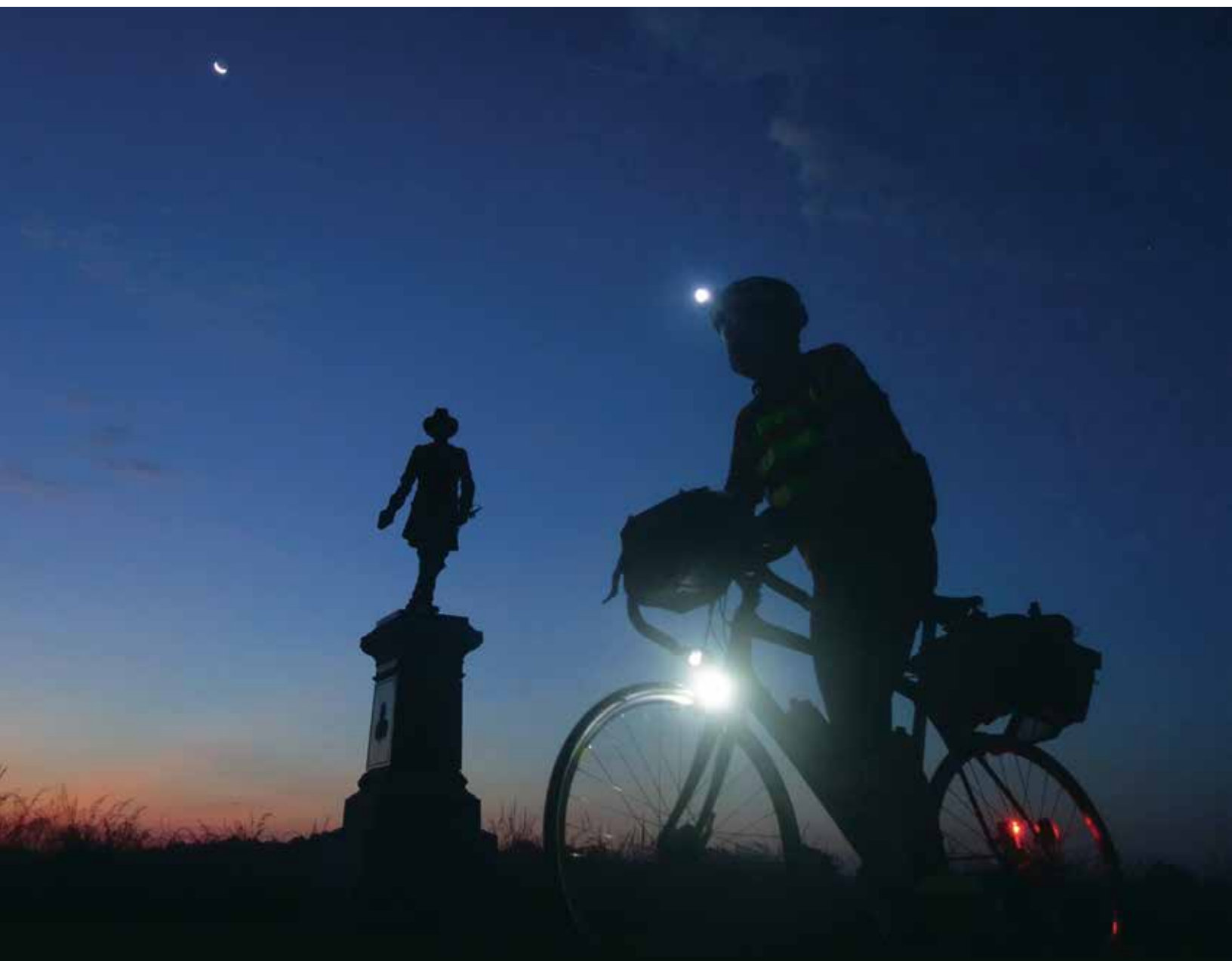


AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



VOLUME 20 • ISSUE #4 WINTER 2017



IN THIS ISSUE:

5 Myths About Randonneuring — DAWN M. PIECH

Back to Big Savage in Search of Solace — BY DAMON TAAFFE

Two Last Chance 2017 Reports — BY JOHN LEE ELLIS AND DEB BANKS



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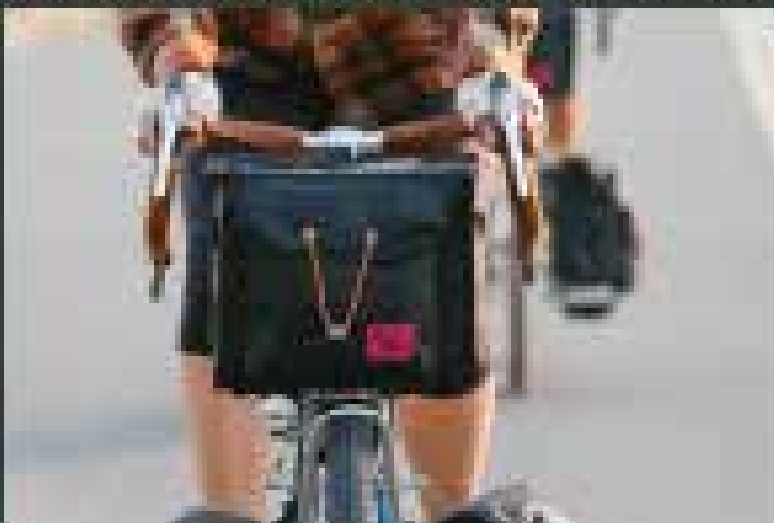
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American Randonneur Magazine

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American Randonneur is published quarterly

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RANDONNEURS USA, INC. IS A TAX-EXEMPT
501(c)(3) NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

American Randonneur

is a publication of Randonneurs USA, Inc.
PO Box 168, Lyon Station, PA 19536
president@rusa.org • phone: 303.579.5866

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COVER—Riding along Cemetery Ridge in
the Gettysburg National Military Park at
dawn on permanent route 201.

PHOTO BILL BECK

WHAT'S INSIDE

President's Message	2
John Lee Ellis	
From the Editor	3
Janice Chernelkoff	
The Great American Total Solar Eclipse 238km Brevet	4
Eric Norris	
The Audax K.C. Great American Total Solar Eclipse Brevet	8
Keith Gates	
5 Myths About Randonneuring	10
Dawn M. Piech	
Great Lakes Mac & Cheese	16
Michele Brougher	
Back to Big Savage in Search of Solace	20
Damon Taafe	
New RUSA Members	23
Ditchers Get Ditches: A Granite Anvil 1200km Story	26
CJ Arayata	
The Granite Anvil 1200km: August 21-24, 2017	30
Meaghan Hackinen	
Granite Anvil Photos	33
Dave Thompson	
Spot Light – 4 RUSA members Due to earn Ultra K-Hound in 2017	34
Dan Driscoll with Pam Wright	
2016 California Coastal Mountain Climber 1000K	36
Massimiliano Poletto	
1200km to Recovery	38
Deb Banks	
Last Chance 2017 Report	42
John Lee Ellis	
The American Randonneur Award	45
RUSA Awards	49
COLUMNS	
UNDER REVIEW	14
George Swain	
DR. CODFISH: The Year of Experimenting	18
Paul Johnson	
RANDOM THOUGHTS: Riding to New Heights	24
Chris Newman	
RUSA MEMBER PROFILE: Corinne Warren	46
Mary Gersema	

President's Message



It's one of the nicest times of year here in Colorado as I write this—mild days, swaths of golden aspen foliage in the mountains, a few glints of gold on the plains, and wonderful cycling. The skis are still in the closet.

It's the end of summer, but like all RBAs, I'm busy putting together our 2018 event schedule, thinking back to what riders liked most, what challenged them, and what more they'd like to do. This year, our local riders are asking for more events, so I told them I'd add events if they volunteered to help ... and they did!

Volunteering doesn't have to be herculean or exhausting. It can be as simple as starting a 200km. Or as focused as spending a few hours one evening supporting riders on a lonely services-free stretch of a 600km.

So as you are contemplating your rides for next year, think about how you can be a part of helping your RBA and your fellow randos!

Speaking of events to contemplate, an astounding eight US Grand Randonnées are slated for 2018. Half of these are inaugural* events.

Blue Ridge to Bay – May 31*
Cascade – June
California Central Coast Randonnée – July
Coulee Challenge – August*
Great Lakes Mac & Cheese – August*
Cross Florida 1600 – October*
Spring and Fall Carolina 1200k's – April, October

Inaugural grand randonnées are required to submit a detailed route and event plan to RUSA, both to assure riders a quality, memorable event, and to help first-time organizers go through the extensive planning process.

It's clear from this year's applications that we are graced with absolutely first-rate organizers and their teams.

Blue Ridge to Bay is DC Randonneurs' mid-Atlantic sampler of regions from the Blue Ridge to the Chesapeake to DC, from mountainous and remote to coastal with plenty of history thrown in.

Greg Smith gave an enticing intro to the **Coulee Challenge** in the Fall American Randonneur. Organized by Greg (Driftless Randonneurs) and Rob Welsh (Minnesota Randonneurs),

it takes riders through the not-flat backwoods view of the upper Midwest.

The **Great Lakes Mac & Cheese** 1200 is organized by Michele Brougher (Great Lakes Randonneurs) and Jeremy Gray (Detroit Randonneurs). It is billed as a friendly and serene tour of Michigan (including the UP) and Wisconsin, building on experience with this past year's Million Meters of Milk.

The **Cross Florida 1600**—John Preston, Southern Florida region—is offering 1,000 miles of riding one way from one tip of Florida in the Panhandle to the Florida Keys. It's so expansive the climate changes in the course of the ride. Plenty of gulf, ocean, and inland terrain to enjoy!

While grand randonnées have an allure, and are dear to my heart as a rider and organizer, only about 200 of our members per year ride a US 1200km. Will 2018 be your year for one?

That said, there are so many other goals out there for you. Not everyone has the circumstances to train for and attend a grand randonnée, or the time to knock out 10,000 kilometers for K-Hound. But maybe you have twelve months of grit and persistence for the R-12 or P-12. Or the travel budget to work on your American Explorer? Or maybe this is your year to build up to a Super Randonneur.

Looking back at the memorable moments of my 2017, they include the jaunt to Nevada for a Richard Stum 200km, seeing local rider John Mangin complete my SR 600, pre-riding the Last Chance with my friends Tim Sullivan and Mark Thomas, and the reward of greeting Last Chance riders crossing the finish line with a smile.

I hope the coming year will hold similar rewards, challenges, and good camaraderie for you!

—John Lee Ellis
RUSA President
president@rusa.org

From the Editor

American Randonneur is now in color! Thanks to research done by Mary Humphrey, our magazine layout guru, and a discussion with the RUSA board, it was decided to make the change. And it's actually cheaper to produce the magazine this way...so no need to worry about the cost. We hope you enjoy *American Randonneur* even more than before.

The articles included here make me think about how each rider in an event has a different experience, and how interesting it is to hear others describe a ride we've just finished. When I began work on this issue, I received notes from more than one person expressing interest in writing about the same event, and I decided to go with it, to give space to different perspectives. You'll find two articles each for three different events: the Solar Eclipse 238km ride; the Last Chance 1200km; and the Granite Anvil 1200km.

Eric Norris offers an overview of how The Great American Total Solar Eclipse 238km brevet came together and Keith Gates provides a local's view of how a familiar landscape dramatically transformed for a day. Eric's photos will help you to feel like you were there. John Lee Ellis, organizer of the Last Chance, writes about the fun of doing the ride again, with friends, as a pre-ride. He also provides a run-down on this year's edition, comparing it to previous ones. Deb Banks, on the other hand, presents her Last Chance experience as a joyful return to the sport she loves after two years of dealing with injuries and surgeries. The third pair of articles is about the Granite Anvil 1200km. CJ Arayata's account of his first 1200km reminds me of the high and low points one experiences on a long ride. For Meaghan Hackinen, however, this was her second 1200km, and she was determined to finish in under eighty hours. Her account

describes the thinking and actions of a rider focused on moving forward a little more quickly than absolutely necessary.

This last issue of the year is also a good place to celebrate some of our achievements, so a round of applause is due to the four randonneurs who, according to Dan Driscoll, have or will reach Ultra K-Hound status in 2017. Chapeau, as well, to Massimiliano Poletto, who offers an account of the (2016) CA Coastal Mountain Climber—over 42,000 feet in 1000 kilometers. The Super 600 might sound intimidating to some, but Damon Taaffe did the Big Savage Super 600km not once, but twice, hoping that the second attempt would be "easier." It turned into a greater challenge than expected, but his story inspires because of his perseverance. Similarly, Corrine Warren, interviewed by Mary Gersema, has achieved impressive goals in randonneuring as well as in Triple Crowns, and loves climbing the mountains of Colorado, but she also says that a positive attitude and the connections with other cyclists are key elements of cycling for her.

Finally, it is a good time to think about future plans, which is the theme of Dr. Codfish's column. One possibility for next year is presented by Michele Brougher, who previews the new Great Lakes Mac and Cheese 1200km. Dawn Piech describes the "Bring a Friend to a Brevet" weekend that the Wisconsin group held this year and urges other regions to try this



strategy for increasing ridership. Chris Newman's reminder of the fun to be had in all kinds of riding is especially timely given that many of us will have difficulty doing long rides outdoors for the next few months, and finally, George Swain's positive review of Juliana Buhning's book *This Road I Ride* will have you buying the book for yourself or as a gift for another cyclist.

Enjoy this issue of *AR*, enjoy the season, and thank you for continuing to support this publication that celebrates all of the ways that we are randonneurs.

Be safe out there.

—Janice Chernehoff
Editor, *American Randonneur*
editor@rusa.org

The Great American Total Solar Eclipse 238km Brevet

August 21, 2017

BY ERIC NORRIS

For millions of Americans, the Great American Solar Eclipse on August 21, 2017, was a chance to join together in experiencing a once-in-a-lifetime event, as the moon's shadow passed over the entire country from west to east. For a handful of randonneurs from across the USA, the Great American Eclipse was also a chance to ride the first officially sanctioned brevet to head out into the Path of Totality, a 238km ride out of St. Joseph, MO, sponsored by Audax Kansas City.

The genesis of the ride, according to Audax KC RBA Spencer Klaassen, was an email from a rider in Minnesota, who suggested a brevet that would take participants into the moon's shadow. After all, no RUSA brevet had ever been designed around a total eclipse! Spencer loved the idea and sent out a

national invite for RUSA members to take part in a 238km or 300km brevet.

The rider from Minnesota ultimately wasn't able to attend, but eight riders—including two from Boston, two from California, and one from Dallas, TX—were on hand for the 6:00am start (seven hours, six minutes

to totality, in the timekeeping standard for Eclipse Day). The group decided to stick together and ride just the 238km route, a decision that turned out to be auspicious when we barely outran a squall line of thunderstorms on the way to the finish in St Joseph.

The ride crossed through three states—Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas—passing through miles of corn and soybean fields and rural towns large (Falls City, NE) and small (White Cloud, KS). We dealt with scattered rain throughout the day, heavy at times, but the clouds thinned just as totality approached, providing for great viewing conditions.

