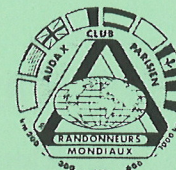




B.C. RANDONNEUR Marathon Bicycling



Founding Member 1983

The Newsletter of the CBC Randonneur Committee
September 1993(Issue #6)

1993 EXECUTIVE

Chair:

Manfred Kuchenmuller 253-4858
2205 Parker St. Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2L8

Vice Chair:

Judy Morrison (Vancouver) 879-3661

Secretary:

Gordon Cook (Surrey) 594-4644

Treasurer:

Peter Lysne (North Vancouver) 980-6231

ACP Liaison, VP Brevets Randonneur Mondiaux:

Gerry Pareja (Vancouver) 874-5229

Newsletter Editor:

Barbara Lepsoe (Vancouver) 876-5228

Social Coordinator:

Karen Smith 873-3397

Awards Coordinator:

Stephen Hinde (Chemainus) 245-4571

Interior Route Coordinator:

Bob Boonstra (Kamloops) 828-2869

Vancouver Island Route Coordinator:

Stephen Hinde (Chemainus) 245-4571

Fraser Valley Route Coordinator &

Fleche Pacific Coordinator:

Harold Bridge (Port Coquitlam) 941-3448

Vancouver Route Coordinator:

Norm Brodie (New Westminster) 522-6726

Policy Manual:

Dan McGuire (Port Coquitlam) 942-3235

Route Archivist:

Carol Hinde (Chemainus) 245-4571

Lower Mainland Brevet Coordinators:

Pacific Populaire -

Judy Morrison (Vancouver) 879-3661

200K -

Ian Faris (Coquitlam) 438-4022

& Doug Cho (Coquitlam) 942-0300

400K -

Dave Charnock & Judy Dwyer (Burnaby) 433-7549

600K -

Manfred Kuchenmuller (Vancouver) 253-4858

1000K -

Stephen Hinde (Chemainus) 245-4571

& Ted Milner (Burnaby) 421-0371

BARB'S CABLE STOP

And it's my last one too, so read up and enjoy this very big newsletter. It's been fun, I'll miss pre-reading all the stories. Thanks for putting up with what I put out, and many thanks, og tusen takk, for the number of articles sent to me. There's no use doing a randonnee unless you plan on writing about it, so keep up the great stories - I hope you'll continue to send them in.

The executive is looking for new faces, please join the board, let someone know what you'd like to do. Ask a current executive member for "job descriptions."

THE PIN DESIGN CONTEST deadline for our 1994 logo is October 3rd at the AGM.

TAKE THE BOAT TO & FROM THE AGM. For \$30.00 you and your bike can go 1 or 2 ways to the Bedford House. See more details elsewhere in this newsletter.

RANDONNEUR AGM

SUNDAY OCTOBER 3RD

9:30am Social Rides

1:00pm Brunch

Bedford House Fort Langley

(see next page for more details)

RANDO JERSEYS

Remember the Randonneur jerseys made during the 1991 Paris-Brest-Paris year? Well, they are still available and Peter Lysne is taking orders now. Phone him and tell him how many you'd like, and be prepared to give him specific measurements. Peter's phone number is (604) 980-6231.

thought it would be kinda neat to ride a tandem. The more people on tandems I saw, the more I wanted to try. In previous years it was always Manfred and Margaret, and this year Deirdre and Bob, who I somehow always managed to be with at some point in time during one of my rides, but never finishing with. So when Bob agreed to do the Lower Mainland 200 with me on the tandem, I was quite excited, and looking forward to the adventure. I figured a 200 would be okay, after all, it's not that far, so if it doesn't work out that well, well then we know for the future, and it's a distance we know we can finish.

So we're off for our test ride, up the driveway. At the end of the driveway I instruct Bob to turn right, and begin to lean when I usually do on my bike, to hear a frantic yell from the front "Don't lean!" So I bolt myself upright, as the bike does a wide swing at the end of the driveway. Then we're off down the street. "This is weird." A little further down the street we're heading down this hill . . . all I see is a green blur. I have no idea how fast we're going. As it turns out, we were going 71 down a hill where I normally go about 55 - in full tuck! So what are the other hills going to be like?

About half way up the hill on the return journey we decide - by joint decision - that it's time to stand. Now when I am standing to go up a hill, I normally use my upper body to help me out a bit. Like a preprogrammed robot I do the same on the tandem, and with a zing it goes shooting sideways across the road in accompaniment to screams from Bob. Me, I had no idea where we were going. Gee . . . I guess we're not supposed to rock the bike!

On returning home, Sabrina Shea (who came over from the island to ride, and was staying with us) and Mike, asked us how it went I still had a silly grin on my face. Always a good sign.

