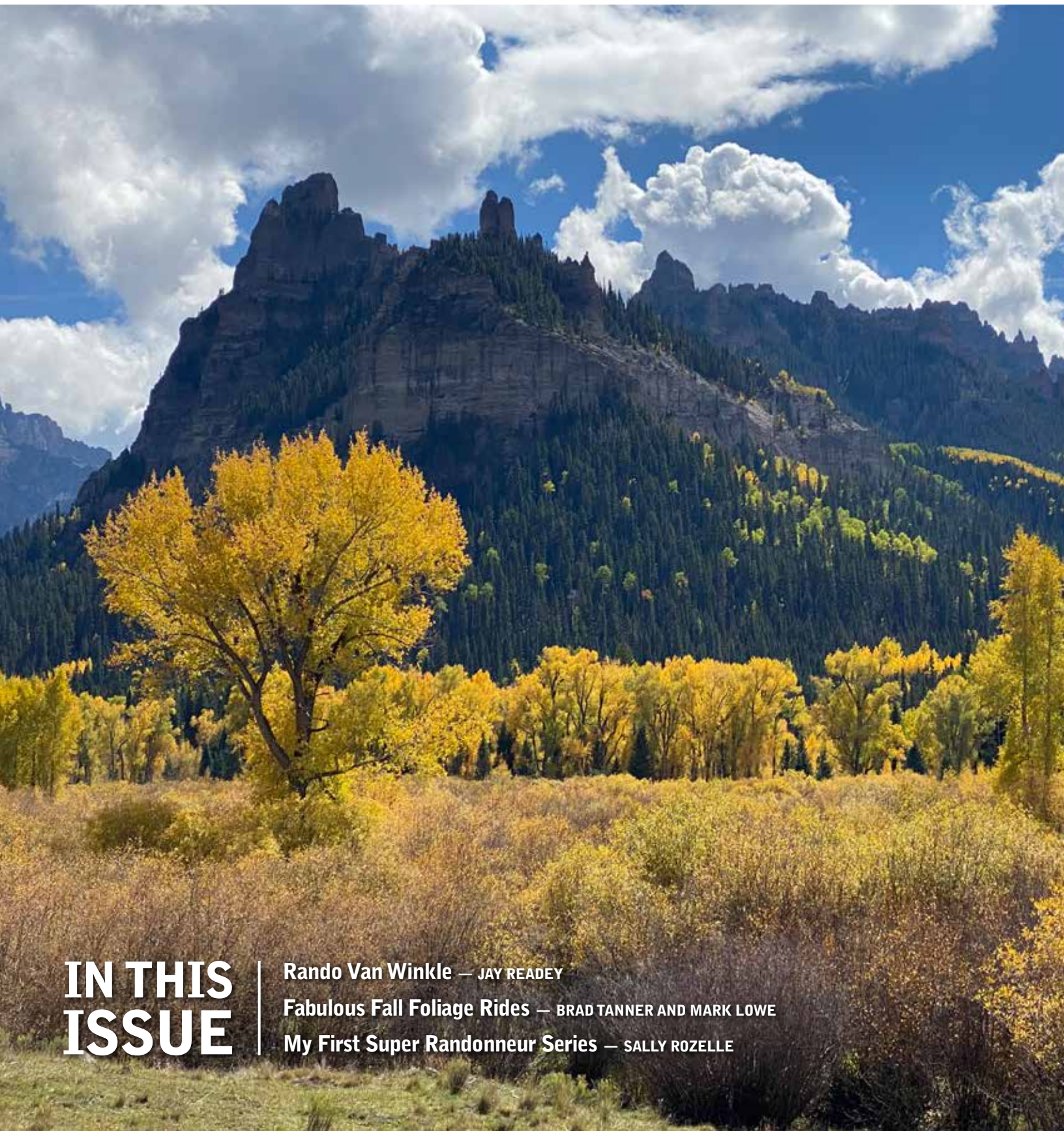


AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



VOLUME 26 • ISSUE #3 FALL 2023



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Fabulous Fall Foliage Rides — BRAD TANNER AND MARK LOWE

My First Super Randonneur Series — SALLY ROZELLE

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COVER— Rock formations in the Cimarron
Mountains. Vista on a gravel ride in Colorado.

PHOTO MARK LOWE

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President's Message

From time to time, I receive questions from RUSA members about various topics, including new riders thinking about attempting longer distance events. I've gotten several questions along the lines of, "I've ridden the RUSA Rouleur series of populaires and just did my first 200k brevet. What do I need to do to be able to ride the next PBP?"

The next PBP will be in August of 2027, and you have plenty of time to prepare yourself.

Think of doing a few more 200k events this fall, and if you can fit it in, ride a 300k too. Work on getting some good lights for riding in the dark so you can finish your autumn 300k, along with some late fall/early winter 200k rides.

If you can, think about starting to earn the R-12 award with a monthly 200k ride (or longer) for a year. These experiences will help you complete even longer rides next year that will likely see you riding all night.

Next, ride a Super Randonneur (SR) series in 2024. These brevets can be done anywhere but sometimes doing your first SR series with your local brevet club is helpful since the roads will be a little more familiar. There will be much to learn during your first SR series and if you can lighten the load by not worrying too much about navigation, that increases your chances of success.

In the future, doing some brevets away from your home region will help you gain experience, a good thing for anyone aspiring to ride 1000k and 1200k events.

Depending on where you live, your local SR series might be completed by June or July. If so, try to do a few more 200-300k rides in late summer and fall to build your randonneuring experience and maintain your endurance.

In 2025, do another SR series, but

now add on a summer 1000k brevet. Its 75-hr time limit means three long, hard days in the saddle (and hopefully a little sleep time too.) Again, keep riding some brevets or permanents after your summer 1000k so that you maintain your endurance.

You can repeat this in 2026 or ride a summer 1200k instead of another 1000k brevet. Adding on that fourth day – and night, depending on the event's start time – for the 1200k will give you a very good experience base from which to draw before PBP rolls around the next year.

Note that your longest brevet in 2026 will get you in line for PBP pre-registration and determine your starting wave. Riders with a 1000k/1200k (or longer brevet) in 2026 have first choice of starting wave; riders with a 2026 600k brevet will have second choice, and so on.

Be sure that these brevets have an ACP/BRM sanction, as most RUSA brevets will have, but events with only a RUSA sanction will not count for PBP pre-registration. Otherwise, brevets with a RUSA sanction are virtually identical to ACP ones, except that the results don't get registered in Paris.

Now you're at the start of 2027 and you'll need to ride another SR series before the end of June. These are the all-important qualifying brevets needed to actually enter and ride PBP.

Along the way there will be much to learn during the next few years, mostly about yourself and how you deal with riding self-supported on distances longer than 200-300k. Most randonneurs find things get interesting after 300k.

One, riding all night is not for everyone but there are some skills and techniques to learn, especially how it usually goes better when you have company to share the night road. Most riders will find there is some

sleep deprivation on the 400k and 600k events. How to deal with that usually comes from experience, not from reading or thinking about it.

Starting a 200k permanent or brevet at sundown will obviously be different from starting one at dawn, and it can really help new riders aspiring to do the longer brevets. Given the hot summer temperatures many of us have to deal with, a 200k nocturne on a full-moon night can be nicer too.

For most PBP riders, there will be an evening start, so be ready for that.

In any case, faster randonneurs get more sleep on the 600k and longer brevets than do slower ones. Do what you can to get as fit as possible so that you can get some sleep during the longest events. Most riders will easily complete the 200k and 300k distances inside their respective time limits, but what happens on the longer events is that some slower riders don't have enough time to stop and sleep for three hours.