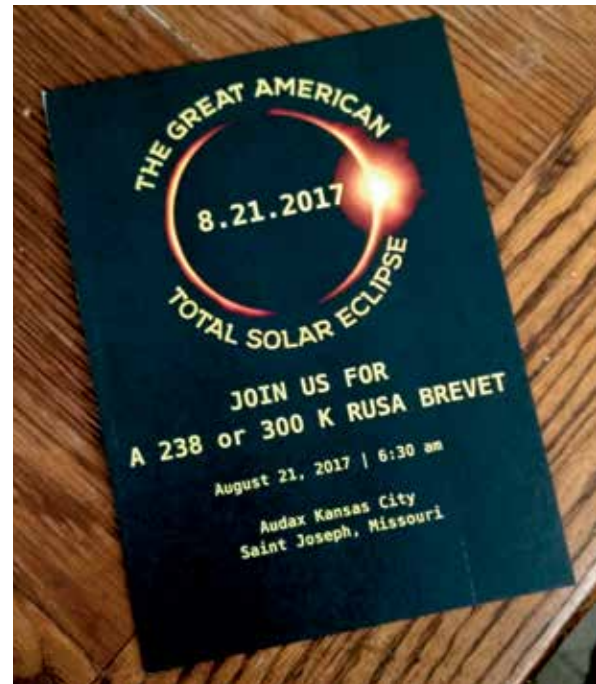
Dark side of the moon—the scene as we entered the moon's shadow. In the distance, outside the shadow, the sun still shone.

—PHOTO STEPHEN HAZELTON





Ready to ride at 6 am—
7 hours, 6 minutes to totality.
—PHOTO ANONYMOUS



Official ride invitation.

Emily O'Brien and Jake Kassen watch as the last sliver of the sun disappears.

—PHOTOS EMILY O'BRIEN



Start of the ride under the animated neon racehorse at Speedy's Convenience in St Joseph, MO.

—PHOTO ERIC NORRIS

Along the way, we saw thousands of fellow eclipse watchers, who had set up informal tailgate parties in small towns and along the area's remote rural roads. The atmosphere, we all agreed later, was like the Fourth of July with the added excitement that this was for most of us a unique life experience.

The fact that this was a unique event also led to several serendipitous encounters with local residents, like the extended family in Morrill, KS, who shared food and drink from their eclipse party with us (we had expected only to find a "pop machine" in town to refuel). In tiny White Cloud, KS, the American Legion had opened their hall (renamed the Eclipse Café for the day), where we enjoyed homemade pie a la mode, hot dogs, and sodas.

The eclipse itself passed over us while we were out in the countryside. As the moment of totality approached, we all used our protective eclipse glasses to watch as the last sliver of the sun disappeared and then ... amazement and wonder. For anyone who hasn't experienced a total eclipse, suffice it to say it was well worth traveling halfway across the country to see. As the darkness descended, we dropped our protective lenses and gazed upward at the wondrous sight of the sun's



corona shimmering around the dark shape of the moon. We oohed and aahed, and somewhere in the distance (we were miles from the closest town) we heard cheering.

The next total eclipse in the U.S. will be in 2024, starting in Texas and heading to the northeast. If the Lone Star Randonneurs sponsor a brevet, you should definitely plan to be there. 🚲

A video of the Great American Total Solar Eclipse Brevet is available on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/Pw3bhX9yc0E>



The American Legion Hall in White Cloud, KS, opened for the event, serving breakfast and lunch.

—PHOTO STEPHEN HAZELTON



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Upcoming Tours for 2018

Arizona Desert Camps and Tours

February and March based from Tucson, Arizona. Each week has a different theme for different types of riders. You can combine weeks to extend your cycling season in Arizona. Come join us!

Week #1 February 24 March 3 Tour of the Historic Hotels

50-65 miles per day between classic Arizona hotels.
2 nights in historic Bisbee, Arizona.

Week #2 March 3 - 01 First Century Week

Four nights based in Sierra Vista 60-100 miles per day .
This week has a slightly different route with one night in Nogales to offer new route options.

Week #3 March 10 - 17 Chiricahua Challenge

75-90 miles per day to the Chiricahua Mountains with two nights in Bisbee, Arizona.

Week #4 March 17 - 24 Second Century Week

Four nights based in Sierra Vista 60-100 miles per day .
This week has a new route with one night in Nogales to offer new route options.

Week #5 (8 days) March 24 - April 1 Mountain Tour Mt. Graham

80-100 miles per day from Tucson to New Mexico and back. This is a popular training week for serious riders.

Wek #6 April 1-8

NEW Gravel Road Week This new week follows a lot of the gravel roads used by the Border Patrol of southern Arizona. These desolate roads are suitable for bikes with 1.5" or 2" street tires. Daily distances average 50 miles per day with 30 miles of gravel.

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Route 66 Western States

Santa Monica, Ca to Amarillo, TX

April 21 to May 11

19 days averaging 60-85 miles per day.

We will ride this classic American Highway built in 1926 and learn about its iconic history. We will stay in many historic motels and eat at quaint roadside cafes. Most nights we are joined by local guest speakers who bring the old road to life. This tour will fill up by January 2018.

Northern Transcontinental

Everett, Washington to Portsmouth, NH

Saturday, July 7 to Thursday, August 9th

3,570 miles, 31 riding days, 118 miles per day

This is a popular route through Washington, Idaho, Montana over The Big Horn Mountains, The Badland of South Dakota and cross Lake Michigan on the Bdger Ferry. We will include riding across Canada to the Niagra Falls before ending in Portsmouth, New Hampshire north of Boston.

Over the Andes - Across Peru

Late October

We have been traveling various routes across Peru since 1999. This route from Brazil to the Pacific Ocean offers some of the best roads in the world with good pavement and light traffic. We have ridden this tour twice before. It is a popular route offering a wide selection of scenery and elevation from the low jungle to mountain passes above 15,000 feet.

There are 11 riding days averaging 80 miles per day. There will be two stopover days to visit Macchu Picchu near Cuzco. Total tour length is 16 days with travel days from the United States. We will stay in hotels and eat at restaurants. We will be riding with several cyclists from the Peruvian National Team who will be our guides. We will also have two support vans who will transport our gear and provide support during the day. This tour is recommended for riders who are looking for adventure in a unique and beautiful country.

**Check the PAC Tour website for dates,
prices and registration information.**

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The Audax K.C. Great American Total Solar Eclipse Brevet

BY KEITH GATES

The solar eclipse provided the rare chance to mingle with accomplished riders from across the country, and this quickly became one of the best parts of the ride. From Boston, MA, came Emily O'Brien and Jake Kassen. From the west coast came Kerin Huber from Pasadena, CA., and Eric Norris from Sacramento, CA. From the south came Steven Hazleton from Garland, TX, and from Colorado came multi-time RAAM finisher and two-time RAAM winner Bob Fourney. Local riders included our RBA, Spencer Klaassen, Aaron Garten from Shawnee, KS, and me. We would ride through three states (Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas) in just over 230 kilometers.

We climbed slowly out of St. Joseph and onto the high bluffs extending northwest as the morning unfolded. The sun rose to our right while we passed through Amazonia, MO, traversing the spine of the Missouri river highlands, overlooking sweeping farm fields and endless rolling hills. Under spitting rain, we followed quiet US-59 north toward Oregon, MO. We were even treated to a rainbow as we rolled along the lightly-travelled highway.

We stayed together as a group until Oregon at the thirty-mile mark. Some took a break while others continued along the route. While inside, a clap of thunder announced an isolated storm cell passing by as we consumed calories for the next leg. We were going to

get wet, but more important to us: would the skies clear, would we even see the eclipse?

Turning west on US-159, we started our passage across the Missouri Valley, past farm fields and railroad tracks, eating up the miles at a solid pace, trying to catch up to Spencer and Bob along the long stretch to Rulo, NE. Evidence of eclipse festivities began to appear; traffic was higher than normal, and along the river valley, campgrounds were full of RVs and trailers surrounded by people from all over the country. Cheers, hollers, and waves greeted us from scattered roadside parties as we cycled. We climbed over the Missouri River Bridge at Rulo and stopped to capture photos at the state line sign.

The normally tranquil expanse of US-159 between Rulo and Falls City had begun to fill in with more traffic from all parts of the country (and beyond) as the clouds and hourly forecast changes began to present potential eclipse viewers with challenges. Viewers began to shuffle from east to west searching for clear skies as the countdown to totality began. We entered Falls City and rain began to spit on us once again. We were also greeted by a strange and completely unusual sight: a traffic jam on the streets of small town America! We made our way to the Kwik Shop parking lot jammed with patrons. Across the street and all along the main street, people sat out the rain in camp chairs, having claimed their spot for eclipse viewing, while hundreds more were either driving through town or stopping to refuel or buy snacks. We were happy to leave Falls City behind; under steady drizzle, we made our way to Nebraska State Highway 8 and out of town.

Finally, free of the throngs of traffic but not yet free of the rain, we began to see the occasional walker and runner along the left-hand side of the road and discovered that a half marathon was in progress—a rare treat considering this section of the route is usually quite deserted. We sounded our bike bells and exchanged waves with dozens of runners, and eventually made it to US-75 and the turn south to enter Kansas. We paused at the Kansas state line for a photo with our second state line crossing of the day, and began to turn our eyes to the sky above,

which finally began to clear. Continuing south, we passed more roadside camps of eclipse viewers who had begun to settle in for the event; campers, RV's, barbecue grills aflame and music playing, travelers from all over hooted and waved as we passed by.

With most eclipse viewers content to stick to the main highways and closer to towns, we returned to Kansas farm roads which seemed to exist only for our passage and the use of resident farmers. Cresting hills and pausing to gawk at the sky behind our eclipse glasses, we slowly inched across the vastness of northeast Kansas toward our rendezvous with a total eclipse, eventually stopping about a mile north of Morrill, KS, where our route came to a "T" with the next turn—perfect! We must have presented quite a scene for the family from California who had parked there to set up their own eclipse viewing party. The light continued to fade into twilight, and as thick clouds continued to give us fits, we were ultimately extremely lucky; we enjoyed just enough of a break in the clouds to see a fully covered disc of sun. The sky darkened, and we could hear the hoots and hollers of scattered observers echoing across the farm fields as the sky dramatically slipped into darkness. The moment became unforgettable: a darkened sky, a random hole in the clouds just for us, the cheers of onlookers rolling across the landscape, and then it was over, the moon's sharp

shadow line raced past just as quickly as it had arrived, returning light to the world once more. Amazing... and we had arrived to see it the best way we knew how: on bicycles, in the middle of a long ride.

Basking in the glow of the event, we remounted to continue our long ride: more than halfway done, but with miles to cover. Only a couple miles up the road we happened upon the source of much of the eclipse cheering as we turned onto the normally-empty streets of Morrill, KS, to find a big family gathering. A family had timed a reunion to occur during the eclipse. We stopped to buy sodas from the machines next to the post office, but today we were greeted with a hearty, "Oh, you don't have to pay for a soda! Come over here!" We were treated to sandwiches and drinks, a great example of the sort of midwest hospitality for which our region is famous. Rested and well-fed, we bid farewell to Morrill—maybe the only time us locals would see the town so busy—and headed out of town and back onto the quiet farm roads for the next control.

We crested hill after hill along the northeast Kansas vastness and found ourselves at the penultimate control at Reserve, KS, just inside the Sac-and-Fox Native American Indian Reservation. We expertly gathered calories and liquids from the shelves and coolers and grabbed some sidewalk to refuel. We stopped again in White Cloud, KS,

another ghost town, but today a great place to stop for a snack as the VFW Hall had been transformed into "The Eclipse Café" for one day only! Tasty pie, a restroom, and cold drinks, and we were ready to take our eclipse tour southbound on K-7, working back toward St. Joseph again.

Under questionable skies and with a slight headwind, we worked flawlessly as a team along the seemingly endless and flat stretch of K-7, pedaling our way south along the Kansas scenic byway, with tall river bluffs creating a massive wall to our right and the Kansas River meandering along to our left. Taking turns at the front of our peline, we made it to US-36 in near record time and then continued until we were across the river from St. Joseph, when the first rumbles of thunder turned our eyes skyward once again.

Maybe the only thing better than a great ride are the great stories circling the table afterwards. While we rested, we laughed and remembered the highlights of the day. The strangeness of it all, for those of us who call the Audax K.C. region home, will make it difficult to venture out onto this particular route again without remembering August 21st, 2017. What a perfect ride!

What's that? There's another one in Dallas in eight years? Really? See *you there...* 🚲



5 Myths about Randonneuring

Debunked by 7 first time randonneurs with the Great Lakes Randonneurs

BY DAWN M. PIECH, PT, MPT, GREAT LAKES RANDONNEURS

In an effort to recruit more members to RUSA and the Great Lakes Randonneurs (GLR), I thought, “Why not host a ‘Bring a Friend to a Brevet’ weekend in Wisconsin?” It would be a great way to engage the membership to recruit new randonneurs. As the GLR schedule was finalized by RBA Michele Brouger in early spring, I approached her with my idea and she was equally enthusiastic about it. We designated August 19th as our “Bring a Friend to a 200km Brevet” weekend in Wisconsin.

In preparation for our membership drive, I put together an article that would get the word out about our organization and fall initiative. This

article discussed some common myths about randonneuring. It also asked some basic questions which included: Are you looking for a new cycling goal

or adventure? Have you ever finished a 100-mile ride and wondered how much further you could have gone? We knew that if one was able to complete a century in a reasonable amount of time, and/or was looking for a new fitness goal, randonneuring could be a good option. The gauntlet was thrown down for the challenge!

We used the spring and summer months to recruit new members. On Saturday, August 19th, we had twenty people on the Jefferson Kettle Moraine 200km with seven doing their first brevet ever! 35% of the riders were virgin randonneurs: three women and four men. Additionally, those in attendance were from Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota. The



Midwest Rando.
—PHOTO DAWN PIECH

camaraderie was so palpable. The route was an out-and-back from Delavan to Jefferson, Wisconsin, with 4,400 feet of elevation gain over the 125 miles and included the three-staged climb of Alpine Hill. Controls included East Troy, Whitewater and Jefferson. The weather was near perfect for the adventure: sunny, minimal wind, and no rain.

Each individual new to randonneuring came for different reasons: a chance meeting at Ragbrai, a yearly athletic goal, a birthday present to oneself, or a simple invitation to explore uncharted waters. It was also interesting to find out that one individual had first heard about brevets thirty years previously from a friend who rode with Lon Haldeman in the 1980's and saw it as a new bucket list item. A relational bridge was built with cycling as the medium.

In an effort to get the first-time randonneurs' perspective of their first brevet, we asked them to think about the common myths in the article. The 5 common myths of randonneuring, along with comments from two first-time randonneurs, Regina Schurman and Ruth Anne Cooper, follow.

MYTH #1: You must have a significant amount of time to do randonneuring.

There are many distance options starting with a populaire, a ride with a distance of 100 to 150 km, through brevets which include a 200km, 300km, 400km, 600km and 1,000km option. Some cyclists choose to ride a few 200km events a year, while others do many more depending on their

Great Lakes Randonneurs Jefferson Kettle Moraine 200k on 8-19-17 in Delavan, Wisconsin.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH



motivation and goals. You select the ride based on your goals and comfort level. The sky is the limit!

*Regina Schurman commented:
"As a slower rider, it will take me longer to complete a 200km than others. My training time will also be longer than that of a fast cyclist. But I enjoy being outside on my bike as my weekend endurance*

First time randonneur John Loesch with Anthony Wozniak, Dawn Piech and Hollie Long at the start of his inaugural 200K ACP brevet.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH



Regina Schurman proudly showing off her first completed brevet card in Delavan, Wisconsin with the Great Lakes Randonneurs.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH

activities help offset the stress of the work week. I didn't incur any significantly longer training time this year than the past few years when I topped out at a century."

Ruth Anne Cooper added, "This is a very relative issue. As a retiree, for me, this was not a significant time investment. To someone with a full time job and a family, this could be a problem. Travel time to the event, the hotel stay the night before, the event, and the travel time back home. And this was the shortest event."

MYTH #2: You must be a fast cyclist. You have to be Superwoman or Superman.

Each cyclist selects their own pace based on their comfort and ability level. The goal of each brevet is to complete it within the allocated time limit. Completing a brevet in the allocated time relies on the individual being strategic and smart with their stops as well as their pre-ride planning.

