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## British Columbia

# Randonneur

## Marathon Cycling

### Le Pres sez:

by Michel Richard

What a terrific season we've been having so far. The usual PBP hangover year doesn't seem to have materialized with large numbers of participants showing up most weekends to ride and socialize. Certainly the beautiful early season weather played a large role in this break from tradition. However, I think the main surprise has been the many new faces who've joined us this year. Welcome!

That being said we're not even halfway through the schedule. And the organizers get pretty lonely if nobody shows up, so keep it up, perhaps I'll see you there.

Due to an incident on a ride this season, I would be derelict in my duties if I didn't bring up the wearing of helmets. It is the law in this province and the club must enforce their use. If you show up for a brevet with no helmet you will not be allowed to ride. If you are caught riding without one, you will be disqualified. It is perhaps also a good opportunity to applaud the increase in overall mudflap use, not perfect but much better. A full listing of club rules and regulations can be found on the website, its good bedtime reading.

On another note, the preplanning for next season will soon be under way. If you think you would like to be involved in the decision making of club affairs, contact me or Lyle Beaulac, as there are vacancies on the club executive, no experience necessary. And it's fun.

Bonne Route,  
Michel -Président

## Rocky Mountain 1200 Update

by Susan Allen

Planning is going well for this event. We have 100 riders and another 13 on the waitlist. A recent trip around the route was a reminder of just

how beautiful the mountains are. On the other hand, I swear the construction on the Kicking Horse Canyon has only progressed 100 m (yes m) since last July.

We still need a few more volunteers. At time of writing: control captains and a couple of volunteers in Salmon Arm and a couple of people in Lake Louise. If you are interested in helping at the BC Randonneurs biggest event, give me a call at 604-734-2504 or email me at [stoker@telus.net](mailto:stoker@telus.net).

## Club Clothing

See Danelle

If you were wondering how to get a pair of those very cute red socks with the BC Randonneurs logo on them - we have plenty in stock. We also have lots of the Goose Jersey, Bumblebee Jackets and club shorts, and limited supplies of tights and the Bumblebee Jersey. Prices are on the web-  
<http://www.randonneurs.bc.ca/clothing/clothing.html> - members receive a discount and are not charged for shipping.

Contact Danelle for more information at (604) 737-0043.

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## BC Rando Wool Jersey

by *Jaye Haworth & Danelle Laidlaw*

We've run into some setbacks as our original manufacturer has closed their factory with an as yet undetermined date for reopening. We are still short of their minimum requirement of 40 jerseys anyway. But don't despair - we are working with a local supplier! We will have to redesign the jersey however, in order to work with the limited colour palette they are able to offer. The revised jersey will likely be a solid red, or if possible, a red/black combination. Stay tuned to the listserv and web site for further developments. There is still time to get in on this fabulous opportunity for a high quality 100% wool jersey! Please send your order (\$155 for Long Sleeve - \$145 for Short Sleeve) to Danelle @ dplaid at telus.net (note: cheque or VISA # required) and direct all inquiries to Jaye Haworth ([randogrrrl@yahoo.ca](mailto:randogrrrl@yahoo.ca)).

## Upon receiving the Roger Street Memorial Award

by *Harold Bridge*

I wish to express my thanks for, & appreciation of, being honoured as the first recipient of this new trophy. Going by some of things Roger has said & done in the years I knew him I think he would approve.

His comments in his write-up of the first Rocky Mountain 1200 in 1996 about how I would appear at the appropriate moment doesn't take into account the reasons I was there helping. Having been crippled by arthritis I was driving my truck around the event. Believe me, I would have been riding if I had been capable of qualifying. I am just very thankful that I was able to overcome

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Editor: Lyle Beaulac

**Submissions:** Please send articles to me. My preference is plain text files or Word and digital photos in JPEG format to [Lyle\\_Beaulac@telus.net](mailto:Lyle_Beaulac@telus.net). Or mail (preferable a diskette) to Lyle Beaulac, 830 13<sup>th</sup>. St. New Westminster, B.C. V3M 4M9

Next publication deadline is .

that period. My positive attitude was largely due to being involved & not just sitting at home bemoaning my condition.

Do I deserve the trophy? Probably, but there are several who would qualify if the idea had been put forward earlier without the tragic loss of Roger. The late John Hathaway for inspiring Gerry Pareja to get the ball rolling, Dan McGuire for his thoughtful & well planned contributions bring 3 names to the fore straight away.

Joining a Club involves accepting a certain amount of Marxist philosophy; "To each according to their need, from each according to their ability" is, I think, most appropriate in it's relevance to how a Club works. That statement isn't much different to St Peter's: "The strong must carry the burden of the weak".

Due to my self-centred & somewhat irresponsible life-style I am in a position to do what I do for the Club & can look back on earlier days as a working family man when I would not been able, or willing, to do that much.

I think choosing future recipients could well become contentious & to avoid that perhaps a points system needs to be devised to decide the outcome. In the same way the Hathaway Trophy is awarded on the basis of total kilometres, The Street trophy could be awarded based upon the total points earned during the season. Say; holding office - 10 points, organizing an event - 5 points. Staffing a control - 1 point. That idea may need more thought, but it is offered as a concept, no more.

## Roger's Memorial Ride and an Outlandish Proposition

by *Susan Barr*

**March 7, 2004**

It's hard for me to believe that a year has passed since Roger's death - I still "see" him out riding, before I remember that of course I can't be seeing him. Today was the day of the Memorial Ride, and despite the fact that it was fairly dismal - the rain was coming down steadily - at least 20 of us assembled at Bean Brothers in Kerrisdale for the ride. I was on my commuter bike (which is substantial!) and had to work fairly hard to keep up with what was actually quite a modest pace (this information is included here to point out that oxygen deprivation may cloud one's thinking process). On the way out to Iona, I was talking to Karen Smith about how this was where I'd last seen Roger. It had been a beautiful spring day just over a year ago, and I noticed this quickly-approaching blur of cyclists in my rear-view mirror (I was on my commuter bike...). At the head of the pack was Roger, with a great big grin on his face, accompanied by Susan Allen, Doug Latornell, Keith Nicholls and Cheryl Lynch. I sucked wheel for awhile, but then had to head home while they completed their customary Sunday morning "Tour de Richmond". When I heard the news a couple of days later, it just didn't make sense, and it still doesn't.

Anyhow, the ride went on. People talked about their memories of Roger, and about their plans for the coming summer: Tour BC, the Rocky Mountain 1200, an "exciting, challenging" 1000 km, a five-week canoe trip, and more. I briefly mentioned contemplating doing a 1000 km ride, as my longest ride to this point is a 600, but at that point I was mostly making conversation. We headed out to the end of River Road, and then turned around for the ride back instead of heading south to go to Steveston. (Everyone was pretty soggy, and comments were made that "Roger got the last laugh" when it came to the weather!) Several of us decided to stop for another coffee at Bean Brothers at the end of the ride, and it was at that point that Ken Wright made the outrageous suggestion that I think about signing up for the Rocky. He was planning to ride it with Roger and Ali Holt, and assured me that it would be fun. He also pointed out that the entry deadline was fast approaching....

In order to appreciate the rest of this tale, you need to know that I am NOT a risk-taker - I've always said that my adrenalin kicks it with almost no provocation. It's certainly not like me to jump into the deep end of the pool without knowing how to swim, and that's what the idea of doing the Rocky felt like. But I kept on thinking of Roger, and how one of the things I'd admired so much about him was the way he "seized the day" and did the things he wanted to do, now rather than later. So somehow I found myself on the BC Randonneurs website at the end of the day, downloading the entry form (the effects of the oxygen deprivation during the ride must have been longer-lasting than usual...).

**Post-script:** At this point it's March 13 and I'm sitting in the Denver airport, reflecting on what still seems like my insanity. However, the "faint hope clause" is still in effect: Two days ago, with a week left to the registration deadline, there were 100 riders registered, which is the limit. Given an expected flurry of last minute entries, it looks like the lottery will take place. I honestly don't know whether I'll be relieved or disappointed if I don't get in - but I think the odds are weighing in the direction of disappointment. So stay tuned!!

**Post-post script (April 3):** I'm in!! And I'm excited!!!

## Will there be a Mystery Rider in the 2004 RM 1200?

by E.W. (Wim) Kok, Brevet Organizer, B.C. Peace Region.

The other day I looked at the list of participants in the three categories for 2004 RM 1200: the 90-hour groups, the 84-hour group and the waiting list. I noted riders from far and wide; recent arrivals to randonneuring and some from way back when. When I say way back, I mean waaaaay back when. That's where one name on one of these lists fits. It definitely piqued my interest. I may be totally off base here, but without blowing anyone's cover, I will only divulge that there is ancient fame associated with this name. Let's face it, if this person does exist (and participates in 2004), which may be pure coincidence, then my submission is for naught, and the joke is definitely on me. On the other hand I do know that April 1 is on the horizon, and we all know the significance of that. (You may also recall that, before we could register, some interesting names appeared on the list of participants.)

So let's explore some possibilities here. A person interested in riding RM 1200 signs up and uses a nom de plume, or in plain English a pseudonym. Assuming of course that we are dealing with a pseudonym raises interesting questions as to why. Allow me to speculate here. First, the registrant does not wish her/his partner, family, employer to know that he will be absent for a while? Train in secret, ride in secret and return in secret. Second, it is an attempt to keep us guessing as to who this cyclist could be. In doing so, the organizers have added an element of mystery to the event. Third, it represents a deep sense of humour on the part of the organizers or the registrant, something we do appreciate of course. Fourth, it may be someone who loves vintage bikes; at least that's what his affiliation appears to reveal? Fifth, the rider may wish to protect his identity for good reasons. For example, many years ago a member of the Royal Family in the Netherlands -- the future king -- registered under a pseudonym in the legendary and famous 200 km Eleven City Skating Marathon (Elfsteden Tocht). He did this to prevent an onslaught of publicity if his participation became known -- paparazzi, etc. You know the

## Coming Events

- LM 600 – June 5-6*  
Abbotsford - Abbotsford –  
Abbotsford  
Bob Marsh 467-7065
- Peace 400 – June 5*  
Le grand tour de Peace  
Wim Kok 250-785-4589
- Triple Mountain Challenge – June 12*  
Grouse Mountain parking lot - 0800  
Danelle Laidlaw 604-737-0043
- Interior 600 – June 12-13*  
Richard Blair 250-372-1873
- 1000 km brevets – June 19-22*  
Various routes  
Eric Fergusson 604-733-6657
- Peace 600 – June 19-20*  
Foothills Randonnee  
Wim Kok 250-785-4589
- Canada Day Populaire 137 – July 1*  
137 km: Fort Langley 0800 - 0930  
Ali Holt 604-946-8438  
Roger Holt
- LM Summer 200 – July 4*  
Burnaby Lake Sports Complex – 0700  
Barry Bogart 604-264-0470
- Victoria 200 – July 10*  
Tim Horton's, Gateway Village – 0800  
Mike Poplawski 250-882-1239
- LM Summer 300 – July 17*  
"Watcom Wambler", Walnut Grove Park 'n' Ride - 0600  
Barry Chase 604-266-4214
- Rocky Mountain 1200 – July 21-25*  
Kamloops – 2200, 0400  
Susan Allen 604-734-2504  
Doug Latonnell

story. By the way he successfully completed the event. Fifth, it may be a way to test us, to see (1) how alert we are and (2) how well we know our fellow riders and the history of randonneuring. So the question is: "will we have a person of fame in our midst?" Sixth, add your own speculations.....The speculation can go on for a while. As a final observation we may be looking at the mystery of resurrection here. Wow! In that case I do wonder if this cyclist will be using his 113 year-old velocipede with the intriguing handle bars and the original Michelin tires. Will there be other mysterious competitors from the same era, i.e. a randonneur representing Dunlop, and this time with caffeine pills in his pocket? I say no more at this time, but look forward to the uncovering of the mystery. Revelations may be accepted at: wkok at nlc.bc.ca. [to e-mail: replace "at" with "@"]. Je suis tres curieux. Meanwhile enjoy the preparation for the RM 1200. :-) :-) :-)

## Mystery Rider Demystified

by David Cambon

I feel compelled to spoil the puzzle before someone has a stroke trying to figure that one out.

