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Randonneur

Marathon Cycling

Prez Sez

As I write this it's the middle of February. The daylight hours are getting noticeably longer and the weather has improved to its usual promise of an early spring. Your terminally tardy prez has even finally taken his bike out for a commute or two, having run out of excuses not to. Still a bit frosty on the ride home, mind you, but enjoyable nonetheless.

It looks like it will be a good year for the BC Randonneurs, judging by the volume of submissions to the email discussion list. A number of new or prospective members have been asking a lot of good questions about the particulars of randonneuring, and much good advice has subsequently flowed from our ever-helpful veterans. That level of friendliness and helpfulness is one of the things that make this such a great club.

For the second year in a row we will be convening an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) at the Spring Social event (scheduled for 7:00 PM, March 19 at Moose's Down Under). While I hope that this doesn't become a yearly occurrence, we feel it's necessary this year to properly handle a situation which has come up at recent executive meetings. It all has to do with the club Constitution. (I can hear the groans already, but permit me this digression).

The normal and quite understandable reaction to discussion of the Constitution is roughly akin to the reaction one gets when trying to discuss disposable nappies. It may appeal to a small minority, but most people greet it with a mix of confusion, boredom and don't-wanna-know. While the topic doesn't have the emotional and visceral appeal of a good argument over, say, mud-flap and fender rules, I believe that the Constitution is a far more important issue. Judging by recent traffic on the electronic discussion list, however, I may be in the minority. The

Constitution is important because it defines us as a legal entity under the BC Society Act. It describes how we are to conduct club business, and it defines the roles and responsibilities of the directors of the club. And therein lies the issue at hand.

For historical reasons the Constitution defines the club executive to be comprised of seven directors. These are: president, vice-president administration, vice-president Vancouver Island, vice-president Interior BC, vice-president Cycling BC randonneur sector, secretary, and treasurer. These people are elected at the AGM and thereby charged with conducting the business of the club on behalf of the club membership.

At the first executive meeting after the last AGM, I raised the point that the seven directors were, by the Society Act, held collectively responsible for decisions made on club business. It then followed, I argued, that only those seven should be entitled to vote on issues affecting the club's financial or legal status. This was contrary to how things had been handled in the past, where anybody in attendance at a meeting could vote on any issue on the table. Now, your

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average executive meeting generally includes a lot more people than just the seven directors. Normally in attendance are several key members of the club who actually do the necessary work to keep the club running. It was felt to be eminently unfair that these hard-working members should be left out of the decision-making process. After several rounds of discussion on the subject, a solution was proposed by our VP.

The Constitution makes provision for the election of additional directors "from time to time". This election must be held at a general meeting of the club members. Hence the reason for this year's EGM: the club executive will be putting a proposal before the membership to increase the number of directors to fourteen. Assuming that proposal passes, six names will then be put forward by the executive as candidates for the new positions, contingent on their acceptance of the nomination. The membership will be asked to vote on each name put forward. The remaining free position will be "up for grabs" to anybody who wishes to get him- or her-self nominated. It should be borne in mind, however, that club directorship carries a share of responsibility for the consequences of decisions made by the executive as a whole.

I would encourage anyone with a glimmering of interest in club operations to read the Constitution. It's not very long, and depending on your temperament or mood can be either a fascinating read or a cure for insomnia. An electronic copy in PDF format can be found at the BC Randonneur Web site: www.randonneurs.bc.ca/aboutbcr/club_constitution.pdf, or one can request a hardcopy from the club secretary.

Hope to see you at the EGM.

British Columbia Randonneur Marathon Cycling is the hardcopy newsletter of the BC Randonneurs Cycling Club. The BC Randonneurs are a founding member of the Randonneurs Mondiaux (1983). The club is affiliated with Cycling BC and the Canadian Cycling Association.

The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the article authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, club executive, Cycling BC, the CCA, or Randonneurs Mondiaux.

The newsletter is published four times per year. Articles and notices are posted to the club webletter at www.randonneurs.bc.ca as received (or a little later if work or riding get in the way) and subsequently edited and formatted into this newsletter. This newsletter is posted on the website and distributed to the club membership by e-mail in pdf format. If you require a hardcopy of the newsletter, please contact the newsletter editor.

Editor: Scott Gater

Submissions: Please send articles to our webmaster Eric Fergusson (eric_fergusson@telus.net) or me (sgater@alumni.sfu.ca). Our preference is plain text files or Word and digital photos in JPEG format.

Next publication deadline is May 15, 2005 .

WHAT: Social Prologue (~35 km on Vancouver bike routes and paths)

WHERE: Kitsilano Community Centre 2690 Larch (between 10th & 12th Ave)

WHEN: Saturday, March 19 @ 1400 hrs – 1730 hrs

WHY: to have a fun, casual ride and get a pin

WHO: You

Jacuzzi/sauna/shower available at the Community Centre for **\$3.60** post prologue and pre-social. Bring a towel and swimwear.

And then . . .

WHAT: Social and special EGM

WHERE: Moose's Down Under, 830 West Pender (between Howe and Hornby)

WHEN: Saturday, March 12 @ 1900 hrs

WHY: vote at the EGM, eat good food, swap Rando tales, find a Fleche team, poetry reading, look at the new clothing for sale . . .

WHO: You

COST: \$5 (what a deal)

!WANTED! TALENT For the 2005 Randonneur Social

**Pull a prank, honk your horn,
Tell a tale, tap your toes,
Sing a song... just don't be long**

See, you don't even have to be good – just entertaining.
Have your agent call Michel at 604-739-6798.

Prizes awarded if warranted.

Ps. We already have a poet lined up.
Surely you can do better than that...

For the wine lovers amongst us, this product will come as welcome news- Californian vintners in the Napa Valley area, which primarily produces Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio wines, have developed a new hybrid grape that acts as an anti-duretic. It is expected reduce the number of trips older people have to make to the bathroom during the night. The new wine will be marketed as Pino More. (February issue of the CCCTS's Newsbrief)-**Thanks to Harold Bridge for noticing this item.**

For those thinking of heading to Europe and want to try off-road cycling, but without having to camp, this item was passed on from Prez Lyle-

Belated holiday greetings and our very best wishes for the New Year to all members of the BCRCC from our team at Transalp Riders. It is the time of year again when we start forging travel plans for the summer with family or friends. For cyclists, Europe is usually near the top of the list of places to go and for good reason. We'd like to update you and your club members on our expanded tour schedule in 2005 and remind you that we'll once again extend our group discounts (5% - 15%) to members of your club.

Our tour roster should be of interest to just about any enthusiastic, traveling cyclist - 'easy or epic', 'short or long', 'down-to-earth or deluxe' - we offer a tour for just about every taste. Browse around on our website www.transalpriders.com and call / write us for any information we could be of assistance with. Wishing you all the best for your upcoming club activities and rides and we look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers, Christoph
Christoph Gniesser (Ph.D., U.Calgary)
TRANSALP RIDERS: inn-to-inn mountain biking across the Alps
email: info@transalpriders.com
web: www.transalpriders.com
Call: 1(800)920-ALPS (from the U.S. & Canada)

On May 18, The Ride of Silence will roll across North America, starting at 7 pm local time. In more than 50 cities, cyclists will take to the road in a silent procession to honour cyclists killed or injured while cycling on public roadways. Although cyclists have a legal right to share the road with motorists, the motoring public is not always aware of these rights, and sometimes not aware of the cyclists at all. Chris Phelan organized the first Ride of Silence last May after endurance cyclist Larry Schwartz was hit by the mirror of a passing bus and was killed.

The Ride of Silence is a free ride that asks its cyclists to ride no faster than 12 mph and remain silent throughout the ride. There is no brochure, no sponsors, no registration fee and no T-shirt. The ride, which is being held during Bike Safety Month, aims to raise the awareness of motorists, police and city officials that cyclists have a legal right to the public roadways. The Ride is also a chance to show respect for those who have been killed or injured. Riders are encouraged to wear black armbands if they knew a cyclist who was killed on the roads, and red armbands if they've been harassed by motorists themselves.

For more information, the official web site is www.rideofsilence.org

Hot off the press!

Congratulations to Ron Himschoot!!! In the latest edition of the American Randonneur, the newsletter of Randonneurs USA, the top news story is that Ron Himschoot of the Seattle International Randonneurs and frequent-flyer with the BC Randonneurs, has earned the newly created RUSA Ultra-Randonneur Award for RUSA members who have ridden ten Super Randonneur series.

Ron is also known as carrying almost as much food on the bike as Stephen Hinde, but is also reputed to carry spare parts and tools for just about any occasion. Leading to the successful completion of many brevets which might have become "dnf's).

Way to go Ron!!
This news brought to our attention by Ken Bonner.