Saturday morning greeted us with a bright, but cool stream of sunshine. What a wonderful day this was going to be. I looked forward to it with anticipation. We even left the house on time to get to the ride! Wonders never cease. The bright smiles of Doug Cho and Dave Johnston greeted us at the sign-up table.

So we're ready to start. Well almost. As the pack wheels off, Bob and I are about to push off, and we see Deirdre both feet planted firmly on the ground as she stands astride a captainless tandem. "I seem to have lost my captain." she says with a chuckle. Ok, so where's Judy? Fertilizing a tree. As we watch the pack go off into the distance I hear someone cry "Where's the tandem?"

Bob and I start at a slow pace at the end of the pack till Judy and Deirdre catch us. From then on there was no turning back. With the two tandems working together we ate up a lot of ground. However, my butt quickly told me that I might have major trouble. At the "Mission Hill" sign, I informed Bob that I might not make it, my butt was hurting pretty bad. I hadn't realized how much I shift my weight on a single to keep my butt from hurting, but on the tandem I could not do this. The only solution it seemed was to stand more, which we did, and it helped, but much of the damage

had already been done.

We had a small party of followers hanging onto the back of one or the other tandem. I liked the freedom to look around at the people around me, even those behind me! Then I noticed . . . they followed us like a swarm of flies, buzzing along behind us, refusing to let go. It was like when you go for a walk in the woods, and the flies follow you along wherever you go, buzzing around your head. It was in Mission where we finally caught the pack, and after all the shuffling it was Ron Horsley, Sabrina, Yvonne Coady (a triathlete I knew from SFU, doing her first 200), and David Pulfrey who stuck to our wheel.

Once I got used to being on the tandem I found I really liked it. Even though I couldn't see where I was going, I rather liked not having to worry about where I was going. So I looked at the scenery beside me. Hey - I was even taking pictures! It all seemed so wonderfully easy. I was putting in the effort for travelling low 30's, but we were actually traveling high 30's! I like this part.

Woodside split us up, though. Grateful bunch I tell you. We (the tandems) pull them all the way to the bottom of Woodside, then where we are a bit slower (on the hill), what do they do? Take Off! So we don't see them till the checkpoint.

Nearing the checkpoint, much to my surprise, we see Mike and Ted, having just left the checkpoint . . . Hey - we're not far behind - cool! As it turns out, the checkpoint had just opened a few minutes before we got there.

The singles are out of the checkpoint before us, as this time the other half of the other tandem - Deirdre - is responding to the call of nature. So Bob and I watch as they disappear out of sight.

Leaving Johnson Slough reality hit. The high 30's was not because of being on a tandem, but rather because of the tailwind, which now, guess what. It took effort to go 30. Sigh.

Then we played yo-yo with the singles. Just as we were catching them we saw a control card on the road and stopped to pick it up. It was Rod's. We offered to sell it to him when we caught him in Chilliwack, but he didn't want it enough to buy it. So we offered it to him cheap. Free. He still didn't want it. It was just after that that Bob and I began to have trouble, and the group pulled away. Deirdre and Judy waited for us. As for the rest, well we found them stuffing their faces at the Maas', and Rod had changed his mind about not wanting his card. Boy that was some hill there too. As we were about to start up I found the gear Bob had selected a bit tough, so I requested a lower gear. Much to my dismay he replied that we were in our bottom gear! Oh help!

Leaving the Maas' with Deirdre, Judy, and George Siudut, who had joined us after Johnson Slough, the bump-bump I had felt earlier was becoming worse. I looked down at the rear wheel to notice that it was desperately out of true. It was rather disheartening, jostling my butt around as it was. We couldn't keep pace with the other three, and they slowly drifted ahead of us. We took it easy down the hills too. With

JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE

(Mike Hagen)

Ted is an animal. He is so strong, so consistent, almost mechanical. Following him is like motor pacing. But I'm not complaining, a guy could get used to these back-to-back 3-hour 100s. The trick is to stay with him on the hills.

So it was in the July Lower Mainland 300. One hundred kilometers in 2:52; 200 km in 5:52; 300 km in 9:22, and the finish in 9:51 (Ted was a few minutes faster at the end, as he dropped me on the Woodside hill. What was I saying about hills?). My computer said the course was 314 km long. But full credit to Ted; as I said to Duhane at the Aldergrove control, I was just along for the ride.

Twenty riders, all singles, started from Burnaby Lake under cloudy skies. About half were doing their first 300 of the year. The weather was virtually ideal: cool, cloudy—though the sun frequently threatened to break through, and finally did at the end—with mostly light tailwinds. The usual Lougheed headwinds showed up between Harrison and Mission.

Fifteen-year-old Paul Aulakh chased after Ted and me at the start, and stayed with us to the Patullo Bridge. You could call this chutzpah, but I like the spirit! He still wasn't that far behind at the Chilliwack River Hatchery control, and ended up with a very respectable time of 12:10. In another five years, I'll be trying to keep up with him!