Regina stated, "The older I get, the faster I was." While there was a time in my life when I could average 16-17 mph for a century, those days are long past. These days I'm pleased when my average speed (not counting stops) is between 13-14 mph. Since I'm a slower rider, I compensate by minimizing my time at the controls. My past participation in longer triathlons (1/2 ironman) as well as 50km trail races taught me how to refuel while still maintaining relentless forward motion."

MYTH #3: It's very expensive to do randonneuring.

There is an entrance fee to do brevets with a price range of \$5 to \$60. Individuals may also need to purchase food along the way, depending on their on-the-bike food supplies.

Regina commented, "Actually the registration fee was much less than I've ever paid to participate in an invitational



bike ride. I did buy a new waist pack so that I could be able to haul more food as well as my rain jacket with me."

Ruth agreed, stating, "This is relative to the individual. The entry fee is very inexpensive compared to other events but there is still the cost of travel and the hotel."

MYTH #4: You have to ride a significant number of miles.

Participation in randonneuring is aligned with your cycling goals. Some individuals ride a few brevets a year

while others complete a full randonneur series (200km, 300km, 400km and 600km). Others may ride a 200km event every month of the year. No matter what your goals are, the opportunities to ride within and outside of the United States are endless.

Regina came into this 200km with about 1,100 miles for the year as weekends were the only practical time for her to ride. Instead of ride frequency, she focused on building up ride distances. Ruth added, "I would think that you need to be able to

pull 12-15 miles per hour on flat, no-wind conditions. If you can pull these speeds, then whatever training program you are on is working. Some people can ride long distances without logging tons of training miles. I average 250 miles per week—this might be low for some people and high for others.”

MYTH #5: You need a special randonneur bike.

Any bike can be used for randonneuring, recognizing that comfort is key. Racing, touring, steel, fixed gear, recumbent, tandem, mountain bike, gravel, and bikepacking bikes or hybrids; they all work well. It’s the rider that matters more than the machine.

Regina shared, “The road bike that I upgraded to in 2003 continues to serve me well. I did add a headlight and taillight but that is for general safety no matter the distance.”

Ruth stated, “I must admit I felt unprepared riding my road bike! I need one of those things to read the cue sheet on my handlebars! If I was doing a longer ride, I would need a bigger bike bag to put jackets, food, and stuff into.”

As you can see from our inaugural “Bring a Friend to a 200km Brevet” weekend, the common myths of randonneuring were dispelled by our first time riders. Randonneuring serves a diverse melting pot of cyclists. Riders of all ability levels, cycling backgrounds and ages come together with a common goal—to answer the question, “How much further can I go?”

First time randos: Roger and Julia Stance, Regina Schurman, John Loesch, Ruth Anne Cooper and Kenneth Keller.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH

Regina added “...as a child, I was constantly exploring the surrounding neighborhoods on my bike. A friend that I made at my first real job got me into riding longer distances, including my first century at age twenty. This friend did brevets and also completed PBP at least two times. I remember him describing the rides that he did with Lon Haldeman back in the 1980’s. Little did I know at the time that one day I would complete a brevet!” Regina also said, “My first brevet was everything that I hoped it could be. The weather was perfect, the course was great. I liked that it was an out-and-back course so that I could see the other riders as I was approaching the turnaround at Jefferson. Everyone was so supportive. For 2018, I plan to join RUSA and work towards attaining a 1000K RUSA distance award.”

I challenge you and your RBA to consider a “Bring a Friend to a Brevet” weekend in your region. I have no doubt you will find it as rewarding as we did. I am already looking forward to our second membership drive in 2018!

There are lots of exciting things going on in the Midwest Randonneuring community! Come be a part of the magic and see what it’s all about! 🚲

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Great Lakes Randonneurs Jefferson Kettle Moraine 200km Brevet:

- Andrew Boryczyka
- Michele Brougher
- Richard Burnside
- Ruth Cooper *
- Bob Hayssen
- James Johnson
- Kenneth Keller *
- Matt Levy
- John Loesch *
- Hollie Long
- Karen Nissen-Boryczka
- Dawn Piech
- Regina Schurman *
- Greg Smolarek
- Roger Stance *
- Julia Stance *
- William Stevens
- Don Wetherell
- Tom Voeller *
- Anthony Wozniak

*Denotes first time Randonneurs on completing their first brevet



In July 2012, with only eight months of preparation, cycling rookie Juliana Buhring set off to do the impossible: to circumnavigate the globe on a bicycle in record time. *The Road I Ride* is her story of this most epic of adventures. In it, we learn why a 31-year old woman is moved to leave the comforts of home to embark on an adventure she seems utterly unqualified to complete and how this unique journey unfolds. Whether you've clipped in for 100km or 1200km or more, the physical, mental, emotional, geographical, financial, mechanical and navigational challenges the author faces and the solutions she employs during her adventure will seem both familiar and inspirational.

falls for an explorer and guide named Hendri. As a result of some fairly risky decision-making and poor luck, Hendri meets an untimely end, which sends Buhring into a spiral of depression from which she seeks an escape.

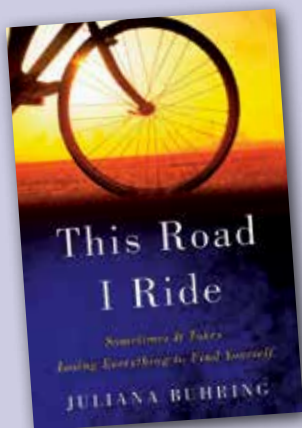
Back in Naples, Italy, where Buhring has spent considerable time, she connects with locals who support her burgeoning interest in cycling as a way to find comfort and peace of mind. Fueled not by athleticism, but rather grief, a keen sense of adventure, and, as she writes the "willpower and the determination to finish," Buhring hatches a plan that is both concrete and spectacular. When someone mentions the challenge of riding across Canada, she asks herself why stop there and begins to research round-the-world journeys. Unable to find any recorded evidence of a woman cycling around the globe, she reaches out to the folks at Guinness World Records for confirmation and guidance. Buhring is disappointed to learn that Guinness will only consider attempts that cover 18,000 miles within 150 days, which is fifteen days fewer than the reigning male record-holder at the time: a fact that strikes Buhring as both insensitive and capricious and only makes her more intent on smashing the record.

After less than a year of serious training, Buhring departs from Naples and heads west across Europe, establishing strong headwinds as one of the main foes she will fight along the way. With only a small financial reserve, Juliana relies upon the generosity of strangers and fellow former cult members she encounters along the way. At times, I found myself peering through my fingers in a "don't-open-that-door!" kind of way,

This Road I Ride: Sometimes it Takes Losing Everything to Find Yourself

BY JULIANA BUHRING

2016, W.W. Norton and Co., 240 pp.
\$26.95 paper, \$14.55 digital



Long before she contemplated riding her bicycle around the world, Juliana Buhring co-authored the bestselling memoir *Not Without My Sister* along with two of her sisters. The book chronicles the harrowing tale of a horrific childhood filled with sexual and emotional abuse at the hands of members of the Children of God religious cult into which she was born and from which she eventually escaped. A childhood spent in this strange and troubling environment appears to have provided Buhring with a unique perspective as well as an unlikely emotional fortitude.

While her early life experiences have powerfully shaped her adult character, it is the sudden and unexpected death of her friend and lover that pushes her over the edge. Having escaped from the Children of God as a 21-year-old, Buhring lives the life of a nomadic expatriate as a young adult. Based in Kampala, Uganda, she



Juliana Buhring Riding in India.
— PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR

but ultimately Juliana's faith in the essential goodness of others prevails. There are dicey situations aplenty in this book as the author crosses nineteen countries on four continents over the course of five months, and readers will likely experience adrenalin rushes that will either make them glad to be sitting on a comfortable couch or wish that they were on the road as well.

Those looking for a protracted examination of gender and cycling may be somewhat disappointed. While Buhring makes references to her identity at points along the way, and in areas such as India, being a woman colors her experience to a large degree, she does not explore these dynamics in great depth. Cycling has long been a male-dominated sport despite considerable progress made by women in recent years and women still make up a minority of cyclists world-wide. Endurance cycling presents unique challenges to the female rider with only 6% of the finishers of Paris-Brest-Paris in 2015 identifying as women and only 18% of the current RUSA membership female. That said, the fact that Buhring is a female cyclist dispels stereotypes

and provides inspiration to cyclists of all gender identities.

This book is a page-turner. With every misfortune, I found myself rooting for Buhring with increased enthusiasm. At points, it seems impossible that she will emerge unscathed by the challenges she faces. Ultimately, though, this book is inspiring, not simply because it recounts an extreme physical and mental challenge, but also because its author and protagonist is so similar to

the rest of us. While Buhring possesses some nearly supernatural qualities, it is her steely determination and outsized self-confidence and bravery that seem to propel her towards success. Readers of this book may wonder whether endurance athletes are running *away* from something or running *towards* something. It's a question we're given ample opportunity to consider in these pages, but one that's left somewhat unresolved. There is a lesson in here for each of us. 🚲



Great Lakes Mac & Cheese: 1200km of History and Scenery in Michigan and Wisconsin

BY MICHELE BROUGHER

Great Lakes Randonneurs and Detroit Randonneurs are happy to invite you to the Great Lakes Mac & Cheese 1200km during the Labor Day weekend of 2018. Our two clubs have designed a route that travels from the Sand Dunes of Michigan up across the Mackinac Bridge through the upper peninsula of Michigan and back south through cheese and cherry country in northern Wisconsin. You will experience some of the very best riding in both Michigan and Wisconsin.

Riders will gather at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and travel together to the start in Ludington, Michigan, on the steamship SS Badger, a National Historic Landmark. The ride will start the next

day, hugging the western lakeshore of Lake Michigan, traveling past Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Traverse City and Wilderness State Park to Mackinaw City. From here, it will be

over the Mackinac Bridge on Lake Huron, one of the largest suspension bridges in the western hemisphere, to the overnight in St Ignace.

Day 2, in the upper peninsula of Michigan, will be a trip up Shipwreck Coast on Lake Superior to Whitefish Point Lighthouse, the site of countless wrecks, including the famous Edmund Fitzgerald. Lunch will be followed by little-traveled roads past waterfalls, boreal forest, and sights seen by few cyclists.

Day 3 starts tamely, following back roads wherever possible, west through old mining and lumbering towns, then following the Menomonee River south through Peshtigo, Wisconsin, site of one of the largest historic fires of the 19th century to downtown Green Bay



The Mackinac Bridge—longest suspension bridge in the western hemisphere.

—PHOTO JEREMY GRAY

on the Fox River. Day 4 features miles of quiet bike trail along the Fox River and stops at numerous small cheese factories in Door County, location of some of the very best cycling in the state. Riders will finish riding along the eastern side of Lake Michigan, passing the famous Rawley Point Lighthouse and the docks that built almost all the submarines that won World War II. The grand finish is in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where you will be greeted with the cheers of all.

All overnights and food will be provided as well as drop sacks at each overnight. With a bit less climbing than some other 1200km events, the challenge will be the remoteness of an historic area that has hosted explorers, lumber barons, miners and pioneers whose legacy will be with you at every pedal stroke: 4 days, 3 Great Lakes, 2 states, and memories for a lifetime.

Come and join Great Lakes Randonneurs and Detroit Randonneurs on August 30-September 2, 2018, for Great Lakes Mac & Cheese! Registration opens January 31, 2018. 🚲



Michigan fields, forest and cherry orchards along US Bicycle Route 35.

—PHOTO JEREMY GRAY



Lake Michigan from Inspiration Point.

—PHOTO JEREMY GRAY

The Year of Experimenting

“These are some amazing adventures Bob; I've got to figure out how to up the priority of cycling in my life. Waiting for retirement is just taking too long.”

I was scrolling through Facebook last summer and came upon this comment on the page of a friend who had just finished a grueling but beautiful 1200km Grand Randonnée. Riding this event was the culmination of an extreme effort: not just in the ride but in the months and even years leading up to it. There is so much underlying wisdom in this comment that I hardly know where to begin.

So let me start with last things first. It is true that the ranks of randonneurs are well populated with ‘older’ riders. It does not follow, however, that waiting till ‘later’—retirement, when things slow down, when the kids are grown and gone—is the optimal time to take up this great sport. It takes a certain amount of time to work up to long distance brevets. Some folks get there sooner than others. But time is not on your side. The rides are the same year after year, they don’t get any longer or steeper, but for riders of a certain age, the body naturally loses strength. So waiting until later is the wrong strategy.

The writer also mentions making cycling a priority. This makes me scratch my head. The idea of upping priority, and waiting, are two gears that will never mesh. In my job, I have some standard tools for prioritizing my work; I suspect everyone who works for a

wage does. But how to make cycling a priority? I believe that we have time to do the things we take time to do. So prioritizing cycling shouldn’t be too hard. There are things that must be done in each day. After these tasks are done, there is time left over, and that ‘spare time’ is where prioritization really pays. Simple: list all the things you want or need to do, prioritize them, and get to it. For me, brevets are the perfect illustration of this idea. As a back-of-the-pack rider, I always have one eye on the clock. Whenever I come into a control, I try to make a list of the things I need to do, and *prioritize them* before I arrive. Only after I have ticked off those priority items do I allow myself a little time to kick back and rest.

On a larger scale, planning ahead is even more important. If PBP 2019 is something you are contemplating, then the 2018 cycling season is your golden opportunity to prepare for success.

If your shoes are giving you a little trouble, if the saddle bites after one hundred miles, or your eating regime is giving you trouble on day two, this is the year to try something different in an attempt to solve those problems.

What events you ride should also be up for consideration. You should experiment with riding hard events back to back. You need to know what it feels like to get up early the day after a hard ride and get back on the bike. Permanents offer an excellent opportunity for this kind of experimentation.

Finally, think seriously about riding a long event, 1000km or more, in 2018. While it is true that you only have to ride a complete series to qualify for most 1200km brevets, keep this in mind while you are celebrating your 600km milestone: if this were PBP you would only be in Brest, as far from St Quentin as possible, and now you would need to turn around and ride another 600km. This long ride experience more than any other will help you determine what you need to do to be ready for PBP. If you need to travel to find such a ride, so much the better. The experience of packing your gear and bike, sleeping in a strange bed, riding in unfamiliar territory with riders you may not know, these are all part of riding PBP. Whether you are able to finish this ride or not, you will come away with a clear understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, and that is what you should plan to focus your energy on from January to July in 2019. 🚲

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Back to Big Savage in Search of Solace

BY DAMON TAAFFE

It was a straight-up revenge mission, or maybe a search for redemption. Exactly two years before, after years of ultracycling and randonneuring—always on the lookout for the mountainous routes that brought with them panoramic vistas and exhilarating downward plunges to reward honest effort—a friend and I had taken a crack at the new, daunting frontier: the “Super Randonneur 600km.”

The course was the Big Savage SR 600km, a route created by Bill Beck, featuring the sawtooth grades of western Maryland, the verdant Lost River State Park in West Virginia, and Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley. It was the best the Mid-Atlantic had to offer, but we’d have to earn it: 42,000 feet of climbing in 375 miles.

The risk of looking for a challenge is that one might find it. In retrospect, I wasn’t even remotely prepared: a nasty fall earlier in the year had sidelined me for two months, after which I’d spent far more time planning my wedding than logging miles. Thus, my 2015 crack at *Big Savage* had essentially been a bachelor’s party only a randonneur could love, complete with self-inflicted debacles and no small sense of relief at surviving the ordeal. It was the toughest forty-three hours of my life; indeed, at the first control—sixty miles and 8,000 feet of climbing in—I’d found myself staring into the middle distance, dazedly trying to ingest a Frito and wondering where my life had taken a wrong turn. The remaining 315 miles were little better. Ultimately, it was only my riding companion’s persuasive

powers and refusal to indulge my self-pity that convinced me to attempt the second half of the ride instead of aborting the mission. My blog post afterward honestly recounted my view that, if one were thinking of attempting a SR600km, the best plan was to lie down until the sensation passed.