Coming Events

Spring Social – March 19

Special General Meeting

Moose's Down Under
Michel Richard 739-6798

Spring Social Ride- March 19

2pm Kits community Centre
Karen Smith 732-0212

Seattle 200 – Mar 19

Ennumclaw
Greg Cox 253-639-2928

Island Populaire – Mar 27

Southgate Tim Hortons,
Nanaimo
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

Peace Populaires I – April 3

50 km: Fort St. John
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Pacific Populaire – Apr 4

9 am: Riley Park
Danelle Laidlaw 421-1717

Island 200 – Apr 9

50, 100, 150 also available
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

Seattle 300- April 9

Peter Beeson 206-618-9410

Peace Populaires I – April 10

50 km: Fort St. John
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

L. Mainland 200 – Apr 16

Lower Mainland
Manfred 448-8892
Kuchenmuller

Peace Populaire April 17

100/150
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Island 300 – Apr 23

Duncan or Victoria
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

Fleche Northwest -Apr 23-25

Finish @ Semiahmoo
Peter McKay

Kamloops 200 – Apr 23

Kamloops
Bob Boonstra 250-828-2869

Lower Mainland 300-April 30

Deidre Arscott 222-3587

2004 Season Review

by Eric Fergusson

There is an expectation for ride participation to drop off in the year following Paris Brest Paris and that is what happened in BC in 2004. But it didn't drop that much this time around - our club distance total was 195,558 km which is actually slightly higher than the 2002 figure, making 2004 the second biggest year in club history. And by the way, this doesn't include all those Rocky Mountain 1200 finishes by riders from outside BC. (If we include this group, 2004 was by far our biggest year ever - 263,758 km.)

There is another expectation that has emerged in recent years... that **Ken Bonner's** personal distance total will be a factor in making those distance cash registers go "KACHING". Here too, expectations were realized, but then exceeded. Ken's total of 14,337 km breaks his own club distance record from 2002. The total has earned Ken his third consecutive John Hathaway Trophy (a.k.a. the iron butt award), and not a competitor in sight--he tripled the total of the next rider on the list. Here's how it happened... Ken completed all three North American 1200s, 2 x 1000, 4 x 600, Alberta Hell Week, and a lot of loose change. But the highlight has to be Ken's extraordinary performance at our own Rocky Mountain 1200. He flew around the course in 52:20, arriving back in Kamloops fresh as a daisy, and all smiles (see photo!) His time was just 18 minutes off Austrian Otmar Altmann's course record from 2002, and six hours faster than the next 2004 finisher. And for those of you keeping track, Ken's marathon count is now at 152--he ran only 5 in 2004, but had some good performances including a 3:29:18 in Seattle which was good enough for first (of 31) in his age category. He's now 62.

It seems we can always count on fireworks from Ken, but one thing we can never predict is who will be on the roster of rando rookies, and what they will show us. Like the previous year, you don't have to go very far down the iron butt list to find the 2004 *rookie of the year* - the first-time Super Randonneur who does the most event distance. **Scott Gater** did the super-sized brevet series (through 1000 km), and then nipped off to Australia for his first 1200, "GSR" the Great Southern Randonnée. A bad weather DNF on the summer LM600 prevented him from registering the highest rookie total ever, but there's still room to be dazzled by Scott's event distance total of 4600 km.

Also like 2003, the rookie field was deep. On the iron butt list, there were THREE rookies in the top ten, including **Jim Fiddler** who was over 4000 km and **Lindsay Martin** who was just a sliver under. In all there were 9 first-time Super Randonneurs. The six others were **Gary Baker**, **Graham Clark**, **Graham Willoughby**, **David Lach**, **Alan Liles** and **Bud MacRae**. Chapeau! But wait... there's something's missing here, isn't there? Right, no chicks! And this is one of the things that usually sets us apart in the world of randonneur cycling.

I was tempted to sneak Jaye Haworth on to the list, but *ringer imports* don't count. There were two legitimate candidates in 2004: **Margaret Elliot**, who completed the challenging "Toil to the Toll" 400 but didn't attempt a 600 km, and **Melissa Friesen**, who suffered two bad weather DNF 600s. You can do it M & M, you were so close. (No pressure though.)

2004 saw the introduction of a new club award - one that was probably long overdue. The "Roger Street Award" will be given annually to a club member for "outstanding contribution to BC Randonneurs." The trophy was generously donated by **Ali and Roger Holt** and named in honour of our great friend **Roger Street** who died while riding his bike in February of 2003. It was an idea suggested several years ago by **Ken Bonner** at the Flèche Pacifique, and he had one particular person in mind at the time: **Harold Bridge**. Harold had done a wonderful job of organizing the Flèche that year, and had done so much else for the club for so many years. It perhaps wasn't too much of a surprise that the first recipient of the Roger Street Award was indeed Harold Bridge. After bagging his prize, Harold hopped on his steel steed and rolled out of Dodge... As other local randonneurs have done before, Harold embarked on a cross Canada odyssey (though most don't wait until they're 76 years old.) It was an Island to Island route (Victoria to St. John's): 81 days, 4594 miles (7350 km), 1 flat (Harold says: "Flat tyres? I don't believe in 'em."), and 10-15 pounds mysteriously missing.

In addition to Harold, a few others had something to say with their bikes off the club calendar in '04. In July, **Craig Premack** battled 38° Okanagan heat in his bronze medal performance at the Canadian road race championships in the 40-49 age category.

It won't be a shock to learn that **Scott Gater** wins the gold bidon for traveling the farthest (South Australia) to ride an event in 2004, but surprisingly **Bill Kitchen** traveled only slightly less distance to ride his over-seas brevet. Bill found himself in Europe in June and had a great time riding the "Sicily No Stop Tre" 1000 km randonnée. (He would like you to start calling him by his new Sicilian name: "Guillermo".) In March **Stephen Hinde** and **Doug Latornell** completed the challenging Mt. Fuji 200 km course which makes its way around Japan's most famous landmark. Omedetou Stephen sensei, Doug sensei.

A few *riders-from-away* did some big distance in BC last season. **David Strong**, **Ron Himschoot**, **Dave Johnson**, **Michael Sturgess**, and **Chris Copeland** all made the honorary iron butt list for riding lots of event kms in BC (without having ridden a Super Rando series in BC - riding a series would have put them on the actual contenders list.) **Dave Strong** did only two brevets up here last summer, but they totalled 2200 km. He was a little busy elsewhere to drop by more often - his combined US and Canadian brevet distance total was 7700 km.

All this, and I haven't mentioned what most would consider the highlight of the year: the Rocky Mountain 1200. There were 94 starters from 8 countries, 75 finishers, 78 volunteers, favourable weather, and good spirits all around the course. On the rider's side, there was an 80% completion rate. You know about Ken Bonner's remarkable ride already, but there was a fast time on the yang side this time around also - local girl **Susan Barr** lowered the woman's record by 3 ½ hours (to 71:09), riding in this her first ultra. It almost goes without saying that the volunteers were fantastic... But I think we should say it loudly and frequently: YOU GUYS WERE FANTASTIC ! And this goes double for the ride organizers **Susan Allen, Doug Latornell** and **Sharon Street** whose planning and attention to detail made this sixth Rocky Mountain 1200 an unqualified organizational triumph. How ever will we match this?

Well that about wraps up '04. Hats off to outgoing club President **Michel Richard** for steering this big ship through waters both rough and calm, and "hail" to incoming President **Lyle Beaulac** who is already doing a superior job of keeping the leaks plugged.

Looking ahead to '05, there are a number of interesting additions to the schedule. The "Halfmoaner" Populaire will be merged with the Lower Mainland Summer 200 to give us the first ever brevet on the Sunshine Coast (July 9) - don't miss this scenic roller. We were sad to have to say good bye to **Gord Cook** this year who moved away... well kind of. We are pleased to announce the return of the Nelson brevets weekend (September 3-6) which this time around will be expanded to include 200, 300, 400, 600, & 1000 km options. The series is being organized by... Gord Cook... who I guess didn't move far enough away. In Penticton **Tina Hoeben** is adding a 300 km brevet to the 200 offered in 2004 - I think I spot a pattern.

And finally, a piece of good news for iron butt trophy aspiries. **Ken Bonner** has let it slip that he won't be riding as much brevet distance this coming season. Don't raise your hopes too much mind. He went on to say that in addition to tallying non brevet UMCA distance, he would be attempting all four scheduled 1200s in the US. (But that's only 4800 km.) Looks like there's a window of opportunity here. And Ken's trophy case (room? wing?) is getting a little crowded. Let's help him make some space. RANDOS... FLEX YOUR ENGINES!

Ride Reports from 2004

Taming the Squirrel

by Eric Fergusson

We abandoned in Longview - 516 km. After 322 km of unfavourable winds, and the miserable 111 km slog up western Alberta's highway 22 in the cold rain and unrelenting headwinds, John, Danelle, Michel, and I had reached the moment when we had to decide whether it was safe to risk crossing Canada's highest elevation paved highway pass in gale conditions. Longview is the approach town to Highwood Pass. Also called "Storm Pass," Highwood Pass climbs to 2206 m. through Peter Lougheed Provincial Park in the portion of the Rockies southeast of Banff and Canmore. The park only opens in early June and the chatter in Longview's Four Winds Cafe was that at the summit we'd be facing snow, not rain. "It's snowed in June before, you know..." Chortle, chortle. To make our decision easier was the fact that the time limit was quickly closing in on us despite the six hours of hard riding immediately behind us. Not only would we be risking the effects of severe weather, but we'd have to make really good time on the climb. Impossible.

