuthing led me to a ride hosted by Witoor, of Ferrara, Italy.

Witoor hosts a number of rides in northern Italy, one of which is the Rando Emperor. On a Saturday in May, there is a 300km brevet from Munich to Bolzano, Italy; on the next day there is a 300km brevet from Bolzano to Ferrara, Italy. Riders can

register for either 300, or both, or complete the whole ride as a 600km brevet. The Munich-Bolzano brevet passes through Germany, Austria, Switzerland (briefly), and Italy; it goes over two alpine passes; and it has about 10,000' of climbing. The Bolzano-

Ferrara brevet is basically flat. In the first half of the ride, you're leaving the foothills of the Alps, and in the second half of the route you ride along the Po River as it flows downstream to Ferrara. This second leg seemed perfect for me. All I had to do was stay on the bike and pedal, which seemed simple enough.

So I put Bolzano-Ferrara into my 2017 ride calendar and made it my goal to finish. As it turned out, I hurt my back several weeks before the ride. And although it seemed to have healed, I somehow re-injured it while dragging my luggage to the ticket counter on the trip out. With seized lumbar and iliopsoas muscles, I spent a week in a small hotel room in Italy, taking maximum strength Tylenol around the clock instead of riding.

I thought I'd ride the Bolzano-Ferrara in 2018, but I had my daughter's college graduation to attend so put off my Italy ride until 2019. Because so much time had elapsed since I had ridden a 300, in late 2018 I decided to enlist the help of a cycling coach who could help me improve my cycling fitness, and prepare me for the upcoming ride. Under my coach's guidance, my power output went up, my max heart rate went up, my cadence went up, and my weight dropped. I was in the best cycling shape that I could remember. As I looked ahead to Bolzano-Ferrara, it occurred to me that maybe I was selling myself short.

At the first control.

— PHOTO BY PASSERBY



Maybe I needed to turn my attention to Munich-Bolzano instead. Maybe an audacious goal was what I needed. I decided to ride the Munich-Bolzano 300 and to train for and ride PBP later in the year.

In Munich, a few days before the ride, I felt overwhelmed by the stress, thinking that I had made a huge mistake. Climbing 10,000' in one ride was more than I had done in ten years. I was worried I had packed too many clothes. I was also worried that I hadn't packed enough clothes. Too much food. Not enough food. I was a mess. But still the hour of departure drew nearer, as it always does. I left the hotel in Munich and rode to the 04:30 start not really knowing what to expect. I was already signed in, had my brevet card, and was ready to go, waiting only for the organizer to step aside.

Mentally, I broke the ride into three sections. The 100km to the first



control was going to be flat and fast. Not much climbing—no more than I would see riding up the coast in southern California. The second section was going to be a beast. It was over 125km to the second and last control, with 7,000' of climbing, including the two alpine passes. The third section was

Leaving Switzerland to climb to the second control.

Below, leaving Strad, Austria.

—PHOTOS GREG OLMSTEAD

going to be fast as well, with elevation loss of about 5200' over 115km. But I knew that this last section was going to be done in the dark, and everything slows down at night.

The ride started out as they usually do with a sorting out of the fast and slow riders. On this ride, the first few kilometers were on a service road in a forest that ran next to a river. Not only was it dark out, but it was foggy (from the river), and the undulating and gravelly service road made it difficult for people to pass slower riders. That



didn't stop people from trying, which only made things more tense than they needed to be. Soon enough I was on a bike path where the sorting out could play out more sensibly.

During the first couple hours I never really spoke to anyone. Firstly, no one was around me for very long; secondly, the people who were nearby were in groups and conversing in Italian; and lastly, I spent most of my mental energy trying to understand my new environment. But after a time, things calmed down for me and I fell into a rhythm. I began to see the same faces; we would just leapfrog each other. After a bit of this we began to chat. I wore my Randonneurs USA reflective vest so people would ride up next to me and introduce themselves in English. Some people spoke English better than others, but everyone's English was better than my Italian so that was how we spent the day. There were lots of questions about where I live, why I chose this ride, how long I'd been randonneuring, lots of stories about their previous trips to the U.S., and so on. Then one of us would stop for a drink and the other would press on. Then there would be a new group of people to chat with for another stretch of road.

Nearly the entire Rando Imperator route follows the Via Claudia Augusta. This was a military road built by the Romans to connect Bavaria to the Po River Valley. The brevet route uses almost all bike paths, city streets, and frontage roads. There's almost never a time when you're sharing a road with multiple cars trying to get anywhere in a hurry. As a result, the ride is very relaxing because the stress of competing with cars simply doesn't exist. You can look around at the green fields in the

The ride is very relaxing because the stress of competing with cars simply doesn't exist. You can look around at the green fields in the valleys, the snow-capped mountains, and the small villages. You can stop and fill up water bottles from public fountains fed by mountain streams. It's really quite remarkable how calm and beautiful everything is.

valleys, the snow-capped mountains, and the small villages. You can stop and fill up water bottles from public fountains fed by mountain streams. It's really quite remarkable how calm and beautiful everything is.

After I left the first control I rode through a number of small towns to get to the start of the climb to the first pass, Fernpass. This climb was unlike any I had ever seen, ridden on, or even

contemplated. It was mostly packed gravel, with patches of loose gravel here and there. The data from ridewithgps.com said that this was going to be 4.5 miles, averaging 4.6%, with a maximum of 12%. This climb was much more difficult than I would have thought because a good portion of my concentration was spent on picking the right path up the road. I had to avoid the loose gravel to be able to maintain



In Strad, Austria.
—PHOTO GREG OLMSTEAD



Outside of Hauptstrasse, Germany.

—PHOTO GREG OLMSTEAD

my traction and steering. As difficult as the bike handling was, though, the scenery was unparalleled. I was at elevation and there were snow-covered peaks all around me, which I enjoyed when I had a moment to look up and take it all in. After cresting the first pass, I started to descend on a trail that was slightly steeper than the hill I had just climbed. Not only was it steeper, but the path was also a bit narrower. There weren't two tire tracks like a typical road, but rather a single track cut through the trees. I guess I was thankful I wasn't climbing the trail that I was now descending. My 32mm tires and my disc brakes gave me comfort and confidence on the descent. But it was a bit more harrowing than I think I would have liked. However, the tense parts were soon over.