Even though the 600k has a 40-hour time limit, you should be able to ride it in about 34-35 hours so that you can get some sleep too. Remember, the brevet times include any time off the bike; some riders will do a sleepless 37-39-hour 600k and qualify for PBP, but in reality, going one night without sleep is vastly easier than trying to ride farther without it.

Another reason to raise your basic randonneuring speed is that PBP will have more time-wasting food lines than virtually all domestic randonneuring situations.

There are other things to learn about riding long brevets. What kind of gut do you have? Many riders find their digestion suffers as the distances increase. On the other hand, some riders of modest ability do just fine because they never suffer from indigestion and they just keep rolling

along, eating anything put in front of them. You'll learn what type of rider you are by doing the long rides. It is best to learn this as soon as possible so that you can find the foods that fuel you best.

Also, randonneurs ride in all kinds of weather. You'll want to carry layers for cold temperatures at 4 a.m., even during summer rides with hot afternoon temperatures. Remember that many brevets take place in cold and wet springtime conditions. PBP can have lots of rain, too.

Again, your experience is key to finding what clothing you need to ride around the clock. You'll want shoes and a bike saddle that are still comfortable after 400k, along with reliable lights that will illuminate rough roads on a moonless night.

Finding all of these things will take time, since all of our feet and bottoms are different and what works fine for one person may not work well for you. Reading the on-line RUSA Handbook can help you learn all these things too.

There is a lot to do and learn during

the next few years as you increase how far you can ride with the randonneurs. You will want to ride lots of long events in the coming years so that you arrive at the start of 2027 a fit, experienced randonneur with reliable, good-fitting equipment.

PBP is truly a great event and worth all the effort and expense needed to earn a finisher's medal. Bonne route!

—Bill Bryant

RUSA President

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From the Editor

Like so many others who indulge in a time-consuming hobby, randonneurs are always looking to eke out more time to pursue their passion, often at the expense of other priorities. Balancing work, the chores of daily life, social time, other hobbies (does a randonneur actually have time for other hobbies?) and family, is a complicated dance of schedule manipulation, support at home, and luck.

It's probably not a coincidence there are a lot of single people in our sport, compared to other, less time-intensive pursuits. But if you are in a relationship, an understanding and supportive spouse or partner is helpful if you are indeed balancing riding with family life. My husband helps me out not only with constant bike maintenance issues, but also a generous spirit, understanding how important riding is to me, and letting me have that most valuable of resources – time.

My first several years of randonneuring meant sacrificing the Annual Family Camping Trip with all my siblings, their partners and kids, for a Not-To-Be-Missed Ride. Summer after summer, I finished those cycling

adventures, but lost out on valuable time with my extended family. I would see the folks in my bike club more often than I did my family, and my siblings let me know they were not happy about it. Gradually, I came to appreciate the fact that 19 other people were taking time off to be all together and I have shifted my priorities for one weekend in July.

Except for the small minority of folks who ride with their partners, time on the bike means time away from loved ones, and that can be hard on all involved. Florida RBA Paul Rozelle has a clever way to deal with this dilemma: get his kids out riding, too! You can read his daughter Sally's take on getting a first SR series done at the age of 14 in the pages of this month's magazine. It's a significant achievement for a remarkable young lady. If you have someone you'd like to recruit to randonneuring, Jay Fichialos' article on a first 200k can help guide them on how to prepare. And if a 200k is still too much for those you want to spend more time with, find inspiration in the Fabulous Fall Foliage Routes from Brad Tanner and Mark Lowe. Getting out to see the colors of autumn is a great way to convince family and friends to give longer cycling routes a try.

For those of you with little ones, we are sure you will be able to relate to the randos we interviewed for Randonneuring While Parenting. Luke,

CORRECTION — In the last issue, we made an error in Rando Veganism. The volunteer pictured with Michael Povman is Liz Lentz, not Jennifer Povman.

Bryan, and Katie provide a window into the lives of busy parents. Young children are time-consuming, physically exhausting, and mentally taxing; trying to maintain two intensive pursuits at once is a big ask for the most meticulous of planners.

Children are not young forever, though, and there is a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. When my kids grew up and moved out, my annual mileage quite literally doubled. Without the daily role of “mom” commanding much of my discretionary time, I had more time to spend as a “cyclist”. But after nearly a decade of prioritizing riding, my husband is starting to request (and reasonably so) more time with his wife. So once again, I have to look carefully at how I am spending my time on the bike and adjust my expectations to prize quality miles over quantity. It's all a balancing act, and I am still working on my juggling skills.

—Corinne Warren

Editor, American Randonneur

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The Transalp 1200K

BY IWAN BARANKAY

This was an absolutely gorgeous and majestic route. Highly recommended. In contrast to the U.S., Europe has many bike lanes. Indeed, I was never on a busy road and mostly on bike lanes. The pictures say it all — just so much landscape to take in until your eyes and heart flow over. It is exactly what I came for, but what I got had some twists and turns!

I met up the night before with Francis, and the next day's start was at 7:30 p.m. from the main square in Verona at Piazza Brà. The mayor came to give a speech. I was glad not to understand Italian :-).

Then we started into bad weather. Thunderstorms in hilly areas are always exciting. It rained all night and got cold, but I was fine. Not happy, but fine. I was riding with a group, so I could stow away my phone before it got water-logged. At the start were about 135 of about 250 registered riders — the bad weather caused the high DNS rate.

The riders were 90% Italian, and 90% male. Just like in the U.S. they were mostly older riders. The group I rode with got quiet, especially when the rain got cold, and we all got tired. The stretch between 2-4 a.m. is always the hardest to push through.

With some difficulty, I made it to the first big control at Niederdorf/Villabassa. My rear derailleur hanger arm had seized and would no longer

spring back to tension the chain. When I coasted or shifted into smaller rings, the chain dragged on the ground or fell between my dropouts and the spokes. Not good.

I could manually re-tension it, but it would not last long and the problem would return, every 300-500 yards. I stopped, cleaned it, and drizzled thin oil on it, but it remained stuck; I could only move the cage hanger arm with great force.

I had just finished a hilly 400k in PA without rear shifting, and I was not prepared for the physical and psychological struggle to go through that again, especially with 900km left to go — across alpine passes, no less. What worried me most was when the chain fell between the dropouts and the spokes.

At that time, we were well into the remote countryside. Villages had bike shops but were closed for famous Italian lunch breaks, didn't have rear derailleurs, as they focused on selling and renting bikes, or were closed for no reason. So I abandoned, rode to the nearest town (Franzesfeste) to soak in more of the majestic landscape, and took a three hour train ride back to Verona.

There I had a nice dinner and went to bed early. Friends texted me to say they hoped I could get some other rides

At the start with other RUSA riders in Verona.
—PHOTOS IWAN BARANKAY





The route took us through Bled, Slovenia – so picturesque!

Sleep deprivation is taking its toll on my sanity.



in while in Italy. They were right; I had come to ride. I already had a long weekend in Verona and saw all the sights and museums, and I did not come here to eat toast in my Airbnb.

I woke up at 5 a.m. to take another look at my bike, and as I took the rear derailleur apart, it started to move again. I guess it needed a night for the oil to seep in. I quickly put it back together and jumped on a train to rejoin the route. After all, I knew that their route was very well designed. I texted the organizers, and they let me rejoin.

Of course, I had to finish within the 90 hour time limit. The repair break took a full 24 hours, and I rejoined the route 40.5 hours after the start with 900k to go. Don't do the math!

In any case, I kept on riding as I wanted to see the scenery. I reached the next big control with volunteers in Fusine. They had heard about my story already and were so nice to me. They had a choice of various pastas, Coke, soup, etc.

On hearing I live in the U.S., one volunteer put on "Viva Las Vegas" by Elvis Presley. Memorable!