But now our immediate problem became *how* to abandon halfway through a 1000 in a town with no easy transport options to return to base camp in Cranbrook. Should we get a room and hope for improved conditions tomorrow? - we could carry on with the route on bike unofficially, or retrace our steps down to highway 3 "Crownsnest" and back to Cranbrook that way. But in the mindset of the moment, these options were secondary - all four of us would prefer a solution involving less bike, and more horse power. So while Michel, John and I finished our meals in the Four Winds, Danelle stepped out into the rain to 'work' Longview. "She's good at this" said John. This was understatement, as we were all aware. If anyone could find a pick-up truck with room in back for the bikes, and a heated cab destined for Canmore or Cranbrook, on Main Street, Nowheres Ville, AB., it was Danelle. Too many cooks, and all that - "Another round of tea and coffee please."

Around the table, we attempted to ease our disappointment by putting some perspective on the situation. The run of bad weather luck for the big three spring rides - Flèche, 600, and 1000 km - for the past two years was beyond belief. Six rides with conditions ranging from the soggy but tolerable (the warm rain on 2004 Abbotsford 600), to the extreme - the icy nighttime ride down highway 9 to Sedro Woolley on Flèche 2003, the miserable downpour at the end of the LM 600km preride that same year, and especially the frigid descent from Poulson summit on the Crownsnest 1000 also in 2003. This was to say nothing of the Flèche that Michel and I had so casually abandoned when faced with a little rain a month earlier.

In fact Michel and I had faced all six of these trials together and the weight of them was taking its toll. When will we be

able to show up for a big ride without having to face rain and cold?

John and Danelle had shared in several of the experiences and seemed similarly underinspired to face the ongoing stresses of endurance cycling. Weeks earlier they had abandoned the Kamloops 400 because of a little headwind, and went touring for the day. Around the table enthusiasm was so low that the talk was not only about abandoning the ride, but abandoning the sport altogether. Michel mused about getting back to ultra distance running... "car rallying" said John - he was serious.

When Danelle returned, the rain had for the moment stopped, but the skies remained unwelcoming. The bad news was that even Danelle was unable to fix this situation. Perhaps moving to the intersection of highways 22 and the 40 (the road through Loughheed Park), and hitchhiking would get results. We wouldn't have to wait in the rain if we left now. Danelle also mentioned that the word 'round town was that it had been raining up top, but that conditions were generally favourable to the north. ...then, a hint of sun on hills to the east of town...

I went across the road to the general store and picked up a pair of 3 dollar work gloves, and two plastic bags - an extra layer over my hands and feet. I was just keeping my options open you understand. But when I got back to the Four Winds, John said "It looks like you've made a decision." I hadn't fully realized it, but I think he may have been right. Or maybe him saying what he said made the decision for me. In an instant Michel began pulling on his booties and then next thing I knew the two of us were on the road. Was this courage or insanity?

The hours which followed made our worries in Longview seem ludicrous. There was in fact no more rain on that day or for the rest of the ride. Highwood pass was an easy gentle grade climb. The northwesterly we'd faced all day was suddenly a mild tailwind. At Highwood summit it was, unbelievably, sunny and warm. On the wildlife-rich descent through Loughheed Park, and the fast traverse on Highway #1 to Canmore, we picked up so much time that we earned the luxury of a full night's sleep.

Meanwhile back in NowheresVille, AB., John and Danelle had indeed gone to the crossroads to mooch a lift to Canmore... But in the improving conditions Danelle said they could just as easily pedal further up the road and catch a ride from there. So with the time limit nipping at their spurs, John and Danelle remounted their steed, adjusted their Stetsons, and moseyed out of town into the setting sun. Once on the road...

John and Danelle arrived in Canmore, by bike!, just 30 minutes after Michel and me. Apparently on the descent the tandem peaked at 91 km/hr. Woosh.

Riding on Monday was, well, euphoric. The run down through Kootenay Park featured extraordinary wildlife and

mountain peaks, and a sparkling river winding through the beautifully treed valley in bright sunshine. Even the interesting burn patterns of charred forests on the north end seemed to fascinate. At one point, on the opposite grassy verge a buck and juvenile deer paced us hoof for pedal stroke at 30 km for about 30 seconds. Incredible. Rather than being a source of concern, the deep interlacing vertical cracks in the shoulder became source of amusement. A new sport - crevice surfing.

I'm still trying to find the lesson in all this. I often hear myself saying things like "you've got to just keep riding, even if slowly" or "don't allow yourself to think that it's impossible." But it's never quite that simple out there, is it? Every situation is a new test, and sometimes the best option is to DNF like we did in Longview... well, like we almost did.

(Route name description) - The "squirrel on a stick" route is an Alberta Randonneurs route, half in BC and half in Alberta. (They call it the "Storm 1000".) Phil Andre from Portland brought it to our attention this spring and John immediately started tinkering with it. The first map I got from John showed a route outline which looked unmistakably like a squirrel, up on its hind quarters, with a big bushy tail... a Columbia ground squirrel???? "Yes, I see that Daddy" said Catherine, "but what about that line sticking out of its tail?" (She was referring to the Pincher Creek/Waterton out & back leg.) "Squirrel... on a Stick!" pronounced (wife) Sian. Subsequent revisions saw the tail trimmed - route 2 was replaced by the less trafficked route 22.

Much of the route has the flavour of the Rocky Mountain 1200 with those characteristically chiseled peaks and ranges. But I saw ten times as much wildlife on this route as on Rocky 2002. The route also covers the ranchlands of Alberta's Rocky Mountain foothills, a lovely out and back leg to Elkford, Crowsnest pass and the Frank slide, and a picturesque run alongside Columbia Lake en route back in from Radium Hot Springs to Cranbrook. Mind you, the ending's a bit of a bitch. To make up a very slight distance shortfall, the route finishes by taking the western diversion of highway 93 at 956 km, which includes a nasty climb up through Kimberley - apparently the highest elevation city in Canada at 1113m.* Still, this route's a keeper - mark it in down your long range planner.

*Note: Banff (1383m.) and Lake Louise (1536m.) are higher, but are not "cities".

Rocky Mountain 1200: Encore!

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

Introduction

Every second year BC Randonneurs organize(s) a challenge: cycle 1200 km through one of the most spectacular settings in the world in 90 hours or less. For many, completing this [distance] is incomprehensible. Two reflections here. First, Olympic distance runner Emile Zatopek noted that 'if you wish to race, do a 100m sprint; if you want an experience do a marathon'. Second, '[On] the *Camino* ([Note 1](#)), your best friends will be blisters, heat, pain, and snoring travellers - if this is for you, then you will really enjoy your pilgrimage.' Of course one immediately thinks about randonneuring, for this too is both a personal and shared experience.

Having completed the RM 1200 in 2002 and PBP in 2003, I wanted to do another 1200 km brevet. This time the choice was between RM 1200 and BMB. Although I briefly toyed with the idea of doing them both, I dropped that when faced with the logistics of juggling too many things. So it was RM 1200 *encore*. While for an *ancien* the 84 hour start may have been the obvious, I selected the 90-hour start. As an *ancien* I recalled the heat in Kamloops in 2002, and a remark from a then 84 hour starter, that the heat almost did him in. Thus, the game plan was a night start, to cycle away from the heat and complete the ride in about 80 hours with sleep breaks in Jasper (Km 445), Golden (Km 850) and Salmon Arm (Km 1094).

Training in the pre-season was similar to previous years. By the end of May I had completed a 200, 300, 382 (Fleche) and 600 km brevets. In early June I reduced the amount of cycling to shorter and more intense rides. In mid-June my wife and I took a well deserved holiday - says I - and without a bicycle! Some people, those who know me, wondered whether I was sick. A no-winner, because similar questions are asked when they find out that I cycle brevet distances. Admittedly, I did borrow a bike for two fast rides during our holidays. After returning in mid-July, there was one week left to get rid of jet lag, and ready for the RM 1200. A few fast 30 km rides felt good. I was well rested and relaxed for the upcoming event. Upon arrival in Kamloops another short intense ride in the heat, and more relaxation. So relaxed in fact, that my hosts had to suggest that it was time for me to get going to the start.

Vanishing into the Darkness.

Just before 10 pm, first Doug's speech, followed by the now familiar count-down, and we were off. Trying to start off slowly, but being familiar with the route, Roger Holt and I found ourselves at the head of the pack, contrary to all rando wisdom. This was rather ironic, since I had explained to my Kamloops hosts that no-way would I be in the lead pack when we'd be passing through Rayleigh just north of the city.

After about 40 minutes a few riders picked up the pace -- precisely at the foot of an uphill section to be clear,

as if adding insult to injury-- so my body and sanity told me to let them go. In usual fashion the pack was torn to shreds. Soon after near Barriere, a smaller group formed and made it to **Control #1: Clearwater (Km 122 2:30 am)** at a good pace. A short break and then northward across the Messiter Summit, our first significant climb, to **Control # 2: Blue River (Km 228: 7:31 am)**. This time no bugs to welcome us. No concern about West Nile virus either. What a relief! We stopped for an hour long leisurely breakfast, and met one of Norway's winter Olympians from decades ago. The road to *Tete Jaune Cache* was steadily uphill. Combine a headwind with many false flats and you have a premier challenge. False flats are sections, which deceptively elevate you to greater heights, but at a price: the danger of physical exhaustion and mental anguish.