And yet, I couldn’t quite let it go. Surely things would have been different if I’d prepared appropriately. Possibly. So, while outwardly vowing never again to toe that masochist line, I thumb-tacked a mental note next to Big Savage that read: “Not done here.”

By September 2017, two years later, I felt ready to even the score. In 2016, I’d cruised through the Lynn Kristiansen Memorial SR 600km on

Endurance challenges are profoundly mental, and I felt my resolve fading as the grades steepened.

Skyline Drive with no undue drama, although tropical storm remnants ensured that it was a thoroughly soggy adventure. Then, in the spring of 2017, I’d joined the rolls of Cyclos Montagnards R60 honorees. With my wife overseas for a week, the scene was ripe for revenge served Savage.

Life, however, has a way of resisting even the best-laid plans. Two weeks out from the scheduled attempt, my father went into coronary arrest and septic shock. Odds were against his survival. I spent the next ten days in the florescent glare of an ICU ward, doing little but sitting, awaiting test results, and conversing with palliative care staff before collapsing each night more tired than if I’d run a marathon.

Improbably, after more than a week of unconsciousness, my father woke up and began what would be a long and uncertain process of recovery. The situation having stabilized at least somewhat, I returned to D.C. three days before my second attempt at Big Savage was to begin. I debated whether to be conventionally sensible and focus on putting my life back in order. Equally, though, I thought that nothing would be better than losing myself in the mountains and sunshine and letting my mind wander with the winds. Call it a celebration of life or an effort to triumph over adversity; if my father could defeat septic shock, I could fight a battle in my own way. I resolved to give it hell, exhausted or not.

Mentally, I started the ride with an audacious goal: to ride Big Savage straight through. I’d timed my ride start to fit with such a plan, and I hadn’t made a hotel reservation at the halfway mark in the hope that it would

be easier not to stop that way. Thus, heart full, eyes clear, and self-delusion abundant, I easily conquered the first hundred yards of the ride before launching myself up the first climb—a three-mile, thousand-foot spike known as Sideling Hill, the bane of weary RAAM riders dreaming of Annapolis.

Three hours into the ride, I'd traveled barely thirty miles. Despite my attempts to remain enthusiastic, my legs weren't responding. My heart and mind remained in a hospital a thousand miles away, and each time my phone rang I feared the worst. Endurance challenges are profoundly mental, and I felt my resolve fading as the grades steepened.

Two thoughts drove me onward. First, I've found that there are few troubles that a day in the sunshine won't improve; whatever my emotional state, the saddle has been the place to work through it. Second, the fact is that the first sixty miles of Big Savage may

be the toughest of any randonneuring route in the United States. It's a remarkably difficult stretch regardless of circumstances, beginning with thousand-foot spikes and culminating in the punishing 2,500-foot ascent of the eponymous Big Savage Mountain. I reasoned that the goal was just to stay in the game and continue moving forward, and that life would look better from the summit. A bag of Bugles had my name on it.

And so it proved. The course meandered along the Big Savage ridgeline, twisting through scenes that contrasted centuries, crimson barns and antique tractors presaging a regiment of wind turbines spanning distant peaks. The roads were in perfect repair, but some ancient houses were little more than scaffolds of timber dejectedly yielding to fate. The deer divined no threat in my whirring wheels, nor did the massive black bear that regarded me skeptically from atop

a railroad embankment. A bald eagle carried its victim out of my path on the plummeting descent down Big Savage. Only too soon, I arrived at the top of the "Westernport Wall," a regionally famous hill in Westernport, MD, whose grade exceeds 30%, and which is paved with bricks immortalizing the riders who have conquered it during the annual Savageman Triathlon.

From Westernport, it was an easy spin through small-town Appalachia to Keyser, West Virginia, scene of the sadly departed Stray Cat Café, a previous culinary highlight of the route, then a turn southbound on the forty-mile rolling stretch toward Moorefield. The cycling gods signaled their favor in the form of twenty miles

Northbound over the summit of South Branch Mountain, the highest point on the route, on Day 2.

—PHOTO DAMON TAAFFE



of brand new, glassy-smooth tarmac, and an expansive valley stretched for miles to the east before the ridgeline I knew I'd have to summit eventually. Just before Moorefield came the deceptively brief but severely steep 1.2-mile Patterson Creek Mountain climb, which is easy to miss in the elevation profile only due to the monsters on either side of it. Its 8% average grade testifies to the lie of averages, and around each of its twists one meets the depressing reality: "Not yet."

But all things must end, and from the summit, a breakneck descent carried me into Moorefield and the control at Fox's Pizza. Calories, sodium, and air conditioning were all that this savaged randonneur could ask for, even if my mere presence put Fox's at risk of flunking a health inspection.

Fox's location is a mixed blessing; it's just what you need when you need it, but it comes immediately before the biggest beast of the course, the climb up South Branch Mountain. Eat too much and you risk giving some of it

one is far more likely to encounter a bear than a cell signal. At its heart lies one of the best controls in the randonneuring world, the Lost River Grill, an oasis of booth seats, great cooking, and pie slices as big as the cog I wished I'd had on South Branch Mountain. Staff members are so familiar with cyclists and their peculiar needs that I've had them preemptively swipe my empty water bottles from the table and bring them back full of my beverage of choice.

The only downside of Lost River Grill is that it's nearly impossible to leave, especially when one's facing twilight and the knowledge that more climbs await. By this time I'd abandoned any notion of riding straight through; indeed, I was sufficiently shattered that I'd tentatively decided to call it quits at the overnight control thirty miles away. My legs had been leaden all day, and as much as I tried to prevent it, my thoughts were with my father instead of on the road ahead. And, with the nature of an out-and-back course, it's

needn't push my luck with another the next morning if I didn't feel compelled.

Ten hours later, I stumbled out of bed confident I'd qualified for membership in the Rip van Winkle society of SR 600km riders, looked out the window, and contemplated my choice: a sixty-mile leisurely spin back to the car, or a 188-mile assault on the return leg of *Big Savage*. While I enjoyed a leisurely hotel breakfast, I received encouraging news about my father's health and immediately felt an emotional cloud lift. I realized I'd be a fool not to celebrate by spending as much time as I could beneath the sun and amidst the trees. Bring on the reverse route!

The return to Hancock was as joyous as the first leg had been arduous. Climbing back through Wolf Gap, a bobcat flashed across the road not ten feet in front of me, as exotic a sighting as one will find on a bicycle. A quick slice of pie at the Lost River Grill fueled me over the much gentler side of South Branch Mountain. So, too, the Patterson Creek Mountain spike and return climb up Big Savage Mountain seemed friendlier with the knowledge that I wouldn't have to see them again the next day. The final thirty miles, with their thousand-foot climbs and descents, were as tough as I remembered them being two years earlier, but no journey worth retelling would end on a whimper. The Big Savage SR 600km admits defeat only after a suitably mighty roar. I finished the ride in 41 hours and 12 minutes.

More than most, randonneurs grasp in their souls that reward is proportionate to effort, and in that respect, the SR 600kms are crown jewels. With their new sixty-hour time limit, they are within reach of anyone with the audacity for the attempt and the planning to make the dream happen. The Big Savage SR 600km is not for the faint-hearted, but it earns that highest of accolades: it's utterly unforgettable. 🚲

The only blessing is a guardrail that provides a convenient seat from which to contemplate the nature of despair.

back in short order— five miles at an 8% average grade is grim in the best of times, and the last half-mile's 14% grade qualifies as obscene. The only blessing is a guardrail that provides a convenient seat from which to contemplate the nature of despair.

The eventual summit proved that hard work pays dividends, offering infinite views of the rugged West Virginia countryside and the encouraging realization that it was all downhill from there. I quickly entered Lost River State Park, a mid-Atlantic cycling mecca of wild landscapes where

only too evident what topographic monsters lurk on the return journey.

But what a final thirty miles! The climbs through Mill and Wolf Gaps are arguably the sweetest riding in the mid-Atlantic, all sparkling tarmac snaking through the George Washington National Forest. At night it's a starry wonderland, the sounds of crickets, spokes, and rushing waters combining into a sonnet for the intrepid rider. On the far side lay the bed into which I collapsed without setting an alarm, content that I'd had a soul-cleansing day in the saddle and

New RUSA Members

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
12122	Threlkeld, Karen A	Birmingham	AL	12127	Farrell, Kathryn E	Wesley Chapel	FL	12150	Crean, Shamus P	Tonawanda	NY
12152	Mundy, Bill D	Decatur	AL	12186	Hurst, James A	Warner Robins	GA	12137	Vajda, James	Oxford	OH
12146	Judah, Mark G	Madison	AL	12158	Roll, David P	Waterloo	IA	12148	Wright, Curtis A	Durant	OK
12174	Sax, Gary	Tucson	AZ	12176	Schurman, Regina	Lisle	IL	12169	Wiechers, Brenda J	London	ON
12162	Nichol, T Ross	Vancouver	BC	12126	Hohmann, David A	Peoria	IL	12175	Walls, Jeffrey Terence	Portland	OR
12156	Abler, Nicholas W	Acrata	CA	12151	Bowman, Michael	Arnold	MD	12138	Knowles-Kellett, Bill	Gettysburg	PA
12125	Tanjuatco, Marie Agleham	Fremont	CA	12172	Webster, Bill	Frederick	MD	12183	Danault, Jeff L	Clarksville	TN
12140	Tolosa, James	Fremont	CA	12133	Hill, Nancy E	Laurel	MD	12173	Orrall, Jamin Williams	Nashville	TN
12165	Douglas, Giles Robert	Mountain View	CA	12134	Hill, Leon E	Laurel	MD	12184	Gammon, William Jacob	Nashville	TN
12159	Garen, Steven Robert	Oakland	CA	12178	Arnett, David	Lothian	MD	12161	Francis, I Tucker	Austin	TX
12185	Nichols, Nathaniel	Oakland	CA	12160	Heitz, Ryan	Potomac	MD	12164	Fleming, Ian	Austin	TX
12129	Burt, Corinne M	Petaluma	CA	12179	Davison, Chris	Hamilton	MI	12147	Truan, Noe Ricardo	Brownsville	TX
12128	Rogers, Jeffrey L	San Francisco	CA	12187	Westphal, Kurt	Northville	MI	12167	Mayfield, Brian T	Colorado City	TX
12135	Perry, Scott	San Francisco	CA	12149	Fontana Jr, Anthony	Rochester	MI	12123	Delaney, Leonard W	Dallas	TX
12181	Cabeliza, Jerry E	San Jose	CA	12144	Lehnherr, Christoffer Robert	Missoula	MT	12143	Wilson, Kellie	Dallas	TX
12170	Carr, Richard A	Stockton	CA	12145	Chadduck, Doug	Asheville	NC	12168	Serrano, R	Houston	TX
12130	Magno Lagasca, Jacqueline Ann	Union City	CA	12124	Goldstein, Ami L	Durham	NC	12131	Petty, Larry D	Katy	TX
12136	Bruder, Dan	Superior	CO	12154	Person, Karen	Durham	NC	12180	Collingwood, Scott C	Layton	UT
12182	Newsom, Chris	Washington	DC	12139	Beese, Todd A	Raleigh	NC	12121	Capps, Charles R	Baraboo	WI
12142	Smith, Joe C	Delray Beach	FL	12153	Nuccio, Tim	Las Cruces	NM	12163	Trad, John P	Dousman	WI
12141	Ramakrishnan, Krishnan	Heathrow	FL	12155	Salameh, Mary	Las Cruces	NM	12177	Wilton, Jeff	Madison	WI
12132	White, Micheal Peter	Miami	FL	12171	Wilson, Thomas Scott	Cortlandt Manor	NY				
12157	Spence, Kelly M	Tampa	FL	12166	Keenan, Thomas J	New York	NY				

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Riding to New Heights

In preparing to write a new column I usually re-read a few previous ones to avoid obviously repeating myself. In spite of that, I find that I am once again on a plane, preferring to read or write than to watch a bad movie on a Lilliputian seatback screen. Shockingly, I am two weeks ahead of deadline and quite concerned that if I actually manage to send this to Janice early it might precipitate an untimely heart attack, but then I recall that she is tough enough to have aced two knee replacements this past summer so I decide to take the risk!

I was returning from an adventure to test my legs pedaling a sampling of Tour de France Alpine climbs cleverly combined with early morning continuing education classes. During our six-day excursion, we would tackle several infamous climbs including the Col du Galibier, Col du Telegraphe, and the Alpe d' Huez.

I had registered for this trip last year after my veterinary buddy Kevin finally persuaded me with stories of the past two years' "conferences." His stories were light on the medical education aspect but epic on the French food, wine, biking and scenery. I love France and biking and eating and drinking wine so it wasn't a hard sell, I just needed to explain to Eileen the wisdom of combining biking in France with a veterinary conference, and she just needed to explain to me that this particular combination of activities might possibly be her worst nightmare and she would not be joining me. I interpreted that to mean I was free to go without her so I quickly registered

before she challenged my conclusion.

Naturally, I had planned to increase my hill training in preparation but life intervened, and I was not able to ride nearly enough hills to prep for the Alps and more significantly, not even sufficient kilometers to attain my favorite RUSA distance award.

I have attained K-Hound status for the past three years and I am lucky enough to still ride with the folks who initially motivated me to try for this award. They take this K-Hound stuff very seriously and I find that often they (or at least he, you know who you are, Joe K.) are more aware of my cumulative mileage than I am and they use that knowledge to "inspire" me to maintain the riding schedule required to repeat the award.

This year, however, I didn't ride enough in the winter thinking I would make it up in the spring. Spring came and went and I was still behind and I was starting to calculate how much time it would take to get to 10,000km and the math was very stressful. Not

getting to 10,000km felt like failure but getting there would turn the activity I depend upon to relieve stress into a stress inducer. I also realized just how much time I had spent the past three years in pursuit of this singular goal and how much I had neglected other aspects of my life. It belatedly occurred to me that my Mom turned ninety this year and while I hopefully will have decades of riding ahead of me, I would surely not have that much time left with my Mom. I needed to re-order some priorities and while I truly need a regular riding schedule to maintain my sanity, I don't need to ride the 200km per week that hounding demands. I still completed a full series and would maintain my R-12 and P-12, but I didn't need to figure out how to get to 10,000km from 6,000km in four months which was a huge relief.

Once I decided to let K-Hound go, I realized that I had time to try other types of riding. I discovered a local bike shop manager at the beach who ran early Sunday morning group no-drop rides. Of course the "no-drop" concept is fungible and on his ride it meant "no dropping unless Jason needs to chase a passing rider but he will wait at the stop sign." The ride length and speed were both variable and one Sunday's ride included a lesson in maintaining a proper pace-line which was enlightening but alas not much use in randonneuring. The following week the tire in my Litespeed blew just as I was heading to the ride which doomed me to riding a fixed gear with Jason and the racers but it proved to be a great workout and only slightly humiliating. An added bonus was the fabulous organic juice shop which abutted the bike shop and



The climb was more beautiful than the sign at the top!

—PHOTO JIM BIXEL

I also joined a local Wednesday night woman's ride at the bike shop two miles from home. A core group of women had been meeting all summer to traverse local Sourland Mountain roads and by joining them I was able to get in twenty miles of hill training each week. And I was once again surrounded by racing bikes and Strava-heads but overall my foray outside of randonneuring was proving to be fun.