Somebody has entered using the name "Charles Terront" with "Cycles Clement". Cycles Clement is the name of a bike shop in Belgium but it is also the Paris "Cycles Clement" made famous in an 1898 Pal advertising poster. The poster features a fanciful woman in a see-through dress hoisting a bike with a rooster on her head.

M Charles Terront won the first PBP in 1891 (in 72 hours, with no gears). He was apparently kept awake by someone who rang a cowbell in his ear.

The implication is that M Terront has come back from the dead to ride the RM1200.

*[Editor's note: The RM1200 organizers steadfastly refuse to comment when queried about the ancient ancien. No doubt the mystery will be resolved in Kamloops on July 21.]*

## Farlander 200

by Harold Bridge

Difficult decision, what was the weather going to do? How much bag did I need for surplus clothing? Did I need a bag, would my tyre sock be sufficient? I erred on the side of caution & used my weekender wedge bag. That really makes a light lively bike feel utilitarian. Spare tyre strapped underneath, 3 spare tubes, 6 Clif bars, tool kit, chain breaker & still room to stow tights & jacket if need be. (Didn't need to)

As usual I set the alarm too early but by the time I got to Albion Hall there were others milling about at 06:20 outside the Hall. No key? The place was a bustling, Manfred & Margaret were dishing out control cards & route sheets like they were going out of style

& I'm told 62 signed on for this relatively easy route.

There has been a lot of pressure on us to use a rear mudguard extension recently. I have used one for years, not that I need one, no one rides behind me these days! But it was encouraging to see evidence the pleas have been taken to heart.

Right on 07:00 Manfred got us away having to first do a make up loop west before heading east for the long trek to Johnson Slough. Saturday mornings are not good for using the Lougheed Highway, it is very busy. But most of the way to Mission there is a shoulder. Beyond Mission the traffic thinned out & I was briefly involved in a pace line with Marsh, Bose & Fletcher. But I went to the front & they decided to ignore me.

Woodside from the west is a comfortable climb. The initial ramp calls for the 36" bottom gear, but after that the 45" & 54" gears are low enough (that's 39x 28,23,19). Near the top the grey tandem glided past with a promise not to get in my way down the other side. They were outta sight by then anyway. I thought conditions were going to be good for descending that 11% average (about 18% on the hairpin I guess) hill. But I didn't even make my age going down there, the wind was too strong - 75.7kph was the best I could manage. What did the tandem do John?

After doing the bike check at the start Bill Kitchen drove out to Johnson Slough & presided over the 90 km control. Having been barricaded off during the winter it was nice of the Highways s people to open the rest area up for us. It had been plain sailing thus far & there was some concern about the relentless wind we would be fighting on our way southwest. But the wind proved to be very erratic & it was only on a few occasions that I had to struggle.

Having built up to a 25kph average prior to the Woodside climb I was fairly confident I could maintain a 20kph, albeit for a 205km route 20.5kph is the preferred minimum if "9hours something" is the aim. I think I stopped to talk too much at the control because the 23.4 average I arrived with was down to 22 by the time I left. The detour round Waleach & Seabird Island Roads is a pleasant interlude that really needs an "Unspecified Control". But a cheat would miss out on a beautiful little detour.

It was a relief to get across the Rosedale Bridge at a time when there were no great big semis bypassing Hope. I resisted the temptation to stop at Popkum Store setting my mind on non-stop to Tim Horton's at Sardis. Suddenly, on Annis Road, Sharon glided up alongside & we rode together for a while until a rain squall caused her to stop to put her jacket on. But I think the rain had stopped by the time she had donned the garment.

When I pulled into Tim Hortons a whole chain of riders went by. I don't know if they really needed to be sucked along by the immense draft of my progress or if they were diffident about passing someone so aged? As it turned out the TH stop was but a visit to the can. By the time I came out of there the line up at the counter was too long.

However the stop & the wash helped to brighten me up & I set out for the Yellow Barn & the 148km control with renewed vigour.

By this time I was scraping along at about the 21kph average & had forebodings about the infamous South Parallel Road. But a cheerful greeting from controller Alard Malek, followed by a cup of coffee while sitting in the sun did wonders for my demeanour & I thought I was going ride the SPR in company with Wayne Harrington. But he had other ideas & he sailed away from me & it took a good deal of effort to get closer. But with Vile Vye Hill soon to be suffered I knew I wouldn't stay with him. Sure enough, by the time I got the hill in sight, Wayne was outta sight, at least, a speck in the distance.

One thing in my (our?) favour was the erratic wind. Zero Av can be a brute when riding into a westerly. But this day it wasn't too bad & I arrived at Control #3 at about 15:55. Wayne was already in one of the Cook's chairs & Doreen volunteered her chair for me. I gave myself the bonus 5 minutes rest as 9 hours for 180 kms put me on my limit & the next 18kms should have a tailwind, albeit with tiring drags up to Aldergrove. Wayne of course glided away again. But the T/L at Fraser Hwy was nearly his undoing. The first green was a left turn arrow only, but he got across.

264th street hill down to 88th Av is a blast, good surface, sweeping bends, no side turnings & good visibility. But, again, I failed to make my age & I didn't disturb the 75.7 max still showing from Woodside.

A grin crossed my face when I saw the long freight train holding Wayne up just past the 240th St junction & I too had to put my foot down.. My aim of under 10 hours had expired. But at just about 9:59:45 I passed the 201 km point. That's good enough, & 10:14 will still fit into the data base.

Thanx to Manfred & Gordon for putting this on. I had doubts when Manfred said he wanted the first 200 to start out at Albion. A few years ago we decided, I thought, that the first 200 should start closer into town as we have lost riders by moving out to Albion for the first event. However, 62 riders suggests that even Vancouverites are getting fed up with riding in town.

I think we should get rid of that Mickey Mouse make up loop at the start of this route. While it would mean moving control #2 from the Yellow Barn to Huntingdon, the loop down Whatcom Road, Boundary Road & 2nd Av & up Farmer Road adds enough distance & is far nicer & quieter than Vile Vye Hill.

Another change I would make would be to turn off Prairie Central 1.6 kms before busy Prest & use Banford which turns into Lindell Rd then Bailey Road to Chwk River Road. Perhaps the new Route coordinator (Who?) will check that out.

April 18, 2004

## Up-Country Jaunts and Jolts

by Harold Bridge

Monday morning (Apr 26); as I picked up the Tony Hoar Custom to move it I thought the front wheel seemed very loose. I checked & to my horror found the head bearings were almost completely unscrewed. Apart from lifting the bike into the truck Saturday evening & out of the truck Sunday afternoon I hadn't touched it since finishing Bob Boonstra's Kamloops 200 at 17:40 on Saturday. Or to put into ISO parlance: at 2004:04:24:17:40.

Anyway, referring back to that event I shudder to think of the possible consequences of riding some of those badly maintained roads with the forks banging around & putting shock loads on the steering column. But my luck held out & the head bearings are now very tightly screwed together.

With the comfort bike awaiting a wheel re-build (36 hole rims hard to get?) I have been enjoying the "fast" bike these days. However, on bad roads it does give me a bit of pounding & the possibility of impact punctures encourages me to keep my tyres at 100 psi.

About 10 riders got away from the Dallas Petro Can (the one about 7 kms east of Kamloops) right on the 07:00 start time & straight away I watched the others dwindle in size as they roared off toward the first control at Sorrento. A brief pause to stop my computer sensor banging on the magnet ensured I wouldn't be tempted to latch on & from then on it was a solo ride. A little way down the road I suddenly remembered Jack Sharkey had also arrived in Kamloops with the plan to ride the event. But we never saw him?

Discomfort was relieved at 27kms when the Pritchard Esso came into view & further relieved at the Chase Petro 'Can'. A grovel up that nasty looking drag at Chase had me wondering if I really wanted to be doing this. But I kept going & decided that once at Salmon Arm I would finish the ride as the long way back was much more attractive than going back along #1.

Sorrento control was reached at 10:10, 25 minutes earlier than last year when the east wind made that a pig of a ride. There was no constant tail wind, but generally it was helpful. Somewhere along there I narrowly missed getting hit by a mini rock slide, probably set off by a scrambling big horn. I was anxious to stay above a 20kph average & happily arrived at Salmon Arm Shell at 11:50, (20 minutes up on 2003) just on the positive side of 20. I gave myself 10 minutes for a coffee before setting out for that delightful ride down the Salmon River Valley & set about adjusting that 19.6 average. As I rode down Salmon River Road with the hills either side of a flat straight stretch of highway I thought how similar it is to that piece of Hwy 9 going down toward Acme.

At about 128kms the store at the Salmon River Valley Junction came into view & the effort of getting back up to 20.2 was telling & was emphasized by my distaste for pocket food. Another stop

for coffee at cookies helped a lot but the 15 minutes ate into my average so that 19.0 was now the aim. I should have left my bike in view. I found out later that Boonstra, driving the route in reverse had gone north while I was in there & got worried when he got to Salmon Arm & hadn't found me.

There were but 2 more kms before turning onto Route 97, the Vernon - Monte Creek highway. That road is in a dreadful state & the 16 kms to the 147km control at Falkland that passes over a deceptive height of land are tedious. Arrival at the Ranch Café happened at about 14:15. (15:35 last year). While sitting awaiting service Boonstra walked in. Not only did he sign my card but he bought my apple pie, ice cream & coffee! Thanks Bob!

By this time thoughts of 10 hours had been done away with & I just got on with cutting into the remaining 63 kms. North of Falkland the highway has been improved in one sense but destroyed in another - Rumble Strips! What goon decided to put them outside the white line when they would be more effective on the inside? But at least, if they have to be in the cyclist's way then get the rest of shoulder cleared of debris & a winter's worth of sand & gravel removed.

Finally the sign pointing left for Barnhartvale Road appeared & a break in the traffic enabled me to get across there with ease. From what I remembered the road is very quiet, but badly in need of more than just patching. Three cattle guards make for some tense moments. But overall it is a romp all the way back to Dallas. However, there is a steep twisting descent into Barnhartvale Village with a corresponding gravel out the other side. But it's all over bar the shouting at that point & the descending was, I think, a bit too fast for Bob Boonstra's digital camera. I got the impression that Bob wanted to make one of those movies where you hold a stack of sequential pictures & flick through them so it looks like a movie. The final plunge got 65kph & I stopped by my truck right on the 17:40 for a time of 10:40, a 55minute improvement over 2003. There is an inexcusable differential between my event time & riding time - 1hr: 07 minutes!

My thanks to Bob for the event & to the Blairs for their hospitality.

To ensure the whole w/e was as enjoyable as possible I avoided as much of the Coq as possible while researching the route we will be using on the Trans Canada tour. Driving Coldwater Road from Larson Hill (Exit 256) into Merritt & Route 5A through Qulchena enroute to Kamloops may be marginally slower but more interesting, you don't doze off with boredom. That route was reversed on Sunday.

## Further Jaunts and Jolts

*by Harold Bridge*

Oh Boy, did I screw up! Deirdre asked for my assistance in revising the established 300 route to avoid the uncertainties pertaining to the realigning of 200 St across Trans Canada at Walnut Grove. The route was originally detoured up Armstrong

Road when John Bates realized there was not enough distance between start & Aldergrove Border Crossing to allow for the fact that facility is closed from 00:00 to 08:00.

Deirdre's enthusiasm for starting & finishing in Fort Langley led me to rearrange the route with this in mind. But I forgot about the 08:00 problem at the border! With start time & location already published there was no changing them. Dan McGuire came to the rescue & the route was revised to use Huntingdon/Sumas Border Crossing. My punishment was being allowed to ride the event!

Due to lack of wheels the comfort bike is out of action for awhile & I spent much of Friday getting the "fast" bike kitted out for a 300. I enjoy riding that bike, a CBS masquerading as a Tony Hoar Custom, but have been made aware of its stiff inconsideration on bad surfaces.

Working back from a Fort Langley start at 06:00 meant catching the first ferry from Albion at 05:00. That meant leaving home by 04:30 & that meant getting up at 03:15. Wayne arrived in plenty of time to get both bikes int' truck & we were away. It promised to be a fine day, but a morning chill required an undershirt & a jacket. They in turn required a wedge bag big enough to add those to the normal supplies therein.