I reached Ljubljana, Slovenia, the 600k halfway point, at 1 a.m., just as that control closed. Getting there was by far the spookiest stretch I had

ever ridden in my life. The route went through a forest in a national park with steep uphill and downhill. The roads had no markings — neither stripes nor reflectives!

I was by myself, and there were no houses or lights anywhere. Pitch black, and you never knew when a turn would come. It was the most scared I had ever been on a bike, bordering on a panic attack. A powerful feeling in hindsight. I kept thinking of my beautiful kids and wife to see me through that stretch.

I was so glad to come out of the forest and into town. I got to Ljubljana at 1 a.m. The roads were filled with young people going home after a night out. Some rode their bikes cheerfully with a friend sitting on their handlebars. Others rode their motor scooters the wrong way in my bike lane, screaming at me as they passed, trying to scare me — you get all sorts.

At Ljubljana, the control was a small cafe by a mini-golf course. As the last rider (slower riders all abandoned), it was just the nice proprietor, Rock (I'm not sure of his name), and me. He made me a massive plate with pasta Bolognese, but I had trouble getting it down.

There was a room with tables and chairs, and I made myself a bed with

the chairs to sleep a few hours, but I couldn't fall asleep! After 90 minutes, I left again at 3:30 a.m. I had stopped in Ljubljana as I did not want to ride through that horror forest again in darkness. Also, I wanted to see more of Slovenia. The route went through Bled, a gorgeous town by a lake with an island, as seen in my photos.

The forest was so beautiful on the way back, too. All the tree demons hid in their holes underground. Sleep deprivation overwhelmed me then. At the perfect time, a bench in the middle of nowhere appeared, and I lay down on it and fell asleep immediately. I woke up after only 20 minutes shivering. As it was early in the day, I kept riding the beautiful route back to Fusine.

All tree demons are hiding during the day time in Zgornja Radovna (Slovenia).

Unfortunately, I did not have much fun now from sleep deprivation. I had 500 kilometers over several alpine climbs left to complete but only 27 hours left, and I also calculated that I needed at least 5 to 8 hours of sleep during that time. Now let's do the math together: the average speed I needed to hit was close to 23 km/h (14.3 mph), which is high when you have already ridden 700 kilometers. I could do it, but it would have been Type 3 fun all the way. (Type 1 is fun during and after; Type 2 is not fun during but after; Type 3 is...).

Moreover, I had yet to reach any other riders: I had been by myself for close to 400 kilometers.

Finally, I worried about my riding skills. I crashed into a fence coming



off a bridge (my knuckles and my UV sleeve caught me), and several times I rolled a bit off the edge of the road. Those are not good signs. I felt I had enough fun and abandoned for good this time.

I took another "train of shame" back to Verona (there were two other Italian DNF riders with me on the train). As always a powerful adventure, and for randonneuring, the details are more than their sum. 🚲

Building a bicycle frame starts long before the torch is lit.

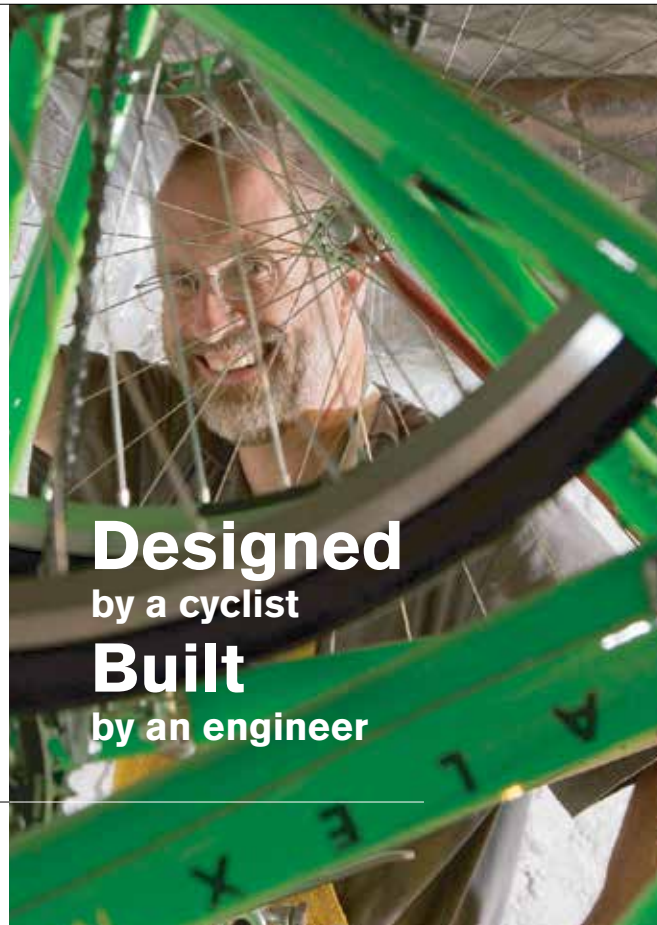
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Beyond Pavement

BY JONATHAN FEY

Courses for Horses

Here's a conversation I've had many times in the last five years: So, what's the difference between a road bike and a gravel bike?

The difference between these two categories, and the continuum they form, has been written about to the point of nausea, so I won't get too deep into it here. But generally, I tell people that most gravel bikes have more tire clearance, are designed for comfort and stability over rough surfaces, and often are designed to carry gear.

A question I haven't been asked much is: What's the difference between a gravel bike and a rando bike?

I suspect this has to do with the types of people randonneurs tend to

be: self-reliant weirdos (I say this with deep affection, and I also count myself among this group). I think they also have a narrow band of application for using the tool. They have an idea of what they're looking for and don't need an inexperienced bike salesperson to muddy the waters.

Here's a thought experiment: True or False: A gravel bike is any bicycle ridden on a gravel road. Part b: A randonneuring bike is any bike one randonneurs on.

Road bikes tend to fall into two categories: "performance" and "endurance." There's a good deal of overlap here, driven mainly, I think, by marketing teams trying to walk the line between alienating one group of riders for one category and not alienating the

other from the same category & vice versa. Almost universally, these bikes are constructed from carbon fiber. Rarely do these bikes accommodate tires larger than 32mm.

At the start of most brevets I've ridden, many riders straddle bikes on the more endurance end of that continuum. A sizable minority pilot what I'd consider a "classic rando bike." That is, a bike usually constructed of skinny steel tubes and with room to fit fenders and larger tires. Many of these bikes are designed around the use of a fork-mounted handlebar bag. The aim of these traditionally designed bikes is to provide a smooth, comfortable ride — larger tires absorb the road chatter, fenders help keep your lower half dry — and those big bags allow you to haul everything you need for a full day of adventure.

If you're blessed with smooth pavement where you ride, I envy you. I've done the vast majority of my



Modern carbon gravel bike.

—PHOTO JOE HOFEDITZ

Traditional steel randonneuring rig.

—PHOTO JOHN MANGIN



Gravel bikes, rando bikes –
does it matter?

—PHOTO JONATHAN FEY



randonneuring on Colorado's Front Range and a little bit in Northern California. Most of these courses have been routed on less-than-optimal pavement, though some of it has been on very good pavement, providing a taste of what could be. I've ridden the vast majority of my rides on tires larger than 35mm and have generally felt that tires this size provide a good balance of comfort and efficiency on a wide range of paved surface conditions.

But the vast majority of my recreational riding is not randonneuring; it's exploring backroads and byways. Riding gravel roads is not novel to me, and there was a time before I knew better that I rode a bike with 25mm tires on a network of gravel roads near my home, simply because the roads were there. This was the dark ages. Just kidding.