After this long descent, I started in on a very gentle climb through a valley to get to the beginning of the second climb. This amounted to about 70km through small towns, linked by a paved bike path. At some point, I lost interest in the food that I had carefully chosen and packed for the ride. Although I had enough calories in the form of bars, powders, and so on, they weren't going

to do me any good if I wasn't eating them. I found a trailside mini-mart and enjoyed a pizza and soda. I just sat there, stocking up on calories, taking in the beauty of the valley in front of me, the clean air, and the sunny skies. After this brief but satisfying meal, I pushed on to get to the bottom of the next pass, Reschenpass.

At kilometer 212, riders turn left to cross a bridge into Austria, and begin their twelve-kilometer climb up eleven switchbacks to get over the Reschenpass and to the second control at a pizzeria in Nauders. During the climb the body heats up while the air cools off. Take a sweater off because you're overheating, then put it back on because you're cooling off too much. There's no right answer for the whole climb.

I pulled into the pizzeria and tried to be as quick as possible in getting my paperwork processed, in adding new layers for the night riding that was about to begin, and in eating what I could. I ended up eating an entire medium cheese pizza by myself, satisfied with how well the first pizza filled me up hours before. Now that I was fortified against cold, rain, and hunger, I was ready to leave.

A few kilometers from the control, I started taking wrong turns on the bike path, and I had to backtrack to get back on course. A couple of riders rode past and waved me to join them. Thinking that they were the group from the control—but ultimately being mistaken about that—I joined up and we promptly went off course. There was no common language to converse in, so I just had to follow them. I had trouble navigating because my thumbprint wouldn't open my iPhone in the rain, but they kept assuring me that they knew where they were going. And so it went for the next few hours. Riding on course, inadvertently taking a wrong turn and leaving the course, and standing around in the sideways rain, watching them discuss how to get back on course. They asked for directions from pedestrians, a driver parked at an intersection, and people coming out of bars.

Eventually, we found our way to the start of the 25-kilometer bike path that would lead to the outskirts of Bolzano. Then another seven kilometers or so through town to get to the finish. When I pulled up to the last control, I happily checked in, hugged my wife (who was standing in the rain, in the plaza at 1:30am), and then left for the hotel as quickly as possible.

When I started doing qualifying rides for PBP, I realized that I didn't have the desire to finish rides longer than 300km, and that as a result I wasn't going to PBP. Having finished Rando Imperator, I realize that there are rides out there that have all the grandeur and beauty of PBP, but with only a quarter of the distance. I'm making plans to ride Rando Imperator again next year. 🚲

The Best Time of Year to Ride

It's autumn now, and you have probably ridden your "A" list ride(s) perhaps even including PBP. The weather is turning to your favor, not as hot as it was a month ago, not as cold as it will be in another couple months. Road construction season is winding down, no more flaggers or cones and barrels to dodge, and fewer family vacationers in their RV's on the road. You are probably close to your peak fitness for the year, making any distance biking distance as my old friend Kent Peterson is wont to say.

I should not say autumn is the best time of year to ride, but it is my favorite time. I like the way the sunlight slants through the trees, the way the air clears up, and the way the wind rattles tall stands of dried grass along country roads. The transition to fall colors. And of course, the smells. I rode a 1000km brevet in September after PBP in 2003. The route took us through Yakima Valley. Harvest of everything from hops to hard fruit was in full swing. The smell of grapes, and truck loads of fresh cut corn, was almost overpowering. A route you have ridden a dozen times in spring and summer looks and smells completely different in September and October.

Time passes but whether you are on a new bike or your old, trusty ride, the experience is always the same. You hear the chain singing through the gears, the familiar hiss of the tires on smooth pavement or that more coarse

note on chip seal. You feel like you are only limited by time. Distance is not an obstacle, it is an invitation. Whether with friends or solo, you are reaping the reward of all those rides you did earlier in the year when conditions and your fitness were not as favorable as they are now.

Randonneuring is a quirky, far corner of cycling and I have always enjoyed riding with others who have stumbled into this sport. I have also enjoyed writing about it and feel privileged to have had the opportunity to share some of my thoughts in this magazine. My great appreciation goes out to the editors and others who have encouraged me and who have put in enormous amounts of time and energy to keep the *American Randonneur* coming to all of us. Like riding a brevet, it is not as easy as it looks. Nevertheless, I know this publication is in good hands and will continue to provide insight,

inspiration and entertainment long into the future.

This will be my last contribution as a regular columnist. I can imagine that something may occur in the future that I will want to submit for publication, just as many of you have and I hope will continue to do. I want to encourage you to think about submitting your quirky, inspiring or entertaining experiences for publication. Writing about it is a lot easier than riding a 200km brevet, and you do that all the time. You will find that what you have to say is probably insightful to someone. You would be surprised how often someone will send you a note thanking you or asking for more detail.

Submitting copy to AR is no mystery. Thumb through this edition and you will find a side bar with guidelines for submission of articles. Janice has made the 'how to' very clear and about as simple as can be and if you still have questions, she invites you to contact her. Contributing to the written record is just as valuable as volunteering to support a brevet or team event occasionally. Nothing happens in randonneuring without volunteers.

A bientôt,
Dr. Codfish. 🚲

The American Randonneur Award

Once a year, the RUSA Board of Directors and the RUSA Awards Committee present an award to a member of the organization who has made a significant and outstanding contribution to randonneuring in the United States.

This person is to be recognized for having gone above and beyond the call of duty to help our niche of cycling grow. It can be an RBA who has dramatically increased brevet participation, a hard-working RUSA volunteer, or someone who has helped randonneuring flourish by a selfless act, good sportsmanship, camaraderie, or by being a good Samaritan.

RUSA wishes to recognize that special volunteer and inspire others to do the same. This is a most prestigious award, a high honor of American Randonneuring. It is the only award we have that names a single winner; all other awards can be earned each season by any number of our members who qualify successfully.

This person must be a RUSA member. (Check the RUSA website Members Search to see if the person that you have in mind is a current member and note their membership number).

The American Randonneur Award is given by the RUSA Board. The nominees' names come from the general membership. The Board then votes on the award winner. Please note that the Board has decided to exempt itself from any active nominations for this award in order to avoid possible conflicts of interest that could then affect other Board matters. If an American Randonneur Award nomination comes in for a sitting Board member, it is held over until that person's term of office is ended and then placed among the next batch of nominees.