The climb up to the Chilliwack River Hatchery was tough. Ted did drop me on the steep section about halfway up, but I managed to reel him in again. We got to the control two minutes after it opened, to the surprise of Jim and Faye Lee. On the way back down, we saw Terry Zrmhal, Rod Horsley, and then Paul not too far from the control. But then we were almost out before seeing Anna, Andy Evans, John Little, and Real Prefontaine riding together. Always in the past I've seen almost everyone else on the return, so this was dramatic evidence of our speed.

Kelly was just setting up at a picnic table in the park across from the Harrison boat house when we arrived. She seemed shocked to see us, she had just gotten there herself. Perhaps Duhane had told her that the first riders would be about an hour after opening; well, you can't count on that when Ted is riding!

The Woodside hill is always tough, as you face a kilometer-long, 14% grade with over 200 km gone already. Times like these, I think about Nike's "Just Do It" slogan; mostly I think about what I'd like to do to the person who dreamed that one up.

Ted found another gear nearing the top where the grade eases. My legs were screaming for mercy, and I could not Just Do It anymore. By the crest, he had ten seconds, by the second crest, another five. Past the Woodside spring, he pulled away. I saw him again at Lake Errock on a straight stretch, he was two minutes ahead.

There comes a time in many randonneés when the spirit ebbs, real or imaginary pains become magnified, and the mind balks. This is when one thinks to oneself, "This is

fine, I've gone far enough now," but there is still 50, or 100, or 200 kilometers to go. This is when one entertains serious doubts about this particular recreational pursuit. Why would otherwise sane adults do this to themselves? We could be out gardening, or walking the cat, or painting the house, or . . .

Ted was just leaving Mission as I arrived. I made a quick stop and was after him, just five minutes behind. Heartened at the small gap, and the usual feeling that, once past Mission, the end is near, I regained my focus.

In 1987, we had an experiment. Riders who finished the 200 in under eight hours were given the option of starting the 300 two hours after everyone else. The idea was to reduce the length of time the finish area would have to be staffed. The course was the same: Burnaby Lake-Chilliwack Hatchery-Harrison-Burnaby Lake.

Anna and I—Anna in her first season, I in my second—had started with the main group. We were climbing the hill on the Mary Hill Bypass, just past Pitt River Road, when the late group passed us. They were on A Ride, and the strain was obvious: dirty, lined faces; blank, staring eyes; salt-encrusted jerseys. Barney Bentall, Gary Fraser, Keith Fraser, Alex Mann, Peter Stary, and David Thornburn turned in a time of 10:13.

In 1988, Keith teamed with Robert Eton and Graham Elvidge in 10:19. Last year, on the shorter but similar course that starts and ends at Guildford, the Fraser brothers and yours truly turned in a 10:20. But a sub-ten-hour 300 remained in the province of dreams. Now, thanks in part to Ted's early pacing, I'd gotten the 10-hour 300, and it was a great feeling.

A SOUTHEAST 400

(Jimmy Vallance)

"So . . . a new route this year."

"Indeed. All-Canadian too; an out-and-back from Cranbrook to Crawford Bay near the Kootenay Lake Ferry. Better than spending most of the time in Montana as we have done in the past two years."

"Better?"

"Certainly. See . . . our last two 400's . . . if you combine Memorial Day weekend with very few k's of road with a rideable shoulder . . . well, Norman and I have this fairly serious aversion to being whacked out by an errant Winnebago. Bad craziness abounds on the roads of northern Montana on Memorial Day weekend."

"Any preparations? If I remember you had some difficulties during the Kootenay 300."

"I rode the C-S-C. As it turned out, it wasn't enough."

"The what?"

"Creston-Salmo-Creston, over the Kootenay Pass and back. I'm no statistophile, but it's approximately 90 miles and near enough 8,000 feet of climbing, and I wanted to iron out a couple of kinks in feeding and drinking so that I wouldn't finish up knackered and knauseous . . ." >>>

comfortable, and was thinking about the Randonneur maximum speed rule. We were slowed by a train as we came into Deroche, and I asked Ted if he made a habit of waiting for controls to open. But he just smiled.

On the undulations between Deroche and the Sasquatch Inn, I actually got in a couple of pulls. Imagine that! But past Woodside and towards Johnston Slough it was back to normal—Ted lead, I followed. I followed so close that, during the course of the day, his fender was getting a bit marked up. For what I saw of the open road, I might as well have been stoking a tandem.

Jim and Faye Lee were just setting up as we arrived at the Johnson Slough control, 12 minutes before opening. So we waited for our average speed to drop to the permissible 34 kph, got our signatures, and left. We were still climbing the hill out of the control when Sabrina, David, and Rod went by, followed shortly by the two tandems and a few others in their wake. It looked like the two tandems had anchored a large group and all were enjoying a fast ride.