After we had regrouped, Grant McLeod, Jon Kramer, Larry Brenize and I decided to ride smarter. We organized a pace-line. Each of us would lead for about 2.5 clicks, then drop to the back, so that each could enjoy a nice draft and chance for recovery. Soon we picked up another rider, Bernie Barge, whom we invited to join us, only on one simple condition: that he tow us all the way to Tete Jaune Cache! Of course this was a 'sick joke' on yours truly's part - sorry Bernie -- but we did extend to him what we did to ourselves: each a 2.5 km pull, then draft. This gave each of us (including Bernie) recovery for a 10 km. Except for one flat tire and a startled black bear, the ride to **Control # 3: Tete Jaune Cache (Km 338:13:30 pm)** went very smooth. After a great soup, a shower and re-stocking supplies, John, Grant and I then headed for Jasper. This section started with a nice downhill to Mount Robson. Soon both road and temperatures rose in percentages and degrees respectively. Serious business! At Moose Lake we called for a short break to test its turquoise waters. Oh so refreshing! Back on the bike, I briefly thought about changing my planned Jasper sleep break to Beauty Creek, some 85 km further along the route and at least another 4 hours of uphill cycling. When I got to **Control 4: Jasper (Km 443:19:30 pm)** the thought of a shower, meal and snooze became irresistible. I was easily seduced. The mind-set of a planned break made it difficult to switch plans. Mind games? Mind control?

By 2 am we were on the road again to **Control # 5: Beauty Creek (Km 530: 06:10 am)**. Since 2 am was really 3 am Alberta time, it meant that daylight was just around the corner and below the horizon. At Beauty Creek a life-size rando puppet sat on the barricade, silently greeting us. The early morning was rather cold, but inside the rustic cabin nothing but warmth: wood stove, breakfast, coffee, and of course the crew. Wonderful place with an energizing atmosphere. The climb to the Icefield Centre was absolutely gorgeous, dazzling and of course resistingly uplifting!! The descent our proverbial downfall.

At the summit we regrouped with 7 or 8 riders. In no time were we down on the flats to Saskatchewan Crossing, our halfway point of the RM 1200. Robert, a friend of mine, had cycled in from Lake Louise. We had lunch at the Crossing and then cycled the hot long climb up to the Bow

Pass for a few Kodak moments on John's camera. Then a long descent to **Control# 6: Lake Louise (Km 676: 15:26 pm)** with a second flat tire after hitting a small rock on the fast downhill. The almost 50 km return loop via **Control #7: Castle Mountain (Km 701: 17:13 pm)** was great, except for 'nother flat, my third and final one on this ride. 't Was a 'sleaker' (slow leaker: new word), which fortunately held to Lake Louise on the return (Km 726). At the control David Blanche and Barry Bogart, in true rando spirit, helped me repair the tire and get reorganized (Thanks!!) and then it was off to Golden. When approached from the East, the Kicking Horse is not much of a pass; the downhill on the other hand is absolutely wicked: a heeeeeeee-haw moment! Can't help but think that randos will always be randos, I guess.

John and I did discuss taking a break in Field, but at C\$ 150.00 for a few hours sleep, our wallets revolted and we decided against that idea. Daylight was still with us and the 20 minute delay in Field gave us enough recovery to put on the afterburners for a fast trek to **Control # 8 Golden (Km 811: 22:39 pm)**. A shower, a great feed with meatloaf, mashed potatoes and *haricots verts* (a PBP flashback!) and four hours of sleep. Wonderful. This is randonneuring in style! To beat the heat we were back on the road by 4 am Saturday morning. Two long climbs, first a nameless one with an almost never-ending ascent and almost uncooperative descent into the Beaver River valley. Here the ascent to Rogers Pass started. This climb is relatively short, quite do-able, and rewards you with two marvelous treats at the summit: (1) the stunning view, and (2) the Best Western. Anyone stopping at the convenience store next door would have missed the latter with its fabulous smorgasbord. This meal is worth the price of admission to the RM 1200. If you missed it, may I suggest to sign up for the 2006 edition of RM 1200, so you can experience what you cycled past in 2004.

From Rogers Pass it was just about all downhill to **Control# 9 Revelstoke (Km 959:12:18 pm)**. As we dropped, the temperature rose: the predicted heat wave became a reality. In Revelstoke we recharged our batteries with first a cold shower, then food and lots of V8 juice. No search in town for Italian espresso this time, but onto Enderby. While road construction outside Revelstoke caused a bit of delay, the heat was our worst enemy. Near Malakwa we cycled past a group of randonneurs eating ice cream at a road side stand. A bit later we watched that same group cycling by, as we took a break. The temperatures soared to 38 0C (if not higher), because my 'instrument panel' recorded temperature in the low forties. This was partially due to the black sensor's absorption of direct sunlight as well as the heat from the pavement (Aren't we exposed to this either?)

Near Sicamous we formed a group of 6: Richard, Dave, Gary, Susan, John and I cruised at high speed along the shores of Mara Lake. Where we got the energy from I still don't know. Through the grape-vine - after all we were on the north-end of wine country - we had heard that there would be ice-cream at the next control. Hot weather, ice-

cream, mmmmm!! That may have been the driving force, which kept us going to **Control # 10: Enderby (Km 1072: 18:16 pm)**, where Dan and Bud took excellent care of us for a quick turnaround. But, no ice cream. Who spread this rumour anyway? :-(-(-. In true rando spirit however, we overcame both disappointment and the subsequent long hill into Salmon Arm. I must have consumed about 2 liter water on this 22 km stretch, evidence that the heat was starting to take its toll. We arrived quite early at **Control # 11: Salmon Arm (Km 1094: 19:52 pm)**, so that the planned sleep break seemed rather premature. What to do? Refresh, refurbish, recover and return to the road for a 2:00 am arrival in Kamloops? Riding in the dark, with lots of heat, evening traffic and construction zones gave pause for thought. Go for an estimated finish time of about 75 hours, or take a break. After all we had till Sunday afternoon to complete the final 112 km. As we set at the table enjoying our food, John loudly lamented the missing ice cream at the Enderby control. Pouting :-), and feeling sorry for ourselves, again :-), caused Melissa to take pity on us. She proved a good sport, showed the true character of a control captain and went to town for ice-cream. Wonderful. Could it get any better? We decided to call it a night.

At the crack of dawn, Dan Clinkinbeard, John and I left Salmon Arm . The conditions were ideal. Just about no traffic; temperature 14 0C. Later upon our arrival in Kamloops it would be rise to 25 0C. So we moved steadily to Kamloops, via Sorrento, across the Chase hill to the finish line. Suddenly, almost anti-climactic and uneventful, we arrived at the *Kamloops Control (Km 1206: 09:06 am)*. Total time elapsed 83 hrs:06 min with about 14 hours of sleep. And then there was the beer. A Heineken! It tasted wonderful. What distance a rando will cycle for her/his beer!! It was well worth it.

The post-event dinner was well organized. Meeting more riders and volunteers over good food and cheer, while reminiscing about the latest experiences. Interestingly, the 'ghost' from the past came up to me and introduced himself as Ken Dobb, similar to the name on his tag. First reactions, our mutual pleasure to meet. He then revealed his real, and intended alias: *Charles Terront* (winner of the first PBP in 1893), who by the way looked amazingly alive and well. No sign of age or resurrection. Needless to say that it was neat to learn who the mystery rider was, hinted at in an earlier submission to the newsletter.

Overall, the ride went very relaxed. I started well rested. Compared to the RM 1200 two years ago, this time I was able to maintain a slightly higher pace while riding. Managing the controls more efficiently and getting more sleep (14 vs 6 hours) made all the difference. The experience of two previous 1200 km brevets enabled me a more relaxed attitude, which no doubt enhanced the quality of the event.

Physically I recovered quite quickly from the event, so much that I was able to complete a few more brevets in August and September. Surprisingly, I noted that I actually gained a bit of weight during the event. Then again, think about it this way: randonneuring after all is a sedentary

sport with lots of eating. No wonder!

As a final thought, Sharon, Susan and Doug thanks for organizing this wonderful event and experience. To all the volunteers, you were wonderful. I had a great time. To my fellow riders, it was fun. Thanks.

Note 1: El Camino de Santiago is a very old pilgrimage used by hikers (nowadays also cyclists) from many different departure points in Europe to travel the Way of the Cross of St. James to Santiago di Compostela in Spain.

Colorado Last Chance 1200 (2004)

by Ken Bonner

Wh-u-u-m-p! Wh-u-u-m-p! The sudden gusts of wind toss me across U.S. Highway 36 and knock me out of my fascination with the dramatic strikes of gigantic bolts and sheets of lightning all around me. A light drizzle of rain begins. The electric wires are buzzing and the heavens are a constant roar of thunder. I stop at the end of a driveway which leads to the lights of an isolated farm house. I need to think about things!

Prior to leaving Boulder on our eastward excursion onto the plains of Kansas (formerly known as the Great American Desert), John Lee Ellis, brevet director, advises us that the predicted high temperatures will be in the mid-eighties F.; and, there was a likelihood of evening showers. Yesterday and today have been in the mid-nineties F. For some time, since dusk, I have been wondering about where John has been getting his weather forecasts maybe "That Old Black Magic.com" website? However, I have not been wondering too much since I've been making great time with the help of a very strong tail wind. Now, I start to think about the very dark and forbidding clouds which were on the south and north of me ... what happened to that channel of clear sky directly west towards the foothills of the Rockies?