My first truly large-tire performance bike was a carbon cyclocross bike on which I completed my first brevet, a very hard 300k with 17k feet of elevation. I also rode that bike to my first successful completion of a double century and then a mixed-surface double century.

Around this time, I stopped riding my pure road bike and began to focus on the type of riding I enjoyed more. I found that I was randonneuring and riding gravel on the same bike because I was looking for the same attributes doing both types of riding.

Simultaneously, I was helping two groups of riders buy their first gravel bikes. For the first group of riders, this was not only their first gravel bike but

also their first drop-bar bike. Having less exposure to road riding, these riders could hone their priorities within the gravel platform. They could select tires and other componentry that aligns with their use case scenario, once they figure out what that is. Gravel bikes simply give riders more options.

The second group of riders lie on a continuum of experienced road riders. I would include many randonneurs in this category. What I found interesting when I talked with these people about gravel bikes was that many of the bike characteristics were well aligned with randonneuring: comfort over long distances, a fit that balances performance and all-day comfort, versatility, stability at speed, and the ability to carry gear.

I'm not totally impartial (I'm a bike fitter), but of these above characteristics, the way a bike fits a rider is the most important. By this, I do not mean that every rider, or even every randonneur, needs to be fitted for a custom bike (although if that's something you want to do, please look me up). Rather, a good bike fit is mostly done in three ways. The first is the modification of the components to support good, athletic posture on the bike within the individual rider's current

range of motion and with a full understanding of the rider's injury history, goals, and priorities. The second is the work the rider can do to consciously engage that posture and its consequent movements on the bike. The third thing is steps the rider can take off the bike to improve on-bike comfort.

I've ridden a lot of different bikes, both randonneuring and gravel, riding and racing in the past seven or eight years. Generally, they have been the same bikes. I'm currently on a custom frame that I had a hand in designing; it's got steel tubing that works for my weight, geometry that suits my fit and handling preferences, and a few nifty integration tricks. My first ride on the bike (outside of a quick neighborhood shakedown) was my fastest 400k to date. I chalk that up to limiting my off-bike time; it's an insanely comfortable bike. Two weekends later, a few friends and I explored some of the hidden county roads in the Pike National Forest, and that bike handled the washboard and rock confidently. It's a gravel bike. It's a randonneuring bike.

Maybe the best gravel bike for you is a bike you already own. And perhaps the best next randonneuring bike for you is a gravel bike. It's all one big pot and we're swimming in it. 🚲

Rando Van Winkle

BY JAY READEY

I start with a confession, which is that as of the time I began writing this, I had never actually ridden a brevet. That matters since I'm about to make the claim that I was "all about that life" as a teenager, putting PBP on my bucket list, but then "went to sleep" for 32 years. And now I'm back, about to ride the 200k Barrington Boomerang tomorrow. Let me tell you what happened to me — because I'm excited about meeting you out on the road, and hearing from you about what I've missed!

Young Distance

Like many of you, I really think I was born for this. I grew up on a cul-de-sac around a little patch of grass, and at seven I rode a banana seat bike for endless laps. I was in the zone. Riding in Mom's car along SR315 in

Columbus, Ohio, I was enchanted by the bike paths along the Olentangy River visible from the highway. At 12 I set out with a group of friends in the true spirit of mixed-surface rando riding: we had PB&J's in Tootsie Roll handlebar bags, getting mushy from soccer water bottles with open straws out the top, and I have strong memories of carrying bikes up staircases to connect disparate sections of bike trail and sidewalk in the different parks and jurisdictions of 1984's uninspired urban planning mien. It took us all day to ride what turned out to be a 26-mile round trip, but we did it again and again. (Today it is all helpfully connected with wayfinding and smooth paths.)

My heart swelled reading the PBP life goals of 12-year-old Sally Rozelle in the Winter 2021 issue of *American Randonneur*. There's something special

about a young person discovering the long ride, and in her honor I have again watched "Kirby Wants 12 Waffles" on YouTube, a favorite from my own son's childhood. As a kid you get to eat hearty, see the world, meet adults who respect what you do, and experience the potential of your body and mind. That was my discovery and my love when I was her age.

At 14 a friend got me into the once-famous Tour of the Scioto River Valley (TOSRV), and riding with his dad I learned to use the stem shifters on my Ross ten-speed for the first time in my life at about the 50-mile mark, where the hills start. I think I had been riding 42x12 on all-terrain for three years. After 210 miles in two days, I was hooked.

Herein lies the first RUSA tie-in, 12 years before its founding: TOSRV (as with most other Ohio centuries) was run by the Columbus Council of American Youth Hostels, which included early American randonneurs Dick Seebode (see RUSA handbook page 150) and Charlie Pace. AYH ran tons of rides that drew me into a community. Again, I was in the zone.

Teenage Dreams

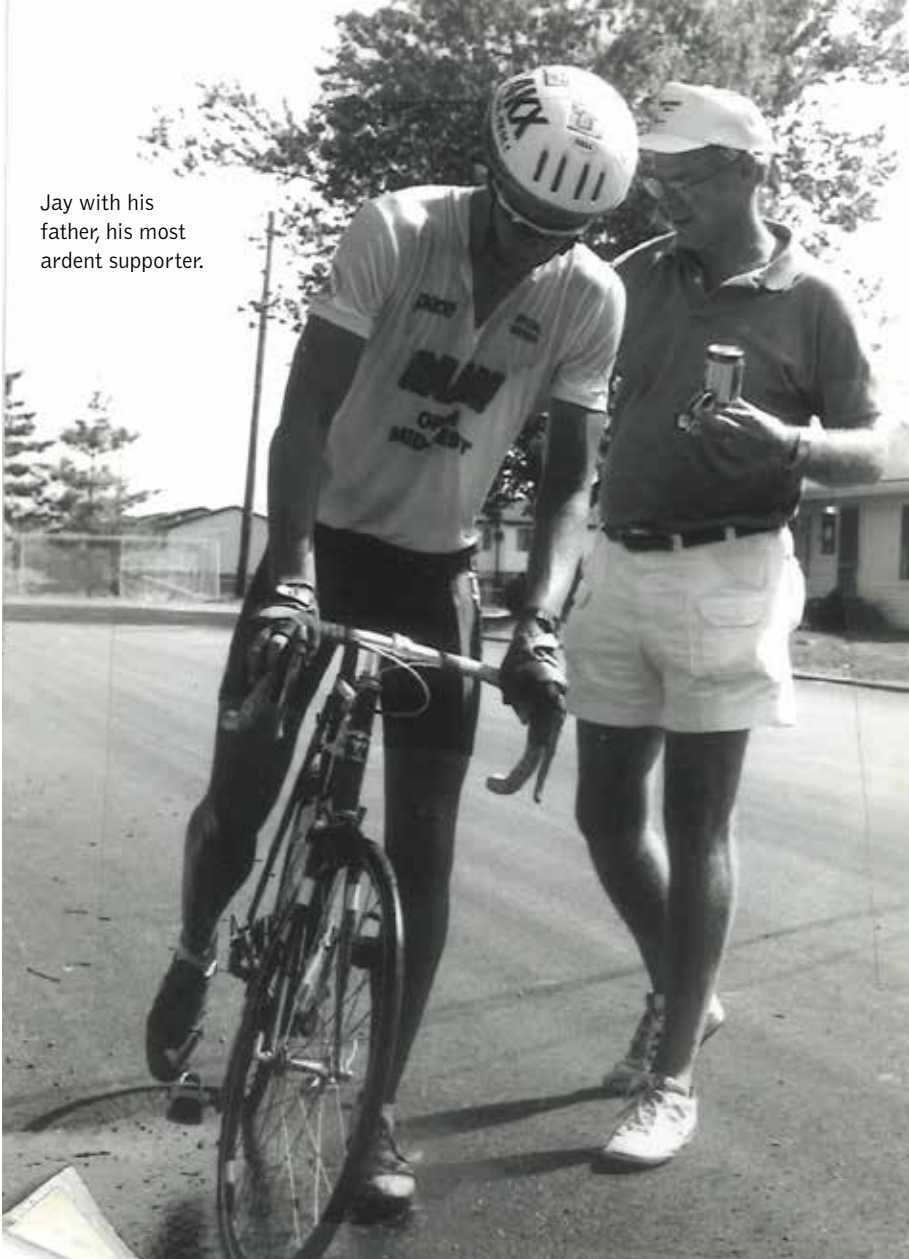
One of those community rides was the Bicycle Marathon of Columbus 24-hour ride (BMOC). At 15, I did a single lap in the dark, a big six volt battery block in the water bottle cage wired to halogen lights front and rear, finishing with 215 miles and my first double-century. Did I mention I was hooked and in the zone? By the time I could drive I would spend most



Jay and his Dad during Ultra Week.