You may nominate a member by email. To make a nomination by email, send your name and your RUSA membership number with your nominee's name and RUSA membership number to Johnny Bertrand at JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com. Alternatively you may fill out a candidate submission form and mail it to the address below. All nominations must be **received** by December 15.

PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

2001	Johnny Bertrand
2002	David Buzzee
2003	Jennifer Wise
2004	James Kuehn
2005	Daryn Dodge
2006	Bill Bryant
2007	Robert Fry
2008	Dan Driscoll
2009	Mark Thomas
2010	Don Hamilton
2011	Mike Dayton
2012	Crista Borrás
2013	John Lee Ellis
2014	Lois Springsteen
2015	Vincent Muoneke
2016	Bruce Berg
2017	Shab Memarbashi
2018	Dan Shadoan

NOMINATION FORM

YOUR NAME

YOUR RUSA #

YOUR AMERICAN RANDONNEUR AWARD NOMINEE

NOMINEE'S RUSA #

BRIEF REASON FOR NOMINATION

SEND THIS FORM TO: Johnny Bertrand, 858 Carrick Pike, Georgetown, KY 40324

E-MAIL: JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com

Community Salvages One Rider's PBP Dream

BY MARY SHANKLIN

At 4:00am on a Saturday, April 13, dozens of riders straddled their bikes for the last chunk of Brevet Week in Central Florida. Likely, they all thought they were prepared..

The route would serve up 600 kilometers with more than 10,000 feet of climbing, Florida-style humidity, and 90-degree temperatures. Ultimately, not all would finish in time—not even some of those who had banked on this as their ticket to Paris.

In the predawn darkness, the group rolled from the parking lot of the humble Inn on the Green in Tavares, FL. Early-morning chatter quickly gave way to a quiet reverence. Miles evaporated for those with fresh legs and unblemished behinds. Soon, gentle rollers rose on back roads skirting orange groves, ferneries and cow pastures.

Each year, early in the season randonneurs from around the eastern United States migrate to the Florida countryside as a respite from iced roads and the taste of woolen balaclavas. Some joke about Florida's pancake-level terrain but the banter softens in Lake County, where hills have 14-percent grades.

On this particular day, those Lake County climbs would seem steeper in the sweaty stew of humidity. Riders split apart long before the first gas-station control.

Sixty-year-old Dan Schreck eased into a tempered pace as the heat bore down and the hills reared up. For him, getting the completed card was a must. He needed to officially finish in order to qualify for Paris-Brest-Paris.

Dan had attempted the overseas

quest in 2015 when he had been riding distance for a few years. A newbie to PBP at the time, he misread the cutoff times. And further misfortune struck when a mechanical failure derailed him. Now, his sights are set on a rematch. The bike-shop operator is so determined that he had dipped into his retirement savings for the quest.

As for the reason for the rematch, "I just really like getting out there and talking to people," said Schreck, who owns Allen Road Bike Shop in Zephyrhills, FL.

By midday, the heat was taking its toll on everyone, including Mary Spence. An engineer from the Tampa area, Mary had cemented a reputation for perseverance during a brevet last year when she was hit by a car and still completed her ride.

Weeks before the 600km, she purchased a Moots bike. Her new titanium frame forgave the chip-seal asphalt surfaces in a way that her carbon-fiber bike could not. It hugged the turns and cradled her down Florida's all-too-short descents. It was a bike meant for the countryside of France and she intends to take it there for PBP.

Her bike shop set her up on the new ride, convincing her not to mount her beloved aero bars. As anyone could see, the triathlon bars ruined the look. In further preparation, she had snagged a new aero-style Bontrager



RUSA member and volunteer Dan Schreck, a Florida bike shop owner who wanted a second chance at PBP after not finishing in 2015.

—PHOTO MARY SHANKLIN

helmet on sale. Minimal vents meant less wind drag.

By midday on the first leg of the 600, the Florida sun seared every exposed surface. Mary's heart rate elevated on the climbs and it seemed her sporty new helmet lacked ample ventilation.

"That Bontrager was cooking my brains," Spence later laughed.

As the miles took their toll, she yearned for her old aero bars. Having that extra position had been her comfort zone for so long. Compounding the punishment, she realized the extras she had packed in her bag only made gravity's drag greater.

As Day One of the 600km wore on and the sun began to set, the orange horizon gave way to fleeting purple clouds. Riders donned reflective vests and gear, powered on by the nocturnal lifeblood of headlights and taillights.

Dan and Mary had been riding together but while the darkness and cooler temperatures invigorated Dan, they only gave Mary a limited boost.

"I urged him to go on without me but he said he couldn't leave a rider alone in the dark," said Mary, who had completed a 400km alone in the dark a month earlier.

One challenge of the 555 route is traversing the Green Swamp. During the day, sunlight filters through a canopy of oaks lining gently curving roads. But target-practice gun shots can also echo through the woods. At night, the chances of a deer darting in front of you are outweighed only by the likelihood of encountering an old pickup flying down the road on jacked-up wheels. Solo riders have had cans hurled at their heads. Law enforcement seldom ventures there.

And so the two persevered, even as mechanicals had ousted others from the ride. For Dan and Mary, Paris was still within reach.

As the night continued, they were still hours from the hotel but within the time limits. Dan needed a break—just a ten-minute nap.

They rolled up to the entrance of Pretty Lake Estates. Mary suggested sitting against a fence but Dan preferred the lush mattress of St. Augustine grass. As they surrendered to the lure of being horizontal, they heard buzzing. It was mosquitos. There would be no sleep.

The two managed to get back on their feet and into their saddles. Soon they found another choice spot. The same thing happened. Then they strategized that, if they found a hilltop, the slight breeze might blow away the needle-nosed bloodsuckers.

They eventually came upon another place and quickly settled in. They closed their eyes for the cat nap and the inevitable occurred.

RUSA member Susan Gryder, a Tampa, Fla.-area nurse who rallied support for Dan Schreck to fulfill a years-long hope of riding PBP this year. She is prepping for PBP this year.

—PHOTO MARY SHANKLIN

RUSA member and engineer Mary Spence, known for finishing a ride after getting hit by a car last year. She is attempting PBP this year.

—PHOTO MARY SHANKLIN

"A ten-minute nap turned into an hour's rest," Dan said.