The Alpine adventure was exceedingly challenging. Those French don't mess around with their hills. We didn't cover long distances but the climbs were surprisingly long and often steep. My lack of training proved painful on the first two days as I lanterne-rouged my way to the summits, but by day three I was feeling much better and by the

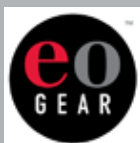
final day and the climb to Alp d'Huez, I was having a grand time and climbing comfortably, which was a great relief. I was surrounded by a great group of riders whose abilities varied from a multi-Iron man finisher to a seventy-year old almost-Olympian to a rider recovering from recent knee surgery. During the week I had been outed as a rider who doesn't know her gear ratios (truly shocking to these folks) and proved that slow and steady always gets the job done. I suspect for most of these folks, this epic week was the culmination of their riding season. For me? A fortuitously timed training ride for the Super 600km that Nigel, George, and I have planned for October. There are other, less time-consuming awards out there, just waiting for me... 🚲

after a two-hour ride with folks who don't use rear view mirrors, fenders or steel bikes, I always felt I had earned a huge smoothie or two.

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Ditchers Get Ditches: A Granite Anvil 1200km Story

August 24–27, 2017

BY CJ ARAYATA, #9565

After a few years with Pennsylvania Randonneurs, it was time for my first “big one.” James Haddad and I decided on Granite Anvil. My preparation included a PA series plus Crush the Commonwealth, a spring event that started in Pittsburgh and ended in Philadelphia this year. I also did a single-speed 200km, had my car tuned up and got my passport; I was ready.

I picked up James on the way to Durham College. We arrived late afternoon on Wednesday and met organizer Dave Thompson and his crew of volunteers. Settled into nice rooms, we ate odd Canadian burgers for dinner and were in bed by 10:00pm.

Day One (Thursday): Oshawa to Parry Sound

After a breakfast of croissants, meats, and cheeses and a brief meeting, we were off at 4:00am. Most of the first day was a blur although spent entirely in the company of James and Chris Slocum. We faced fifteen minutes of rain, ominous looking clouds, and bad drivers. I had to keep reminding myself: one day at a time. Much climbing for one sweet, sweet descent. James’ rotisserie chicken at Wasaga Beach hit the spot.

James’ Chicken.
—PHOTOS CJ ARAYATA

My GPS kept skipping ahead with cues. The majority of the riders got into the overnight much earlier, but I didn’t care because I had just put in my fastest 400km time ever! Lights out at 3:30am with the alarm set for 6:30am.

Day Two (Friday): Parry Sound to Bancroft

Three hours of rest was perfect, and we rolled out by 7:15am. There was climbing out of the gate, and my left IT band started hurting. We stopped for croissants in Huntsville. The next stretch on ON-60 through Algonquin Park was pretty, but long with relentless rollers. About thirty miles out, I rode ahead of James and Chris, to ride my own pace for a while. After a stop at Lake of Two Rivers Café, where I devoured fish and chips, I put on night layers, tightened my creaking crankarm, and headed out. No sign of Chris and James.

I hustled on ON-127S: smooth road, no traffic, a view for miles. Eventually



James Haddad and Cj Arayata.

—PHOTO CHRIS SLOCUM

I caught up to Larry Midura and Mike Anderson, who I know from PA brevets. We reached the Porterville Diner at 9:02pm to find out the diner closed at 9:00pm! We pleaded for any ready-to-go food and ended up with coffee, chocolate milk, veggies, and muffins. Warmed by the food, I put on more layers and was back out into the night.

The leg to Bancroft went quickly with company. I was envious, as Larry's nicer hubs had him coasting as fast as I was pedaling! We reached Bancroft around 2:30am, devoured ribs, chicken, and scalloped potatoes.

Day Three (Saturday): Bancroft to Napanee

I had two hours of sleep and then leftover pumpkin pie for breakfast. It was nice leaving around the same time as others; into the fog I went with Larry, Mike, and Canadian newbie Don Williams.

We were rightly warned of brutal climbs, which began immediately. Up,



up, up, and the sun came out with a vengeance. I was in short sleeves and bare legs by 9:00am.

We did tons more climbing that day to the afternoon stop for subs at Denbigh, and we faced more rollers after. My knees grew increasingly painful, so Don conducted a roadside PT session to assess them. Nothing was obviously inflamed or torn, but the pain seemed unavoidable.

We slowed down considerably, but eventually reached Sharbot Lake after 10:00pm, where PB & J's, coffee, fruit, and friendly faces awaited us. I was surprised to find Bill Olsen who had experienced a rear shifter jam and lost most of his gears.

Bill, Don, and I rolled out around 11:00pm. With fifty miles to go, it was not looking like we would get adequate sleep. Don was feeling good, but he slowed for me and Bill. This was a long and painful stretch: foggy weather-wise and mentally. My knees were killing me and the dreaded three-letter-word came to mind. I hit rock-bottom when I looked over and witnessed Bill slo-mo veer into a ditch.

Don, the voice of reason, prescribed a group ditch-nap. Vivarin, alarms set for 10 minutes, and the stars above. I melted into the ground. I was half-asleep but then thought I heard

voices? Lights? Was that.... James and Chris? The reunion totally revived me. "Dude!!" Laughing and catching up on the two days that we hadn't seen each other, James told me he had wanted to catch me and then hate-drop me, or even forego sleep so he could wait for me at the finish just to say, "Look who's finally here."

We finished day three at 4:00am, ate lasagna and had only one hour of sleep, but it didn't matter.

Day Four (Sunday): Napanee to Oshawa

I finished my third "lobby" breakfast by the time everyone else met me. Delirious and poofy-eyed, we looked deranged but didn't care. Volunteers shouted to us, "The family is back together! It warms my heart!" We crushed the opening leg with smooth roads, good spirits, chatter, and pictures. The low point of this day occurred later on when I was on my own, but then I found a lot of riders outside Colborne, the midway control. I had a sit-down breakfast with Don and Noel from Seattle but was quickly dropped by them through farmlands and had to sing to myself loudly to keep awake. About forty miles out the van crew informed me that I was the lanterne rouge. I took two caffeine pills and had

James Haddad, Chris Slocum, CJ Arayata.

—PHOTO BY VOLUNTEER

an energy bar, and I was ready for a three-hour time trial to the finish. My knees were hurting pretty badly but I pedaled hard anyway, and even faster when I saw riders stopped ahead with the van. Lanterne rouge no more. Fifteen miles of rollers along Lake Ontario, and eventually I caught up with Noel. Unclipping at lights was excruciating! Finally, I rode onto the college campus and was done. Finishing was surreal. The applause at the after-party made me feel like I had conquered the world.

Thanks to Dave Thompson and all of the volunteers for an unforgettable ride. The first of many, and I can't wait for the next. 🚲



CJ Arayata.

—PHOTO JAMES HADDAD

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The Granite Anvil 1200km

August 24–27, 2017

BY MEAGHAN HACKINEN

“You haven’t seen hills,” my ride buddy, Robert Couperthwaite, told me during our first brevet of the season, “until you attempt the Granite Anvil.”

Challenge Accepted

“I’m in,” I replied.

He chuckled, perhaps mistaking my enthusiasm for insanity. But while I may live in the flatlands of Saskatchewan, at heart I’m from the West Coast, forever pining for Coastal Mountain climbs, roller-coaster island roads, and the steep slopes banking Vancouver’s downtown. I love hills like a dolphin loves tuna—I can never get enough.

By day four of the Granite Anvil, however, I may have had my fill.

The Ride

2017 marked the third edition of the Granite Anvil 1200km, hosted by Ontario Randonneurs. The ride departs from the Toronto suburb of Oshawa, taking riders for a 1200km loop on scenic back roads through the eastern Ontario’s sparsely populated granite hills, cottage country, and gem-hued lakes in remote Algonquin Park. According to ride organizer, Dave Thompson, this year’s event took into consideration feedback from previous renditions: the final 100 kilometers had been rerouted to follow the relatively flat lakeshore of Lake Ontario (instead of climbing inland on busier roads) and

the food at controls was revised to contain more protein sources and varied offerings, including sit-down meals, fresh seasonal fruit, and ready-to-go sandwiches. The ride included hotel accommodations (and beer!) at overnight controls and professional photography as well as mobile support. There were 56 starters, 44 finishers, and a crew of dedicated volunteers; five individuals participated in two pre-rides.

Day One

We set out from Durham College at 0400 hours. The first day would be the longest at 400 kilometers, followed by two 300-kilometer days and an “easy” 200-kilometer day to cap everything off.

My goal: finish in U-80 hours.

I’d completed my one previous 1200km in eighty-four hours on a commuter bike with sneakers, so I figured that with an upgrade to a road bike and cleats, my goal was achievable as long as I could maintain pace and stay on course. I had a last-minute extra challenge when my phone crashed during the flight en route. No phone meant zero distractions: no music, social media, or motivational messages from back home. Luckily,

Meaghan Hackinen at the end of the ride.

—PHOTO DAVE THOMPSON



I was loaned a Spot Tracker so that the support vehicle (as well as friends and family) could keep tabs on my whereabouts.

After a few final reminders and notes of caution about potentially sketchy gravel sections, we were off. I pedaled alongside fellow Prairie Randonneurs Marj Oneschuk and Bob Couperthwaite, climbing gradually up to the Niagara Escarpment until I lost them on one of the hills. Alone, I chased down the twinkling red of riders' taillights ahead of me, picking up pace on the rolling climbs as my legs warmed up. Daylight came on slowly to reveal ominously dark clouds, threatening precipitation. Regardless, I felt charged and alive, experiencing gleeful relief as the clouds parted to let sunshine filter through. The first control at the McDonalds parking lot in Alliston provided a welcome break.

"Selfie!" screamed Shab Memar, volunteer and partner of rider, Hamid Akbarian.

I turned just in time for Shab to snap a photo of the two of us, her looking impeccably fresh and me already rosy-cheeked and sweat-glistening. Shab would become the unofficial photographer of the GA, snapping photos of all the riders and uploading them to the group Facebook Page with astonishing regularity.

The remainder of day one flew by as the rolling hills gave way to farmland that transitioned to rocky Canadian Shield. Aided by the readily available granola bars, fruit, and refreshments at the controls, I made my stops brief and efficient. On a curvy back road I caught up with Larry Graham, a returning rider who participated in the GA during the inaugural run in 2009.

"There was this section that they called the glutebuster," he told me in hushed tones. "Imagine: you're near the end of a 1200km, and then they throw this at you. Pure torture."

Lucky for us, this year's edition did not include the glutebuster.

We arrived at the control at Wood

Fired Pizza Joint in Torrance to find bikes aplenty in disarray across the lawn. Despite the beckoning aroma of baking dough, I wanted to cash in on the remaining hour of daylight. I switched on my lights and took off toward the overnight control at Parry Sound, reveling in the smooth pavement, wide shoulder, and minimal climbing of the day's final sixty kilometers.

Day Two

Another early start. At the urging of Shab, I rode out from the overnight control with her husband Hamid.

"Take care of each other," she said.

The route dipped and swerved through misty darkness, cool undercurrents of air indicating the passing of small bodies of water. Hamid and I exchanged stories and before we knew it, we were approaching the first control of the day in Huntsville alongside early morning truck traffic. From Huntsville I rode with Ontario-rider Jim Raddatz, the two of us breathlessly tackling 15% grades, grateful that this section of the route pulled away from the main roads and vehicle traffic was infrequent.

Jim and I joined a handful of other riders for lunch at the mid-day checkpoint in Algonquin Park, including Jerzey Dziadon, first-time 1200km rider John Cummings, and the wise-cracking duo of Renato Alessandrini and Albert Koke. The scenery in Algonquin Park—pristine green wilderness reflected in the glassy lakes—was glorious. If I have one regret, it's not taking the time to strip down and take a plunge.

I spent much of the afternoon pedaling alone, enjoying the challenge of the quick climbs and rush of the swift down hills. The final few kilometers of the day circled around the calm waters of Elephant and Baptiste Lake before routing into the picturesque town of Bancroft. I joined the others for a buffet-style dinner at the Eagle's Nest Restaurant before we made our way back to motel rooms, road-weary but refueled.

Day Three

A series of steep climbs took us out of Bancroft. Held up by a rear flat, I caught up to Dick, John, and Jerzey as the rose-hued pre-dawn sky transitioned to brilliant sunshine, midway up an unforgivably steep climb.

The volunteer crew had been relentless in reminding us that the early-hours ride out of Bancroft would be chilly. "It's called Siberia Road," said volunteer Dick Felton. "Let that sink in. It's going to be cold."

I was glad to have heeded their advice and layered up, taking the extra step to pull my blue latex surgical gloves over cycling gloves for extra insulation. A rewarding downhill brought us into Barry's Bay, where riders de-layered and sipped hot coffee at the day's first control. I rolled out again with John, Dick and Jerzey, enjoying the amiable atmosphere of chasing each other up and down rolling climbs. The words on the Granite Anvil homepage—"If you're not going up, you're going down,"—aptly describe it.

I had my first encounter with the support vehicle after I pulled over to change another flat. "Noticed your dot stopped in the middle of nowhere," said the volunteer. "Just thought I'd come along to see if you were okay."

I was—if there's one thing I can do it's fix a flat—but the fact that the support vehicle had tracked me down to ensure my well-being was a heart-warming gesture, and demonstrated the level of care afforded to Granite Anvil participants.

In every way conceivable the volunteers were amazing, putting in long hours and catering to our every sleep-deprived whim. While I usually pride myself on self-sufficiency, I was surprised how much I enjoyed the convenience of supported controls. I had a great time chatting with the volunteer crew and appreciated knowing that if I required mechanical assistance, it would be available. A huge thanks to everyone who came out to support this ride: we couldn't have

done it (and wouldn't have had nearly as much fun) without you!

By the time I reached the final night control of day three in Napanee, I was close to my limit. The sun swung low on the horizon illuminating golden fields, and the evening breeze chilled any exposed skin. Volunteers Shab and Cathy Brouse waved us into the final night control, cheering our arrival: "You made it!" I climbed into bed at 9:15 pm and set my alarm for three hours.

Day Four

Night riding has always been a challenge. Generally, I try to avoid it, but since I aimed to complete the GA in less than 80 hours, this time it was non-negotiable. The route followed quiet country roads out of Napanee where I tuned into the rhythms of my body, my eyes tracing the silhouettes of trees. Aside from a few harrowing moments when a dog burst from the darkness to give chase, I had a suburban night ride.

I crossed the high bridge over the Bay of Quint and then followed the bay to Carrying Place, passing cottages interspersed by small towns. I stopped at a 24-hour convenience store to have my brevet card stamped and refuel with a microwaved breakfast sandwich.

As I reached the Waterfront Trail on the north shore of Lake Ontario, the day was dawning, and I welcomed the morning sights.

Not long after Carrying Place my rear shift cable broke. With only two gears, the final hundred kilometers of the ride—especially the climb from the lakeshore into Oshawa—proved soul-crushing, but I managed, pumped full of adrenaline from the thrill of finishing within my goal. I was forced to walk my bike up the nastier climbs, wincing in embarrassment at the sound of my cleats on pavement.

I finished in 78 hours and 24 minutes, welcomed by the enthusiastic volunteer crew, and I was bestowed a medal with the ceremony of a medieval knighting. GA veteran Marcel Marion had been the first rider in, no surprise since he was the quickest to reach all of the controls from day two onward. Arriving early meant I had the opportunity to greet other riders; instead of catching up on sleep, I spent the better part of the day drinking beer and enjoying the camaraderie, balancing out the solitude of the previous night.

The festivities continued into the evening with a pizza party wrap-up and medals awarded to the Can-Am

Challenge finishers. A few riders rolled in mid-meal, the whole room turning to applaud their efforts. Everyone, even those who DNF-d, had a story. Here is a sampling of online comments:

• I was never hungry. There was plenty of food and drinks. I particularly liked the chicken and ribs in Bancroft—delicious and just what I needed.