06:00 & 60 riders took off on about 58 bikes & they disappeared from view in great haste. As a result there was no one around to witness my heroic struggle with a 36" (39x28) bottom gear on Armsrong Road. But late starter Henry Berkenbos (he spent too much time riding from home in Richmond to the start) flew past at the top of the climb oblivious to the still climbing road. Once Ali had gone by I had the route to myself all the way to Huntingdon /Vye. As a result, while day dreaming my way down 248th St I overshot Robertsn Crescent. But fortunately I looked at my computer & saw "13.6" & realized I was 100m past Robertson. Quickly corrected, I was well along Huntindon/Vye before 3 more late starters passed me by. I tucked for a few metres, there was a nasty wind blowing off the Cascades, but the effort was more than I prepared to make at that point in the ride.

I got into US Customs, used the facilities & removed my jacket & was away ahead of the 3 pace liners. On Goodwin they caught me & after the right turn on South Pass Road I watched with a certain amount of envy as they disappeared in the distance. State Route #544 and Everson-Goshen Road are pleasant riding, even though the latter has some roller coaster lumps that climax with a stiff climb up to SR #542, Mount Baker Highway.

Soon after turning onto Britton Road yet 2 more late starters, the always late Bogart & Margaret caught me just before Dan McGuire's control at Whatcom Lake. From there is a beautiful ride down the west side of the Lake that was spoilt by the condition of the road. I think road builders are the power behind the growing numbers of suspension bikes, that save them bothering about their standards of workmanship. Of course I was riding the wrong bike from that point of view. Once past the Lake there is a few kms of pleasant country along Park St to the intersection of Highway 9. I had a tandem in view, that later turned out to be Manfred & Margaret, & I seemed to be gaining

on them but every down slope & they were away. Once over the height of land they were outta sight.

Plan A; ride non-stop between controls. It was getting warm & the removal of tights & undershirt was becoming a priority. But being stubborn I kept going out of Sedro Woolley & was passed by Ali again. She too did a quick disappearing trick. Apparently I had also passed a stationary Kuchenmuller tandem, unseen by me, for they came along soon after around Lymen.

Somewhere along here the first riders were heading west. A pace line of 5, including Keith Fraser in the unaccustomed rear position, were the first on the road. Keith even appeared to be enjoying himself! Saw Sarah G & John L thrashing about down in the ditch with John muttering something about annoyances. Also along there a certain blue GMC S15 truck went past as secretly as possible, but there was no hiding the Litespeed on the roof rack Bob.

I have given up old standards, like getting inside 15 hours for a 300, not without a pace line anyway. I decided that the first 100; 5 hours, 2nd; 5:30 & the 3rd: 6 hours. Take an additional 15 minutes for the bonus 5 kms, that should get me inside 17 hours. The first 100 arrived right on the 5th hour. I reckoned 14:00 a good time to be away from the 157 km control at Peskies Espresso in Concrete & the tail wind up Hwy 20 got me there at 13:25. It was a relief to disrobe & put those smelly clothes away in the bag. Bowl of soup, a donated sandwich & some water used up my spare 35 minutes & I left right on 14:00 just as treasurer Wayne arrived. A friendly American rider came in & was out in quick order.

I heard later that this Spokane rider had arrived at the border without his passport & was refused re-admission to the USA. If I've got the story right he went back to Fort Langley, drove back the border, left his car there & continued with the ride to finish in 13 hours. After which he had to ride to the border to get his car to drive off home.

As expected the float east was a tussle west & my resolve regarding control to control non-stop waned at Lymen & I popped into the restaurant for pie, ice cream & coffee. But that is the theory regarding the 100 km splits, not so much a reduced riding speed, but more stops.

It is at this point in the ride, roughly 65% that inconveniences magnify. Enough to make you tired but still a substantial distance to go. We hit F&S Grade Road! We won't dwell on what F&S stand for, but I last rode that road in 1986 & detested it then. It has got worse in the intervening 18 years! 9 kms of jolts on a Paris-Roubaix Road. France donated the Statue Of Liberty to the USA I think the USA should donate F&S Grade Road to the "Hell of the North" Of course, I wasn't on a modern carbon forked titanium bike. I wonder what difference that would make?

The build up of cloud & some slight hints of rain that had darkened the approach to Sedro Woolley dissipated & the ride along Prairie was a delight in the late afternoon sunshine. Not a good road, but acceptable after the pounding on F&S. Larry

Voth's new LeMond was still outside Alger's Food Mart when I got there & he took off while I was getting my card signed. It took about 15 minutes for me to use the can, buy some fluid & sit outside to eat a sandwich. I guess that is the amount I was behind Larry; 15 minutes.

Samish Way is simpler than the instructions suggest. & it is a decent road. But at the entrance into Bellingham I screwed up & got lost. I wasted about 2 kms & about 20 minutes before getting onto Broadway from which point I knew my way. It was getting to that time in the evening when I needed to put my take offs back on. But I was enjoying riding those roads through Ferndale & into Blaine with the cool air spurring me on to the control at the border where I intended to all I needed to do to get ready for the night ride into Fort Langley.

But at the Birch Bay-Lynden Road I used the barricade to lean the bike upon while I put my undershirt on. Entering the border control I saw Deirdre's note that she would sign our cards at the corner of Route 15 & 8th Av., by the store. They were to close at 21:00 & I had about 10 minutes in which to get some chocolate & some Coke. I donned tights, jacket, reflective Sam Browne belt & ankle straps. The last lap was upon me. The generator light was giving me a good light on those dark roads & most of the way I was fine. But the southern end of 192nd St leaves a lot to be desired. No excess pavement, but a trench dug by vehicle tires constantly running off the road. Not nice is it Mr Surrey Councilor?

The complex intersection where 192nd St, 64th Av & Route #1A converge is a dog's breakfast. I screwed up & instead of turning on to 192 north I turn too soon onto Route #1A west! Found my mistake when I got to 188th St & Fraser Hwy. Then I compounded the problem by going back the way I came. In crossing the road to the wrong side when riding down the centre reservation I left tire rubber when I saw to curb of the island fast approaching! In the light of day I realize safety & convenience would have been better served by turning right on 188 & right on 72nd to pick up the route when I crossed 192.

Once on 208th & across the TC overpass it remained only to head east on 88th Av & up Glover to the finish. There is a decent descent on 88th & with vehicles behind me I let it rip to encourage them to stay behind. But no, they had to pass when I doing around 60s! A sprint up Glover & there was Bob LePage ready to sign my card at 22:53 for a time of 16:53 - good enough.

I had time for a Guinness & some nachos, Wayne didn't come in until 00:03, with Bogart Margaret, Bose & Fletcher. Larry had dropped me by about 45 minutes from the border to finish inside 16 hours. Great day out, thanx to Bob & Deirdre & their helpers.

HJB

## Taste of Summer

*by Greg Sneed, Social Director, Redmond Cycling Club*

At this time of year in the Northwest one is always worried about

the weather before a long cycling event. All long-distance cyclists have war stories about the rain, wind, and mechanicals caused by lousy weather. It's hard to shake off the Randonneur's mindset about spring rides.

Well Gang, Linda Knapp & Sue Matthews, Matt Dalton, Tom Killion, Ralph & Carol Nussbaum, Steve Rossano and Greg & Ruth "Lovey" Sneed from Redmond Cycling Club got a fine taste of summer riding with riders from The BC Randonneurs Cycling Club on their annual BC Randonneur Cycling Club's Lower Mainland 300K held on May 1st.

With Deirdre Arscott & Bob Lepage Co-hosting this spring classic approximately 50 riders started riding at 6am in 50-degree clear morning temperatures from Marina Park in Historic Fort Langley. With just a touch of ground fog the pack was soon gliding along the back roads of Glen Valley and Vye Road heading for the south crossing of the Canadian - U.S. Border at Sumas. There was the sun lighting up the hills with a slight tailwind as the riders rode to the first checkpoint at Lake Whatcom (78.6 Kms).

As we broke into our different groups riders stripped down to shorts and short-sleeved jerseys, the uniforms of summer, which we all had been waiting for since the start of the year. Ralph & Carol, Linda & Sue, and Lovey & I formed our own "100 of the Best" rotating three tandem paceline. The big rigs easily holding 18 to 20 mph heading south from Everson & East Smith road to the Sudden Valley Area. It was strange with all our years of combined riding the folks in our ride group had not ridden these roads before and found them even with the chip & seal beautiful for cycling.

The BC 300K was for Ralph & Carol and Steve Rossano the longest distance these folks had ever ridden. You couldn't tell that with the way these riders were enjoying riding the course. These three seemed to ride with more strength in the later parts of the ride. Well Done! Gang.

After riding the 20 miles out from Sedro Woolley to Concrete on Highway 20 Our group reached the Second Control at Concrete (157 kms) in 7hrs and 30 minutes. The ride was very well organized with the BC Club providing A-board signs, table & chairs and good advice on riding this difficult course.

Inside the restaurant groups of riders about filled up the place. Tuna Sandwich, Apple Juice, and Hot Beef Soup were great and recharged us after completing the first 100 miles. I'd felt at this point that we had had tailwinds mostly to Concrete and upon leaving Concrete after lunch we're were going to have to deal with headwinds back the 20 miles to Sedro Woolley. I was ugh correct.

With temperatures above 80 degrees our three tandems headed back to Sedro Woolley and the first of my problems with our tandem. Lovey and I tend to stand a lot while riding our tandem. We both stand while riding to catch up to a faster group or for climbing short hills to stretch the legs. It's bad for morale when you stand and heard a grinding noise coming from the front of the

bicycle.

First we stopped the paceline to check the front wheel loose spokes maybe. We started again. Second Stopping tighten crankarms and check pedals. Third stopping retighten bolt on newly installed consentrix. YES! With our ride group kindly awaiting it's a good feeling to solve a road maintenance problem in a reasonable amount of time.

The section from Control Point #3 at Alger (213 Kms) to The Douglas Border Crossing Control at 274 Kms and 12 hours on the road had drained me of strength. Ralph & Carol and Linda & Sue were doing most of the pulling at the front. I was trying the Ensure and Chocolate Milk method of settling my stomach. The temperature was dropping quickly as an overcast had set in. Lovey was doing fine but I was ready for this ride to be done.

From the border to Fort Langley was just 18 miles with four nice little hills throw in to finish off what was left of my conditioning. Our group completed The BC Lower Mainland 300K at 8:50 pm total distance 192 miles. Total time 14hrs 50 minutes a new speed record for Lovey and myself. The meeting of old friends, food and a few beers at the Fort Pub in Fort Langley. Priceless!

Well Done neighbors for a most enjoyable event.

Greg Sneed

## Alex Stieda... Harold & Joan

*Harold Bridge's early contributions to Alex Stieda's cycling career is one of those things that many of us have known about without knowing the details. Wim Kok's message to the discussion list (April 26, 2004), and Harold's response, helps to shed a little light on this interesting piece of history.*

### **From Wim:**

Leafing through last Friday's Edmonton journal, I noted an article on page B3, headlined: "Cycling champ takes to the airwaves" It was about Alex Stieda. In reading the article, I came across this little newsworthy tidbit and I quote:

It was a newspaper route that developed Stieda's cycling legs. "As a kid I'd cycle to hockey practice at 5 a.m. with my gear over my handlebars," he said. "It saved my mother getting up." He later cycled in the summer to stay in shape for hockey and was befriended with Harold Bridge, a neighbour and the BC Bicycling Association president. "He lent me a bike and I began cycling with more purpose," said Stieda. "I crammed at SFU in the fall, cleaned sewers in the winter and cycled with clubs in the summer."

That must have been in the late seventies. So wherever one goes, history follows.

### **From Harold:**

Poor old Alex, He is in his forties now & his memory shows it. It



was my then wife, Joan, who was President of what was then the Bicycling Association of BC. I think I was Editor of the newsletter. Although I lent him my 1954 custom built racing frame I think it was Joan's words which encouraged Alex. He was complaining about spending too much time on the bench at ice hockey & she suggested that if he was to get into cycling in a short time he would be traveling the world.

He started Junior track racing in 1979, won all National titles except the road team time trial (silver) & went to Buenos Aires as part of the Canadian team for the Junior World championships. He finished 5th in the individual pursuit, put out of the quarter finals by one Greg LeMond, I think.

## Connections and Coincidences

*by Harold Bridge*

In 1971 the Bridge family moved from Port Coquitlam up the hill into Coquitlam. After getting settled in our new home a neighbour introduced me to another neighbour who had a distinctly English accent despite her Teutonic sounding surname. I was introduced as a "Cyclist" whereupon the new neighbour, Gerry Stieda, said; "I used to be a cyclist" Sure, I thought, everyone used to ride a bike.