Their mistake in not setting an alarm cost them the crucial time cutoff. Dan's dream of a rematch in Paris was dead.

Mary still had a shot at PBP. She had registered for another qualifier—the Sunshine 1200km in May. The route from Key West is wrapped by water views but it can serve up brutal heat and South Florida congestion.

Dan was done. He had neither the funds nor the inclination to do the Sunshine.

Randonneurs are an odd bunch. While many people dismiss them as crazy, they bond together through adverse weather, mechanicals, exhaustion and traffic. They become extended family.

In Central Florida, the head of the rando family has a singular focus. For RBA Paul Rozelle, all roads lead to the Paris. Unable to accept defeat for a volunteer at RUSA events, Paul worked with the organizer of the Sunshine



1200 and arranged for Dan to do 1000km of it as a qualifier.

Then the roadblock became financial. Dan's decision to invest in the Allen Road Bike Shop had limited his reserves and made cash flow uncertain.

Enter randonneur and Tampa-area nurse Susan Gryder. She, too, refused to accept Dan's defeat. Without letting Dan know, she reached out to fellow cyclists with messages asking for contributions just as friends would pitch in for a birthday present. The responses came so fast that the registration for the Sunshine was quickly covered. One person even responded: "I can contribute my hotel points."

Weeks later, he said the outpouring left him so overwhelmed with gratitude that he struggled to even face Susan. He said he was simply unable to begin to express his feelings.

"No one," he said, "had ever done anything like that for me."

Dan might have his day at the start line in Paris after all. 🚲

On May 19, Dan Schreck and Mary Spence completed the South Florida qualifier for PBP. Other members of the Central Florida Randonneur family further supported Dan's efforts to ensure he could go to Paris without complications.

Sunshine 1200km 2019

BY DAVE THOMPSON, BERNARD FLYNN, JOHN LEE ELLIS,
CHARLIE MARTIN, AND MARY SPENCE

The Sunshine 1200km in Florida was offered in May 2019. Following are brief accounts by event organizer Dave Thompson as well as four participants. Heat, humidity and wind challenged organizers, volunteers, and riders, but the event was a great success.

Dave Thompson

Seven of us started the pre-ride just one week before the main event. At times it was tough holding our little group together, and due to the heat, our number dwindled to four by the end. The main event riders were lucky; it was ten degrees cooler.

The logistics of a point-to-point 1200km were all-consuming for two weeks: pre-riders, hotel arrangements, bike transportation, the Key West Express Ferry, on-the-fly rerouting during the pre-ride and the main event. So many details to manage!

An organizer's objectives are

simple, but not easy to achieve even with good planning:

- Get the riders through the course safely. I was relieved to hear that the helicopters I saw weren't carrying riders away even though some rode an extra 20-30 miles due to the road closure.

- Ensure that all arrangements hold up. Despite contracts and multiple email confirmations, one hotel only had one room reserved when the first volunteer arrived. We sorted that out before the riders arrived.

- Do our best, as a team of volunteers, to help tired riders achieve their objectives. We qualified two newbie riders for PBP and did our best to mitigate the effects of the heat.

When I'm riding a 1200km there are always moments when I ask myself what the heck am I doing. An organizer has those same moments, but randoesia sets in quickly after a ride. Was it worth it? Yes. Happy riders make it all worthwhile.

Bernard Flynn (Ireland)

Having completed the Great Lakes Mac & Cheese 1200 last year, I asked for recommendations for another US event and the Sunshine 1200 was suggested. From the outset, the communication from Dave Thompson

(L-R), Joshua Haley, Mary Spence, and Scott Manning near Mt Dora, FL on Day 2.

— PHOTO MARY SPENCE





left me in no doubt that the event would be well-organized.

Arriving in Fort Myers after a long journey from Ireland, we received a great welcome. I was happy to see familiar faces from previous events. This was my first time cycling in Florida so every part of the journey was going to be a new experience; the first issue for me was going to be the heat and humidity, something we don't often experience in Ireland.

4:00am on Thursday morning quickly came around and we set off from the southernmost point of the USA with 1200 kilometers to go. The first two hours were easy, so it seemed that this was going to be an easy spin. That impression changed as we faced a

strong headwind. The long bridges were grueling and soon I was asking myself why I had chosen this event. By the fifty-mile mark, I was wrecked. With the heat and humidity, I was sweating like a cartoon character. However, relief arrived in the form of a heavy downpour. The most welcome rain ever!

The heat also affected my appetite, and I survived mainly on Muscle Milk and similar protein drinks throughout each day, only eating "proper" food at the end-of-day controls.

The highlight of Day One was cycling through Miami, a fantastic city. And I was delighted to finally reach Jupiter, knowing that the longest day was over. Day Two was tough again because of the heat. The most welcome

Sunshine 15 ... Tropical Way?

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

sight that day was Susan Gryder with cold watermelon and cold drinks at just the perfect point. I also met Ken Bonner, a legend in Audax, and shared the road with him for the last thirty miles of the day.

I decided to leave early on Day Three so was on the road at 3:30am to get some miles in before the sun rose. This worked well until I hit a bump on the road and my Garmin took flight. I stopped in time to see a car drive right over it. Luckily, I had downloaded the route sheet to my phone but I had no way of calculating distance. This added a new dimension to my journey, trying to figure out in my head how far it was the next turn. At the end of the day, Dave kindly helped me to get ridewithgps on to my phone and we downloaded the last day's route.

Having learned how to deal with the heat, I set off at 11.30pm to

With the heat and humidity, I was sweating like a cartoon character. However, relief arrived in the form of a heavy downpour. The most welcome rain ever!



This is what someone jokingly referred to as a Florida “hill”...it’s the Venetian Causeway Draw Bridge on Day 1 heading out towards Miami Beach (bike path painted green).

—PHOTO MARY SPENCE

begin the final leg of the journey. It was a particularly pleasant experience cycling through the orange groves at night. Early on the last morning, I spotted a large pipe close to some road works with a bicycle parked by its side and, sure enough, Jim Solanick who had also cycled through the night, was asleep inside.

I was delighted to finish just after 11:00am, before the real heat of the day kicked in.

Normally at the end of a 1200km event, we talk about the severity of the event, but it is generally the hills or mountains that are the talking points. In the case of the Sunshine 1200, the heat and humidity provide the challenges. The Sunshine 1200 was well-organized and tested both body and mind.