I lean against my bike with my butt to the wind. I've put on my rain-jacket and am munching a p.b & jam sandwich I carried with me. A pick-up truck passes by and I see he applies his brakes, then turns around and drives up to me. "You O.K.", he asks. I reply in the affirmative. "Well", he says, "you are going to get hammered! There's heavy rain and hail just up ahead, sure you don't want to jump in?" "No", I say in my naivety "I've got my rain jacket, I'll be fine!" He looks at me as if I am out of my mind and I watch his blurred tail-lights (rain on my glasses) disappear into the darkness and lightning. Hey, after experiencing 20 solid hours of torrential downpour, thunder and lightning at B-M-B just a couple of weeks ago, I can handle anything! Besides, the weather forecast was for night-time showers this little event should blow away in a few minutes.

Ten minutes later. Still propped against my bike trying to keep from being blown across the highway. The light rain has now become a heavy horizontal "downpour" mixed with hail. My body temperature is dropping rapidly and the storm seems to have settled in. Where is that pick-up truck driver now? Should I fill my cleats with sand by

walking into the isolated farm house and likely get bitten by the owner's farm dog? Where is the culvert I am supposed to crawl into (along with rattle-snakes and other unknown dangerous creatures!) if I encounter a tornado? Finally, I decide to risk the dog, pick up my bike to turn it around, and wh-o-o-o-sh, it is suddenly plucked up from the ground and I am hanging onto it by the cross-bar as it assumes the horizontal position. I desperately cling to it so it doesn't head off on its own into the Land of Oz!

The kind farmer provides shelter, the use of his telephone and stores my bike on his front porch. My wife, Margot, who has been waiting at the next control 25 miles away, wondering when she was going to get hit by a bolt of lightning, bravely drives back to the farm house and then I drive nearly 90 miles to the motel in Byers, Colorado, where I had planned to cycle to during the night. The next morning, clear and cold, I drive back to the farm-house and start riding west once again. Off the bike for 12 1/2 hours. The farmer has informed me that we were probably on the edge of a tornado, as all during the day, there had been reports of tornadoes just north of his farm. So much for the prediction of "night showers"! Also, "Adios" to my hopes of finishing around 60 hours so I could drive to the San Francisco 1000k brevet.

The day passes, clear and sometimes with a tail-wind, sometimes with a head-wind. We have a new wrinkle this year. Instead of heading directly into Boulder on the way back, we take a little detour up to a place called Kersey. Like the end of so many 1200 k brevets, this is probably a very scenic route, but on the dark, rural backroads, one feels trapped in a bad dream it's getting colder (I should have brought more warm clothing!) my hands, feet and body suffer everytime we drop down a hill. Please, please, no more downhill! Did I miss a turn? The back wheel feels funny ... it has acquired a nice bounce it did not have a few minutes ago. A slow leak? No, probably just a loose spoke? Bump, oops, that was the rim hitting the pavement. Maybe I can finish the last 50 miles on a flat tire? A porch light shines on the road, so I come to the conclusion that I might as well fix the flat where there is light. A pick-up truck goes past, brake lights go on and it turns around (is this the same pick-up I experienced earlier in the ride?!!) It stops a few yards behind me and its bright lights help me see while changing the tire and tube. Just as I wave "thanks" into the lights the driver's door opens and a woman gets out. I probably don't look too well -- tired, cold and unshaven for several days and it's close to midnight. . Once again I am offered help (a ride). I decline, saying I have ridden 700 miles and only have 50 to go.

The lady is impressed! She wants to congratulate me by shaking my greasy hand! I show her my blackened hand and express my appreciation, but she insists on shaking my hand anyway! Colorado folks are just plain friendly!

I finish the ride frozen to the core. The next day, John Ellis organizes a post-Last Chance dinner and we trade stories.

If you go, be prepared for: friendly people -- not only the riders and organizers, but the folks that live along the way. U.S. Highway 36 should be known as the "friendliest highway in America", even the trailer trucks provide lots of room for cyclists. This includes the trucks coming from the opposite direction, as they seem to understand that they kick up a tremendous side wind when they pass

extremes in the weather. Although this is a relatively benign time of year (September), temperatures can range from the high 100's to the high 30's Fahrenheit.

Strong head, side and tail-winds. No shade, no bicycle repair shops and no place to hide when nature calls! foothills --- eventually one gets to the flat plains, but the foothills seem to last forever (and you can see them for miles and miles and miles and)

Highwood Fall Classic: A 300 km Brevet in Alberta's Kananaskis Country

by E.W. (Wim) Kok

Brevet Organizer Peace Region

If there is one brevet randonneurs ought to seriously consider, it is the Highwood Fall Classic in SW Alberta. This 310 km round trip organized by the Alberta Randonneurs (Note 1) starts in Cochrane and rolls westward along Hwy 1A to about 7 km shy of Exshaw, then connects with Hwy 40 south to enter mountain paradise. The route steadily climbs, including a 12 km uphill crawl to the Highwood Pass, then down to Highwood House. Here the route turns NE to Longview, from where there are only 100 km left for the return via Black Diamond, Turner Valley and Bragg Creek to Cochrane.

The scenery is in one word sparkling; the landscape provides an incredible contrast and diversity: plains and mountain ranges, valleys and passes, the alpine, forests, wilderness, farm and ranch land. One thing to consider before undertaking this ride: the fickleness of the wind. Mountain breezes, valley winds, turbulence, tail winds, headwinds, side winds, gusts, uphill winds, you name it and you'll wind up with or against them, notwithstanding your preferences. The route offers a lot of variety in terms of the human and natural landscape.

Contrasts, sudden changes yet seamless in their transition. Having traveled, hiked and camped in what is affectionately known as Kananaskis Country, I've had an eye on this brevet for awhile.

Sunday September 5, 2004 I started from the Cochrane Husky gas station in the dark, did four left turns- I don't know if these are politically correct in Alberta - but they got me onto #1A west. Soon first daylight cast the long shadow of the lone rider. That same daylight threw a red morning glow on the alpine snow, collected by the mountains in days past. Meanwhile I moved through a gentle landscape, glacially sculpted and shaped. On my right I noted a drumlin, compelled to rest forever since its abandonment by retreating ice way back when. Suddenly -- I must have startled it -- a whitetail deer challenged me, sped on my left,

effortlessly cleared one fence like an Olympic hurdler, crossed in front of me, graciously cleared yet another fence in similar fashion, then abruptly stopped to look back and see who was victorious. No match.

Occasionally the road crossed a coulee filled with a trickle of running water and cool crisp air. The wind picked up, a headwind judging by gas plant flares pointing east, and my slowing pace going west. Two squad cars with howling sirens screamed past, rudely disturbing the morning peace. In the distance a wall came ever closer, the Rocky Mountains. At the junction with 1X the choice was: 'turn south or continue west'. While the route sheet appeared ambiguous, the route map was clear. Not being familiar with the route, I ignored the map and ended up in Exshaw, a bit too far west. Indeed, a map at a gas station confirmed that I should have turned onto 1X. This was painful, because the extra 7 clicks (downhill/headwind) to Exshaw were slower than the 7 km uphill/tail wind back track. C'est la vie d'un randonneur. Once reconnected, I took 1X along Seebe, as of August 31/04 Canada's newest ghost town, latest victim of corporate decision-making. The 4 km stretch with a westerly breeze along the Trans Canada Highway going east, made up for lost time. Checked in at Control # 1: Barrier Lake Visitor Centre (Km 67), took a brief break and continued up Hwy 40. The winds were now trying to conquer me sideways. For the first 10 km past Control # 2: Fortress Junction (Km 105) I could maintain a good pace. This felt promising. Then the ride became a matter of mind and matter over grade and gravity. In plain English: the going got tough. The grade steepened, the temperature dropped. Ah, those lapse rates can explain it all. It was near freezing, which meant snow in the mountains. Skies darkened with clouds showing their winter fluffiness. After all it had snowed in days before; the white powder draped the mountain peaks to elevations where birds of prey were soaring. I tried the same, but the ride turned into a crawl.

These majestic mountains were imposing; I tried the same, too, but felt more like tiny Wim (with due apologies to Charles Dickens) scaling the ascent to the Highwood Pass (7,220 feet/2,209 m above sea level). This road is after all known as Canada's highest paved road, and is only open from June 15 to November 30 every year.

After I conquered the pass it was downhill all the way, literally that is. No wildlife signs, but lots of signs: wildlife. There was one dead elk, victim of collision. Along the road Alberta beef grazing on the range; on the road their pies resting. Dodging them became quite an art. Come to think of it mudguards could indeed be multi-purpose. (Hmmm, cow-pie-guards?) Even more artful was negotiating the many Texas-gates at high speed on the down hill section: try and aim for the metal strips on them. Well, if you miss the strip, the consequence a posterior sense of being hit by a hail of shotgun pellets. Not that I ever had that experience, but I successfully avoided that option. The posterior was grateful, I think. At Highwood Junction (House) the route went NE under a new name, while Hwy

40 turns south and turned gravelly connecting with Coleman (Crowsnest Pass). Took ten minutes rest, a quick bite and a strong coffee for the next 45 km to Longview. A stiff breeze chased me along at 35+ kph. Wings, wings and more wings! Great ride with rangelands on my left, Highwood River on my right. The scenery became distinctively foothills-like, mindful of images out of Western movies. Would Eastwood hang out here somewhere, I wondered, expecting him to show any moment just anywhere, guns blazing? How about Ian Thyssen with a few peaceful cowboy songs? Started humming a few of his tunes, though, but to no avail. Meanwhile, I kept an eye on the sky and noted changes in the cloud patterns. Seemed the tailwind would not last that much longer, and sure enough, with five clicks to go, the tailwind died and resurrected itself into a fierce headwind. Notwithstanding that, the 45 km to Longview only took 1h:15m.