I asked where in UK she came from & she said she considered Chichester, in Sussex, home despite her Dad's job with the Ministry of Supply moving them all over the country. I mentioned that I knew "Chi" quite well as I was stationed close by there when in the Fleet Air Arm & that in 1950 I rode the Chichester Club's 50 mile time trial. At the time my best 50 was a rather pathetic 2 hours 17 minutes & I had plans to improve by about 5 minutes on the rather fast course along the South Coast.

A problem arose when the early morning start didn't jive with the bed & breakfast hosts' idea of the right time to get up on a Sunday morning & they grudgingly allowed us a bowl of cereal for breakfast. My scheduled 2-12 was looking good for about 40 of the 50 miles then the hunger knock got me & I staggered into the finish with a 2-18 ride. I told this story to Mrs Stieda & then she floored me with; "2-18? I think that was my time for a 50!"

Eventually I got to know the family, Gerry's husband Hans, her eldest son Alex & his 3 sisters, Carolne, Jennifer & Margaret. Margaret became, & still is, a close friend of my Daughter's. Didn't see much of Alex, he was always doing something away from home. If not playing hockey he might be partnering Jennifer in figure skating or touring with the Centennial School band..

There is a 10 mile tt course that uses that awful road up to Pitt Lake - good Paris-Roubaix training. We used to use it for mid-week events & in 1976 I took 14 year old Alex out there on a Bitzer he had built up himself. He was riding in runners & with no toe clips. On the way out there I suggested to him if he rode like we were at that moment but about 2 sprockets smaller in the gear range he would get round inside 30 minutes.

I was on a decent bike equipped with sprint wheels & tubular tyres (sew-ups). My plan was usually to at least get inside 30 minutes & I did. So did Alex, fortunately about 15 seconds slower than me! In 1977, his first year of competition, he won most of what he entered & in his first year as a Junior, 1979, he won all but one of the National Championships; Sprint, 1000m tt, individual pursuit, team pursuit on the track as well as the road race & individual tt on the road. Quebec, I think, beat BC in the team time trial. As a result he went to the Junior World's in Buenos Aires & finished 5th in the pursuit. 1980 & he was still eligible for Junior status & had a repeat of the previous year plus the TTT.

By this time I had met his Grandfather, Ernie Baker, when he was visiting from UK. He & I discovered mutual friends in the English cycling fraternity. Gerry showed me a photo taken by the Cycling press during the mid-thirties. It was of her father finishing a time trial ahead of 3 other riders who were spread out by a few metres. Ernie knew that one of the other riders in the photo had the same surname as his but didn't know the details.

It was in the summer of 1980 we got a phone call from an old clubmate of mine, Bill Kay. He was stranded in Vancouver due to labour trouble preventing him going on the Alaskan cruise he had booked.

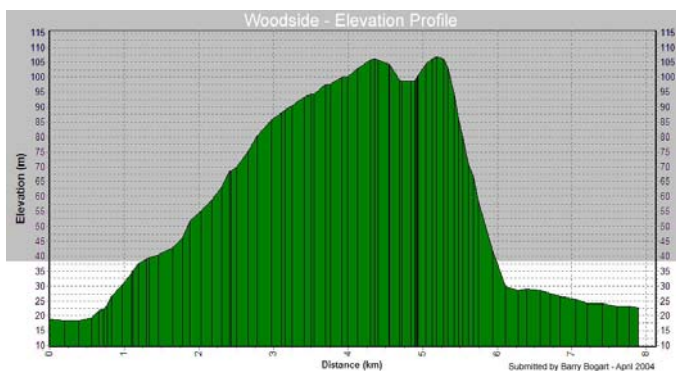
He came & stayed with us for a week. One mid week evening I took him with me over to 41st & Marine where I was planning to ride the evening "10' that went up through UBC to turn on Chancellors Blvd. Bill took a few photos & after my 28 minute effort we drove home. I suggested we call on the Stieda household. But Gerry & Jennifer were away to Zero Av where they too were riding a "10" & Hans was at home alone.

I asked Hans to show Bill the photo of Ernie Baker & asked Bill if he recognized the other riders. He put uncertain names on the 2nd & 3rd ones. Before joining my Club, Bill had been a member during the 30s & 40s of the Bath Road Club. He was in no doubt about the 4th rider in the picture: "...and that is Len Baker of the Barh Road , the \*\*\*\* who gave me this dent in my skull when he knocked me off during a club run!".

Alex went onto a successful professional career with the all powerful 7-11 team riding with our own Ron Haymen & Brian Walton as well as the gold medalist speed skater Eric Heiden. Alex was a close friend of Davis Phinney & was right there to witness that horrendous crash when Phinney went through the rear window of a team car during Paris-Roubaix. Alex quit & got in the ambulance with his team mate to support & comfort him

# Making a Mountain out of a Molehill?

[aka: we'd better be scared stiff!!]



by E.W. (Wim) Kok, Brevet Organizer, Peace Region

When the profile of the Woodside road first appeared on my computer screen, I held on to my chair, cold sweat broke out, and I froze. Flashbacks from Mount Trevezel! What a mountain to climb. Who was so cruel as to place this monstrous challenge in a randonneur's quest to finish? Imagine arriving at Km 0 of this Woodside road section, the BLACK mountain looms. (Cruelty seems to know no bounds if one had to start on the other side at Km 7). So imagine approaching this mountain: the pace slows, the crawl begins, gears shifting down, resolve shifts up and into overdrive. Arrgh, one revolution; arrgh, another revolution, and so it continues, pushing forward, inching upward. Panting near exhaustion, profusely sweating, muscles cramping. The rando's tongue hangs over the handlebars, dragging over the front tire. No mercy. Vivid images of mountain scenes in "Triplettes de Belleville." So steep! Would the cyclist fall over backward during the ascent? Would this Woodside hill become a nemesis? Finally, the first summit, then a small cleavage in the profile, followed by a small lump at Km 5.2. What are we looking at then? The abyss, a descent into a gaping hole. Wondering "should the bike have been equipped with an ejection seat?" Then with a 1-2-3 "hat er sich nach Unten gestuerzt" (dropped like a bomb) over a distance of less than a kilometer to coast down a more reasonable grade in the final stretch. Victory. Ah, the beauty and power of a profile. It can instill fear! It may make even the mighty tremble (and humble). Then a sober second look, the fine print. I relax. It is only a profile, which made a mountain out of a molehill. So let's rent a few proverbial picks, shovels and buckets and deconstruct the mountain, and turn it back into what it really is: a molehill. Check the scale. The vertical scale 1:900 (minus the change), the horizontal scale 1:107,142 (plus the change) for a vertical exaggeration of almost 119 X. Phew, no wonder! Further calculations show that one side of Woodside has a 2 % grade; the abyss 7.5%. So relax, the ride might be a picnic after all.

PS: Vertical exaggeration is a cartographic tool used to accentuate the terrain lumps. With a 1:1 scale even Mt Everest would disappear from a profile of the surface of the earth, so we know

the rationale. Also, colour - in this case 'black' - is used as a 'propaganda' tool in representation. As long as we are aware of this, life on the bike will be a lot easier (or not).

*[Editor's note: Woodside is infamous among Lower Mainland randonneurs. Since it sits astride one of only two routes leading into (or out of) the eastern Fraser Valley it tends to be a feature of many LM brevets. What's more, when taken westbound it often appears in the last 75 km or so of said brevets. Riders returning from, say, the Coquihalla 400 or the Cache Creek 600 all know that they must face the final insult of a nominal 11% grunt up the "Agassiz Agony" (one of the printable appellations for the molehill). Although posted as an 11% grade by MoTH, actual grade on the way up increases dramatically (I'd estimate 18%) as one struggles past the second right-hand bend. It is noted that our intrepid Peace Region organizer passed this way during his recent Fleche effort. His thoughts on the molehill now?]*

## Vancouver Island 400

by Jaye Haworth

As Ken, Jim, Jean-Marc and myself pulled out of the Chevron at 3:00 in the morning, a scattering of big rain drops christened our ride, but then thankfully stopped. Because the bike routes out of Victoria impose a somewhat reduced speed (especially in the dark) I was able to ride with Ken for the first 10.65 K! Once we cleared them, he very kindly offered his back wheel, then immediately pulled away as we began the climb up the Malahat. My disappointment in losing his company so soon was replaced however by the interesting study in visibility which he made. As he had told me previously, he truly looked like a Christmas tree! I made some mental notes about the reflective materials and Sugoi tights he had and have begun adding to my arsenal in the struggle to be noticed by the drivers with whom I must share the roads.

Traffic was light and the still night air was lovely. I paused briefly on the summit(s) to look back over my shoulder at the bright moon which created beautiful silhouettes of the treeline above. Sydney, way down below and off to the right, was all lit up and the reflections on the water were breathtaking. Yes - it was definitely worthwhile, getting up at 12:30 in the morning! The rumble strips, which were easy enough to avoid on the ascent, were a bit more dicey on the descent. Even with my lights, they were sometimes difficult to see. After braking numerous times to avoid debris in the shoulder, I finally pulled out into the lane and was tolerated for the most part by the passing drivers. Only one semi blasted me with his/her horn anyway, even though we were travelling in two separate lanes.

Mike had warned me about how cold the Cowichan Valley can be after coming down off the Malahat, but luckily the difference in temperature wasn't too great. I didn't need to stop to add more layers, or to warm up in the Tim Horton's.

As the light began to gradually increase, wispy patches of fog could be seen snaking over the road from the surrounding fields and farms. Nothing too thick to cause concern for visibility - but

just enough to add a soft note of mystique - creating a very pretty, ghostly treeline over the blight of the roadside billboards.

I was feeling pretty good - and was hitting the controls close to my targeted times. My confidence in the route sheet's accuracy (it's so reassuring to know these routes are pre-ridden) helped greatly to assuage my trepidation in riding alone. Back in Ontario, where pre-rides aren't usually done, riding alone on a brevet was a big fear which I would avoid at all costs!

As I approached the turn-around point of Union Bay, I began laying bets with myself as to when I'd see Ken on his way back. This was good motivation to push those pedals harder! Finally he pulled into view - we waved - and on I went. I passed a public washroom with about 4 K to go to the control according to my computer. Woohoo! This meant I could grab a badly needed cup of coffee in Union Bay while loading up on water, apple juice and gatorade!

As I was just coming out of the washroom (big enough to bring my bike in with me!) I saw Jim ride past on his way to Union Bay. No sign of Jean-Marc. The views of the beaches and water through Qualicum were nice - and I found the piles of shells around the oyster farms interesting to contemplate. This took my mind off the head winds a bit. Traffic was becoming steadily heavier as the day progressed.

Leaving Parksville, I wasn't too pleased to see the dark clouds heading my way. Just before the cloverleaf turn before Nanaimo, the rain hit. The drop in temperature was enough to stop and put some layers back on, but it didn't last long. Then I was immediately too hot and had to stop again to take those layers right back off.

The welcome to Nanaimo sign announced 7 exits to the city centre. I fervently hoped that exit No 29 would be amongst the first few. The speeding traffic was relentless and I was getting really tired of it. The first exit I came to was No 28 - Yay! Only one more! I slogged along, up and around a big curve or two, only to find myself at exit No 21. Oh no. I pulled off into the rest stop on the crossroad and asked someone for help. When he said I'd have to get back on that insanely busy stretch of highway and ride quite a ways back to find my correct turn, my spirit sank. He confirmed however, that taking the crossroad - Northfield - would put me back onto my route so I decided I would do that and disqualify myself. I just couldn't bear the thought of going back up that highway knowing I still had another 150 K of mostly highway, to go.

I checked into the Nanaimo control and then began taking little breaks over the remaining 100 K - having decided that this was no longer an official brevet for me I lost a bit of my drive. I was getting tired, and the rains were continuing off and on. I began to wonder if Randonneuring was really necessary.

A motorcycle buzzed me coming out of Duncan. I don't who he was trying to scare the most - me or his female passenger. It didn't enhance my mood. The tanker trucks made absolutely no effort to swing out a bit as they passed me - even though the second lane

was usually clear. It was with a mixture of relief and dread that I made the turn off the highway and onto Cobble Hill. The break from traffic was most welcome, but the climb out of Shawnigan was approaching. The roads here were fairly quiet - the usual dinner hour peace! The long, meandering climb out of the valley and up to the Malahat was hard - but I was coming into the home stretch!