John Lee Ellis

Friends had ridden the inaugural Sunshine 1200 in 2015 and had a good time. They said I would, too, if I rode this year. It turns out they were right.

The route is like the Big Wild

Ride 1200 in Alaska: a horseshoe with a ferry to the ride start. But on the Sunshine the prospect was for alligators and manatees rather than moose and grizzlies. The point-to-point arc of its route gives the Sunshine a feeling of expanse.

Each day had its own theme: the Keys and Miami on Day 1; Atlantic Coast beaches and Intracoastal Waterway on Day 2; rural towns, citrus, and hills on Day 3; and quiet agricultural back roads on Day 4.

Day 1 featured the blustery crossing of Seven Mile Bridge at first light, the gnarly but delightful path paralleling Old Cutler Road, waiting for a drawbridge in the heart of downtown Miami with commuters on their e-boards, the relaxed night life along the beachfront at Vero Beach, and the sound of unseen surf after dark as we passed waterfront mansions.

On Day 2, it was the small-town beach and waterfront scenes, the thirty-six shady and traffic-free miles on the Eastern Coastal Trail, and the full moon shimmering off the Halifax

River as we glided into the Daytona Beach overnight.

The sight of Central Florida volunteers bearing cold drinks and fruit atop Mt. Sugarloaf capped Day 3. Oh, and the tranquil orange groves at sunset. Possibly the finest scene of Day 4 was Susan Gryder’s cooling oasis at the hottest part of the day on Hwy 31. I also appreciated the shady cloud bank transiting Ft. Myers on the home stretch, for which we give the organizer credit.

It’s not just the scenery, of course. It was a treat to spend time with the normally solitary grand randonneur *par excellence* Jim Solanick, and get a guided tour through his backyard of South Florida. To meet less veteran randonneurs such as the always cheerful Mary Spence and the always fresh Charlie Martin was also a pleasure. Then there was Shab Memarbashi’s made-to-order omelettes in Jupiter the second morning, one of many moments with Sunshine’s superb and enthusiastic volunteers.

Any grand randonnée is a huge amount of planning and work. More so when it’s point to point and you have to send the riders by ferry—while carting their bikes overland—to the start. I’m grateful to Dave Thompson and his cadre of elite volunteers for providing those of us who missed 2015 the chance to ride the Sunshine 1200 ... and have some fun!

Charlie Martin

Like many others, PBP caught my interest and pulled me into randonneuring. I got a foot in the door just in time to get in a pre-qualifier, and I entered 2019 unsure how to work

my way up to a 1200km brevet. What better PBP riding preparation than actually doing a 1200km beforehand? There were two on the RUSA calendar before PBP so I registered for both with an open mind, clueless as to how they would go or whether I would find myself adequately prepared. But if I completed them, what a confidence boost that would be!

The first 1200km came and went, and with the ride format now much less nebulous, I approached the Florida Sunshine 1200km with new goals. Meeting more randonneurs was at the top of my list, and foremost I was eager to meet my hero Vincent "Vinny" Muoneke, whose RUSA and RM results filled me with awe and fire. Second, as a California hill climber, I wanted to get a full experience of Florida's Sugarloaf "hill" that I'd heard so much about.

Riding with Vinny shaped my

whole event. Apart from getting to know him, I wanted to see how he would conquer the Florida humidity and heat, his nemeses. Half an hour into the brevet, he got a flat tire in the dark and I made good on my commitment. Now at the back of the pack, we moved slowly into the wind through the Keys. Together, we survived the rest of the day, aggressively topping off at every hydration opportunity. With the sun setting on our way out of Miami, I witnessed Vinny's signature vampiric transformation, his gaining of strength as the sunlight diminished. Throughout the event I also enjoyed sharing significant stretches of road with Lorin Fowler, Mary Spence, and Chester Fleck. Lorin, Vinny, and I formed a trio that stuck together through most of the event. Getting to hear Vinny recount his tales of 1200km events was well worth the price of admission!

Day three was the highlight for me. This was the day we climbed Florida's hill, Sugarloaf "Mountain" Road, and I was eager to give it 100%. It turns out that 100% isn't much when ninety miles into the day and nearly 550 miles into the event, using a loaded steel bike, in humid 90°F weather. Still, 100% is 100%! While our vampire companion trudged ahead, Lorin and I stopped at a Dollar General five miles out from Sugarloaf to ingest some hill-climbing nutrients. The climb had no switchbacks—great for putting your head down without worrying about oncoming traffic. I charged up the hill, unsure how soon I'd reach the top or what sort of gearing to use. Before I knew it, I reached the "summit" and found a wonderful support tent inviting me to collapse under it. A volunteer/angel poured chilled water over me and fed me watermelon, making it the best post-hill-climb experience ever!

Mary K. Spence

I am a rookie, in only my third year of randonneuring. My goal this year has been to qualify for and complete PBP. My series was going well until the 600. I bought a new bike but made more mistakes on that ride than I could count. Thankfully, the flèche renewed me. I was already signed up for the Sunshine 1200, knowing I would want to complete that distance, but changed my registration to the 1000/200 option to substitute the 1000 for the 600 for PBP qualification.

On Day 1, I thought I might throw up at the start just out of fear. Riding up Duval Street in Key West was surreal. It was 4:00am and the previous night's

Day 4—Finished!

—PHOTO DAVE THOMPSON



We met storms in the Keys and heat on the mainland. Downtown Miami was filled with people in business suits zipping around on scooters. Miami Beach was a concrete canyon and Ft. Lauderdale was one big party after dark.

parties were ongoing. The lights strung across the street added to the festive atmosphere. We met storms in the Keys and heat on the mainland. Downtown Miami was filled with people in business suits zipping around on scooters. Miami Beach was a concrete canyon and Ft. Lauderdale was one big party after dark.

In West Palm, Charlie Martin and I passed Mar-a-Lago. I will never forget the sight of the tall observation tower and giant American flag lit up in the darkness. Shab Memar set the bar

high for volunteer support as I rolled into the first hotel, in Jupiter, around 2:30am. She fed me & hauled my drop bag to my room.

Day 2 was incredibly hot (104°F) and windy until the sun went down in Titusville and we got to the long wooded bike trail. In Daytona Beach, the 1000km riders had an extra twelve miles to do after passing the hotel: tough but doable.