At the Longview Steakhouse (Control # 3: Km 210) I soaked up two bowls of soup and inhaled an open ham sandwich. After this recovery I was ready for the 17 km roller-coaster leg to Black Diamond, a quaint little town, great espresso bar/ice cream parlour (Control #4: Km 227). Then westward to Turner Valley, to be followed by a route which repeatedly turned north and west until the turnoff on Rd 763 to Bragg Creek. While the early morning wall promised steady climbing, now a new, more ominous wall loomed promising a different challenge: dark storm clouds. Not long after I had turned north onto Rd 762, all hell broke loose: pelting rain, hailstones and overhead thunderclaps. If you've ever seen a randonneur hastening his body into rain gear with the speed of lightning, this was my moment in the rain. Nobody watched.

As the storm unleashed its forces, I continued to Control #5: Bragg Creek (Km 279: 20:11pm.) Another short break, then the final leg back to Cochrane. Expecting a downhill section, the reality was a flat one with a few inclinations. Road signs indicating distances were totally off, as if Alberta Highways had arbitrarily and randomly placed signposts without any regard for distance. I plodded along in the dark, no sign of Cochrane anywhere, but suddenly there it was. At 21.25 pm I pulled into the final control: Km 310. Total distance was 325 km on account of my early morning error in 15:25. Great ride. High(wood)ly recommended for anyone wishing a change of scene. Be prepared for the wind's fickleness.

'Arold's Big Adventure Part Deux

When we last left our scribe, he and his group of intrepid riders had pulled in to Lake Manitoba Narrows lodge, part way through their Trans Canada cycle trip...

Many Trans Canada cycle tourists, intimidated by the dreadful reputation of the Trans Canada Highway through Northern Ontario, choose to head into the USA & go round the south side of the Great Lakes. We, however, didn't. We endured the Canadian route with its constant stream of big trucks on our left & broken pavement where a shoulder should have been on our right. Sandra, a tiny 57 year old with a gymnast's figure, was constantly in danger of being blown off her bike.

From Kenora, our first contact with Ontario, we headed south to Fort Frances that sits right on the American border. It was rumoured to be a somewhat better road than the direct route through Dryden. However, when driving the 1 ton support truck back to Vancouver we found that stretch of road to be quite good. But the desolation of the area might have proved tedious. By the time I got to Fort Frances I had suffered a lot of pain for a few days. Tendonitis or siatica down my left leg was the problem & the next day was to be our longest, 150 kms to Atikokan. I endured 105 kms of it & finally had to retire to the truck. Upon arrival at Atikokan's Bunell Park we were told that Town manager Wayne was giving us the site for free. We had a Chinese therapist traveling with us, one of the rider's wives. She did her therapy thing on my leg & recommended a couple of days in the truck. That would get us to Thunder Bay where we were due for a rest day. Having 3 days off the bike seemed to cure the problem & it didn't return. As a Port Coquitlam resident it was incumbent upon me to visit the Terry Fox Memorial about halfway between Thunder Bay and the KOA we were using. Mary & David Helt, Irene & I taxied from Down Town Thunder Bay to the imposing monument & had quite a long walk from there back to KOA campsite.

During the rest day I decided it was time to install the new chain & new rear tyre. The chain gauge indicated the chain was 75% worn & too much use beyond that point starts to hook the sprocket teeth.

We left Thunder Bay on July 9, my 77th birthday & Mary's 63rd. We had candles to blow out that evening! At Nipigon the Stillwater Tent and Trailer Park had a sign out front welcoming us. A group photo by the sign was mandatory.

Getting from Thunder Bay at the Lakehead to Sault Ste Marie at the eastern end of Lake Superior took 7 day and just about 700kms.

This week's ride took us in a big arc round the edge of this large body of fresh water. We were lucky along this stretch, very pleasant & sunny weather allowed us to think we were riding alongside the ocean, not an inland lake.

Our final stop before Sault Ste Marie was to be at Montreal River Harbour. Despite the mosquito annoyance it

was a pleasant spot with some tents planted on a cliff edge overlooking the Lake. As the name suggests it is in a dip in the landscape so that getting there used brake blocks & leaving there used leg muscles & low gears.

Ever since a tumble just outside Jasper I had been nursing a pedal problem. Somewhere in the Prairies I took the pedal apart to remove a piece of grit that had been causing an annoying "click-click". Unfortunately, due to a worn lock washer, I wasn't successful in getting the pedal back together very well. By the time I had climbed the hill out of Montreal River Harbour the pedal cage was about to fall off the spindle. Luckily Wayne had yet to drive the truck by & so I lost another day's cycling when he stopped for me & I climbed in.

The Sault Ste Marie bike shop had a cheap pair of toeclip type pedals he sold me for \$20 & I managed to complete the tour on those. In 2003 CCCTS member Marion Orser cycle camped from Prince Rupert on BC's northern coast right through to Halifax. In the Sault she found the Algonquin Hotel, a heritage building that now operates as a Youth Hostel for youths of all ages. It was on her recommendation that we booked this facility for 2 nights for our 5th rest day. Another couple of nights we didn't have to camp!

The plan was Highway 17 all the way from the Sault (the Soo) to Iron Bridge, a distance of 120 kms. However, some local advice was to turn off at Echo Bay & take the back road. On the map it didn't look any longer than staying on the main road. But it added about 14 kms to the distance as well as some brutal hills. Worse still, the back road's surface left a lot to be desired whereas those who stayed on the main road had a brand new surface on a wide shoulder. But even so, the 30 or 40 kms we did on a quiet back road was a pleasant change. From South Baymouth at the south end of Manitoulin Island we were to board a Ferry to Tobermory at the north end of the Bruce Peninsula, this pastoral scene divides Lake Huron from Georgian Bay.

Once into southern Ontario we were made aware of the proximity of Toronto & I was happy to get to Ottawa, But on the way we had a short day into Kingston & this allowed us time to view this historic & attractive city.

We had booked 2 rest days in the capital & we were met by the Ottawa branch of the CCCTS. They led us along the Rideau Canal into the university residence where we were to sleep in real beds for 3 nights. We arrived soon after noon only to find that we couldn't be registered until 16:00. I took the opportunity to ride out of town to the National Aeronautical Museum that I had long wanted to visit. An impressive display of aircraft of all sorts. Badly overcrowded as the building is, it was good to see an additional hangar is under construction.

We crossed the Ottawa River from Hawkesbury into Quebec in very miserable weather. Worse still the road to our campsite at Lachute was in an awful state & I was feeling very anti-Quebec.

However, beyond there Quebec roads were very good. It was enroute from Lachute to Joliette we suffered our first serious accident. Irene, from Edmonton, Alberta,

somehow flipped & broke her elbow & pelvis. With Mary to comfort her she spent a long time in the hospital waiting room before being seen to & eventually being flown home.

I hadn't been to Quebec City since living in Montreal during the sixties. It is a wonderful town. We were also quite lucky with the weather & our rest day there was a good opportunity to get re-acquainted with the French aspects of Canadian culture.

But getting out of Quebec City & onto the south shore of the St Lawrence River involved combating very bicycle unfriendly facilities on the Bridge & a tedious traffic laden ride through several kilometres of urban sprawl on the South side of the St Lawrence River.

After that, St Jean Port Jolie was a delight with its concentration of artists displaying their crafts along the road and with wide views NE across the River. Leaving Rivere du Loup on Saturday August 7 involved a monster climb away from the river & toward New Brunswick. We entered New Brunswick with about 6,200 kms behind us. Partly due to no choice & partly due to time constraints we were spending a lot of time on main roads. In NB that wasn't too bad, the Province had finally convinced the Federal Government that the accident rate on NB roads was unacceptable and warranted a major rebuild. New Brunswick roads were the best we got to ride on.

On August 11 I left Harrt Island campground on the western edge of Fredrickton by myself. I found my way through town okay but got hopelessly lost upon leaving town. I wandered around some back roads for an age before someone, a mailman I think, got me on the right track. On August 12, In Moncton, I got a glimpse of George leading Mary & David the "wrong way" & in wondering where they were going I found I was heading out of town in the wrong direction. Once on the right road it was a straight forward ride to Shediac.

Upon leaving the campsite the following morning I found my rear tyre to be flat. But I didn't have a puncture to wreak my record. Instead the valve stem had split from the tube.

We were due for a short day on the bikes. My computer indicated 65kms to the shuttle bus that was to take us across the 13 km long Confederation Bridge onto Prince Edward Island. Fortunately, the weather was decent so the long wait was only made uncomfortable by the lack of shade from the hot sun!