Over the Fraser River and onto Camp River Road lead Ted. A headwind was picking up, and his speed was down to 34 - 35 kph rather than the earlier 40. I was still working hard, but not exceptionally so, and was growing more confident about staying with him the rest of the way.

I led through Chilliwack—led from behind, calling out the turns in advance. During the 1991 Fraser Valley 200, Anna and I had become confused and had lost eight minutes in Chilliwack before getting back on course. Consequently, the correct route was brazened on my mind, and Ted and I were able to expediently zip through. This was my contribution to our fast time.

Along the open stretches on Old Yale Road and South Parallel Way the headwind became more noticeable. Bit by bit it blew away our aspirations for a sub-six-hour ride. My infrequent pulls were at 28 kph, Ted was managing 31 kph.

At the turn onto Highway 11, I jumped through a smaller gap in the traffic than Ted felt comfortable with. He hadn't caught up by the turn onto Huntington, and I made the climb quicker than he—my low gear being lower than his. By the top of the hill I'd opened up the largest gap of the day, and was actually entertaining thoughts of getting to the Maas' before Ted. What utter hubris! Within a kilometer he caught me and opened up his own 100 meter gap. Along Huntington I hammered, past the penitentiary, past the airport. Finally, at Peardonville, I reeled him in, and put another mark on his fender for good measure.

We arrived at the Maas control eleven minutes after it opened, and took five minutes there. With 24 km to go, we could not make 6 hours, but the Fraser's course record of 6:15 was still in reach.

Back on Le Feuvre Road, the route goes up a gentle hill. Here Ted came up beside me, checked some route details, realized he didn't need me anymore, and unceremoniously dumped me. I was crushed, we'd been so close. My legs were still leaden from the break, and I could

not respond. Slowly he pulled away, and I watched him dwindle in the distance.

Now I was on my own. But with a tailwind and a mostly downhill trend, I was able to maintain 40 kph. On River Road, approaching the railway crossing just two km from the finish, my heart sank when I saw an oncoming train. Seconds later it leaped as I realized the train was on the other track! In the end I got to the Fort Pub just one minute behind Ted, covering the distance in 6:11.

I staggered off my bike. It felt so good to shuck my shoes and sit in a real chair. Shortly I got up and went to wash the salt, dirt, and dead bugs off my face. Then I settled back with a sigh to wait, with Ted, Doug Cho and Ron Johnson, for the other riders to show up. Life was good.

FLECHE '93 RETYRED

(Marfred Kuchenmuller)

This was a difficult year for the Retyred team. One of the team members had to work, which is unusual, and one of the members was somewhat disorganized, which is not so unusual. While Bob Boonstra was marking papers in Kamloops, and Bruce Hainer was crying in his basemet beside his broken bicycle, the staunch remnants of the team, Gordon Cook, Mike Hagen, and I, pedalled with our fingers crossed (a difficult task in the dark) hoping that our numbers would suffer no further attrition. While wind and weather seemed unfavourable, I found relief in Gordon's slip stream where I could pray quietly that Mike's bicycle would survive this trip and that he would be spared any further flat tyres.

Each year that we ride this route we set out determined to turn around in Coupeville, and each year through some collusive manoeuvres by this person or that person, we turn around in Oak Harbor. The truth is that we forgo the extra 34 kilometer return trip to Coupeville for that delicious latte and sticky bun at Tony's Coffee Shop in Fairhaven. Being somewhat thick-headed, (which was later pointed out, and which of course goes along with being retyred), we failed to realize for the third and last time that we can only change the route distance by 10% at the end and not in the middle or at some other more convenient place. Quite innocently therefore, we turned at Oak Harbor and started to think fondly of our Hope Motel room. Although the first hundred or so kilometers after the turnaround occupied us with worrying about ever making it to Hope, once we let go of this useless activity, our riding and spirits seemed to pick up.

Somewhere between Hope, our three hour rest in a wonderful motel room, and the race into Harrison, good fortune started to smile on us. The rhythm of our riding, and our combined desires to have a good time allowed us to get beyond all the negative thoughts and elements that often conspire to finish off those riders who fight too hard or attempt too much. In addition to having had a good time, we were also (much to our surprise) bestowed the trophy for the most kilometers (411km). While it appears that we owe this trophy to those other team members whose mishaps of one

It was a tough ride, with 15,000 feet of climbing. The other tandem had two horns, both honking as we turned into the final control. It was immensely satisfying to finish.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“By the return to Loudeac I have used a small jar of vaseline to reduce the chamois friction prevalent on such a long ride. My friend has such a bad case that we stop at a small-town Peugeot repair shop where we borrow a razor knife. In the middle of the shop he starts hacking away at his seat trying to reduce the pressure on his crotch. The mechanics look at us as if we just arrived from Mars.” *(Pat Rodden)*