The rapidly fading light further spurred my effort to nail this ride, and I made it down and off the Malahat within the last few remaining moments of daylight. I pulled into the Chevron at 9:28 p.m. with just over 402 K. As the attendant signed my control card, he told me Ken had finished 3 hours earlier. I was both surprised and pleased when Stephen said my transgression warranted a 1/2 hour time penalty as opposed to disqualification.

Even though this will not be one of my favourite routes, it was still a good ride. Some company might've lessened the weariness of the traffic. And now that I've had time to recover, Randonneuring is still strangely attractive! Bring on the 600!

## Toil to the Toll – LM 400

*by Benjamin Lewis*

Well, I survived, and have now recovered from this past Saturday/Sunday's 400 km brevet, aka "Toil to the Toll", which went from Lougheed and Boundary to the Coquihalla toll booth and back.

Weather was quite nice; not much sun, but fairly warm. Highlights include: Beautiful scenic climb up Chilliwack mountain. We were told there would "probably" be a secret control point. Organizers seem to like putting these at the top of a hill in the first third or so of a ride, and sure enough there was Michel Richard at the top, with a big water container.

Sit down meal at cheapo diner in Hope. Asked for side of mayo for my fries, was given Miracle Whip or similar. Bleah. Ate it anyway. Old woman on a walker "really liked" my blue hair. Sun had come out at this point, stripped down to shorts and sleeveless jersey in preparation for climb up Coquihalla. Wedged my MEC wool jersey between my GoreTex jacket (strapped to my backpack) and seat bag. It seemed pretty secure (cue ominous fore-shadowy music).

The climb! First up Othello hill, a "Categorie 2" climb. I was not too proud to use the granny gear. A brief, quick descent past turn-off to Othello tunnels, and then the long slog begins. The Coquihalla is actually not that steep, with a similar grade to Burnaby mountain. The main part of the climb is probably similar to biking up to SFU four times in a row, but with much nicer scenery (mountains on both sides, and some good views of the Coquihalla river below to the right). I'm riding with Lindsay Martin, who soon becomes a speck in the distance as we start climbing. I still have to work on getting a little more POWER into these legs.

I pass the summit, which is followed by a bit of a descent to the

toll booth. Arrgh! I have to climb this again!

Finally, the toll booth control point. It turns out Lindsay has only been waiting a few minutes. I gorge myself on cookies, donuts, etc., provided by the organizers. It's a lot cooler up here; we can look down and see patches of snow still on the ground. Hell and Damnation! My wool jersey is gone. At \$63 it's not terribly expensive for wool, and fortunately I also brought along a "polar fleece". (Not a "cycling jersey", but functions as one nicely with pockets provided by a short sleeved synthetic jersey over top)

Now we get to ride back down! Strong head winds make this a little less exciting; my dream of coasting most of the way back to Hope is shattered. I also can't see over the concrete barrier in the highway median most of the way down, and never find my jersey.

Sigh. Almost everyone else is in front of us, so I don't expect to get it back. The wind in my face, combined with a full stomach, produce a strong soporific effect, and I find myself starting to nod off as we descend. Feeling less than safe, I signal to Lindsay and we pull over for a two minute power nap. A nice warm tingly sensation suffuses my whole body: endorphins, perhaps? I am then awake enough to continue, thinking about coffee in Hope. Strangely, the journey back down seems even \*longer\* than the way up.

Feeling more awake at Hope, we decide to press on to the Seabird Island Cafe control. There are some strong head winds coming out of Hope, but we soon get to more sheltered roads, and the wind is probably dying down as evening approaches.

Seabird Island Cafe. We run into Claude Theriault polishing off a bowl of Cream of Mushroom soup and mashed potatoes. This looks really good at this point, and we both follow suit. It is dark at this point.

The rest of the ride is mostly an uneventful journey back along highway #7. I become drowsy several more times, and Lindsay is kind enough to wait for me as I take 3 or 4 more power naps, probably ranging from 2 to 15 minutes each.

Woodside Hill! After cycling 300 km, and approaching from the steeper side, this is not an insignificant climb. Once again, the granny serves me well.

We almost miss the turn-off to Mary Hill bypass. Not caring to go back 40 meters, I hop my bike up and over the concrete median. Mary Hill bypass is less than scenic, but is vastly improved by a barn owl gliding along the highway beside us, maybe 5-10 meters away, looking ghostly in the street lights. It lands in the ditch ahead of us, and we get a great view of it head-on as we pass.

Knight and Day restaurant: we're finished! It is now 4:44 am, 22 hours and 44 minutes after we started. We sit down with Karen and Michel, and polish off a couple slices of now-cold pizza, nevertheless delicious. We collect our finisher's pins, which are of course the real reason we do these rides. We are now a mere 4 km from my house, so I bike home, quickly rinse off in the shower, and ... BED!

## A Different Perspective on Ride Day: Volunteering on the LM 400

by Kevin Bruce

Whenever I leave home to ride a randonneuring event, among those affected by my absence is someone who for years has remained faithful, patient, and understanding: my cat. It's nice to know that I am missed when I'm off somewhere racking up the kilometers, but at the same time there is always that mild twinge of guilt that sits lightly in the chest and must somehow be made up for at a later date. Thus it was that I discovered a marvelous way to be involved in a rando event yet still give full attention to those not involved in, but still affected by, my cycling predilection – volunteering to help out on ride day.

The night before a ride is always a bit tense for me as I review the route, double and triple check my bike, assemble my gear, visit and re-visit the Weather Channel, eat a big meal, lay out my clothing, set my alarm, and worry about whether or not I'll fall asleep quickly enough to be properly rested for the next day. All of these pressures, however, vanish like Ken Bonner into the early morning mist when one knows that the next day will involve nothing more strenuous than signing control cards and offering encouragement. So, the night before the LM 400 was much like any weekend evening: my girlfriend came over for dinner; we attended a modern dance performance, and then back to my place for the night. Granted, she was a bit non-plussed at having to get up and go home at 4:00 AM when my alarm went off, but that was counter-balanced by my cat's being totally delighted at getting fed two hours earlier than normal.

The starting point for the LM 400 was at Broadway and Boundary which is fairly close to where I live, so I cycled over at around 5:00 AM and found Harold sitting in his pick-up waiting for the show to begin. Michel and Karen arrived shortly thereafter and we quickly set up shop in preparation for the arrival of *les cyclistes*. Michel proved quite capable at putting the Division of Labour theory into practice and so it was that we were assigned tasks and quickly created a production line that would have made Henry Ford envious: Harold did the bike check, Michel collected the money, Karen and I handed out control cards and route sheets. Twenty-seven riders arrived, signed in, and were duly registered. The best part of this process for me was that I got to put faces to names. Like so many people, I'm "terrible at names", but the experience of greeting all the riders that morning, writing down their names, and handing them their control cards and route sheets helped me ascertain people's names without that awkward, embarrassing moment where one says to someone: "Forgive me, but I can't remember your...."

Shortly past 6:00 AM, Michel gave his oration to the troops in proud, encouraging Henry V style; Shakespeare couldn't have written a better speech. Among the various pieces of last-minute advice, he warned them of the hazards of getting onto the Patullo

Bridge, a situation that had warranted a conference one week earlier on the pre-ride. We had stopped on the north end of the bridge (Michel, Karen, and I), turned back to look at the confusing, possibly dangerous, lanes of traffic and considered advising riders to cut across to the bike path. Which was the safest way to approach the bridge? Which was legal? Was there a liability issue? Questions I had never before considered had now become something into which I had input and therefore responsibility. This business of volunteering was not just performing mundane tasks that would insult the intelligence of mouth-breathing simians, but was rather about looking out for the best interests of those that would depend on the accuracy of the information provided on the route sheet so that they would have a safe, sane, and rewarding journey. I felt honored to be a part of the process.

At 6:04 the riders zipped away amidst the click and clatter of cleats snapping into pedals and shifting gears. As the throng of randos cornered past the McDonald's and quickly disappeared from view, I felt a strange relief that I did not have to ride today. The 200, 300, and 400 pre-ride had taken up three of the previous four weekends for me, and my legs were telling me that it was time for a bit of a breather. "Don't stop riding", they said, "Just don't ride quite so far this weekend." I heeded my leg's wishes, and chose to ride only from the Abbotsford control back to Vancouver after having signed all the riders through. Michel gave me and my trusty bike a ride to the Chevron on Highway 11, and there I waited for the first riders to appear. Naturally, Keith Fraser was the first to arrive along with Rob Bitzer. Keith had taken a tumble when his wheel touched Rob's, and I noticed a bit of a scrape on his leg. I've been very lucky over the years and have rarely had to dig into the first aid kit I carry in my seat-bag, but now I had the opportunity to assist a fellow rider. I gave Keith an alcohol swab and bandage for his abrasion, thought momentarily about Florence Nightingale, figured I'd look ridiculous dressed like her, then shouted, "Good luck!" as Keith and Rob hurtled themselves out of the control.

Not long after, a trio of riders appeared, one of which was Eric Fergusson. Having chased after Eric in the previous couple of rides before he unceremoniously dropped me like a sumo wrestler on a unicycle, I was quick to point out that today, for the first time ever, I had arrived at a control before him – a cheap shot, but I'll take it nonetheless.

Over the next two hours, riders arrived and departed in two's, three's, and small swarms. Signing their cards gave me an opportunity to reiterate the faces-to-names exercise I had gone through at the start. I managed to exchange a few friendly words with each of the riders before they departed, many of them calling out a cheery, "Thanks, Kevin!" as they left. And so it was that I realized yet another benefit to volunteering: not only was I putting a name to each face, but they were putting a name to mine.

Shortly before the control closed at around 10:00 AM, Karen and Harold arrived unexpectedly; they were on a quest for food to take with them to the Toll Booth control. Their timing was excellent as I had been wearing a fleece jacket that I really didn't want to wear on my ride back to Vancouver. I asked if I could

leave my jacket with them to be brought back to the Knight & Day later that evening, and Karen was quite pleased at the thought that an extra fleece might come in handy in the thin mountain air where she was headed (it did, too, so she told me later). After the last rider was duly signed through the Abbotsford control, I climbed on my bike, headed back to the city, and stopped to replenish carbohydrates in Surrey by wolfing down a Dutch Pannekoek the size of planet Jupiter.

When I arrived home at around two o'clock, the cat looked up from her basket, a bit surprised that I was home so soon and would have checked her watch had she been wearing one. After convincing her that, no, it was not yet time for her to eat again, I flopped down on the couch and switched on the TV and to watch the Preakness Stakes, the 'second jewel' in horse racing's Triple Crown. The cat flopped down on my belly and, through an exchange of various 'meows', engaged me in a conversation the meaning of which will forever be known only to her. I watched in amazement as a horse named 'Smarty Jones' demolished the rest of the field in the Preakness the same way that certain randos finish brevets in freakishly fast times.

It was now about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and even though I felt the urge to sleep for a bit, I still felt slightly anxious about being part of the ride that was now going on without me. I had promised to be at the closing control at 8 o'clock, but now had about five hours to kill where I didn't quite know what to do with myself besides catch a nap. Given the time of day, I figured that most riders would be on the Coquihalla by now and I remembered the Coquihalla webcam that is available for viewing through the Ministry of Transport's website. I went to the computer, opened my browser, and searched all the different camera shots hoping to find randos in action as they struggled up and coasted back down the Coquihalla. The cameras take only still photos at half-hour intervals and there appeared to be nothing of interest on any of them except for a few curious specks on the side of the road in a shot taken from the snow shed. I saved this photo, and a half hour later saved the next one. Comparing the two I could see that the specks that had been on the side of the road were no longer there, but there was now a new set of specks a bit further up the road and on the other side. Whatever these specks were, they were moving, and this could mean only one thing: they were randos caught by the Coquihalla webcam! Satisfied that I had captured something truly unique, I crawled into bed to rest up for the long night ahead.