On Day 3, I was pedaling at sunrise and heading inland. I saw Daytona Speedway and then the beautiful

Stetson University campus in Deland. I was in good spirits heading into the Ocala National Forest when Dave turned us around due to an accident (not cyclists) that forced a road closure. This gave me a chance to ride with the faster riders as they caught me on the reroute. On Sugarloaf Mountain, Central Florida Randonneurs served up salted watermelon and ice-cold towels. This was another brutally hot (116°F) day and I repeatedly packed ice into Ziplocs to wear in my jersey. My outlook improved with each mile I closed in on Lake Wales and the finish of the 1000. Dave Thompson, Susan Gryder, and Mary Lu Williams greeted me at the hotel that night. I was now qualified for PBP!

On Day 4, I rode the 200km with Mark, Luis, and Rudy from South Florida. My computer hit 113°F that day, but the end was in sight. At the finish, I was never so exhilarated and exhausted at the same time in my life. I did it! 🚲

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RUSA Board Election—Details & Paper Ballot

Two member-elected positions on the RUSA Board are open for 2019. Nominations must be received by September 15. If you are a current RUSA member, you may nominate someone by that date by email to Lois Springsteen at secretary@rusa.org, or to the address below.

Current RUSA members may vote for up to two candidates for these positions. You may only vote for duly-nominated members. The list of nominees, their candidates statements, and online voting instructions will be available on the website at www.rusa.org by October 1. (See link on home page.)

We urge you to vote online, but you may vote instead using this paper ballot. If you choose to use this ballot, mail it to: Lois Springsteen, 226 West Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Votes must be received by November 15.

_____	_____
VOTE #1 (Candidate Name)	RUSA #
_____	_____
VOTE #2 (Candidate Name)	RUSA #
_____	_____
YOUR NAME	RUSA #
_____	_____
YOUR SIGNATURE	

RBA Representative (RBAs Only)—Details & Ballot

Regional Brevet Administrators elect a current RBA to serve as Director on the RUSA Board for a one-year term. Nominations must be received by September 15. If you are a current RBA, you may nominate someone by that date by email to Lois Springsteen at secretary@rusa.org, or to the address below.

Current RBAs may vote for one candidate for RBA Representative. You may only vote for a duly-nominated RBA. The list of nominees, their candidates statements, and online voting instructions will be available on the website at www.rusa.org by October 1. (See link on home page.)

RBAs are urged to vote online, but you may vote instead using this paper ballot. If you choose to use this ballot, mail it to: Lois Springsteen, 226 West Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Votes must be received by November 15.

_____	_____
VOTE (Candidate Name)	RUSA #
_____	_____
YOUR NAME	RUSA #
_____	_____
YOUR SIGNATURE	

American Randonneur — CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We welcome submissions of interest to readers of *American Randonneur*. Articles with photos or other visual elements are particularly welcome. While the focus of AR is on randonneuring events held in the U.S., articles on international events are also published.

Submission deadlines:

Spring issue — December 15
Fall issue — June 15
Summer issue — March 15
Winter issue — September 15

Questions? Please contact the editor at editor@rusa.org.

Types of articles include but aren't limited to the following:

- Ride reports or promotional articles
- Technical or Gear articles
- Training, health, nutrition articles
- Humorous articles
- Reprints of blog posts
- Reports on non-rando long-distance/endurance events of interest to randos
- Letters to the editor
- Book reviews
- Cartoons

Length of articles: articles of up to 2000 words would be appropriate. There is no minimum length requirement, but please contact the editor if you wish to write more than 2000 words.

Photos: must be high resolution and unaltered. They can be submitted as attachments to email messages. Other options are available and can be discussed with the editor.

How to submit articles: articles should be sent as Word files (no PDFs, no links to blog posts) to editor@rusa.org or jchernekoff@yahoo.com. Send photos separately; do not include them in articles.

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

Paid advertising: is available. For details please contact Jim Poppy at jpoppy55@icloud.com.

RUSA Awards

RUSA American Explorer Award

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.

Award criteria:

- Rides must be of the following types:
 - ACP brevets and flèches;
 - RUSA brevets, populaires, arrows and darts;
 - RUSA permanents and permanent populaires;

- RUSA sanctioned Super Randonnée permanents;
- 1200km events held in the United States after 1998.
- Routes must pass through or be contained within any of the 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, ...). Multiple states/territories can be achieved on a single ride.
- There is no time limit to earn this award.

Recognition

- A minimum of ten states or territories must be completed to receive initial recognition.

NAME	CITY, STATE	STATES ADDED	TOTAL STATES	APPROVED
Burke, Brian P	Cumming, GA	16	16	6/5/19
Hall, Mary E (F)	Dallas, TX	2	21	7/8/19
Klaassen, Spencer	Saint Joseph, MO	2	42	5/17/19
Lippincott, Jeff	Princeton, NJ	17	17	6/9/19
Nadovich, Chris	Easton, PA	7	28	7/2/19
Piech, Dawn Marie (F)	Lombard, IL	10	10	4/17/19
Reimbolt, Tom	Boise, ID	1	11	4/27/19
Slocum, Christopher C.	Toms River, NJ	3	18	5/20/19
Stevens, William	Volo, IL	2	17	4/23/19
Tamas, Tibor	Fort Worth, TX	7	44	6/16/19
Wiley, David M	Lawrence, KS	13	13	6/10/19

Galaxy Award

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

This award can be earned just once by a member and is automatically recognized upon completion of the required distance (no application required).

The qualifying distance for this award is based on all events on RUSA's calendar (ACP brevets and Flèches, RUSA brevets, populaires, arrows and darts), RUSA

permanents, and 1200km events held in the United States after 1999. Foreign events (including PBP) are not counted.

RUSA congratulates the riders who have earned this prestigious award.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Schaaf, Daniel A	Rowlett, TX	5/4/2019

RUSA Awards

Ultra Randonneur Award

The Ultra Randonneur Award is for RUSA members who have ridden ten (10) Super Randonneur series. The Super Randonneur (SR) series of brevets (200 K, 300 K, 400 K and 600 K in a calendar year) that are used to qualify for the Ultra Randonneur Award need not be in consecutive years, nor is there a time limit on how long it takes to accumulate the ten SR series. Note that it is possible to earn more than one SR series per year, making it possible to earn this award in fewer than ten seasons. Non-US ACP and RM brevets can be used provided that these non-US events account for no more than 50% of the rides counted towards this award.