“The lake and mountains were crystal clear, the road was almost deserted. It was the sort of ride one should do with a camera, not a control card with time limits on it.” *(Harold Bridge)*

“And then it started to rain again, another hard, pitiless downpour, aided and abetted by a blustery headwind. The temperature dropped too, for as we exhaled, our breaths condensed in front of us making us more like draught horses in mid-November than cyclists in mid-June.” *(Jimmy Vallance)*

“They can't really shut down the streets of Paris on a Monday afternoon for a bike ride - can they? Not only do they do it, but the people along the streets don't seem to mind.” *(Pat Rodden)*

“Mad dogs and peletons go out in the mid day sun.” *(Anon.)*

ORGANIZING STRESS

(Harold Bridge)

I keep on promising that the next event I take on will have an entry closing date three days prior to the day. I can't believe that riders wake up the morning of something like a 600 and decide then and there to ride.

Worrying whether one has enough control cards printed, and has planned for enough food at the controls, is an unnecessary waste of resources that can create stress for the organiser. The day before the 600 I had to go to the doctor. Randonneur Cliff Ungar was on vacation, but his locum was nicer looking anyway! She took an interest in my problem. I felt that suffering diarrhoea for a whole week was indicative of a problem and she sent me for tests. I knew that not too much was wrong, as I had, the previous evening recorded 28min53sec for a 16.1km time-trial.

Guess what? Once I got the event under way, no more problem. I had created some panic at the start by suddenly realising I hadn't signed out the start box on the 10

control cards (I planned for 20 with 30 cards kindly printed by Arn Driver). Then, when I did sign, I signed in the wrong box!

Ten started, one female, one 15 year old and one approaching 60. Gord Cook had expressed an interest in a 24-hour ride but at 12kms down the road he learned it doesn't pay to use STI on one bike and Ergo Power on the other. The gear triggers behind the brake levers work in the opposite direction to each other. He put his gear in the spokes because the chain was too short, and ended his 600 bid there and then.

I left the start a few minutes after the stipulated hour was up and out of interest, drove up to see Ron Johnson and Malcolm Lissone at the Dewdney control. I was astonished to see Real Prefontaine still in Pitt Meadows and worried about him missing the time limit at the first control. The three Islanders were entering Mission and the five-strong paceline was hammering onto Hatzic Flats, but there were three when they arrived at the control. Ralph Hilderbrand and George Siudat were seeing to one of their numerous flats. As I returned, I was surprised at the catch-up job Real had done as I met him coming off the flats between Silverdale and Mission. It transpired that he had had three flats in quick succession, two on Broadway Street, where he started in Port Coquitlam. He had another in Mission, walked down to Wentings bike shop, left his wheel, borrowed another, got his Dewdney control and retrieved his wheel before speeding off after the others enroute to Sedro Woolley.

Control #2 was staffed by the redoubtable team of Jim and Faye Lee. Speaking to Faye on the phone a couple of nights beforehand, I found out how helpful it is to have enthused help. I didn't have to trouble myself with details, they would buy the goods and dispose of any surplus at a hospice in Bellingham. They send their expense report directly to Peter Lysne. They had a list of riders dropped off by Tim Pollock on his way to the Arlington Motor Inn where he was to be in charge all night. Peter too, had driven all the way from North Vancouver to supervise the collection of start money, so taking something else off my mind.

Paul Aukuah, at 15, is perhaps too young for rides of this length, but he seems to tackle them with a maturity that belies his years. He had a few problems a few years ago, but, unlike many, he has learned from his mistakes and is well equipped now, even though he was riding on a cracked frame!

As the start and finish were to be on the premises of the place I work, I thought I should enlist the help of employees. Of course, Glen Springle is a randonneur and so was obliged. Some others were pleased to help too. Peter Helland rides an ATB and was telling me he is off to tour the Yukon in a week's time. His riding partner? Duhane Lam!

THE RAGGED EDGE

(Mike Hagen)

The numbers on my computer weren't making any sense. I had some hazy idea that I wanted the bottom number to be as small as possible, though it kept rising steadily, by increments. Vague thoughts stirred that the upper number should be as big as possible, but I couldn't quite figure out WHY that should be, or how I would go about it. When it seemed like I could almost get a handle on it, my mind would wander.

How had I gotten into this predicament? It all started seven years ago . . .

In 1986, I rode my first 600. It was a stupefying, over-whelming experience. My first 200 and 300 had gone well, leading me to think I might have some aptitude for this game. The first 400 showed me something of the darker side of randonneuring: a broken hub, a borrowed wheel (Thanks, Harold!); a 100 km solo ride in sheeting rain and swirling headwinds before catching a group for the last half; my first sustained night riding; and my first trip off course. Still, a good feeling of accomplishment, and I signed up right away for that first 600.