After managing a few winks of sleep, I leapt from my bed at the crack of dusk, fed the cat, hopped on my bike and headed down to the Knight & Day. After taking a table and ordering fish and chips, Michel arrived and shortly thereafter Lyle joined us. Michel and Lyle had club business to discuss, so I attempted to split the difference between ignoring them and respectfully acknowledging their need to talk by occasionally glancing at the newspaper I had brought with me. They discussed membership fees; they discussed insurance matters; they discussed routes; they discussed the need to encourage more people to volunteer; they discussed the need for more copy for the newsletter. After about an hour of exhausting the various matters at hand, there was the sort of lull in the conversation that signaled the end of their

discussion. They had identified and defined the issues of importance that would need to be further addressed. At this point, I folded my newspaper, set it down, looked at Lyle and said, "So, you need copy for the newsletter," then, turning to Michel, said, "and you need more people to volunteer." Both nodded. "Well," I continued, "why don't I kill two birds with one stone and write an article for the newsletter about volunteering?" Michel smiled and said, "I was hoping you'd say that." He's a sneaky one, that Michel. No wonder he's the President.

Shortly past 9:00 PM, the first finishers rolled in and to no one's surprise it was Keith Fraser accompanied by US import Chris Copeland. How they managed to cover 400 km to the toll booth and back in just over 15 hours without taking a bus, I'll never know, but there were the duly signed control cards, dirt on their faces, and sweat on their brows to prove the veracity of their claim. At around 11:00 PM, Karen appeared, back from duty at the toll booth. She warned of many riders not looking in very good shape by the time they had gotten to the Toll Booth control just past the summit. How they would look upon completing the entire distance was anyone's guess. Matthew Campbell appeared at around 11:30, and just past midnight Eric Fergusson and Susan Barr rolled in. At this point, I wondered if it was more than just coincidence that three of the five fastest finishers – Fraser, Campbell, and Fergusson – have distinctly Scottish names.

As the night wore on and our eyelids became progressively heavier, the riders trundled in throughout the night and we offered congratulations and a polite smattering of applause whenever we found the energy. Our little production line continued to work efficiently, albeit somewhat more slowly than at sign-up that morning. I dutifully recorded each rider's final time and stamped their cards, Karen handed out the pins, and Michel verified the times with his signature. Karen pointed out that none of the riders looked nearly as haggard at the finish as they had upon reaching the toll booth. There is something about cycling up a mountain to its summit that gives one pause to question one's own sanity, which is what Karen witnessed at the Toll Booth. Such self-doubt vanishes, however, when one feels the surge of satisfaction at completing the ride, and that's what we witnessed at the final control.

Some riders joined us at the table, though not so much for the conversation as for the opportunity to sit down without having to move their legs in a circular motion. A few of the riders were so tired and hungry they finished off the pizza I had ordered earlier and could not finish myself. I didn't bother to tell them that the pizza was about six hours' old, but even if I had I doubt it would have made any difference to them.

At 6:00 AM, with only two hours' to go until the final control closed, there were but two riders still to come in: Barry Bogart and Margaret Chase. Barry had with him one of those GPS things and he had given Karen the website and code so that we could track their progress. I suggested that since I lived close by I go home, determine their location, and then call Karen on her cell phone to let her and Michel know how much longer they'd be. This, of course, was just a sneaky way of getting to bed a little earlier than if I were to stick around. Seeing as Michel had

already gotten me to write this article you're now reading I knew I wasn't fooling him with this ploy, but it worked nonetheless.

I hopped back on my bike and pedaled home. After feeding the cat an extra half-scoop of her favorite kibble, I switched on the computer, found the GPS website, punched in the code, and determined that Barry and Margaret were currently at the start of the Mary Hill bypass. I phoned Karen and told her that the last two riders should be there in about an hour. After the obligatory but heartfelt "Thanks for everything," and "have a good sleep", I hung up, got undressed, and climbed into bed as the cat leapt up onto the duvet and snuggled in beside me.

As I lay in the quiet, reflecting on this first time experience as a ride day volunteer, I thought about all the previous rides I had ridden and how there was something about each ride that made me think that certain things could have been done differently. There can be curious choices for controls or strange routings that don't quite make sense; maybe the starting point is a bit awkward to get to at an early hour, or perhaps there might be points along the route that require particular caution that I wish I had known about in advance. In such cases, it is perfectly normal for one to recognize (or think they recognize) a better way of doing things, and articulate one's thoughts by saying something that begins with the words, "What they should do is..." But who are "they"? And will "they" ever listen? How does one influence this relatively anonymous entity referred to as "they"? Now I had my answer: the best way to ensure that "they" make irreproachable decisions is to become one of them.

## The Wonderful Toil to the Toll

*by Margaret Elliot*

After an eight year lapse, I've come back to try my legs at longer rides again. Not owning a bike, this is only possible because of the generosity of my Wonderful friend, Barry, who by good fortune is exactly my size. Dressed from headgear to toe in his clothes and on one of his bikes, I had already done the Populaire, the 200 and the 300 this spring at which point I firmly decided I was not capable of and NOT GOING TO DO the 400 because I am not really a cyclist. Even when I spotted a Wonder Bread jersey in a Fairhaven bike shop a week after the 300, I thought I'd love to have it but dismissed the thought because I'd feel like an imposter wearing it. That weekend we talked a lot about the 400. It was quite the plum of a ride, going up the Coquihalla to the tollbooth and back, something I'd love to be able to say I had done, but the 300 seemed to be the limit of what I was capable of. After all, I'm an already near exhausted, working, single mother of two teenagers, two cats and a rabbit. What was I thinking when I even did the 300? I thought that was going to kill me. But at 11AM of the Thursday before the 400, inspiration struck and I called Barry to say I had to do the 400 because that way I could say I had Toiled to the Toll and earn the right to wear that Wonder Bread jersey. He said he was already planning to do it without me anyway, on my bike, but would prepare the other bike for himself if I was serious.

So, by Saturday AM we were ready. We decided to be at the start ON TIME for this ride since we couldn't afford to needlessly waste any. Barry figured we'd be at Hope by 2PM and at the tollbooth by 6PM if all went well. I didn't tell him but I still had grave doubts about my ability and thought his timeline was optimistic, but even if all I accomplished was getting up the big hill I would still have earned my jersey. (Of course, what I kept forgetting was on these rides you can get halfway BUT THEN YOU STILL HAVE TO GET ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE START WHERE THE CAR IS PARKED!!)

Off we started with the whole group, me on the bike Barry had taken to PBP last year with the low gears and him on the bike without the low gears (no Wonder I always beat him up the hills). We rode with several others for much of the way to the first control but soon after that seemed to be comfortably at the back going as fast as I could. We made it up Chilliwack Mt, though I had to speed ahead of Barry on the hill (because I could), reaching the secret control in plenty of time to rest and refresh before he arrived and we were off again. It was a lovely, pleasant ride along Hope River and Camp River Roads until a spoke broke on Barry's rear wheel. We sat and ate lunch at the side of the road while discussing the options. Barry felt confident in gambling that a repair short of replacing the darn thing would be fine but several searches through the bags failed to turn up the zap straps I was supposed to have put in there. It looked like duct tape would have to do (maybe we could get zap straps in Hope?). Then one last randonneur came up the road behind us and asked if we were okay. He did have a small zap strap or two and so it looked as if we were going to be okay (and that we really were the last ones now). We carried on to Hope and arrived at the control at 2:05. Wonder of Wonders, we were actually on schedule! We forgot to look for zap straps and didn't remember until Othello Road when the second spoke snapped, but because it was near the first one we just used more duct tape. I was beginning to Wonder about how this was going to turn out but Barry still seemed confident enough to not replace the spoke (oh yes, we had only one spare spoke anyway). So on we carried, up the hill, me way faster and far enough ahead that I reached the junction at the Coquihalla and had several minutes to wait and Wonder if Barry was soon going to appear around the corner or if something more serious was happening and I was going to have to back track, find him and a disabled bike and walk back to Hope for more serious intervention. I actually waited for only two minutes (the GPS tracking us confirmed this later) and when he caught up he suggested that the safest way for us to reach the top with the compromised spokes was if I rode that bike because I weighed less than him. This worked Wonderfully for him because it also meant he now had the lowest gears for the climb and we were evenly matched for speed.

I was instructed to watch the road and avoid all potholes and bumps, which wasn't too tricky at the speed we were traveling. And Wonder of Wonders again, we reached the tollbooth at 6:30, nearly on schedule. Not only was I tremendously proud and impressed with myself for having achieved that goal and earning that jersey, but also strangely impressed with Barry and his confidence, too, for having so closely figured out how fast we

were actually going to be able to do it.

It was much colder at the top than we had planned for but a few extra cookies and a banana and we were ready for the descent. Karen wisely counseled us to head for the next control at Seabird without much delay in Hope so that we could have a good meal before it was too late. The descent was long but controlled, particularly on my part because I had in the back of my mind that one of my wheels was not quite right and I was still supposed to watch for bumps and potholes. I was amazed at the length of the highway as we coasted down for two hours! Did I really climb up this? All was going too well. I was feeling on top of the world and bursting with pride and the Wonder of the accomplishment. We rounded the corner back to Othello Road and as we began the climb up the next hill my bike came to a screeching halt and I nearly fell over. Another spoke had broken and the chain had come off. This time I applied the duct tape as Barry figured out how we were going to manage this one. He loosened my rear brakes which really began to concern me. Now I could feel the wobble and we were still nearly 200K from the car. I Wonder how I did it, but Barry convinced me we were okay to go on. At the bottom of Othello Road we found a gas station and Barry looked for zap straps. They didn't have them but offered us twist ties instead. Good enough! We twist tied together every set of spokes we thought we needed to and had spares left over. On to Hope where Barry still had to work to convince me the wheel was safe, but it was already past 10PM and I wanted a hot meal and table and chairs at Seabird so off we went.

We made it in time for the hot meal but left without the coffee, a mistake in hindsight. Now came the long, dark ride down Highway 7 with only the headlights to mark the bumps in the road. I was beginning to feel more confident about the wheel because so far it was still holding up. On and on in the dark, heading for Woodside, but before we reach it spoke number four breaks in Agassiz. As we are stopped at the side of the road twist-tie-and-duct-taping this one back in place, an RCMP officer pulls up. He thinks we must be bike cops-- who else would be out on the road at 1AM? We asked with Wonder, "You have bike cops here in Agassiz?" and he said, "No." We couldn't miss this opportunity so I admit we asked him if he would give us a ride back to Vancouver. He said no. We asked him if he had any zap straps but he only had the ones for handcuffs and they are too big. So he looked at us as if we were crazy, warned us to be careful on Woodside because it is so narrow and drove off.

From here to the finish we had no further trouble with the rear wheel but the deterioration of my mental condition was becoming a concern around hour 22! Coffee and cake at Tim Horton's in Mission, dawn and daylight, a ten minute nap on a bench near Silverdale, Barry's good humor and -what was that near the end?- cheerfulness?- pulled me through, though apparently I was a Wonder to behold as we arrived at the Knight and Day

In the end, the bike shop replaced 11 spokes, and I did get my Wonder Bread jersey. I will wear it without hesitation knowing that I cycled the Coquihalla to the tollbooth and back! Will I ever do another Randonneur ride? I don't know but if that plum of a ride to Cache Creek and back is ever put on again....

# Fleche Pacifique 2004 - CHAOS' Story

by Donald Boothby

Preparedness is everything. Physical and mental conditioning are important, as is a properly prepared and appropriate machine. My 2003 Raleigh Competition is really a race bike and not the best for randonneuring, but I have spent a lot of time and effort since last December in an effort to make it work. Unlike a lot of the cyclists I have met since finding this sport, I have only one bike. Well, okay, so I now have a tandem, too, but that's a story for a different day. I have experimented with tires, fenders, lights and attaching mechanisms to make sure I could make everything work together.

I felt really strong on Thursday night as I was getting clothing and gear together and making sure I had everything on my checklist in order. I managed to sleep in until 8:30 Friday morning, with a 6:00 p.m. start scheduled. Mimi said to me at some point during the day when we were talking, "Let me get this straight. You are driving north 30 miles to Edmonds so you can then turn around and drive south 80 miles to Enumclaw so you can ride north 240 miles to Canada. It all seems a bit odd to me."