RUSA congratulates the riders who earned and applied for the Ultra Randonneur Award.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Anderson, Michael [2]	Mansfield, MA	5/23/19
Bradbury, James	San Francisco, CA	6/27/19
Kimball, Branson	Durham, NC	5/28/19
Lebron, Gil	Perth Amboy, NJ	6/23/19
Mathews, David	Prairie Village, KS	5/14/19
Maytorena, Hector Enrique	San Diego, CA	7/23/19
McAlister, Grant	Morro Bay, CA	7/23/19
Prince, Gary	Seattle, WA	6/5/19
Selby, Ron	Zionsville, IN	6/5/19
Sexton, Robert B	San Jose, CA	7/23/19
Young, Michal	Eugene, OR	6/23/19

Ultra R-12 Award

The Ultra R-12 Award recognizes the completion of 10 R-12s. There is no time limit; there may be gaps between any of the 12-month sequences that define each R-12.

It is likely that members will have applied previously for each of the ten component R-12 awards; however, it is not a requirement to have done so. A given month can only be used towards one Ultra R-12 award and one may earn only one Ultra R-12 award during a ten-year period. The applicant must be a RUSA member during each of the 120 months included in the ten 12-month periods.

RUSA congratulates the riders who earned and applied for the Ultra R-12 award.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Courtney, Greg	Ames, IA	4/16/19
Preston, John	Plantation, FL	7/5/19

Ultra RUSA Cup Award

Whereas the RUSA Cup award recognizes members who accumulate at least 5,000km during two-year period including all of the RUSA event types, the Ultra RUSA Cup recognizes the attainment of ten (10) RUSA Cups. There is no time limit. [RUSA Cup award details].

To be recognized, the member must have earned and applied for ten RUSA Cups..

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Driscoll, Dan	Arlington, TX	7/11/05

RUSA Awards

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
Becker, Cheryl L (F)	South Lyon, MI	6/18/19
Chalfant, Michael L [3]	San Francisco, CA	6/9/19
Dang, Dzung A	San Jose, CA	4/16/19
Driscoll, Dan [10]	Arlington, TX	5/29/19
Ende, John Capn	Asheville, NC	5/5/19
Gray, Jeremy R	Okemos, MI	5/16/19
Haley, Joshua J	Oviedo, FL	4/22/19
Lippincott, Jeff [2]	Princeton, NJ	5/17/19
Martin, Charlie A	Sunnyvale, CA	5/15/19
Nguyen, John D	Seattle, WA	5/16/19
Slocum, Christopher C. [3]	Toms River, NJ	6/30/19
Smith, Gregory H [2]	Richland Center, WI	5/2/19
Whitlock, Ray	Seattle, WA	7/21/19
Wright, Pamela (F)	Fort Worth, TX	6/13/19

Mondial Award

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

The name “Mondial” comes from the 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 can be earned just once by a member and is automatically awarded upon completion of the required distance (no application or purchase required).

The qualifying distance for this award is based on all events on RUSA’s calendar (ACP brevets and Flèches, RUSA brevets, populaires, arrows and darts), RUSA permanents, and 1200km events held in the United States after 1999. Foreign events (including PBP) are not counted.

RUSA congratulates the riders who have earned this prestigious award.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Bigler, Wallace J	Houston, TX	5/5/19
Buschman, Robert	Portland, OR	6/22/19
Chin-Hong, Patrick	Amherst, MA	6/8/19
Coldwell, Charles Michael	Belmont, MA	5/11/19
Dechter, Joel	Bethesda, MD	6/1/19
Ehlman II, Thomas N	Rochester, MN	5/18/19
Haas, Stephen D	Alameda, CA	6/23/19
Kerrigan, Mike	Salem, NH	6/1/19
Lentz Jr, Herman P	Suffolk, VA	5/14/19
Morse, Josh	Olympia, WA	6/22/19
Slocum, Christopher C.	Toms River, NJ	6/29/19
Teachout, Todd H	Hercules, CA	5/12/19
Whitney, Paul	Richland, WA	6/8/19

RUSA Awards

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.

Events that count toward the P-12 Award are:

- Any populaire (100km - 199km) on the RUSA calendar.
- Any dart of less than 200km.
- Any RUSA permanent of 100km-199km.
A particular permanent route may be ridden more than once during the twelve-month period for P-12 credit.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Beck, William A [6]	Woodbine, MD	6/22/19
Chernekkoff, Janice (F) [4]	Lyon Station, PA	7/28/19
Chernekkoff, Janice (F) [4]	Lyon Station, PA	7/28/19
Coleman, Sam Robert [2]	San Diego, CA	7/8/19
Flitcroft, Ian D [4]	Williamson, GA	7/24/19
Haddad, James R [3]	Manchester, NH	7/14/19
Hazelton, Stephen [2]	Garland, TX	7/5/19
Kanaby, Gary [3]	Salado, TX	4/26/19
Myers, Mike [8]	Baxter Springs, KS	5/2/19
Myers, Nancy (F) [8]	Baxter Springs, KS	5/2/19
Novick, Robert M	Clifton, NJ	7/22/19
Shipp, Martin [6]	Raleigh, NC	5/28/19
Stevens, Sharon (F) [2]	Richardson, TX	4/16/19
Stum, Richard [2]	Mt Pleasant, UT	6/11/19
Uzzell, Audra A (F)	Bois D Arc, MO	7/4/19
Vergara, Mac	Piscataway, NJ	7/8/19
Wiley, David M [3]	Lawrence, KS	6/10/19

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
5/31/2019	Smith, Gregory H [2]	Richland Center, WI
EVENTS	2016 Cracker Swamp 1200 2017 Last Chance 2018 Florida Tip to Tail 1600 2019 Florida Sunshine 1200	
6/18/2019	Solanick, Jim [3]	Lake Worth, FL
EVENTS	2000 Boston-Montreal-Boston 2001 Gold Rush Randonnee 2005 Cascade 1200 2005 Last Chance	
6/18/2019	Solanick, Jim [3]	Lake Worth, FL
EVENTS	2009 Shenandoah 1200 2009 Endless Mountains 1240 2011 Colorado High Country 1200 2013 The Big Wild Ride	
6/18/2019	Solanick, Jim [3]	Lake Worth, FL
EVENTS	2015 Florida Sunshine 1200 2016 Texas Rando Stampede 1200 2016 Cracker Swamp 1200 2018 Coulee Challenge	

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.