But on PEI I endured quite a wet ride & ate my lunch at Cavendish Beach in the rain. Apart from George appearing out of nowhere while approaching Charlottetown I spent our token PEI ride alone.

Bike storage at the University was a problem and Frank's bike was stolen whilst parked outside the dormitory. But Wayne the driver had his bike with him for the occasional ride & he came to the rescue by loaning Frank his bike.

The Maritime Provinces deserve better. Perhaps as the majority of the riders were from the west coast it might have been more profitable to start in St Johns rather than

finish there. As it was, by the time we left Quebec there was an aura of; "Lets get this over with" It is a long way to ride a bicycle.

But given the time constraints and the fact the whole operation was aimed at riding across the country we did what we needed to do in the time available. But riding point to point isn't necessarily touring in the true sense.

However, I think those of us who hadn't been east of Quebec before had our appetites whetted for returning to the Maritimes for a closer look.

In Charlottetown we saw the building where, in 1867, the guy pulled the letters of the alphabet from a hat and said: "C eh, N eh, D eh" & thus created Canada. (He didn't? eh?).

On August 16 we rode 74 kms to the Wood Islands ferry for a sail back to the Mainland, docking at Pictou in Nova Scotia. As the ferry charged by the vehicle all the bikes went in the truck & all bodies went in the truck or "ChanVan". Saved a bundle there. Arriving at the Harbour Light Campground we received a very courteous welcome in the form of cheese and meat plates, fruit & bottled water.

August 17 was very wet, but with only 81 kms to do even I arrived in camp, Antigonish, at 14:00. This ride was mainly on Hwy 104 & we continued on it on the 18th to cross the unshouldered Causeway onto Cape Breton Island. While descending the hill toward the Causeway Frank suffered a flat back tyre. We struggled to get the very slack tyre to stay on the rim. Finally I gave him my spare, a 20mm Michelin Hilite foldable. It looked most out of place on that mountain bike, but it saved the day.

The original plan to go to Louisbourg was dropped due to time distance & weather & arrangements were made to stay near Sydney, or so we thought. But the KOA's mailing address has no relationship to their actual location.

That was the other side of the Seal Island Bridge. Not realizing how far away it was I turned off the main road and during a 135 km day got to tour Big Bras d'Or. As a result I was in camp very late. The Camp sign I saw referred to some other facility. Of course, I was supposed to be on the cook team that night as well!

Crossing the Seal Island Bridge was a similar experience to the Rosedale Bridge across the Fraser River south of Agassiz; you just hope no big trucks come across while you are on it.

The following day there was just 30 kms to do into North Sydney before boarding the ferry to Argentia. We had a decent day to spend in North Sydney with me chasing around trying to find more slide film. "Slide film? What's that?"

After a placid crossing on the night of August 20/21 we docked at Argentia in wet, cold, foggy conditions which did not encourage us to mess about with a sight seeing detour to Cape Spear. It was decided we would plough straight on to St John's & get there a day early. The final stretch on a near freeway was tedious & it was here that Nancy had her first flat, a km or 2 from the campsite

The following day was bright & very breezy. Getting blown off Signal Hill was a possibility. But we hung onto our

hats, got some photos & enjoyed the attractive and historic views. A visit to Trapper John's to get "screeched" & kiss the puffin's arse converted us into Honorary Newfies.

On Sunday we did manage to get everyone together for photos at St John's "Mile Zero". For me it was Mile "4,594" For most others it would be about "Mile 4,800" With that done it was time to go home. But it was another 3 days before camp was completely dissolved. Then Dave & I drove the truck back to Vancouver.

Whether the camping, cooking or cycling I don't know, but I lost between 10 and 15 lbs during the tour. I certainly climb hills better now. Let's see if I can maintain this weight (165/169 lbs) & put it to good use next year when I plan some serious cycling.

I started writing this on the last day of summer, September 21. The day after was my re-introduction to working for a living. I retired at the end of 2000. Why it has taken the company almost 4 years to realize I am indispensable I don't know.

Apart from my antipathy toward camping, one of the problems that came to light was the fact that campsites are usually out of town & it is nice to be in town in the evening. Perhaps a B&B tour might be better from that POV. There was one more event, in mid September. An off road 200km randonnee in the Cariboo. A disaster! Unmade roads, some snow among the rain, hands too cold to change gear. Brake blocks worn to uselessness & fingers unable to adjust the brake cables. A Good Samaritan drove me back to my truck at Hills. My right middle finger is just now coming back to life after 7 weeks!

As a result of all the cycling I have done this year, what with a busy spring followed by riding across Canada I have recorded 15,172 kms (9428 miles) so far (November 8). I feel, therefore, I should make an attempt at 10,000 miles (16,093 kms) for the year 2004. It would be the first such distance since emigrating from UK in 1964. But this going back to work business might make that aim difficult & so I feel I should take every opportunity to stack in some "Ks".

Given that I am a good deal fitter post Trans Canada than pre-TC, it is a great pity I was unable to get my 14th "Super Randonneur" medal from Audax Club Parisien. Joining *C-KAP* 2 years ago has given me an incentive to keep stacking in the kilometres & perhaps I can start next season in better shape than in past years.

Canadian Kilometre Achiever Program

Going South for a Ride

By Scott Gater

As one who is fascinated with the land down under, it only made sense that when I got into randonneuring, I'd check out the Australian Audax website for ride ideas where I first heard about a 1200 km ride called the Great Southern Randonnee (GSR). After reading several ride reports written about this ride, including one by Canadian Grant McLeod, I knew this was a ride I wanted to do. As luck would have it GSR was being held this year and coincidentally my wife Melissa was presenting at a scientific conference in Australia in the same state as GSR (Victoria) two weeks before the event. I could not miss this opportunity. I had started the year planning to do only a couple 200's and a couple 300's, but with the encouragement of other BC randonneurs, and the tease of riding in Oz in October, I completed the full Spring series, most of the summer (DNF on 600), and the Labour Day 1000km. I knew that trying to train for a 1200 in October is a bit unorthodox as it is late in the season, but having volunteered at the RM1200 meant that I got to see what people looked like at 1100km into the ride and I tried to learn from that.

A brief 60 km loop out to Moysden and back to Halls Gap then we were to repeat our steps back to Anglesea. If anyone thinks that Australia is flat, this ride would dissuade them from that thought. Lots of short steep hills and in the Otways & Grampians very long steep climbs that took you through ancient rainforests.

With the ride starting in the Austral spring time, the weather was predicted to be similar to what BC is like in April -- some sun, lots of clouds and a very good chance that it would rain at in the next 90 hours. It also meant that there were close to 10 hours of darkness per day (7:30 pm – 5:30 am). One of the trademarks of GSR and some other OZ Audax rides, is that they run multiple rides at the same time -- in this case they were running a 1200, a 1000, a 600, a 400 and two 300's over roughly the same course.

The aim was to have everything finish by noon on the Friday to avoid the weekend traffic. So to accomplish this, the 20 riders in the 1200 left at 6pm on the Monday night.

With only 20 riders in the 1200 there was still a variety of riders and mounts, as with the start of any ride, all expressing their owner's style of riding. Some were set up with a myriad of lights, reflectors, bags and bits to allow maximum comfort and security while others had the basic kit on board and seemed intent on speeding through the countryside as though it was an afternoon jaunt. I was in between the two groups with one pannier with some spare clothes and food to see me between the controls and the rest stop I had planned for Port Fairy (km 503). Two recumbents were in the start line. Nine of twenty riders were from various overseas locations: USA (3), UK (2), Brazil (1), Belgium (1), and Canada (2).

The food on this ride is fab- u – lous ! The variety and the quantity were all outstanding. A special thanks to

the Pam and Grant in Halls Gap for the lamb shank stew. Lots of warm food owing to the cold night time temperatures and I don't think I've ever had as much butter on rolls as on this ride. One of our controls was Cobden bakery. Like many of the riders whose ride reports I've read, I even had a nighttime stop at McDonalds!! (No Tim Horton's down under, so late night food choices were less).

Everyone has stories about going to Australia and seeing wildlife. On this trip there was lots of wildlife about -- one advantage of travelling at night. Saw a koala on the first morning by the side of the road, heard lots of birds while riding through the eucalyptus forests and saw lots of kangaroos and wallabies (small kangaroos) while in the Grampians. But the best was the last night, travelling through the Otways with Larry from NY. As the bush made noises all around us Larry turned and asked "what was THAT ?" Now I didn't know, but I took a guess and said "oh, that. That is a Koala." "Are they predatory?" he asked. Long pause here while I considered how much to tease him, then considered that since we're over 1100km into the ride, not to worry him. "No Larry. They aren't predatory."

This ride required all lot more night riding than I expected on a 1200km due to the placement of the sleep controls and the long hours of darkness. The combination of starting at 6pm and my first overnight stop with a bag drop being 503 kms (~7pm, 25 hours into the ride) meant a lot of riding before stopping to sleep and then heading out into darkness. There was an earlier bag drop/potential sleep stop at Port Campbell, which I arrived at too early in the day to consider sleeping. This was my first test of my new Schmidt hub on a randonneur event and I was thrilled with it. The ample light provided by it and by my Cateye EL500 back up light was more than enough for me and at times aided other riders who I rode with, including one rider who was ready to sleep in the ditch because his lights weren't sufficient to descend Laver's Hill until I came along.