—PHOTOS JAY READEY

Jay with his father, his most ardent supporter.



weekends riding a century each day. And of course I had become a huge RAAM fan-boy, discovering the Ultra-Marathon Cycling Association (predecessor to WUCA).

UMCA had a “points challenge” for organized rides 100 miles or longer, and I was all in. More valuable than organized centuries and doubles were the “Open” rides: 200+ miles of your own choice, punctuated by sending postcards from gas stations and convenience marts that would later be signed by witnesses — a practice that felt distinctly like permanent controls do now! On my way to the “Who’s Who” at 16 and 17, I developed a serious mileage crush on this guy from Colorado named John Lee Ellis. How could someone ride 10,000+ miles a year of

distance rides?!?! And this was a bit before Charlie Martin discovered RUSA!

In a very teenage fashion, I would often spend a Saturday making my way 75 or 80 miles out, finding my way home, and then downing a pound of Chips Ahoy or Oreos with Cokes until my energy prompted me to go back out for 50 more.

In 1989 I first made the pilgrimage to that Mecca of ultra cycling: Capron, Illinois, near the Harvard, IL home of Susan Notorangelo, Lon Haldeman and Ultra Week. For two consecutive years I would ride the Midwest RAAM Open, but for me there was nothing like those Open rides.

I used to say if you dropped me and my bike from a helicopter in the southwestern three-fourths of Ohio,



At the start of the 604-mile RAAM Open Midwest in 1990.

I could ride for 20 minutes and find a road I knew. The ideas of PBP and BMB inspired me, but as a teenager, Indiana and Illinois were as far as I could travel to ride. Close to home, I discovered several mentors on bikes. David Brokaw, a loyal AYH ride leader, had a “Friday Night Century — bring your lights.” In 1989 he rode 404 miles on BMOC — I was proud to ride 353 — and people spoke of his legend in hushed tones. I knew who I wanted to be, and in which zone.

And...Burnout

After a year of college, I planned for 1991 to be my year. And it worked: I set a 19-and-under record at the Michigan 24-hour nationals (373 miles, or 600 km, which now seems poetic) and finally qualified for RAAM, riding a grownup time in the RAAM Open Ohio. But the efforts took everything I had. Tall and thin, I developed some body image issues; my neck hurt, a lot; flat tires, headwinds, and the mandates



At the post-ride banquet for Ultra Week 1989 with RAAM rider Matt Bond.

of the cyclocomputer - if the numbers didn't read what I wanted. All of them wore me down. I rode alone a lot, and started to think I needed a team sport to share the load with others and socialize.

Back at school, I rowed heavyweight crew and put on 40 pounds. I still rode bikes, and indeed have spent much of my life known as a "bike guy," but rarely as my primary focus and not again over 70 miles for the next 32 years. After 70 my neck would get stiff and sore enough to say "no mas." I had lost the zone.

Time Away

After college, I followed a common pattern to fade away from serious cycling. I married, started a family and a career. As a young kid, my son was often on a bike seat, trail-a-bike, or a tandem. We rode to the first day of school for four years to start his education. But at 6 he discovered baseball and said "I'm not playing unless Daddy coaches." So began a 9-year little league coaching career for me. There is nothing like a full-blown baseball season to keep you off the bike. I desperately wanted to ride RAGBRAI with my son, but alas, baseball never took that break in July.

During Ultra Week, 1989.

When he left for college, I planned a hike to process the new empty nest — from childhood spaces in Southeast Ohio to home in Illinois. Originally envisioned as 40 days and 40 nights during Lent 2022, at roughly 10 miles a day, it turned into Hiking, Biking and Baseball as we followed him on his college team. Largely unfinished business (www.jubileetrip.org), I resolved to start biking more after the "official" end of the trip schedule at

Easter, with mostly bike miles left to knit together my hikes from Ohio's Hocking Hills toward Cincinnati and Chicago's Outerbelt (www.Outerbelt.org) to Indiana's dunes on the home end. The Major Taylor Cycling Club of Chicago (MTC3), the largest and best cycling club near me, captured my heart and reinvigorated my love of cycling with a wonderful group of people. When I organized a small impromptu moonlight century in fall 2022, I realized, "I'm back. I'm in the zone" — and I learned 2023 is a PBP year!

What I Have Learned

One visit to a chiropractor resolved the neck issues and gave me confidence. Rediscovering serious cycling has been an unmitigated joy. Muscle memory has helped me in reclaiming distances, although adding 80 pounds and 32 years have presented serious challenges.



I finish this having recently qualified for PBP by finishing my SR series, but on the 400K I had 11 minutes to spare and the 600 took me two tries, with the first marked by heat exhaustion and the second finding me within 2 minutes of the cutoff time after the first 24 hours (admittedly with 15,000 feet of climbing). Amazed by the growth of the community and GPS tracking, here are some things I have re-discovered between here and there:

I have a long way to go! There is considerable training to be done between here and Rambouillet in August (and by the time you read this we will know how it turned out.) But I am grateful for all the help, online and in person, that reassured me I could get a 90-hour start time even without riding any brevets last year. The learning curve has been slow and humbling, but also refreshing and energizing, like the discovery that learning new skills and taking on new challenges as we age is good for our lives. My elation upon qualifying and registering knows few parallels.

Getting there is half the battle.

As soon as I foresaw a year of brevets and permanents (I threw in a P-12 goal for good measure), my planning muscles went into overdrive — and before I had even ridden a mile in 2023 I rediscovered the joy of reading, envisioning and making lists. Like many of you, I have obsessed about reading old editions of *American Randonneur* and *Between Controls*, and my Christmas list was made up of old school distance riding books.

I don't have to go it alone. At 19, I was lonely and needed a team sport. But now that the team sports have destroyed my knees, I realize that the same dynamism that existed in ball sports and fast-paced games is present in group rides and the mapping and logistics challenges of long distance cycling. Even if not everyone does the really long miles, I can ride to the ride, ride from the ride, and pick the longer options when riding with other people.



Sneaking in a quick nap and icing the knees during Ultra Week.

There are so many ways to build a social life into cycling, especially if I'm willing to ride a few extra miles to get here or there. The discovery that even if I do different things, I can do them with others has been life-affirming.

Going with others makes it go better. In just the last year of riding, I've made more new friends than I did in the rest of my adulthood. And in just 10 weeks of randonneuring, I've had peak experiences with a dozen people that I can't wait to see again. Real hours of true pursuit lead to life-deepening commitments and discoveries that beg for revisiting. I feel glad to have found my way back.

Randonnesia is real. Vomit, saddle sores, and finger numbness would beg the question why I am so

excited about Paris. But I have not felt so alive in years, and I've got rides and goals and progress laid out in front of me in a way that promises so much more. My SR series was marked by my father's final decline, and in addition to having some powerful moments and critical discoveries while riding brevets, I have been grateful that my own life has felt so purposeful during that stretch.