Events that count toward the R-12 Award are:

- Any event on the RUSA calendar 200km or longer.
- Foreign ACP-sanctioned brevets and team events and RM-sanctioned events of 1200km or longer, provided that these non-US events account for no more than 6 of the 12 counting months.
- RUSA permanents 200km or longer.

RUSA congratulates the latest honorees, listed below.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Adams, Chip [11]	Severna Park, MD	5/22/19
Beck, William A [13]	Woodbine, MD	4/30/19
Brining, Doug	Galveston, TX	4/17/19
Brown, Audra A (F)	N. Lauderdale, FL	7/9/19
Chalfant, Michael L [4]	San Francisco, CA	6/10/19
Chalfant, Michael L [4]	San Francisco, CA	6/10/19
Chernekkoff, Janice (F) [2]	Lyon Station, PA	7/28/19
Coleman, Sam Robert [3]	San Diego, CA	7/15/19
Cutler, Mel [5]	Los Angeles, CA	6/26/19
Ehrentreich, Norman [4]	Minneapolis, MN	6/18/19
Frederick-Rothwell, Ian	Austin, TX	7/22/19
French, John D	San Francisco, CA	7/22/19
Gallo, Linda Dal (F) [7]	Mount Shasta, CA	5/26/19

Gentile, Vincenzo F	N. Lauderdale, FL	7/9/19
Haas, Stephen D [6]	Alameda, CA	5/19/19
Hazelton, Stephen [9]	Garland, TX	7/5/19
Hibler, Bill	Seattle, WA	5/8/19
Ishihara, Mitch [4]	Issaquah, WA	5/9/19
Janssen, Earl [7]	Severna Park, MD	7/30/19
Kenway, Gaetan K.W. [2]	Sunnyvale, CA	5/25/19
Kindl, Cindy A (F) [2]	Dallas, TX	5/30/19
Larson, Lesli A (F)	Springfield, OR	6/11/19
Mento, Chris [12]	Glen Burnie, MD	7/21/19
Mousseau, Haley Dawn (F)	Oakland, CA	7/29/19
Nadovich, Chris [7]	Easton, PA	7/2/19
O'Connor, Patrick F	Washington, DC	4/16/19
Piech, Dawn Marie (F) [3]	Lombard, IL	5/5/19
Preston, John [10]	Plantation, FL	7/5/19
Provenza, Clint [8]	Millersville, MD	6/13/19
Sexton, Robert B [5]	San Jose, CA	6/18/19
Shellow, Jacqueline S (F) [2]	Hollywood, FL	7/15/19
Sigmond, Bennett [2]	Broomfield, CO	6/26/19
Singer, Ian Ryan [3]	Weston, FL	5/11/19
Stevens, Sharon (F) [13]	Richardson, TX	4/16/19
Sullivan, Timothy J [7]	Coronado, CA	5/21/19
Therault, Michael [2]	San Francisco, CA	5/3/19
Thompson, Ryan [4]	Santa Rosa, CA	4/24/19
Todd, Joseph H [6]	Decatur, GA	5/21/19



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2019 Tours are Sold Out

"Elite Tour Ridge of the Rockies"

June 15-28

Mexico (El Paso, Texas) to Canada

12 days, 160 miles per day

The Elite Tour is an intense tour intended for serious cyclists who want to challenge themselves with longer daily miles. The tour will start near the Mexican border and follow the Rocky Mountains north along many paved roads while crossing the Continental Divide several times. This Elite Tour is also a qualifying ride for the Race Across America. Full support with many rest stops, lunch and full support are provided each day. Lodging will be in nice motels with local restaurants nearby.

"Ridge of the Rockies Tour" July 6 - 26

Albuquerque, New Mexico to Canada

19 days, 95 miles per day

This Tour is the "Touring Version" of the Elite Tour. The route will begin in Albuquerque, New Mexico and follow the Rocky Mountains north to Kalispell, Montana. Full support with many rest stops, lunch and full support are provided each day. Lodging will be in nice motels with local restaurants nearby.

Cycling Across the Andes in Peru

September 23 to October 11

1,200 KM, 11 Cycling days

This is an epic tour starting near the Brazilian jungle and cycling back toward the deserts along the Pacific Ocean. We will climb 14 passes over 12,000 feet in elevation. Meals will be in local restaurants and we will sleep in hotels along the route. Several non cycling days are planned to visit the ruins at Machu Picchu and the Nazca Lines

Coming in 2020

Desert Camp in Arizona

Based from Tucson, Arizona - each week has a different theme for different types of riders. You can combine weeks to extend your cycling season in Arizona. Come join us!

Week #1 February 22 – February 29

Tour of the Historic Hotels 50 miles per day

Week #2 February 29 – March 7

First Century Week 60-100 miles per day.

Week #3 March 7 - 14

Chiricahua Challenge 75-90 miles per day

Week #4 March 14 - 21

Second Century Week 60-100 miles per day.

Week #5 March 21 - 29

Mountain Tour Mt. Graham 80-100 miles per day

Week #6 March 29 – April 5

Gravel Week in Arizona 40 miles per day

Cycling Route 66 (Eastern Half)

Amarillo, Texas to Chicago

May 28 to June 13 16 riding days 1,200 miles

The the tour will focus on the history of building the highway and the cultural changes that happened during the past 95 years. We will stay in many original motels and eat at the popular cafes and diners on the "Mother Road".

Southern Transcontinental

Mid September to early October

This will be a 27 day tour from San Diego, California to Tybee Island (Savannah) Georgia. Most days average 110 miles. We will cross the country through a variety of terrain and visit many historical sites along the way.

Going to Ghana Africa

Early November 14 days

This unique tour will ride a 320 mile loop of southeastern Ghana. Along the way we will meet and visit many local people of this beautiful country. Road conditions will range from good pavement to red dirt. Mountain bikes with 26" tires are recommended. The people of Ghana speak English. We will stay in hotels and eat in restaurants along the way.

Check out the PAC Tour website for dates, prices, registration information and a full schedule of available tours.

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