• GREAT!!!! You were with us on the road. Couldn't ask for better support. I'll be back in 2021!

• Loved the route. It was scenic and beautiful with a variety of terrain. I wish I was faster so I could have seen more of it in the daylight, but that is something I need to improve, not you.

• The mobile support was unbelievable! A+! Perfect! Amazing! And I mean that literally, I can't believe the dedication of the mobile support. Their work looked far more tiring than the ride... I loved the ride, I loved the atmosphere you created, the people I shared it with and everything about it.

As for me? I'll be back for another round of punishment four years from now at the 2021 Granite Anvil. 🚲

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Left: Dick Felton (presenting) and Ed Boltz.

Below: Stephen Kenny, Toshi Munekata and Mike Sturgill.



Granite Anvil Photo Roundup

PHOTOS BY DAVE THOMPSON



Above: Larry Graham, Hamid Akbarian and Vern Smith.



Top: Vern Smith and Mike Turek.

Above: Ian Shopland and his Dad.



Above: Nick Bull and Meaghan Hackinen.



Right: Shab congratulating John Mazur on Granite Anvil completion.

Spot Light – 4 RUSA members Due to earn Ultra K-Hound in 2017

BY DAN DRISCOLL WITH PAM WRIGHT

In 2016, the RUSA Board created a new RUSA award, the Ultra K-Hound, for any RUSA member that earned 10 K-Hounds. This may be RUSA's most difficult award to earn.

Kongratulations to four RUSA members that are slated to earn the Ultra K-Hound Award this year, and it appears that three have already completed the task.

RUSA #2565, **Gary Gottlieb**, member of Lone Star Randonneurs, earned his Ultra K-Hound Award in August of this year. Gary is unique in that he earned all ten of his K-Hounds with RUSA rides within the continental United States. In 2012 Gary busted

through what most of us would not believe possible...riding over 40,000 kilometers of RUSA rides in one year. That's an average of almost 800 kilometers a week, but Gary was only allowed one K-Hound Award for his efforts that year.

In stark contrast to Gary's domestic riding, RUSA #64, **Mark Thomas** of Seattle International Randonneurs, has earned many of his 2017 kilometers with international 1,200km rides.



Mark has over fifty 1,200km rides to his credit and has become an international legend with his travels. Mark's exploits have taken him around the world many times. In fact he leads the world in collecting "International Super Randonneur Awards," earned by riding a 1,200km on four different continents. Mark has done this five times. Check it out at www.aukweb.net/results/fame/isr/.

RUSA #4495, **Vickie Tyer** of Lone Star Randonneurs, earned her Ultra K-Hound this year with the completion of The Last Chance 1,200km. Vickie is also no stranger to international



Above, Geoff Swarts.

— PHOTO LYN GILL.

Gary Gottlieb at the finish of The Texas Rando Stampede.

— PHOTO LINDA MIDDLETON



Vickie Tyre at the start of The Texas Rando Stampede.

—PHOTO LINDA MIDDLETON

Mark Thomas at The Great Southern in Australia.

—PHOTO LINDA MIDDLETON



randonnées, having completed two LEL's and two PBP's. Vickie currently has ridden more 1,200km rides than any other female RUSA member.

RUSA #4089, **Mr. Geoff Swarts**, of Seattle International Randonneurs, will most assuredly be RUSA's fourth recipient of the Ultra K-Hound Award in 2017 with about 1,300 kilometers standing between him and his goal of K-Hounding for the tenth time. We just

don't see Mr. Swarts coming up short.

These four over-achieving Ultra K-Hounds join three of their Ultra K-Hound Award comrades who earned the Ultra K-hound in 2016: Pam Wright, Sharon Stevens, and Dan Driscoll, all from Lone Star Randonneurs.

Keep your eyes open for new Ultra K-Hounds in 2018 and beyond; it looks like Mr. Vincent Muoneke is next in line. 🚲

Attention Members

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

Update your address online at:

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

...and to renew your RUSA membership!

Memberships run from January through December. Renew online at:

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2016 California Coastal Mountain Climber 1000K

BY MASSIMILIANO POLETTO

Eric Larsen's Coastal Mountain Climber 1000km is a magnificent ride: over 42,000 feet of climbing, hundreds of miles of remote, traffic-free roads, and well-spaced sleep stops. It deserves to become a classic. On paper, prior to its first edition, it seemed daunting—awesome in the literal sense.

That might explain why there were only seven of us at the start, at 9:00pm on Thursday, October 6, at the Palo Alto Caltrain station. We wound our way in the dark through the Stanford campus, past the venture capital empires of Sand Hill Road, and up Old La Honda, one of the Bay Area's most well-known climbs. I'd never ridden it in the dark, and it was wonderfully different—quiet and a little mysterious. A waxing yellow moon emerged from broken clouds low over the horizon as we swooped down to the ocean.

Four of us—Matt Roy, Jon Beckham, Dan Beringhele, and I—joined forces when we reached Highway 1. The road was deserted and quiet save for the occasional sound of surf. We kept a brisk pace, sometimes forgetting that we still had almost six hundred miles to the finish. Santa Cruz by night, empty like I'd never seen it, with brief stops for coffee in Aptos and Monterey, and another stop in Carmel to fix a flat. We alternated pacelines with side-by-side riding that favored conversation and helped us stay alert.

Daybreak found us in Big Sur. It was an idyllic morning, with perfect visibility and few cars on the road. Our group split and regrouped repeatedly

on the coastal rollers. In Lucia, I benefited for the first time from the support of Mo, Matt's wife. She went on to meet us at every control of the ride. Having never ridden a brevet with personal support before, I was grateful to be catapulted to Mo's pro-level assistance, complete with fresh-made sandwiches and countless other goodies. It almost felt like cheating.

The highlight of day one was, without doubt, Nacimiento—Ferguson Road, seven miles at 7% average grade that took us from the seashore into the dry interior of the Ventana wilderness. Our quartet stayed mostly together until Jolon, then broke up definitively as Matt and I made swifter progress into the headwind to King City. The oak savannah of the Ventana wilderness, with its golden grasses and scattered oaks, gave way to flat, wind-swept farmland.

We stopped for a long time at the King City control, trying to cool off with ice packs on our heads. Back on the road, we followed the Salinas River before climbing gradually into increasingly arid ranchland, a broad canyon surrounded by spectacular dome-shaped hills.

Unexpectedly, we found Mo by the

side of the road at mile 235. She had driven ahead and found a bridge down. Work crews claimed that the bridge would be impassable to cyclists, but after a brief call with Eric, we decided that whatever the obstacle, we'd be able to hike around it. Turning around, not to mention rerouting the riders behind us, seemed like a terrible idea.

Despite the dire warnings, the bridge turned out to not be a problem. The new span was in place but had not been surfaced, and rebar poked through the concrete. We dismounted, walked, and were safely across. Strange that no one could imagine such a simple solution!

Only thirty miles or so remained to Paso Robles, our stop for the night, and they passed quickly. We saw wild pigs, tarantulas on the road, a herd of elk in the distance, and a fantastic sunset that we struggled to capture with our cameras. We arrived at the Motel 6 at 8:20pm. I took a shower, inhaled a burrito that Mo had purchased for me, and was asleep shortly after 9:00pm.

I woke without an alarm at 3:20am, alert and fresh. By 4:15am we were on the road, rolling slowly to give Matt's knees time to warm up. Two riders had abandoned during the previous day, so only five of us remained on the course. We had left Jon and Dan in Paso, while Sherry Adams, the only female participant, was now ahead of us. She had stopped only briefly, resuming her ride at 2:00am.

Matt's knee problems receded, and sunrise lifted our spirits. At the corner of Pozo Road, the morning sun still low on the horizon and the yellow grass all aglow, we found Eric brewing coffee

in his VW camper-van while his gigantic dog Arthur loped around us enthusiastically. It was a perfect scene.

We continued twenty miles to Pozo (“pozo” means “water well” in Spanish), more than half of them on a well-graded but incredibly remote gravel road: no cars, no buildings, no power lines or other manmade structures other than the road itself. Pozo Road was a highlight of the ride for me.

The adventure continued on Hi Mountain Road, ten miles of dirt that tested our off-road riding skills: huge rocks in the middle of the road, deep ruts, treacherous pockets of fine sand, several tricky dry creek crossings. At times we shared the trail with local enduro motorbikers, who were friendly but could not help kicking up massive clouds of dust.

Vicky Backman of San Luis Obispo Randonneurs welcomed us to a much needed water stop on the far side of the mountain. Refreshed, we rode hard for twenty miles into a stiff headwind to Arroyo Grande, passing Sherry near Lopez Lake. We turned southeast, and the headwind became a bodacious tailwind that blew us to Tepusquet Canyon at 25 mph.

Tepusquet Road, a shady and mostly gentle climb through oak and bay woods, rewarded us with a fantastic descent, every turn swoopy and well-engineered. By the end, Matt and I were grinning like madmen.

It was past 4:30pm now, and thirty-six miles to New Cuyama, our rest stop for the night. There were trucks on the road here, and what looked on the profile like a constant gentle climb turned out to be a sequence of upward-trending rollers. But the drivers were mostly courteous, we had a tailwind, and I felt unexpectedly strong, settling into a 30-mile pull. We arrived at 6:29pm, to a warm welcome from Mo and Julia and David Walker, and enjoyed a leisurely evening before turning in at 9:00pm.

We were on our bikes at 4:00am. The other riders had come in while

we slept; once again, Sherry had not stopped for long and was two hours ahead of us. For a long time we ground up a gentle grade under a brilliant starry sky. Beyond the range of our headlights, the landscape was black and featureless.

The stars had faded and dawn colored the sky when suddenly we smelled coffee. Coming around a turn, we saw the familiar VW camper-van, Eric, and Arthur the big friendly dog. We ate breakfast and admired distant views of the Kern Basin.

The climb continued for many miles, eventually topping out at 6,000 feet. We did not encounter any cars for maybe thirty miles, and enjoyed grand views of Los Padres National Forest stretching south to the horizon.

Tejon Pass—two kilometers at 5% grade into a howling headwind—was the price of admission to the Old Ridge Route, one of the most distinctive

they served me well for the next ten miles on CA-126. That was really the only unpleasant stretch of the ride: a debris-strewn shoulder, high-speed traffic, and a relentless headwind.

The farm roads of the Santa Clara River valley felt like heaven after the freeway. Matt suffered a flat, which we fixed in the shade of a citrus nursery. We enjoyed some ice water from a large cooler, presumably intended for the farm workers. Not much further now: more orange groves, tidy rows of vegetables, a couple moderate climbs, then Ojai, the penultimate control, with its tall palm trees and elegant Spanish Colonial Revival main street.

It was there, around 5:30pm, that Matt noted that, with a bit of effort, we could finish before 7:00pm, breaking seventy hours. And so our ride, which had been more scenic tour than timed event, turned into a proper hammer session. After forty minutes or so it

At times we shared the trail with local enduro motorbikers, who were friendly but could not help kicking up massive clouds of dust.

roads I have ever traveled. Built a century ago as the primary connector between Los Angeles and the San Joaquin Valley, it was superseded by safer routes starting in the 1930s. It has been closed to traffic for the last ten years, and it has an eerie, post-apocalyptic feel. The concrete surface is cracked and broken, and hundreds of black rubber mats are scattered about, presumably for erosion control. A stone arch and wall are all that remain of an old roadside inn. Mountains stretch to the horizon in every direction.

We passed Sherry near the top of the Old Ridge Route, then descended into a furnace at Castaic. I drank almost a gallon of fluids there, and

became clear that we'd make it without trouble, so we paused to admire sunset over Lake Casitas.

We summited the final climb, West Casitas Pass, just as the setting sun lit up the waters off Santa Barbara, while clouds overhead glowed orange and purple. I laughed out loud: that such a magnificent ride end with so much beauty—it was ridiculous, too good to be true. Matt and I laughed and slapped each other on the back as we coasted down to Carpinteria. At 6:51pm we were in the parking lot of the Motel 6, beer in hand. 🚲

Abbreviated from <http://veloblog.maxp.net>

1200km to Recovery

BY DEB BANKS

My new life began on January 30, 2015. Out for a three-day credit card trip with friends, riding dirt and quiet highways in northern California, all five of us were hit from behind by a drunk driver. I felt a tap and woke up in a ditch, with cracked ribs and a severely broken right leg. Another rider had a broken collarbone and ankle, two others suffered contusions and one cracked vertebrae in his back.

The 18-year-old who hit us was so out of it that he and his stepdad (the drunk passenger) had the nerve to tell us that they were going to “take off” because they thought we all looked fine. Unbeknownst to everyone at the time was the fact that one of our five companions lay unconscious

under the front wheel of the car, still attached to her bicycle. We were, most definitely, lucky.

During the two years of surgeries, I remember thinking to myself that I was on a 1200km to recovery, only I didn’t have a map of the route or a cue sheet. I had no idea how long each

section would take, or when the interim milestones would occur, only that this trip would take a while.

Finally, in November 2016, my doctor and I looked at my x-rays and sure enough, we both clearly saw signs of healing. In January 2017, almost two years to the day of the crash, I started walking and riding again. In February, I rode my first 200km! I sucked wheels all day, and when I arrived at the finish, friends from San Francisco clapped and cheered. I cried tears of joy to know that I could still complete a brevet.

In April, I completed my favorite ride of the year, the fleche! My team rode a flat route, new roads for all of us; it was great. When I walked into Crepes on Cole, people cheered, clapped and hugged me. I can’t begin to tell you how much the support from rando-friends helped me keep going, helped me be

Bill Russell inbound while we're still outbound.

—PHOTO DEB BANKS





Same three at Last Chance.

—PHOTO CATHERINE SHENK

Finished-Bill Olsen, Deb Banks, Mark Behning.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

positive and helped me push forward when I wanted to stop.

I wanted to attempt a 1200km in 2017, and due to circumstances, it seemed that Last Chance was going to be my best chance. I emailed John Lee Ellis, sheepishly asking if he would let me attempt Last Chance without all of the pre-qualifying rides. However, I told him I would feel more comfortable with at least a 600km under my belt, so I ended up doing the British Columbia Lowlands 600km. I highly recommend this route – it’s beautiful and Canadian hospitality is excellent.