I'd yet to learn that in some rides the spinning is easy; in others, you never seem to get your head into it. That first 600 was one of the latter. Full dark found me just east of Mission, alone, at the side of the road, wondering whether to go on, go home, or stop. Go on, go home, or stop? After an hour of indecision, David Cambon showed up. When I saw his lights the decision was obvious, to go on, of course!

I will always be grateful for Dave's moral support that night. It took us seven hours to bumble the 80 km to Hope. And when we left in the grey morning, I accidentally pulled away from him. Down the road some time later, I looked behind and he was not there.

I don't remember much of the last 150 km. Suffice it to say, they passed; and I finally finished—in 31:21.

It was four years before I attempted another 600.

In 1990, Anna and I and Ron Sherman rode a 600 on the Concrete-Darrington-Sultan course. We got back to Marysville, at 400 km, in 16 hours. But the night defeated any hope for a 24-hour ride. Morning found us at the Smitty's in Mission, waiting for breakfast, sound asleep. That ride took 27:56.

In the following two years—the Island 600 in 1991 and the 600 to Sultan in 1992—Anna and I broke the ride into two parts separated by a break of a few hours. Though it takes 33 or 34 hours to complete, the 600 becomes much more manageable.

Earlier this year Anna and I rode the June Lower Mainland 600 to Cache Creek and back. Though we stopped at Lytton on the return, we only managed a 3 hour break. Heat and hills in the canyon, and huge buffeting headwinds on the final leg from Hope took their toll, and the ride lasted over 36 hours.

In '86 and '87 Luis Bernhardt used to solo in hours ahead of anyone else. It had a certain compelling fascination,

and I wondered if perhaps I could do that too. Last year, I'd given some thought to doing a second 600, which was to be a solo attempt at getting under 24 hours. With some trepidation, I'd gone so far as to tell Norm Brodie to expect me for the Fraser Valley 600. But the day before the ride I became convinced I was not up to it, and DNSed.

This year, following the LM 200 in June, Bob Boonstra and I had some discussion about an inaugural Kamloops 600, deciding that Kamloops-Merritt-Kamloops-Revelstoke-Kamloops would probably fit the bill. Commitments made, Anna and I headed up to Kamloops on Friday evening. In the car, I was having second thoughts, was there some way I could get out of this honorably?

Arriving at the Boonstra residence, we found that Bob was just getting his information together to figure out where the controls should be. This does a lot for ones confidence. After some manipulation, he decided that the course should start from the 7-11 on Summit Drive, proceed to the first gas station in Merritt via the old Highway 5A, return through Kamloops all the way to the first establishment in Revelstoke, and back to the PetroCan about 5 km east of Kamloops. This would, he thought, be about 610 km. Good 'nuff. When did I want to start?

Phil Minter, the only other rider attempting the course, was starting at 0600. As it was then approaching midnight, I said the hell with it, and decided to start at 0700.

At 0700, card in hand, I stood ready at the 7-11. Almost. My water bottles were still in the Boonstra fridge. I set off anyway, and Anna went back to get them.

Forty minutes later Anna caught up to me with the bottles. I was stopped near the summit of the big hill between Kamloops and Merritt. It was pouring rain and I had just put my rain shell on. It was not turning out to be a good day.

Just past the bottom of the big hill, beside the lake that is the water-skiing and rowing venue for the Canada Summer Games, I fumbled getting a bottle back into its cage, and dropped it. It rolled under my rear wheel, the top popped, and I lost my Gatorade. Now I was faced with 60 km to the next control at Quilchena with only one full bottle, and probably nowhere to stop for more water before then.

At this point, I was ready to say "Forget it, I'm not doing this," turn around, and do something more enjoyable. But then I thought, well, this is one of the things that randonneuring is about. It is working through the adversity. It is achieving or at least attempting your goals, even when things aren't working out quite the way you want them to. Kind of like life. Fine, I continued.

Just past Quilchena I saw Phil coming the other way. This was quite a bit sooner than I expected to see him. At Merritt I discovered I'd made up a whole four minutes on him. I chose to believe he was having a great ride, was in the process of burning himself out, or both.

Between Merritt and Quilchena was the only substantial headwind of the trip. Still, the clouds had dispersed, the sun was out in a hazy sort of way, and it was pleasantly warm. Past Quilchena, into the rolling hills and

deep ditch at the side of the road, hood pointed starward. Driver and passenger were sitting bemusedly in the front, and the stink of alcohol wafted out the windows. At a tractor-trailer unit parked 500 m down the road, I suggested that the driver call the police on his CB. Carrying on, I carefully avoided thoughts of what could have happened.