Time commitments lead to time management. This is the part I really wish I had known after a shorter break to get my head straight. I can fit it in, and the quest is worthwhile. 🚲

Motivation by Fear

This August, for the first time since 2007, I will not be heading to France for PBP. I didn't realize, when I made the decision to stay home, that I had not missed this event since my first attempt back in 2007. It feels a little strange to be so removed from the action, the planning, the worrying and the training, although I'm looking forward to an update on all of the above tomorrow when I ride with my friend Paul, who is heading to Paris in August.

In looking through my RUSA results page, I calculated that I have ridden a 1000k or 1200k in 11 of the last 13 years. Most of these epic rides took place in the late summer or early fall, giving me plenty of warm months to train sufficiently.

I remember registering for the Cascade 1200 in 2015 and worrying that June was very early for a 1200k and how would I be able to train sufficiently in the usually wet weather of a New Jersey spring?

Then in 2021, I registered for the

Treasure Cove 1200k, to be held in May of that year, and once again doubt filled my mind as I contemplated an even earlier-in-the-year start.

Although I finished both brevets in lanterne rouge territory, completing them might have given me just the little bit of overconfidence I needed to sign up for the Golden Falcon, a 1200k held this past March. A March 1200k? Insanity. Yet there I was, clipping in at the start and perhaps, miraculously, finishing in 87:45.

Way back in January, I thought that attempting a March 1200k would force me to train relentlessly over the usually slow winter months and then my fitness would position me to easily complete an SR series.

That was very optimistic thinking. Reviewing my winter training, I realized I rode consistently, during January, February and March, although some rides were just short commutes. I completed the 1200k and didn't feel like death warmed over at the finish. Although it was challenging, it was still enjoyable and I'll admit I was quite proud of myself for completing a spring 1200k. And now I could take it easy and sail through Super Brevet season. I had finished a 1200k in March — how hard could a 200, 300, 400, and 600 later in the season be?

Unfortunately, I can't really answer that question since my season stalled

The scenery can be stunning — and distracting.

—PHOTOS CHRIS NEWMAN





Nigel Greene on the very early Golden Falcon 1200k.

Who wouldn't be distracted by this face?



after completing the New Jersey 300k. I did attempt the 400k pre-ride on what was a hilly and chilly route, on a day with monstrous headwinds. Our pace for the first 40 miles was glacial so we decided to quit. I think we made the correct decision but then I failed to ride on the actual event day. And always in the back of my mind was my March accomplishment and the feeling that I already had a successful season and there was no pressure, no Grand Brevet looming, no PBP to train for. I can always ride tomorrow. But most weeks, tomorrow never came.

I was able to rationalize spending most of my free time pursuing other interests which I had neglected in the past — gardening, walking the dogs, traveling. There was no pressing reason to get on that bike at 5 a.m. and ride 250 miles. So, I didn't.

In addition to the 200k and 300k, I rode many 100ks, which I always find enjoyable and reasonably simple to fit in my schedule. At least I hadn't blown that streak and had even managed to complete three 100ks in May. In writing this column and checking my RUSA results, however, I discovered, much to my annoyance, sadness, and embarrassment, that I had not completed a 100k in June. The month slipped by with travel and bad weather

and meetings and extra work days and ... I guess I just forgot. And then today I checked my Ride With GPS mileage for June. Only 43 miles. How is that even possible?? I know my riding slows down in the fall after the "season" is unofficially over. But June is high season! Just 43 miles? Am I even a cyclist anymore? Anyone can ride 43 miles in a month. Ugh.

It seems that a successful season for me requires an anxiety inducing goal to train for. It is so easy to push long distance riding aside if there is no fear of failure lurking in the not-too-distant future.



Currently, I am registered for a hilly 400k taking place in 19 days. July has started off well with a 100k completed, another scheduled for tomorrow, and one day of commuting. This seemed like a reasonable goal when I signed up last month, but now it seems almost unattainable. Almost.

My training will be compromised by a planned weekend trip and a new puppy who might not appreciate waiting in a crate while I crank out 100k. But at least now I have a mildly terrifying 400k motivating me to find a way to get this done! 🚲

Off the beaten path on Treasure Cover 1200k last year.