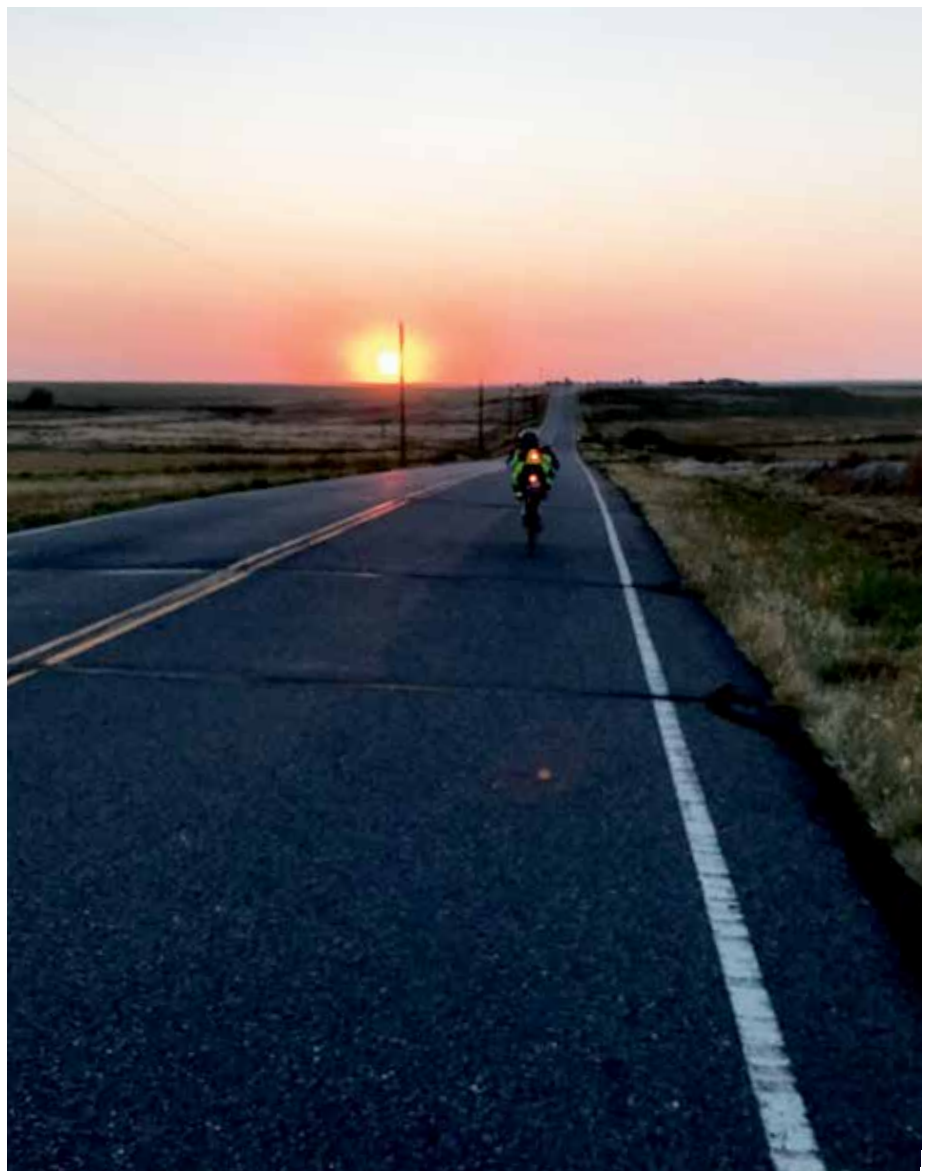
Ten days after the 600km, we lined up for the start of the Last Chance in Louisville. There were a number of friends also riding: Vickie Tyer from Texas, Bill Olsen from New Jersey, Vinnie from Washington, and a host of others, so I felt good about the rando-company I would be keeping for the next 90 hours or so.

As the group sorted itself out, Mark Behning and I teamed up with the honey badger of a rando, Vickie Tyer. She is strong, determined, and gets it done, no matter what. We rode and swapped stories for hours as the miles passed by.

Arriving in Atwood, KS, Brent welcomed me with a big bear hug. We ate and headed to bed, agreeing to a departure time of 5:00am. Vickie left earlier and that's the last we saw of her until the celebration dinner.

Day two was hot. Bill Olsen, Mark and I made our way to Nebraska, stopping at every state line for a goofy picture. The landscape is monotonous: rolling hills of cornfields or sunflowers, or nothing. Sun, road, and unfavorable winds, the rule of the day.

All three of us were on a comeback ride with something to prove. Mark had been randonneuring since 1990, but had taken a hiatus for many years for other life pursuits. Bill had been battling illness for two years and was



Vickie Tyer, Day 1.

—PHOTO DEB BANKS



Last Chance.
—PHOTO DEB BANKS

coming back into form. Between us, we had completed plenty of 1200km rides, but you never know for sure that you're going to finish one of these long rides.

Zoom zoom! Bill Russell flew by in his velomobile heading west as we headed east. He was already on the return, having blown out to the turnaround in a ridiculously fast time. He finished Last Chance a full day and a half before us. Bill was also on a comeback ride, his last Last Chance having ended earlier than planned.

We made our way to Alma, NE, and then returned to Kansas, stopping for food in Phillipsburg. We were now heading west, back to the foot of the Rockies, but they were far away. Last Chance is a different kind of 1200km, lacking high mountain passes, or various eco-systems that help break up the ride, it requires a mental discipline of unrelenting focus.

That night, I got drowsy and fell asleep on my bike. The three of us stopped for a power nap, taking in the stars, finally returning to Atwood very late. While we were wrapping up our day, Greg Smith was starting his. He was refreshed and down the road while we stopped for 2 hours of sleep.

Day three dawned a beautiful morning, and we were hopeful that if we completed the day's ride, we would

have a shot at finishing this event. Bolstered by that thought, we stopped in the small town of McDonald for delicious breakfast burritos and coffee, made by, yessiree, Mrs. McDonald.

In the late afternoon we stopped at a small store where we met Glenn, the elderly man behind the counter. Behind him was an opening into the liquor store. We were ready for a beer. I asked him if I could purchase one from the grocery and he said, "No." I needed to go to the liquor store. I walked outside, took two steps and entered the other door of the same building. Glenn was there waiting for me. "Hello!" I said, "May I buy these beers?" I paid, went outside, took two steps and entered the grocery side of the shop. Glenn was there and I said, "Hello!" as if it was the first time I was seeing him. "May I buy some water?" Glenn obliged and we bought ice, too, as we were going to make some ice socks out of our leg warmers. I asked if we could drink our beers outside and he instructed us to

Prairie Dog State Park—stopped here to change clothes.
—PHOTO DEB BANKS



move away from the building and drink responsibly in the shade. Bill, Mark and I shared some shade and rehydrated with light hops.

Continuing into the night, we began climbing up to Anton and watched some heat lightning off in the distance. The air was cooler because it had rained, but the roads were dry. The heat lightning entertained us, but a few riders who were there earlier had had to wait out the quick storm in an outhouse along the road. Sometimes it pays to be slow.

Continuing on through the last control before resting in Byers, we were welcomed by a surprise neutral support stop after twenty miles of rollers. Catherine Shenk had parked her campervan in Last Chance, CO, and was serving hot soup, beer and chips for weary riders. Catherine had introduced me to randonneuring 10 years ago and she was a welcome sight. The soup was good but the warm hug from a good friend gave me an extra boost.




Cooling off— Last Chance.

—PHOTO DEB BANKS

Thirty-five more miles of rollers brought us back to Byers, where we were welcomed by the ever-cheerful Paul Foley, pushing mountains of food our way and asking about our needs. He even carried my bike up some rickety stairs to my room. Bonus!

Four hours later, Paul served up coffee and muffins to get us down the road. We had 103 miles and fourteen hours to get it done. We three set off gingerly but in good moods. After

thirty miles, we were back on roads I know well. We stopped at a carniceria for fantastic tacos before heading to Platteville, our last control. Today we would celebrate the day so we stopped for hoppy refreshments.

Heading back into Boulder County, I kept an eye on the sky. A typical late afternoon storm was brewing, and we needed to outrun it because the wind was swirling and pushing us around. On familiar roads we ramped up our speed for the last few miles. Mark and Bill were right with me, and we wrapped up the ride in style. Jersey zippers up, sitting tall, we pulled into the finish, to the cheering of our fellow randonneurs. Mark completed his first 1200km in fourteen years, Bill rode out his illness and we all felt like we were back to the sport we love. 

A Grand Challenge

We invite you to join us for a Grand Randonnee on some of the finest cycling roads you'll find anywhere. Beautiful scenery, awesome support and a route that provides an unmatched mix of beautiful ridgetop views, challenging climbs and idyllic river valleys. Come see for yourself!

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Coulee Challenge
1200K

Last Chance: A Ride into the Heartland

BY JOHN LEE ELLIS

Something seemed different this year. Rain wasn't pelting. Flood waters weren't rising. Tornadoes weren't brewing. Tumbleweeds weren't chasing. And riders weren't scanning the horizon for a clump of trees for shelter, or an abandoned school bus to hide in. *All these things have happened over the years on the Last Chance.*

The reason we hold the Last Chance in September is that serene, luminous weather is the norm in Colorado and Kansas at that time of year. This year the norm was back.

The ride was dry throughout, except for a shower for a few riders coming into Byers the third night.

Mild nights in the 50's and 60's, days a tad on the warmish side at times, but no complaints about dry and sunny!

What's the Last Chance Like?

For one thing, it's not flat, or not much of it is. It's mostly rolling, like swells, across the open plains. Breeze

is your constant companion, and at some points, you can see where you'll be riding half an hour from now.

After the first checkpoint at mile 70, you suddenly break into a strongly rolling, open, and largely treeless expanse. The towns are small and getting smaller with the passage of time. Services are widely spaced.

In Western Kansas, there are more trees, more towns, and more services; but it is still a trip back in time to small-town life and cafés.

Most of the route is on US-36 heading due east into Kansas and then back. But there are a few jarring moments. For example, US-36 turns north-south for three miles near the Kansas border. I once got a late-night call from a rider flummoxed by these



Pause for a photo during a break on the return trip.

—PHOTO CATHERINE SHENK

turns after so many hours without one.

And this year we veered off US-36 into Nebraska so American Explorers could tag another state and because it's pleasant country.

The Last Chance can have its own fascination as you ride, imbued with interesting facts such as that US-36 is the most direct way between Indianapolis and Denver (legacy billboard), Phillips County is the Cow Calf Capital of Kansas (another legacy billboard), or that Kansas leads the country in the production of sorghum (a.k.a. milo).

Our Pre-Ride

Tim Sullivan (RUSA #28), Mark Thomas (#64) and I pre-rode. We enjoyed similarly fine conditions. I had not ridden the event in seven years, and was struck by how much I actually enjoy the Last Chance with its expansiveness and the room to let your mind wander, free from the distractions of navigation.

Tim Sullivan at sunset.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS



To be sure, fine weather lends a golden hue to any event.

Thanks to my riding partners, one thing I especially enjoyed about our pre-ride was taking time to savor a sit-down rancher breakfast—one at the Frontier Restaurant in Oberlin, another at the Dusty Farmer in St. Francis. It's one of the useful delights of the Last Chance.

Riders

This was the sixth Last Chance for our friend Bill Olsen. Bill has ridden every edition since 2008. As Debra Banks points out in her own comeback article in this issue, this year Bill was coming back from an illness that had taken him out of randonneuring for a couple years. Maybe the Last Chance offered a kind of rando therapy.

This was the first year for a velomobile on the Last Chance. Riders have proven it's a recumbent-friendly course, and Bill Russell proved it's quite a speedy course for an enclosed recumbent!

Speaking of recumbents, Lone Star Randonneuse Vickie Tyer reprised her 2009 Last Chance ride but this time on a recumbent. She was all smiles and conversation at the finish, so likely a good choice!

Five Japanese riders made up a contingent that largely rode together, and by all accounts had a great time.



Vickie Tyer.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS



Front row, left to right: Tetsuya Namiki, Chikara Iwamoto, Makoto Miyazaki (personal supporter) and Tsuyoshi Tanaka. Back row, left to right: Tomoyuki Ishi and Yasuhiro Tomioka..

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS



We asked them in advance if they had any dietary preferences and their answer was, “Yes, American food!” Makoto Miyazaki, a veteran of the Colorado High Country 1200 and the Colorado SR series, spends summers here, and gave up his spot on the Last Chance to help his Japanese colleagues feel comfortable in our country. Looks like some will be back for the next High Country 1200.

Our riders also included three Canadians—some of them anciens and good acquaintances of ours—and one from Brazil.

Of the smallish cadre of 29 starters, everyone finished except for one rider due to a mechanical. And they finished with a smile. This is the kind of result we like to see!

Despite the high-altitude adventure and wealth of descending on the Colorado High Country 1200, I have a special place in my heart for the Last Chance. It’s a minimalist event (in scenery, not in support!) that encourages you to ride with others, where you encounter the heartland of America in everyone you meet. I hope you will join us for the next edition. 🚲



Deb Banks at sign-in.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

The American Randonneur Award

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS OF THE AWARD:

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

NOMINATION FORM

YOUR NAME _____ YOUR RUSA # _____

YOUR AMERICAN RANDONNEUR AWARD NOMINEE _____

NOMINEE'S RUSA # _____

BRIEF REASON FOR NOMINATION _____

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

E-MAIL: JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com

RUSA Member Profile BY MARY GERSEMA

Corinne Warren

Rocky Mountain Cycling Club

This edition of RUSA Member Profile finds us talking with Corinne Warren of the Rocky Mountain Cycling Club. She started riding brevets in 2012 and hasn't looked back since. As Corinne summarized in our conversation: "Randonneuring helped turn me from an introvert into an effusive person compelled to share her passion for cycling with others, who wants to move our sport forward, and feels there is no challenge too big if met with the right attitude and the support of friends."

How did you start randonneuring?

I did my first brevet in 2012 in a carpe diem moment, when I decided after losing my brother and father in the two previous years that life was short and it was time to try something extraordinary. I knew right away that this was a sport that I could develop a passion for, but what I didn't know was that I would make the best friends I have ever had, one ride at a time, as I plowed through my first full season in 2014 riding my first Super Randonneur Series, my first 1200km, first Triple Crown, and first 24-hour race.

What is your home club, and what are the rides like in your area?

The Rocky Mountain Cycling Club, based in the Denver metro area, is unique in that it houses the Colorado

branch of RUSA as well as the Colorado Triple Crown, our series of tough double centuries. I used these rides to help train for that first 1200km, Colorado High Country. My favorite brevets all have climbing in our beautiful mountains. The longer 400km and 600km rides usually have the climbing front-loaded, and

then we swing east to the plains for the last legs.

But my favorite rides are the Triple Crown rides that focus on climbing and beautiful scenery but require you to be faster than the more generously-timed RUSA rides. Sadly, I live a bit too far south and have to drive to most of the club functions. Last year I drove north forty-five weekends out of the year to ride with our club—sometimes both Saturday and Sunday. I hope to move closer once my kids finish school.

How long have you been randonneuring?

I have been riding for almost fifteen years but started to think about randonneuring after my first century ride, shortly after I'd been cycling a year. I met a guy on a ride who was interested in the bike I was riding—my brother's 1986 all-aluminum Guerciotti.



Corinne's Seven at Gold Rush
2017 check-in.

—PHOTO CORINNE WARREN



When he heard that I'd just ridden a century on it, he said, "I'd like to see what you can do on a bike that fits you," and he asked me if I'd ever heard of PBP. I went home and looked it up, but while I knew I could ride a 200km it took eight years of poring over the web pages of the Rocky Mountain Cycling Club to get up the courage to try a 300km. I finally rode one in 2012. It had 17,000 feet of climbing in it and took me over 18 hours, but I finished, thanks to a seasoned rando helping me get through the last forty miles. Two weeks later I rode my first 400km and felt like that was enough for a while. The following year, I injured my knee skiing and had my worst cycling year ever. The week after knee surgery I signed up for a 1200km and told myself, "I'll decide later if this is a good idea or a bad idea."

What is your favorite brevet distance or event and why?

They all have a unique appeal, but although I have only done four Grand Randonnees, there is something I love about having my world reduced to just

what I can carry on my bike and the knowledge that I will be riding from before the sun rises until after it sets, day after day. The simplicity of having to do nothing but pedal my bike in the company of friends old or new comes as close to pure joy as I have known.

What are some of the ways you work through the difficult moments that can occur during a long ride?

I have been lucky because those moments have been few; a couple bad rain and hail storms come to mind, and sleep deprivation on some of the longer brevets are the only times I'd call a ride "bad." My family would say I can get through anything because I am stubborn, but I think it's my friends who have gotten me through. In my worst moments, I have almost always had a friend with me. When I am feeling strong I chatter and generally try to keep everyone's spirits up. In turn, when I am struggling, they have gotten me through my rough spots with bad jokes, or bad singing, or good stories. The people I have met and the friends I

Dallas Divide: part of the Colorado Death Ride route.