We all met up at Terry's house in Edmonds to get our bikes and gear stashed into our support vehicles for the drive south. The team should have started worrying, I suppose, when I asked Terry if we could stop in Auburn so I could go to the bathroom. When we got to Charlie's Restaurant, the sign said open, but they weren't, so we headed off in search of a café to have a pre-ride dinner. A perfect 6:00 p.m. start, delayed only a couple minutes when Linda remembered as we were crossing the highway that she had forgotten to pump up her tires. After about a half hour, I had the team's first flat. Changing it, I got to hear Matt and Shane's analysis of my Continental Ultra 2000 tires. After another mile and a half or so, I had our team's second flat. Now I REALLY got to hear the analysis of my tire choice and Shane pretty much insisted on giving me a spare he had along, something that looked like it came off a tanker truck. We got the tube installed and upon inflating, I managed to break the valve stem in my haste to get us back up and on the road. Now, very frustrated and ready to throw the entire \*#&\$&!# wheel into the bushes, I was into Shane's supply of tubes, which I promptly managed to pinch between the rim and tire and explode, which sound was followed by a collective vote of general displeasure from the rest of the team. After much cussin' and fussin', I finally managed to get a tube in, air in and back on the machine. We're now 45 minutes behind schedule. I didn't bother to mention to the team that I really needed a couple more minutes to take a leak and managed to hang on until we got to Issaquah, albeit barely.

It started getting dark as we headed up East Lake Sammamish between Issaquah and Redmond and by the time we took a left into Marymoor Park, we were under full lights. We saw a group of cyclists, the formation of which looked vaguely familiar, and it

turned out we were crossing paths with the Pasty White Guys, who had started out an hour after us from another location. Waving and exchanging mutual well wishes on the fly, we trekked onward. As we were going north up the trail, we calculated that we were pedaling along with a 15-20 mph tail wind. This had pretty much been following us since Enumclaw, but I felt the air getting more and more humid and knew that our night was just beginning.

Somehow, we managed to find Terry at the Albertson's in Woodinville and after a brief equipment and clothing modification, we were again headed north up and out of Woodinville, with our next scheduled stop in Snohomish. This was probably the hilliest section of the ride, and even though it wasn't raining, I could feel it coming and felt very fortunate that we had benefited from the good conditions so far. Somewhere along this stretch, Matt had his one and only flat, our team's 5<sup>th</sup>. It was not nearly as simple changing tires in the dark, but I managed to eat, drink and seek the relief of some nearby bushes so as not to hold the team up further.

The pace line seemed to pick up a real head of steam coming down into Snohomish and as we pulled into the parking lot of the Buzz Inn Steak House, we discovered they closed 15 minutes before our arrival. There really isn't much open at that time of night and this was discussed for weeks as our weak link in the schedule. It was ultimately agreed to hit the 7-11 where we had a choice of Cup-O-Soup noodles, stale turkey and cheese sandwiches or frozen burritos. I opted for the sandwich, a lemonade and, of course, another bottle of Ensure Plus. As we rode out of Snohomish, I began to wish I'd selected the noodles as my stomach began to feel like I'd swallowed a bunch of lead fishing weights. While I never actually lost my dinner, there were some moments when I wished I could.

Our last dry control for a long time came at Granite Falls, where we all found time to head behind the closed service station for some much needed personal relief and we were able to enjoy watching the 5 young people in a car playfully engaged in their late-night teen-age antics. Much reminiscing about what it was like to be that young. Very shortly after Granite Falls and about 7 hours into the ride, we began to get the first sprinkles and it didn't take long before Matt was suggesting we stop and change into our raingear. This proved to be a pretty good idea, since about five minutes later the heavens opened up and unleashed a full fledged rainstorm on us for the next several hours.

Somewhere between Granite Falls and Stanwood, we met up with a couple of escort dogs. First they were on the right, then the left, running along in the ditch about 20 meters or so in front of our pace line. First was just one dog, then two; they kept crossing the road and between Linda, Sue and I, we kept announcing their position to the rest of the team. Matt said later he never saw them, he just heard us screaming about them.

Going through Arlington, we made another relief stop at an all-night gas station and mini-mart. When I went in to buy a candy bar, I was trying to remain positive and upbeat and made a comment to the shopkeeper about being grateful he was open all



night. His response was that he didn't have any choice. If it were up to him, he'd be home in bed and that's where we ought to be. He commented, "Why the hell don't you do this in the daytime? Are you people stupid? Don't you know that over 90% of the cars out there at this time of night are DRUNK?" He tended to ramble on a bit, so I made my purchase, feigned a smile and thanks and exited as quickly as I could.

Arriving in Stanwood a little before 4:00 a.m., we found Terry, who had managed to catch a little bit of a nap, parked outside the local QFC. I'm not sure whether he knew in advance what a providential stop this would prove to be, but his scouting out this rendezvous was much appreciated as we walked in, dripping and sloshing our way through the store. We discovered three things that became an immediate mood elevator for a group of very tired and wet cyclists. The first was a gas burning fireplace. The second was a collection of 4 overstuffed leather chairs and the third was a 24-hour espresso bar. I can only imagine what the employees must have been thinking with seven dripping bodies invading the otherwise empty store, removing booties, gloves rain coats, shoes and socks and hanging gloves and booties over the fireplace to dry, while they ran back and forth to the bathrooms, drank hot coffee and lukewarm Ensure Plus, wolfed down some much needed food and prepared for the next leg of the journey. I think leaving that location was probably the toughest moment of the ride.

As we exited Stanwood, we started to see the first evidence of dawn, and the birds began singing songs of early morning greeting to us as we turned from the parking lot back onto the highway. The rain let up a little bit for a while and then we hit Chuckanut Drive, where it was raining harder, the hills seemed to never end and we hit our first secret control. There was Danelle to give us a warm and welcome smile, a hot cup of coffee, some chocolate chip cookies and, of course, a photo opportunity for team Chaos.

After that, it was a nice descent into south Bellingham, where we made our potty stop using the port-a-potty because the store owner didn't want us dripping up his store. In my rush to get back on the bike I forgot my Camelbak and had to ride back 2 blocks while a team that I'm sure was already becoming impatient with my delays, had to sit and wait for me.

Matt encouraged us by letting us know that it was just 20 more miles to his house, our big rest stop, where we were promised a full breakfast of pancakes, eggs, oatmeal, fresh fruit and plenty of hot fresh coffee—and a dryer!!! A few short blocks later, Shane had our team's sixth flat. When he pulled the wheel off the rim, water cascaded out. Back on the road, a couple miles later, it was Linda's turn. Just as we stopped to execute the tube change, the heavens opened up into a downpour that made me very grateful for a tree I could stand under while the work progressed. We hadn't ridden another mile when Shane had his second and our team's 8<sup>th</sup> and final flat.

I suddenly sensed a general attitude of the team becoming a little demoralized, thinking that if this continued, we would have a pretty short rest break at Matt's and could be in real trouble with

time. Despite all of our fears, though, everything went well from that point on until about 3 miles from the Dalton Hotel at which point we were faced with a hill. No, not a hill, a wall. It may have been short, but my legs simply didn't want to pedal anymore for some odd reason. Amidst some grumbling and a few more adjectival references to randonneurs in general, I made it in and we were met by a smiling and generous hostess, Alison, who instructed us to put all of our dry things into the basket and she'd get them into the dryer for us while we ate.

Everyone else attacked the food, while I found a most comfortable sofa on which I could administer a 3-minute massage of my feet and legs to get the tired blood recirculating a bit. I generally have to do this on the hard, cold ground and this felt most welcome. Then it was on to the oatmeal with honey (nobody seemed to favor my idea of spaghetti with honey for some odd reason), scrumptious scrambled eggs with maple syrup, fresh strawberries and cantaloupe and a cup of very hot, very dark and rich and very sweet black coffee. I honestly do not believe I have ever enjoyed my morning repast more than I did that day.

Then it was off to the showers. We had been told we needed to take short showers, so we wouldn't run them out of hot water. My trick? Let everyone else go first, and then I can feel a little more leisurely about it all. After about 5 minutes of water running over my back and neck, the positional headache I had started to develop was gone and I was able to lay down and rest for about 20 minutes. With my eyes closed, I kept envisioning a slot machine cylinder, only instead of bars and cherries, it was all stars in ones and twos, but the cylinders never stopped rolling. Later, I analyzed this a bit, but at the time, I just chuckled to myself and enjoyed the horizontality of it all. The later analysis? We're all stars and we're about ready to hit the jackpot. Corny or not, that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

When it was time to get moving again, we came out and discovered all our bike duds were dry, folded and separated into matched pairs and sets. Alison really made everything special for us and as I was pulling on the now dry clothing, I noted that the rain had stopped and it was almost sunny, with a few filtered rays coming through the still mostly overcast sky. Much discussion was held over what to do about tubes, with the team having experienced 8 flats altogether to that point. It was decided we had enough to get us down the road and we had an extra front and back wheel in Terry's truck we could pirate at a later control if we needed to. Off we went with about 70 miles left to go.

10 miles later, Donny B. had to go again. Much frustrated, the team agreed to let me stop at the Burger King in Lynden, at which point I took a good tongue lashing from Matt about how tight time was now becoming and how we really needed to keep moving forward if we were going to finish in time. A stop every 10 miles would guarantee we couldn't make the 24 hour limit. After this quick personal relief stop, we headed off again and as I rode along in silence, I began to feel like I was at risk of destroying the team's chances of finishing in the allotted time and decided two things. First, I simply wouldn't drink anything anymore. Second, if I need to relieve myself, I'll just pretend I'm a racer and I'll let fly from the saddle, come what may. I've been

wet all night anyway, what difference does it make at this point? Of course, I could recognize the flawed logic of the first of these decisions, but did begin to cut back on the amount of fluids, as I was obviously well hydrated enough. But I knew I had to keep eating and drinking if I was going to finish and I still thought the team needed good output from every member of the team, including me. Fortunately, I never had to act on the second.

As we rode between Lynden and Sumas, my brain began playing real tricks on me, fluctuating between wanting to simply give up, making up excuses to take myself out of the game at the next control, and feeling a rage to finish, no matter what the cost. There was a moment as we approached the Sumas crossing that I suddenly became re-energized and again felt that, regardless of what I had to do to make it happen, Team Chaos was going to finish in time and I believed that I could make it.

From Sumas to Chilliwack was simply a matter of survival. I was beginning to suffer from exhaustion and it seemed like no food or water would make much of a difference. Linda said something about how and where we were going to stop at the 22 hour mark to note our time and distance on our control cards. For about 5 minutes before that, I had been thinking that I just wanted to go to sleep. I noticed my reaction times were failing; I almost crashed into Jim and Ann's back wheel a couple of times because I was not able to respond to changes in speed. My judgment was starting to get really poor and all I could think of was how good it would feel to lie down and take a nap. I was yawning, my eyelids felt heavy and I knew that I was about ready to fall asleep on my bike, but I was afraid to say anything to the team for fear of either getting dropped or having them make a stop that would jeopardize our chances of an on-time arrival. I remember thinking at this point that if I could just have another flat, I could let the team go on without me and at least the team would finish and I could take a short nap and ride on into Harrison, maybe not within the 24 hours, but at least I would finish without killing anybody or myself.

Finally, we arrived at a Husky station and mini-mart. I grabbed a chocolate milk (thanks to Tamara Stephas for introducing me to this wonderful recovery food), a Snicker Bar (the extra big one) and two No-Doz tablets which provided me with 400 mg of caffeine to go with the sugar, protein and carbs I got from the first two elements of the fatigue cocktail. And on we go, with 28 K to go in 2 hours. We can do this, if we just don't have any more problems.

The remainder of the ride was done on sheer willpower, adrenaline and caffeine/sugar rush. There was nothing left in my legs. My brain had ceased functioning. I tried to remember things and found even the most simple tasks were next to impossible. I couldn't remember who was on the back of Linda's tandem. Then, going up a slight rise where we had to make a left turn, there was another secret control and as I accelerated to cross traffic, a loud squeal began to develop in my rear wheel. Worried that I might be losing my rear hub, I dropped into some lower gears and decided I would just need to spin better and put as little torque on the equipment as possible. There was a big bridge ahead and I knew I needed to conserve everything I had. I was

also having difficulty figuring out my left from my right. Every time I was on somebody's wheel, I was afraid I was going to misjudge the distance and take both of us out. I was having visions of broken collarbones and lying in ditches while my team rode past me laughing.