New RUSA Members

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE	RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
16314	Wade, Brooks Howard	Anchorage	AK	16345	Baralt Nazario, Lucas Emanuel	Chicago	IL	16418	Del Pino, Diego	South Salem	NY
16312	Wilson, Frederic H	Anchorage	AK	16397	Coleman, Haley	Chicago	IL	16266	Beeman, Nancy	Whitehouse	OH
16372	Dietzel, Stephanie	Tucson	AZ	16340	Shultz, Rachel	Chicago	IL	16251	Tomsic, Bob	Brooklin	ON
16355	Mc Casland, Kenneth D	Arcata	CA	16358	Zhu, Alexander	Chicago	IL	16288	Brown, Ryan A	Fraserville	ON
16356	Poree, Cybele L	Arcata	CA	16261	Moore, Jeffrey Noper	Good Hope	IL	16391	Lynch, Ryan D	Portland	OR
16319	Keller, Ed	Auburn	CA	16303	Madland, Tina M	Libertyville	IL	16277	Burns, W Walt	The Dalles	OR
16318	Sherrill, Ellen	Auburn	CA	16310	Snarr, Brian H	Mount Prospect	IL	16316	Rogoff, Nick	Conshohocken	PA
16335	Giese, Lucas J	Bayside	CA	16401	Davidson, Jack E	Oak Park	IL	16348	Lewin, Bob	King of Prussia	PA
16257	Beatson, Simon	Beverly Hills	CA	16309	Gerig Shelly, Ben	Oak Park	IL	16271	Arrivello, Stephen	Philadelphia	PA
16400	Schmid, Garrett S	Cardiff	CA	16311	Castro, Jaime	River Forest	IL	16378	Donovan, Moira	Philadelphia	PA
16321	Scoggin, Justin Keith	Davis	CA	16394	Hubbard, Peter Douglas	Wheaton	IL	16313	Dwass, Simona	Philadelphia	PA
16366	Shelley, Brook Adams	Emeryville	CA	16373	McCollum, Brian D	Wheaton	IL	16393	Hatkevich, Claire	Philadelphia	PA
16332	Wisniewski, Jarek	Encino	CA	16375	Warren, Brad	Wheaton	IL	16290	Bisailon, Marc	Philadelphia	PA
16341	Barnes, Jason M	Eureka	CA	16255	Birch, Don W	Indianapolis	IN	16346	Jermann, Urban	Philadelphia	PA
16305	Bachant, Pete	Fairfax	CA	16327	Couet, Cyrille	Arlington	MA	16368	Kobasz, Owen	Philadelphia	PA
16306	Kern, Zoe	Fairfax	CA	16298	Sassler, Ed Z	Arlington	MA	16376	Perfetti, Ross H	Philadelphia	PA
16337	Chapman, Michael C	Fortuna	CA	16292	Levinsohn, Erik	Boston	MA	16363	Strzelec, Lucas J	Philadelphia	PA
16382	Chang, Shaoting	Fremont	CA	16254	Munoz, Guillermo	Burlington	MA	16263	Falvey, Suz	Pittsburgh	PA
16374	Moore, Kris L	Los Altos Hills	CA	16322	Kowalski, Tom	Cambridge	MA	16411	Doganiero, Rick	Wellsboro	PA
16416	Campos, Anthony	Los Angeles	CA	16280	Tan, Bridget	Charlestown	MA	16377	Pacchione, Ronnie	Wynwood	PA
16379	Harrell, B Keith	Los Angeles	CA	16294	Skarupa, John W	Chatham	MA	16286	Bisailon, Marc	Montreal	QC
16384	Nghe, J T	Los Angeles	CA	16250	Briggs, Peter	Plymouth	MA	16308	Caty, Olivier	St-Laurent	QC
16367	LeVasseur, Joshua	Menlo Park	CA	16328	Muniz, Randy	Reading	MA	16413	DuPont, Charles	Nashville	TN
16402	Pawlicki, Thomas V	Morgan Hill	CA	16412	Brekki, Oeystein Roed	Somerville	MA	16360	Jimenez, Ramon Antonio Sarthou	Old Hickory	TN
16362	Harrington, Ben Michael	Oakland	CA	16301	Monica, Ian	Somerville	MA	16336	Ferguson, Austin	Irving	TX
16370	Hinder, Tracey	Oakland	CA	16293	Ozturk, Berk	Somerville	MA	16389	Hoover, Robert E	League City	TX
16279	Aprelev, Alexander	Pleasanton	CA	16253	Salvatore, Derrick	Somerville	MA	16307	Cowser, Max	Pearland	TX
16417	Garcia, Stephanie E	Rancho Santa Margarita	CA	16291	Kurtz, David	Winchester	MA	16260	Maxwell, David L	American Fork	UT
16380	Williams, Pamela	Riverside	CA	16302	Williams, Randolph	Winchester	MA	16269	Frasier, Laura E	Kaysville	UT
16343	Chagatai, Ozer	San Diego	CA	16295	Myers, Scott W	Yarmouth Port	MA	16270	Frasier, Rex M	Kaysville	UT
16334	Holdaway, Aaron	San Diego	CA	16274	DiCarlantonio, Julian	Crofton	MD	16249	Lauderbaugh, Kelly	Ogden	UT
16299	Pendergraft, Matthew A	San Diego	CA	16353	Henson, Bryce Attridge	Falmouth	ME	16410	Klaes, Kevin	Alexandria	VA
16252	Gundogdu, Deniz	San Francisco	CA	16338	Lodge, Michael Lance	Clinton Township	MI	16403	Foster, Carlton A	Newport News	VA
16392	Lambert, Chase	San Francisco	CA	16364	Ramon, Alex	Harper Woods	MI	16414	Davidson, John C	Portsmouth	VA
16398	Vachal, Z	San Francisco	CA	16325	Grigg, Jeri	Saint Clair Shores	MI	16278	Van Liew, Tyler R	Burlington	VT
16326	Atla, Ujval Reddy	San Francisco	CA	16354	Turner, Kyle J	Eagan	MN	16407	Mitchell, Brian W	Carnation	WA
16276	Sakimura, Melia R	San Lorenzo	CA	16265	Kehrberg, Eric	Golden Valley	MN	16359	Smith, Kent	Edmonds	WA
16390	Rossi, Emilio C	Santa Barbara	CA	16256	Moe, Kat	Minneapolis	MN	16352	Leader, Gary	Everett	WA
16388	Eberle, Daniel J	Santa Cruz	CA	16262	Nutt, James W	Minneapolis	MN	16408	Kieling, Mark	Issaquah	WA
16399	Jones, Mason	Santa Cruz	CA	16406	Capron, Charles	Rochester	MN	16409	Whitfield, Monika B	Issaquah	WA
16300	Atkins, Joseph A	Spring Valley	CA	16281	Carroll, Sam M	Saint Paul	MN	16369	Taht, Aaron	Mountlake Terrace	WA
16419	Truong, Leonard	Tahoe City	CA	16381	Cerullo, Scott J	Apex	NC	16351	Taht, Jaime	Mountlake Terrace	WA
16342	McCourtney, Matthew Jo	Faron Woodacre	CA	16304	Day, Eli	Asheville	NC	16315	Fagan, Deborah	Richland	WA
16365	Kuhfahl, Joseph	Broomfield	CO	16289	Osgood, Joel	Asheville	NC	16405	Eldridge, Richard P	Seattle	WA
16275	McPherson, James I	Chaplin	CT	16344	Robinson, Jonathan Ross	Asheville	NC	16347	Green, Andrew	Seattle	WA
16284	Adomeit, Paul F	Ellington	CT	16387	Borer, James A	Omaha	NE	16296	Huckabee, Josh	Seattle	WA
16264	Rivard, Patricia	Granby	CT	16386	Borer, Maria J	Omaha	NE	16395	Ly, Brian	Seattle	WA
16267	Hankins, John B	Mansfield Ctr.	CT	16282	O'Grady, Thomas A	Keene	NH	16385	Mars, Z	Seattle	WA
16258	Bergemann, Reza E	New Haven	CT	16317	Sverdlov, Michael	Jersey City	NJ	16320	McClelland, Kevin R	Seattle	WA
16268	Moors, Vanessa C	Simsbury	CT	16330	So, Eugenia	Palisades Park	NJ	16287	Weiss, Peter	Seattle	WA
16285	O'Grady, Barry	South Windsor	CT	16415	Bennett, Eric	Albany	NY	16283	Massey, Richard L	Tonasket	WA
16272	Stoltze, Chris	Tolland	CT	16329	Roberts, Justin	Brooklyn	NY	16259	Parmentier, Andrew	Madison	WI
16331	Bryant, Steve E	Warren	CT	16333	Su, Vicky	Brooklyn	NY	16383	Hinkle, Jess B	Lander	WY
16420	Burbank, Istvan	Orlando	FL	16324	Suen, Mathew	Brooklyn	NY	16273	Haynes, Stephen Andrew	Christchurch	UK
16350	Stewart, Brandon	Decatur	GA	16339	Atmaca, Yilmaz	Middle Village	NY	16371	Katzir, Tal	Tel Aviv	Israel
16396	Hall, Cass	Viola	ID	16349	Berridge, Jim	New York	NY	16357	Gravesen, Jens	Virum	Denmark
16297	Bates, Christopher P	Charleston	IL	16361	Walter, Kalten	New York	NY				
16323	Schroll, Anne B	Chatham	IL	16404	Whitney, Zach T	Oneonta	NY				

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Preparing for Your First 200k

BY JAY FICHIALOS

Your first randonneuring ride can be a thrilling experience, as everything is new and exciting, but it also can be daunting. As time passes, it's easy to forget what it was like to go out on that first big ride. If you're considering taking on your first 200k ride or know someone who is, I hope this article can provide some guidance and inspiration.

Preparing for the Ride

Start off by considering your level of training. If you're considering riding a 200k, have you ever ridden 100k? Thinking about a 100k? Have you ridden 50k? Gradually increase your mileage and incorporate hill and interval training into your routine. This will help you build the endurance and strength needed to complete the ride. Longtime RUSA volunteer Dan Driscoll says "As an RBA, the biggest thing I did was align the new rider's current skill set with a ride distance and terrain that would net them a finish." Talk with your local RBA and tell them what you'd like to do and where you're coming from. They can help you identify the best ride.

Developing a nutrition and hydration plan is also critical, and there's no better way to do this than trying things out on your training rides. Don't let the first time you try out a new drink mix or food be on your first long ride. Plan to eat and drink every 20-30 minutes during the ride,

and bring a variety of foods and a source of electrolytes.

Randonneuring generally doesn't require a large initial investment in specialty clothing, but you might consider getting padded shorts, chamois cream, and comfortable gloves. Again, training rides will help you sort out the clothing that's most comfortable for you. You'll see lots of different approaches to equipment and nutrition; randonneuring is a big tent. The most important thing is to find what works for you.

Speaking of equipment, make sure that your bike is properly maintained and that you have gear that suits you, including a helmet that fits and comfortable shoes. Having the latest gear isn't as important, but having a basic understanding of how your bike works and how to maintain it can help keep you moving on a long ride and boost your confidence that you can service minor issues that arise.