—PHOTO NAT SCHUB

have made in this sport have become as important as the riding, and when you are not alone, things are never that bad.

You also volunteer and organize rides in your area. What do you think are the benefits of volunteering and the challenges to ride organizing and volunteering?

For some reason, we have a hard time getting people to volunteer in this area. Maybe because riders here are so darn serious? Lots of retired pros and top-notch athletes reside in the Boulder area. Colorado is a wellspring of serious distance riders.

But I always say if you can get someone out to volunteer once, they will do it again. Volunteering is so rewarding in and of itself. I started just because I wanted to help my mentor and friend, Mark Lowe, who organizes our Triple Crown series. It was after that first 1200km; my legs just plain



Poudre 400K, four weeks after triple hernia surgery to qualify for PBP in 2015 (with Dave Nelson, Timo Haugen, me, John Mangin, Jason Turner, and Mike Turek).

—PHOTO BY RANDOM PASSERBY

didn't work, so I offered to support one of his rides. I had no idea how much I would get out of it. I baked some cookies and muffins and headed up to a support point at 9,000 feet to wait for the riders. The gratitude they expressed for a bit of food and drink, and perhaps a friendly word of encouragement, just blew me away. I had never felt so good, or so much a part of something, even though I wasn't riding.

Best of all, I got to know everyone, from the fastest riders who were on record-breaking pace that day, to the spouses and friends out supporting particular riders, down to the others in the back of the pack, where I would have been. There is such a sense of camaraderie among distance riders, perhaps because we all appreciate that this sport provides us with a haven of understanding. So the real challenge is getting someone to give up a ride and to get them out to volunteer that first time. After that you have buy-in and it all becomes easier.

Corinne, what kinds of riding do you do in addition to randonneuring?

While I am still fast enough, I love doing our Triple Crown rides. These rides focus on climbing and seeing all the prettiest spots in Colorado, and that's what I love to do on the bike. If someone were to visit Colorado to ride, I would recommend our Death Ride, which starts in Durango and loops north

up and over the Million Dollar Highway.

We also have a ride called Cycle to Saturn that is brutal as well as beautiful, with 20,000' of climbing in 200 miles, and much of the course above 9,000 feet in elevation. So much riding so high creeps up on you and it is an exhausting as well as exhilarating ride. If you want to get the RUSA miles in, our Super 600km showcases so many of our scenic climbs along the Front Range, it is like a sampler platter of Colorado climbing. There is also the South Park 400km—yes, that's South Park like the TV series—which is a really tough but scenic ride that took me almost 24 hours the last time I rode it. But whenever you ride, keep in mind Colorado's temperamental weather—I have been snowed on every month of the year on my bike. Always be prepared.

Do you have a favorite brevet bike?

My first "brevet bike" was a stock Orbea Dama Race that was way too big for me. At the end of my first year of randonneuring, I had a custom Seven Axiom S built, as stiff as they would make it to replicate the aluminum. It's basically a small version of my mentor's brevet bike, and in the two-and-a-half years I've had it, I've put thirty thousand miles on it, with chunks of time out for two major surgeries. That is the extent of my brevet bike ownership; this one is working well for me and I just need to add a dynohub. There isn't a lot

of real estate on my small bike. I think carefully about what I attach, and I have a 1200km set-up that works pretty well.

What has been your biggest challenge in randonneuring?

My biggest challenge on the bike is that I am going to need hip replacements. I am slight of build but a genetic defect means the hips I was born with are not going to last. My surgeon says it's a matter of pain management right now. Hip replacements are not yet what I need them to be—I've been told I can't crash with the hips currently on the market, and I seem to do that on a regular basis. I missed PBP in 2015 despite riding a 600km the day before surgery and a 400km four weeks after to qualify. My hips just wouldn't let me. One of my big goals is to ride in France in 2019.

Many randonneurs I know talk about how randonneuring has strengthened them in non-cycling ways. What are some aspects of randonneuring that you've applied to your non-cycling life?

Randonneuring has helped me to both power through things and handle stress better. You learn on the bike that no matter how bad things get, they don't stay that way, that thirty minutes can change everything. There's no telling what the next mile, or the next day, might bring. Most importantly, it is more the attitude you have towards anything—a bike ride, the daily grind, a life challenge—that makes the difference. You can choose to have a good attitude or a bad one, but if you choose a good one, things will go better for you and people will be drawn to you. 🚲

RUSA Awards

RUSA Mondial Award

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

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

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

The qualifying distance for this award is based on all events on RUSA’s calendar (ACP brevets and Flèches,

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

RUSA congratulates the riders who have just earned this prestigious award.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/16/2017	Maglieri, Christopher	Weatogue, CT
7/22/2017	Roffe, Theodore	Seattle, WA
9/1/2017	Shaw, Mike	Oceanside, CA

R-12 Award Recipients

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

Events that count toward the R-12 Award are:

- Any event on the RUSA calendar 200km or longer.
- Foreign ACP-sanctioned brevets and team events (flèches), Paris-Brest-Paris, and RM-sanctioned events of 1200km or longer, provided that these non-US events account for no more than 6 of the 12 counting months.
- RUSA permanents — a particular permanent route may be ridden more than once during the twelve-month period for R-12 credit. The applicant must be a RUSA member during each of the twelve months.

RUSA congratulates the latest honorees, listed below.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/28/2017	Bergeron, Robert D [6]	Raleigh, NC
9/24/2017	Bott, Linda (F) [10]	Ventura, CA
10/1/2017	Brier Jr, Bill A	Fremont, CA
8/5/2017	Burke, Brian P [5]	Cumming, GA
7/19/2017	Danovsky, David [2]	San Diego, CA
9/14/2017	Fischer, William [9]	Elmira, NY

9/28/2017	Gilson, Jay M	Fremont, CA
8/20/2017	Gold, Tayler S	Apopka, FL
8/17/2017	Grant, Jamie O	Plantation, FL
9/16/2017	Gregory, Scott D [2]	Saint Paul, MN
8/31/2017	Haas, Stephen D [5]	Alameda, CA
8/21/2017	Haddad, James R [2]	Binghamton, NY
8/26/2017	Heg, Christopher [9]	Seattle, WA
8/6/2017	Horchhoff, Patrick A [10]	River Ridge, LA
9/5/2017	Jenkins, Charlie [10]	Denison, TX
9/5/2017	Jenkins, Patricia (F) [10]	Denison, TX
9/24/2017	Nadovich, Chris [5]	Easton, PA
9/16/2017	Newberry, Jeff [8]	Austin, TX
7/31/2017	Otcenas, Susan (F) [6]	Willamina, OR
7/30/2017	Preston, John [8]	Plantation, FL
8/7/2017	Ray, Joseph	Bernardsville, NJ
8/6/2017	Schoenfelder, Steven J	Lewisburg, PA
9/13/2017	Shaw, Mike [4]	Oceanside, CA
8/2/2017	Sigmond, Bennett	Broomfield, CO
8/22/2017	Smith, Paul K [4]	Cooper City, FL
7/24/2017	Smith, Vernon M [2, 3]	Larkspur, CO
9/5/2017	Snavelly, Henry J [3]	Centennial, CO
9/13/2017	Tagawa, Mark	Paramount, CA
9/6/2017	TeBockhorst, Earl Paul	Broomfield, CO
7/24/2017	Torres, Bob [5]	Carlstadt, NJ
8/18/2017	Trimble, Carl [4]	Coral Springs, FL
9/13/2017	Williams, Don	Discovery Bay, CA
8/17/2017	Winkert, George [11]	Highland, MD
7/19/2017	Xiang, Ping (F) [4]	Hanover, MD
8/30/2017	Zinbergs, Martins Andrejs	Anaheim, CA

RUSA Awards

RUSA Coast-to-Coast Award

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

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

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

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

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
8/29/2017	Haggerty, Tom	San Francisco, CA
9/5/2017	Hands, Ian Page	Asheville, NC
7/24/2017	Smith, Vernon M	Larkspur, CO
7/24/2017	Smith, Vernon M	Larkspur, CO



RUSA Cup Recipients

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

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

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

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
7/20/2017	Arnold, Megan A (F)	Santa Rosa, CA
7/19/2017	Booth, Robert J	Madison, WI
9/28/2017	Foley, Paul A	Golden, CO
7/30/2017	Kehler, Mike	Longwood, FL
7/22/2017	Marshall, Kate R (F)	Ossining, NY
9/4/2017	Newman, Christine (F)	Skillman, NJ
8/18/2017	Pierce, Jason	Oakland, CA
7/24/2017	Schiltz, Anita C (F)	Ellensburg, WA
9/20/2017	Slocum, Christopher C.	Toms River, NJ
8/26/2017	Smith, Gregory H	Richland Center, WI
9/19/2017	Sullivan, Timothy J	Coronado, CA
7/22/2017	Urvantsev, Victor	Ossining, NY
7/24/2017	Uz, Metin	Palo Alto, CA

Ultra Randonneur Award

The Ultra Randonneur Award is for RUSA members who have ridden ten (10) Super Randonneur series. The Super Randonneur (SR) series of brevets (200 K, 300 K, 400 K and 600 K in a calendar year) that are used to qualify for the Ultra Randonneur Award need not be in consecutive years, nor is there a time limit on how long it takes to accumulate the ten SR series. Note that it is possible to earn more than one SR series per year, making it possible to earn this award in fewer than ten seasons. Non-US ACP and RM brevets can be used provided that these non-US

events account for no more than 50% of the rides counted towards this award.

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

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/28/2017	Jackson, David	Elgin, OK
7/24/2017	Smith, Vernon M	Larkspur, CO
7/25/2017	Stum, Richard	Mt Pleasant, UT

RUSA Awards

RUSA American Explorer Award

The American Explorer Award recognizes the achievements of RUSA members rambling across the United States. The award is earned by riding events that cover at least ten (10) different U.S. states and territories.

This is an ongoing achievement program that recognizes continued exploration of additional states and territories. The maximum achievable number of states and territories will depend on the availability of routes and the member's desire to explore.

Award criteria:

- Rides must be of the following types:
 - ACP brevets and flèches;
 - RUSA brevets, populaires, arrows and darts;
 - RUSA permanents and permanent populaires;
 - RUSA sanctioned Super Randonnée permanents;
 - 1200km events held in the United States after 1998.
- Routes must pass through or be contained within any of the 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, ...). Each state or territory through which the ride passes is counted and multiple states/territories can be achieved on a single ride.
- There is no time limit to earn this award.
- Only RUSA members may apply and each qualifying ride must be completed while an active member of RUSA.

Recognition

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

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
8/3/2017	Alexander, Ron	Overland Park, KS
9/26/2017	Beauchamp, Christina (F)	Morrisville, NC
8/4/2017	Burke, Brian P	Cumming, GA
8/26/2017	Edwards, Joe	Glenwood, IA
9/28/2017	Foley, Paul A	Golden, CO
8/25/2017	Fournier, Charles Joseph	Redding, CA
10/1/2017	Gann, Brian	Olathe, KS
7/19/2017	Greene, Nigel	Elkins Park, PA
8/16/2017	Gridley, Ross	Pickerington, OH
9/6/2017	Hall, Mary E (F)	Dallas, TX
9/6/2017	Huber, Kerin (F)	Pasadena, CA
8/25/2017	Jackson, David	Elgin, OK
8/14/2017	Lane, Christopher S	Arnold, MD
8/17/2017	Long, Beth (F)	Denver, CO
9/24/2017	McCarthy, Jackie (F)	Springfield, MO
8/16/2017	Nelson, Todd	Pleasanton, CA
7/30/2017	Newberry, Jeff	Austin, TX
9/4/2017	Newman, Christine (F)	Skillman, NJ
9/26/2017	Rawls, Allen	Morrisville, NC
8/28/2017	Selby, Ron	Zionsville, IN
9/19/2017	Smith, Gregory H	Richland Center, WI
7/25/2017	Stum, Richard	Mt Pleasant, UT
7/24/2017	Torres, Bob	Carlstadt, NJ

Something New for Permanents!

Electronic Proof of Passage Option for Perms

We've added the option to use electronic devices (GPS devices or digital cameras, for example) to validate controls on RUSA Permanent rides, with the agreement of rider and route owner. Important conditions apply. See the RUSA Announcements page for details on rules and contact information for questions.

RUSA Awards

Ultra R-12 Award

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

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

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

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/24/2017	Bott, Linda (F)	Ventura, CA
8/6/2017	Horchoff, Patrick A	River Ridge, LA
9/5/2017	Jenkins, Charlie	Denison, TX
9/5/2017	Jenkins, Patricia (F)	Denison, TX



ACP Randonneur 5000

In 1961, the Audax Club Parisien created the Randonneur 5000 award to recognize finishing ACP and Randonneurs Mondiaux events totaling at least 5000km within a four-year period.

To qualify, the randonneur must complete:

- A full series of ACP brevets (200, 300, 400, 600, and 1000km) [longer brevets cannot be substituted for shorter ones];
- A Paris-Brest-Paris randonnée;
- A Flèche Vélocio, or other ACP-sanctioned flèche (your team of at least three bicycles must finish officially); and
- additional ACP and/or RM events to bring the total distance up to at least 5000 km.

The qualifying events must be completed within a four-year period, beginning on the date of the first qualifying event.

RUSA extends its congratulations to the US riders who have received this special award.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/28/2017	Foley, Paul A	Golden, CO
9/4/2017	Newman, Christine (F)	Skillman, NJ
7/23/2017	Smith Jr, Kenneth D	Plainfield, IN

Joe Kratovil Earns Galaxy Award

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

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

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

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

RUSA congratulates the riders who have earned this prestigious award.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/2/2017	Kratovil, Joe	Hillsborough, NJ

RUSA Awards

P-12 Recipients

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

Events that count toward the P-12 Award are:

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

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/5/2017	Alsup, William [3]	Beaverton, OR
9/4/2017	Barth, Roger A.	Dunnellon, FL
9/4/2017	Barth, Sally (F)	Dunnellon, FL
9/30/2017	Carleton, Sam [2]	Mason, OH
8/16/2017	Cox, Kenyon	Belpre, OH
8/5/2017	Crixell, Joshua [5]	Temple, TX
10/4/2017	Driscoll, Dan [9]	Arlington, TX
10/5/2017	Espina, Allan J	Odessa, TX
7/19/2017	Haddad, James R	Binghamton, NY
8/12/2017	Horchhoff, Patrick A [8]	River Ridge, LA
9/16/2017	McAlister, Grant	Seattle, WA
9/27/2017	Methner, Wayne W [2]	Lake Forest Park, WA
10/1/2017	Olsen, William [2]	Califon, NJ
9/22/2017	Olszyk, Anita (F) [4]	Lacey, WA
9/16/2017	Perry, L D	St Joseph, MO
9/27/2017	Pinkston, Patricia M (F) [3]	Temple, TX
9/17/2017	Sammons, Jeff [2]	Brentwood, TN
8/2/2017	Shaw, Mike [2]	Oceanside, CA
9/20/2017	Slocum, Christopher C.	Toms River, NJ
9/2/2017	Young, Mary (F)	Kansas City, MO

American Randonneur CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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

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

- Ride reports
- Ride promotional articles
- Technical articles
- Gear articles
- Training, health, nutrition articles
- Humorous articles
- Collage articles incorporating tweets, facebook quotes and/or short quotes from blog posts
- Reprints of blog posts (occasionally. Material not printed elsewhere is preferred, however, exceptions may be made.)
- Reports on non-rando long-distance/endurance events of interest to randos
- Letters to the editor
- Book reviews
- Cartoons
- Sketches



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

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

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

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

Paid advertising: is available. Please contact Jim Poppy (jpoppy55@icloud.com) for details.

Submission deadlines:

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

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

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