The most bizarre and unrealistic images began to take over my thought process and then something happened. Matt said, "By my calculations, it's 8 miles to go and we have an hour to make it." In that simple statement came my salvation. I looked up a moment later and saw a sign that said "Harrison Hot Springs – 14" and I knew that meant kilometers, not miles. From those simple words, I managed to gain the strength needed to overcome the demons which had begun to invade my brain, and I got my final wind. Shane was somewhere behind me and I thought that Linda and Sue were, too, only it was Jim and Ann that were behind me; Linda and Sue were at the front, followed by Matt and then me. All of a sudden, Linda hollered out for me to get to the front, and Jim and Ann to get to the front. We were coming in and she wanted the rookies to lead us in.

Tears began to well up in my eyes. I had done it. My whole team had done it. There won't be and DNF's on Team Chaos. This goal I had set for myself back in January was about to come to fruition. Little had I known last December 26<sup>th</sup> when John Keyser and I were invited to join in a Cascade ride and I had been introduced to a bunch of folks by Greg Sneed as "wanting to come over to the dark side" that it would come to this. The sun was out, I was looking at snow-capped mountains and I could see this sparkling lake in front of me and I knew what I had been working for. "TURN LEFT...TURN LEFT", I heard Linda say. "No, not at this one, the next one."

As we turned left into the parking lot at Harrison Hot Springs Resort, I saw a bunch of people waving and pointing. As I approached, there was Peter Rankin there. And Bob Brudvik. And Ken Condray. All guys who I have had the joy and pleasure of riding with and getting to know a little bit this spring. And most important of all, there were Terry and Chantel, our ride support. They were all clapping for us, and pointing the way in to the control. And then, in an instant, it was over. All of the aches and pains were suddenly forgotten and it was time for hugs, back-slaps, handshakes, congratulations and something cold to drink.

It was difficult to choke down the emotion of this moment. In the last five months, I have completed more miles on a bicycle than I have ever ridden in a complete year before. I have completed rides I used to only be able to dream of. At 53 years of age, I feel in better shape than I have since I left the Marine Corps in 1972 at the age of 21. I have been surrounded with a group of people who know about what it means to be a team and work together for a common goal and they have allowed me to become a part of a club that endorses safety, endurance, good health and camaraderie. They have helped me to prepare. They have taught me new cycling skills to make me a stronger and safer rider. They have helped me when I needed it and let me stumble when I insisted on doing it my way. They then helped me to get back in step and never let me lose sight of the ring. This is the true spirit of randonneuring.

# Lungs for Life

by Sarah Tennant

*"To be 70 years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be 40 years old."*

**Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809 - 1894), O Magazine, October 2003**

It's not often that a 26 year old gets to spend 24 hours with a 50, 61, 68 and a 76 year old. I never really planned to do the Fleche Pacificque this year but when Wayne Harrington appealed to my competitive and patriotic side by saying that with Harold and I on his team we were destined to bring the Lungs for Life trophy to Canada, how could I resist? Plus Harold Bridge's slide show last year at the club social is one of my first and clearest memories of Randonneur riding! As I recall, it started with a photo of his parents on their honeymoon on a tandem bike and Harold boldly stating, "this is how it all began for me." Finally I was sitting in a room where my bizarre transportation method was normal.

Riding 1,000km in a year was not abnormal - it was adequate. In fact, the Iron Butt award went to Ken Bonner that year...he has now ridden over 80,000km in his 'lifetime'! And lifetime is being defined as when he started rando riding so his 'life' began when he was 40? I'm guessing on that one but somewhere around there.

So it was with great enthusiasm that I agreed to be part of this group of experienced riders. The event started for me Friday afternoon when Harold came to pick me up from work (I wasn't allowed to ride my bike in case a car hit me...didn't he realize I had been riding all week?), but I wasn't about to argue. Being treated like a princess is part of the reason I like randonneur riding☺

We drove out to Harold's house stopping at White Spot on the way for a good carbo dinner and I got to hear all sort of fun stories about his daughter, rides from the past, his car accident, his amazing recovery and his upcoming ride across Canada. As a person in their 20s I find it very difficult to keep life in perspective sometimes. My week leading up to the Fleche had been one of those weeks where the world had gone from cracking under my feet to flying by me WAY TOO FAST. I'm realizing life isn't going to get any slower or easier...(all you more 'mature' people can chuckle at my overdramatic words☺) Harold's wise words and his ability to make sense of even horrible events like car accidents eased my quarter life crisis as I realized everything works out especially if you ride a bike and have a great positive outlook!

I know that last paragraph sounds a tad overdramatic however staying at Harold's house the night before the Fleche was truly relaxing, a good opportunity for the team to get to know each other (Keith Fletcher also stayed over and Wayne came over to keep me company while Harold played taxi again and picked Keith up from the ferry) and a trip down Randonneur history lane. Somewhere on the BC Rando website, Eric makes the comment that luckily Harold kept all the records of the club since 1979. Well, every piece of history appears to be on his walls. It's the neatest thing. And even neater is the stories Harold can add to

these unique jerseys, medals, plaques and photos. His memory for detail is amazing (either that or he's just a really good story teller and is able to make things up on the spot with a lot of conviction).

The ride itself was a great route! I was a little concerned when we all showed up at Tim Hortons at 6:45am and NOBODY had a route sheet BUT everyone but me had ridden the route 3-6 times so we weren't bothered. We were a tad bothered by the rain but Harold kept saying, "RAIN BY SEVEN CLEAR BY ELEVEN." And well, he was pretty much right. It rained from 7-11 am and then a little later on but compared to what the Friday night riders experienced, we were in heaven.

In fact the entire ride was ideal. We didn't have a single flat, the guys knew the route so well that we never got lost nor did we have to ask for directions and our checkpoints were perfectly spaced out. We headed across the border to Sedro Wooley, through Concrete the town, and into Marblemount. Concrete fascinated me as it's such a bizarre name for a town. I looked it up on the Internet and it turns out that in 1909, the two towns of cement city and Baker were united to form Concrete. So a cement company did play a role in naming the city!! On the way home, we took the same route back but instead of returning to Port Coquitlam, we headed to Harrison Hot Springs via Mission. The Fleche is an interesting event as you have to choose a challenging enough distance that you won't get bored going too slow but it can't be so challenging that you can't finish. I was glad Wayne did such a good job organizing it. In fact, I'd steal his route if I do another Fleche☺

The other thing I really enjoy about Randonneur riding is that you can ride with a group of people! These people can provide copious amounts of entertainment (especially if they have the pun ability of Harold Bridge), they can pull you along (I think I hid behind all four of them as we headed into Harrison...holy head winds) or they can just be there as silent companions! It's great.

My biggest weakness on the ride was my inability to stay awake! At the last two controls I don't think I ate a thing nor did I say I word. Whenever I stopped biking my head would hit the bench, table or anything else that was underneath it. In fact, at one point I was so exhausted I had to bike ahead of the group as fast as I could and when I was far enough ahead, I'd crash on the side of the road (figuring they needed me to win the Lungs for Life award so they'd wake me up). And they woke me up. However, if we didn't have time restraints, I would have insisted on a nap. Who would have thought a 26 year old would have to sleep LONG before the rest of the crew! These four men are pros.

*"It is a mistake to regard age as a downhill grade toward dissolution. The reverse is true. As one grows older, one climbs with surprising strides."*

**George Sand (1804 - 1876)**

Back in Harrison Hot Springs, we had a shower and I had yet another nap before the breakfast. The other great organizational feat of our group is that we had Bob meet us in Marblemount with dry clothes and Keith's wife to meet us in Harrison. They're smiling faces were needed...especially by me.

The breakfast was a blast! Awards were given out and I heard some of the FUNNIEST stories I think I've ever heard. Or maybe I was so tired they just seemed funny but I honestly think they could have a collection of the stories we told on Sunday: teams getting stuck on bike criterium courses, animals, lots of wet cyclists and flats! We could write a HOW TO GUIDE: how to herd a cow on your bike, how to build fenders in Phoenix or how to create the worst weather ever (just mix Winnipeg snow with Phoenix humidity) and how to flood a Chevron with only the clothes you have on your body!!

What an event! I'll definitely be back but that was one of the toughest things I've had to do in my short 26 year old life (especially since I haven't been doing as much long distance cycling this year). The people who organized it: Danelle, John, and the secret controls did such a fantastic job. Next time...I'm staying in Harrison till Monday☺

*Of all the self-fulfilling prophecies in our culture, the assumption that aging means decline and poor health is probably the deadliest.*

### **Marilyn Ferguson, The Aquarian Conspiracy, 1980**

I'm hoping as I get older, the Fleche will only become easier and one day I can master the Fleche and stay awake the whole 24 hours just like Keith, Norm, Wayne and Harold did! And if for some horrible reason I can't do a Fleche at the age of 77, I know I will always remember my Victoria Day weekend 2004.

Best of Luck to Harold on his 80+ day trip across Canada !

## PEACE COUNTRY PEDAL

*By Danelle Laidlaw*

For quite some time now, I have wanted to go up to the Peace country and do one of Wim Kok's rides. I have only been up that way once before and I flew in and out of Fort St. John. That experience did not leave me with much of a feel for the area. I grew up in northern Ontario, and so the countryside, vast expanses of trees and more trees, felt very familiar, but I wanted to try riding in the area. And besides, it was time to try some new rides.

In May, John Bates, Val White and I were scheduled to do a week's worth of riding to pre-ride this year's TourBC route which starts and finishes in Kamloops (great training for the Rocky Mountain, btw). This ride always coincides with my birthday and I thought – this is my chance – as a little birthday treat to myself, let's carry on north to FSJ and ride Wim's 300 – it isn't that much further... Well, it is quite a bit further. After scrunching the TourBC pre-ride into 5 days instead of 7 (that was our training for the 300), we had 2 days for a leisurely drive to FSJ and we needed that much time. We didn't drive long days, but we put quite a few kms on the car by the time we got there.

We chose to drive up via Hinton and Grande Prairie and return via Prince George and Williams Lake. I had always wanted to go to Grande Prairie, though now, I am not sure why. The stretch

between Hinton and GP is quite monotonous and to top it off, we had snow flurries at Grande Cache – the high point on the way there. This did not bode well for our ride.

However, we eventually got to FSJ, and it wasn't too cold, though like everyone does, we were monitoring the weather channel in the hopes of some Chinook or something. We met up with Wim and his wife (who thinks we are all crazy), got our cards and route sheets and back to the motel to finalize our preparations and get some sleep. Although we carry a camera on all these rides, I don't always think of using it. And unfortunately, did not think to snap a photo at 6 a.m. at the Tim Horton's for the historic occasion of 4 people starting one of the Peace Country brevets! Actually there were five of us, but the fellow from Alberta admitted that his plan was only to cycle to Hudson's Hope and back as he had not yet done a 200. There was actually a hint of frost as we started out, but we had the all the gear and weren't too worried about the cold.

I was expecting flat – you know Canadian Shield style – after all, we'd been through Grande PRAIRIE – it wasn't that far fetched. But it was anything but flat. There are a number of rivers coursing through this area (WACKY Bennett dam and all that is in this region), and at each one of them, you go down to the river and then you climb back up – these are long climbs – 5, 6, 7 km long (and wonderfully long descents also). It was very different from what I had imagined. And there was tons of wildlife – deer everywhere, moose, coyote, and bear were most prevalent, but lots of birds also.

The 300 route is very straightforward – Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd, cut off the corner before Dawson Creek and back to FSJ. And in between those control points there isn't very much in the way of services or assistance. Wim knows the countryside intimately – he was able to tell us what the winds would be like, exactly how many hills there were, which stretches we would find interesting and which are a little dull and where you could get food. And he was right on all counts. The weather improved for our ride. After the chilly start, and a few showers, the sun came out and we actually finished the ride in our shorts. Val unfortunately missed the cut-off and went almost into Dawson Creek before realizing her mistake. This added another hour or so to her time.

At the finish we were treated to northern hospitality at its finest – a home cooked meal at the Kok's and lots of cycling talk. I really have to hand it to Wim – getting out there and doing the rides all on his own, through very remote areas where if you had a spill or a mechanical problem, it may be 2 hours or more before anyone came by and there is no cell phone coverage. And getting up on days when snow is threatened... I would be tempted to turn over and enjoy a few more ZZZs.

Wim has a system where he calls his wife from each control. Then if he fails to show up somewhere, she knows where to start looking – a good system. And there are areas where Wim will not cycle after dark, mostly for fear of wildlife, so he plans his routes accordingly. So for all of you who are finding it tough to motivate yourselves – just think of Wim.