Into Chase and 50 km to go, a grey light was rendering my computer once again visible. I could see that my average speed had dropped dramatically. A 22-hour ride was out of the question, 23 hours was still probable, but at that point I didn't much care. Anna hadn't been able to find water, and all she had was some Gatorade. Unfortunately, I thought it was mixed too strong, and refused it.

The randonneur must ever be vigilant: dehydration and hypoglycemia are constant risks. Beware the bonk! The first stage is a decrease in speed—which is hard to spot at night. The second is confusion. The third—when combined with sleep deprivation—is hallucinations. Well, I missed out on the hallucinations (this time), but I was certainly confused during the 30 km after Chase. I wasn't going very fast either.

About 20 km to go, I finally drank some fluids and soon realized I needed to make haste if I wanted to get under 23 hours. Pounding along now, under cloudy skies with no wind, I was hitting 35 to 40 kph.

Soon I passed Anna gesturing me into the exit. Around I went, through the underpass and into the PetroCan parking lot. The place was closed. But a woman, not yet on duty, opened up and signed the card, the precious card! It was 0548, the ride had taken under 23 hours.

This is one thing about randonneuring. If you are so inclined, you can push right to your limits, right to the edge, the ragged edge. If you can hold mind and body together there for a few hours, you are capable of astonishing things. Every one of us. Distances, in times scarcely dreamed of, can roll under the wheels. Of course it's not easy. If it were, it would not be remarkable. Remember, the non-randonneur thinks just finishing a 200 is remarkable. And so it is.

LEL - ONE THIRD OF THE STORY

(Manfred Kuchenmuller)

Now that a month has passed since I completed the LEL, the event has mellowed in my mind and allowed me to give the highs and lows a more gentle perspective. Gone is the intensity of the experiences, but not how they fit into the big picture. I remember experiencing a few low points and how these tried to spoil a good time. I also remember the highs which piggy-backed the lows and eventually climbed over them. This rollercoaster of emotions represents the essence of marathon riding for me.

For me the LEL was arriving at the Airport with Harold and Gordon, getting lost riding around Heathrow Airport, being introduced to stout by Harold, enjoying many more stouts with Harold and Gordon, meeting the Gudgeons and Campbells, our hosts near London and Hatfield respectively, setting out on a bicycle journey through England, and letting Harold guide us through the times and places that

he knew as a youth and young man in England. This 850 kilometer bicycle tour to the start off the LEL at Hatfield, also stirred up in me thoughts of other times; I thought of my recently deceased father, and my upcoming journey to Germany where I intended to bury some of his ashes. The LEL was an emotional journey for me, a microcosm of endings, losses and beginnings which always seem to happen despite our best efforts to have it otherwise.

The LEL was also the York Rally which followed three days after the event on a huge fairground in York. Thousands of cycling enthusiasts with their trailers, tents, cars, and bicycles made this a memorable experience for me. While I loved the browsing, shopping, and watching the Penny Farthing races, I reserved my fondest and most moving memory of the Sunday morning service in Yorkminster Cathedral which was held just for the York Rally cyclists.

The LEL was also one hell of a ride: 1360 kilometers which represents about sixty kilometers of wrong turns. While it did not quite have the altitude gain of the PBP, (9893 meters versus 8372 meters for LEL) the gain was more concentrated, the wind was always the wrong way, the rain was always wet, and the air was mostly cold.

From day one the ride was demanding, demoralizing, and refreshing. It was also bloody cold and windy. Gordon and I sadly missed the checkpoint at Carterhead Bar, which didn't get set up for lack of volunteers. At that shivering low point I reflected momentarily on the organizers' failings; the poorly described route, and those bloody free-spirited independent-minded Brits who rode their own route and didn't give a thought to this poor foreigner who followed them, got left behind by them, and was thoroughly lost just an hour north of York. (Where were you Dan when I needed you?)

Of course the low feelings gave way to highs. Gordon and I focussed on our riding and made sure that we kept our water bottles filled with our meal replacement. Out of what initially appeared to be insurmountable distances and taxing climbs on the A68 became shorter distances and beautiful lanes nestled in long flat stretches. The checkpoints too, helped to raise our spirits. I have fond memories of the warm receptions and personal service which we received at the checkpoints. Of course the delicious soups, spaghetti, beans and toast, and hot tea helped as well. I have fond memories of some of the riders whose determination and outlook helped me get through my more difficult moments, and I laugh everytime I think of Gordon emerging from our Hotel room on a rainy morning at 4am and apologizing to a couple of police officers for cycling on the wrong side of the road. I recall Gordon saying something about being Canadian and hoping to get it together soon.

Most of all the LEL was a great experience. With the high highs, and low lows gone, I have saved a few memories of peace and intimacy. For these I want to thank all of the people who were part of that, especially Harold and Gordon who shaped much of this experience for me.

leaving about six or eight riders behind. So, now we weren't last - a boost to the morale. In fact, a few miles from the Thurlby control we even engaged in a little racing. Kinda crazy, but who said randonneurs are sane?