I kept to my plan to ride my own ride, which meant that I alternated between riding with others and by myself depending on who was leaving the controls when I was ready to leave. Riding with Ian, Ken and Adriann out of Port Fairy in the gale was far easier then trying to leave town in that storm by myself. The fact that I got up, looked outside, got dressed and ate and then headed out in the storm says more for mind over reality then anything else. Riding back to Port Fairy 24 hours later by myself (~ 2am), as several others stopped for a long supper, was a surreal experience. Low pasture land lit up by the occasional burst of moonlight reflecting off the moisture, the mist/rain coming and going through out the night was a really special part of the ride.

In the latter parts of the ride, riders from the 1000km were catching up with those of us on the 1200. Hans Dusink was a strong 1000km rider who caught up with some of us on the return run to Port Campbell. We rode together for part of the climb to Lavers Hill, both of us wondering how much colder it could get for those behind us, as it was already cold enough and only 8pm. I wore tights over shorts throughout the whole ride. On top, it was

a short sleeve jersey and arm warmers for the first day or so and then once the cold wind and rain arrived, a wool undershirt, a jersey, and jacket on top. Only on the last morning did I pack away the jacket and wear just the wool top and jersey. Hans and I had some food at the control at the top and discussed cheating in one day cricket with one of the control volunteers- crazy things happen towards the end of a 1200, as I had only meant to stay a few minutes, not half an hour chatting away! Hans slept at Laver's while I continued to Apollo Bay to sleep (~ 1am). From Apollo Bay I had only 75 km left to ride, but I wanted to ride the most spectacular coastal part of Great Ocean Road in the daylight. Hans and I would later ride the last 60 km together along the way discovering that we both stopped at the same spot on the road to take some Ibuprofen to make it to the end. One thing about the riders is there seemed to be a lack of interest in setting a course record. The fast riders seemed to decide to ride fast and sleep long – an approach I observed Wim Kok using at RM1200 and greatly admired. A few times I was passed by other riders on the road who slept longer than I and still managed to finish before me.

For the record, I finished in 86 hours and 45 minutes, with about 15 hours of sleep, and a congratulatory beer at the finish – Thanks, Andy! Not the fastest and not the slowest but I learned that I could complete a 1200 and not have it hurt (well not until later at the hotel when I tried to sit) and I think one of the reasons for this is that I rode my own ride throughout. I finished relatively healthily, with the exception of a swollen right Achilles and a sore butt. The three storey walk-up hotel room that Melissa booked for that night in Melbourne was also a bit of a challenge (she swears she didn't know there was no elevator), but fortunately I had a massage booked at a Sports Medicine Center for the next day.

A big thank you to Peter and Andy Moore who organized this event, and to all the volunteers. Big thanks also to Alan Walker for putting up with us for a couple nights and to Ian Humphries for the ride back to Melbourne. A note for all of you RM 1200 finishers who went to the party afterwards at the yacht club- things are different in OZ. The organizers had a post event party at Peter and Andy's bike shop and along with the champagne, beer and pizza, there was a newsletter work party, so we were on our feet for a bit longer. Sorry to any Audax Australia members who were missing things in their newsletter package, having sleep deprived people help does not necessarily result in a perfect product. It was a great opportunity to chat more with the GSR riders and other Audax Australia members. In fact it was at this party/newsletter work party that I heard about the 1200 in Bendigo – Pushing for Gold – from an enthusiastic ride coordinator. Having enjoyed our cycle tour and GSR so much, I'm trying to organize it so I can go back in October 2005 and do the 1200 in Bendigo and the Fleche Opperman in early November. Anyone want to join me?

For those who have seen the folks riding the single speed bikes on brevets in the past few years, Ron Penner answers some questions about how one sets up a Fixie-

Getting Fixed

by Ron Penner

Life is funny sometimes:

When I first got the itch to attempt to ride fixed gear, I went into it the same way I do with all things bicycle. Spend a lot of time thinking about it, reading about it on the web, then finally, jump in and give it a shot. This sensible attitude did not help me avoid buying a Softride frame and deciding I really didn't like bouncing around on a beam while riding, but in general it has worked out pretty well.

So, for fixed gear there were initially two issues. (1) How do I turn my older GT with vertical dropouts into a fixed gear bicycle, and (2) if I only have one gear to choose from, what exact gear should I choose?

I checked out the famous Sheldon Brown website and he suggested in his articles that there were a few ways to make the conversion. The first attempt with a "Surly Fixer" failed because I got the lock nuts wrong and ended up with a seized hub half way to work one morning. The second attempt, last weekend, with a "White Industries (ENO) Eccentric" rear hub, would end up doing the trick.

Next issue: gearing. After attempting to ride on my geared bike in known configurations, I settled on approximately 70 gear inches as a good compromise for a somewhat hilly commute. At that ratio, I was more concerned about spinning out of control on the downhills than having to walk on the uphill.

Sheldon Brown also mentioned that chain tension would be an issue for vertical dropouts and I would have limited gear combinations that would work. I bought some half chain-links to improve my chances of getting a good fit. I found some online chain length calculators that helped me determine a good combination: 39 x 15 (71.7 gear inches) should allow me to use the existing inner ring and give me a decent chain line.

Then I remembered that my current crankset on the GT was an old Shimano Biopace. I generally don't notice it, so I have left it alone till now. Back to Sheldon Brown's web site. Yes, he says, you can do it, but it puts even more importance on getting the chain tension right, because it will vary through the pedal cycle. Yikes. Another wrench in the gears. Would this work at all?

Well, last weekend the rear wheel with the eccentric hub was finished, I put the whole thing together and was able to get a chain tension that worked. I took the bike out for a short test ride and found the experience good enough to be

worth attempting the weekly commute. There were minor grinding noises, but I knew the chain and chain ring were old and would have to be replaced soon.

Well, one week of commuting (about 150 km) told me that I like riding fixed, but that my gear choice was a bit ambitious! I was expecting to spin freely on the flats, work hard on the uphill and spin like a crazy man on the downhill. I found that the uphill were REALLY hard, the downhill were not as bad as I thought and on the flats I was not doing the desired 85 - 90 rpm. I thought, am I getting old (hard to admit but possible), or not in as good a shape as I think (even harder to admit)?

Well, I decided this past weekend it was time to replace the oval chain ring with a round one, and put a new chain on as well. That should hold things for the winter. I got the new 39, and new SRAM chain (love that power-link). Now here's the funny part (finally).

Last night, as I was pulling off the old biopace chain ring, I happened to look at it instead of just throwing it away. Lo and behold, it's a 42! Suddenly, the gearing that I was complaining about was 77.2 gear inches. No wonder. Suddenly I am not aging too quickly. This morning I found myself busy going down River Road in Richmond doing a good and proper 90 rpm on the pedals, grinning from ear to ear and thinking happy thoughts about tonight's hill climb on the way home.

It is always strange to me how much of our sport (or any sport I suppose) is mental. How can an 8% change in gearing make for such a complete change in attitude?

A Ride Report from 2005-

Bridges and Streets by 'Arold Bridge

A conflict: Reluctance to endure the urban sprawl between PoCo & Kerrisdale & resultant ride round YVH & environs while at the same time feeling obliged to join the Ghetto Dwellers on the Roger Street Memorial Ride. At least, if one has to go then early Sunday morning is the right time to do it, but that ignores, of course, the return journey when the rest of the world pops up. As the trophy bears my name as first holder there was a strong incentive to go. Besides, it was a rare chance to see all the aforementioned Ghetto Dwellers, albeit a short one.

Not being given my customary gentle wind up to speed had me puffing by the time we reached the Arthur Laing Bridge. The fog meant my specs were perched on the end of my nose where they pinched off my air supply. The resulting gear change off top cog broke the Ergopower lever. There was no warning as one would expect, the lever just isolated itself from the machinery.

Susan Allen & John Little were there in a moment when I stopped to see what I could do. Realising that given the terrain I didn't need variable gears I tried to screw in the stop to keep the chain on a bigger sprocket. But the screws are not long enough to allow that & I spent the rest of my 18 kms with the chain jumping. Despite a few stops to try an adjustment I was unable to deal with the problem. When I upended the bike I saw the gear cable was frayed under the bottom bracket.

After delaying Susan & John a while I told them to go on which they did, minus the Iona detour. I in turn decided to make my way back across the Bridge only to realise that in the fog I was on the wrong ramp heading for the airport. A bit of cyclo-cross got me on the Bridge & thus to SW Marine Drive. I was uncertain where I was to turn off WMD & I stopped to refold my route sheet so I could check the bottom of sheet 2. I only had sheet one! I didn't do too much extra, turning north on Carnarvon. Then at West 41st I initially headed west before getting back to my truck about 11:15.

After lunch on a bright, sunny, clear, unfoggy afternoon I went out on the Tony Hoar Custom around Pitt Meadows & Maple Ridge for an uncomplicated, trouble free 46km ride. Of course, I had to change my shoes, I still have toe clips on that bike.

Comment: While these high tech gear controls are very convenient I doubt that a friction gear control would allow you to ignore a frayed gear cable which I assume caused the trouble. I never felt any extra resistance before the gear lever broke free.