At the Thurlby checkpoint we ate, rested a few minutes and as we were getting ready to leave, the tandem trike pulled in. Peter Gifford was captain with Pat Keny as his stoker. Pat was in such bad shape he had to be helped from the machine. As a matter-of-fact, he needed help just to walk. The problem with the trike, as I see it, is that the stoker is sitting over a very rigid structure that transmits the shock from not just one rear wheel, but two, which gives ones butt quite a massaging. Add to this the fact that the stoker can't see the bumps coming and gets the full benefit of each one. I didn't see how they could possibly finish if Pat couldn't even walk. But, finish they did! Talk about pure guts! And to think I almost let a sore foot and a sore knee stop me. Oh! the shame of it all.

About 11:00pm and about 20kms from the last control, Ann and Dave stopped to rest. Manfred and I carried on. At a "T" junction we couldn't decide which way to go. While we were poring over the maps and the route instructions, a lone rider approached, and, crying aloud in the wilderness said, "come, follow me, I know the way!" Our saviour had arrived. We immediately became believers and followed. A few turns later and on a dark narrow lane he admitted he was lost. My first reaction was to retrace our steps to where we left the route (rules you know, and this point was also our last known location) but no, we carry on, looking for sign posts so we could locate our position on the map. Well, to make a long story short, we wandered around the English country lanes in the middle of the night for at least an hour. Someone had mentioned to Harold that he hoped that Manfred and I could steer clear of, well, we'll call him Sam, because Sam always gets lost. You guessed it, that's who we wandered the lanes of England with that night. I chuckle now when I think of it, but at the time, well . . . We finally made it to the California chicken farm, the last control before the finish. We got fed and rested, then with dawn breaking, left the control with several other riders, for the 50km ride to the finish.

It was the longest 50kms I have ever ridden. At this point we had been sleepless for about 23 hours and very short on sleep for the past three days. I should have caught 15 or 20 minutes at the control, but didn't. At one point, about five or six miles from the finish, I thought I was riding in Oregon. Why, I don't know - I have never ridden in Oregon. When I realized this was not so, I had trouble figuring out where I really was. "Oh, yeah, I'm in England and I'm in the LEL." Such a revelation. Then, with this major problem solved and the realization that I was only a few miles from the end, my brain woke up and started working for me rather than the opposite. About a mile from the finish I got another flat. Flat tires were the bane of my existence the whole time I was in England. Hardly a day went by that I got a flat - one day I had four. The finish line, as usual, was a very welcome sight. We

were told the course was 1276kms; however, most people had over 1300kms on their computers. Manfred had 1360kms on his, but we had gotten lost several times so that explains some of the extra distance. It had taken us 92 hours 45 minutes out of an allotted time of 95 hours 53 minutes to complete the course. We ate, then rode the three miles back to Don and Nora Campbell's house to sleep.

The English approach to Randonnees is different than ours. Their philosophy seems to be to get to the control points via the shortest route possible, even if it means going off the prescribed course. One chap took a short cut that took about five or six kms off. I'm sure it's not the only one he and others took advantage of; it puts people who are from abroad at a disadvantage. The other major problem was the route sheet. We found the route instructions very difficult to decipher and because of this it was impossible to maintain a decent average speed since so much time was used looking at the map and the route sheet. The route sheet had no distances between turns, places, etc., only the distance between the controls was mentioned. We sometimes had no idea how far along a road we should go before looking for a signpost that would point us in the right direction. Add to this the fact that the signpost might be hidden by foliage and/or darkness. This is only the second running of the ride, so I'm sure many improvements will be made in the future.

The volunteers at the controls were very congenial and helpful. As I mentioned earlier, one even massaged my foot. We couldn't have expected any better service. As well as the friendly faces and cheery conversation, the food was excellent.

Many people asked if we found the LEL harder than the Paris-Brest-Paris. A very difficult question indeed. During the LEL I had no problem eating, unlike the PBP. The difference was the use of Ultra Energy food replacement. The downside to using Ultra Energy is that it is heavy - about 14lbs for enough to do the LEL. I can cope with the heat we experienced on the PBP much better than the rain and cold on the LEL. Wind is wind I guess, hot or cold. I finished the LEL in much better physical shape than was the case after the PBP, but, that was due to the ability to eat. The LEL is longer by 100+ kms which doesn't sound like much when compared to the total distance, but, the extra distance is ridden when you've already done 1200kms, so it's an extra six hours, or more, in the saddle. And that's a lot after about 86 hours. Manfred's altimeter indicated the altitude gain was greater by over 1500 meters for the PBP, so this makes the PBP route tougher. But does it? I can't recall the hills being as steep in France, but, maybe they were. So, which is tougher? I really don't know, but, this I do know, both are very tough rides indeed.