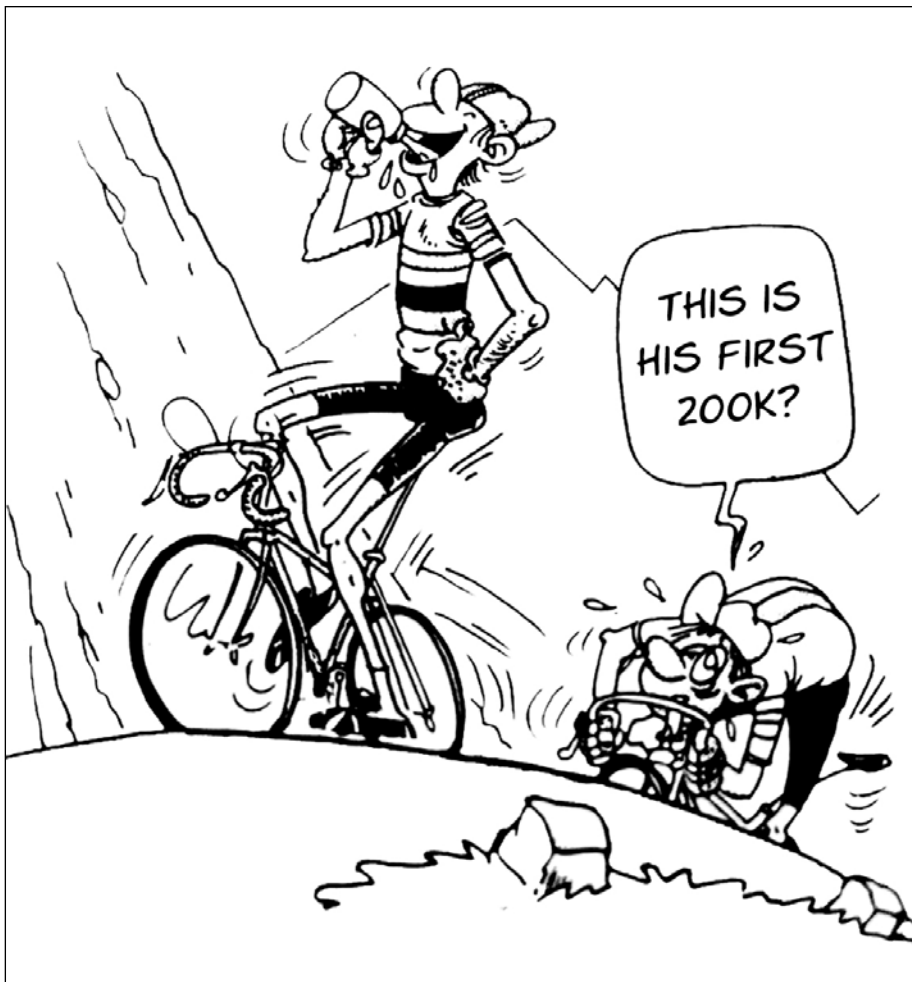
Mental preparation is also important and often overlooked.

It can be helpful both to visualize yourself completing the ride as well as to think about what could go wrong and develop strategies for how you can keep going. You might think of a half-dozen things that could go wrong and how you'll overcome them. Then, on the ride only two of the problems you thought of come up, and you'll be pleasantly surprised how much easier it was than you thought it could be. Dan recommends "Close your eyes, imagine it's raining, you're lost and off course, you've been dropped by the group, you are walking your bike up a hill because it's too steep, you're cold, and you notice you have a flat tire... If you can smile and find humor in it, you're on the right track."

As you're thinking through potential challenges, make sure you consider and prepare for the weather conditions. Check the forecast and dress appropriately, bring rain gear if needed, and always be aware of the possibility of changing weather conditions. If it's your first 200k and the weather looks bad, skip it and ride another one when the weather improves. There's no shame in that. Save bad weather rides for when you've built up some experience. There will be plenty of time for new challenges.

During the Ride

The preparation is done, and now it's time to ride. There are a few important factors to consider before embarking on your long ride. Arriving early and checking in at the starting point is crucial to ensure that you have



everything you need and hear the announcements. You'll want to be in the loop on road conditions and last-minute changes. Additionally, it's essential to have a navigation and pacing strategy in place. Study the route ahead of time, and whether you're using a map or a GPS device (or both), make sure you know how to read it, and securely attach it to your bike.

One of the biggest mistakes new riders make is starting too fast. Remember, a 200k ride is not a sprint; it's a marathon. Start at a comfortable pace and maintain it throughout the ride. Keep in mind that pacing also includes breaks and rest stops. Take breaks when needed, but be mindful of the time and how long you're taking. Former RBA Richard Stum, quoting an old friend, says "Start slow, finish fast." It's still sound advice.

While we're talking about pace, this is a great time to find folks that are

moving at a similar pace and ride with them. Riding with someone who has more experience than you can be a great way to learn the ropes of long-distance cycling. Before the ride, consider asking someone to ride with you, or join a group along the way. Riding with others will not only give you the opportunity to learn from more experienced riders but also provide you with the motivation to keep going.

Cycling can be unpredictable; unexpected situations can and often do arise. So, it's vital to be prepared for flat tires, mechanical issues, and other challenges. Carrying and knowing how to use a basic tool kit with spare tubes, tire levers, a pump, and a multi-tool can be helpful in addressing minor mechanical issues.

This is your chance to implement the nutrition and hydration plan that you developed during training rides to prevent fatigue and dehydration during

the event. RBA Ken Moss tells new riders to "Eat, eat, eat." You probably won't feel like eating, but you generally can't overeat when you're on the move.

Finally, don't forget to enjoy the ride. Ken's number one advice for new riders is to ask somebody to ride with you: "Hey, I'm new at this, could somebody ride with me?" When you have time on the road riding with others, ask them about how they train, prepare, deal with problems, and so forth. Experienced riders can offer valuable advice on how to prepare and enjoy long distance rides. Don't be afraid to ask questions and learn from their experiences.

After the Ride

You did it! Celebrate your achievement at the finish line and prioritize recovery so you're ready for the next ride. Remember to stretch your muscles and rehydrate to prevent cramping and fatigue. You can also try some post-ride recovery strategies to see what works best for you, such as foam rolling and recovery drinks or snacks. If people are heading out for dinner or drinks after the ride, take the time to share stories from the road and talk about the rides that are coming up.

Final Thoughts

Completing your first 200k can be an amazing experience, and brevets often provide opportunities to form lifelong memories and friendships. Use this article as a guide, but at some point you just have to jump in and give it a try. By following the tips and advice outlined here, you can increase your chances of success and hopefully enjoy the journey. Remember to stay safe, stay hydrated, and have fun! 🚴

Randonneuring While Parenting

A RUSA INTERVIEW

We asked some of our RUSA members with young children about the challenges of being a parent and a randonneur, both activities that take a lot of time, but only one of which is discretionary. Luke Heller, Bryan Kilgore, and Katie Raschdorf shared their points of view; not every parent queried had the time to answer our questions!

Can you briefly sketch out what your randonneuring looked like before kids? What was a typical week/month like during the season? How many miles/kms did you ride, and what was a normal weekend ride for you?

Luke: Rando lifestyle was effectively in full swing for me by fall 2012; the year I completed my first 1,000k, concluded my formal education,

locked down my future wife, and landed my first real job. It's been a juggling act of work, play, and love from go. Not necessarily in that order but often so. Riding 4,000-6,000k of RUSA rides seemed to be yielding sustainable and satisfying results for the first few years.

In preparation for parenthood, it seemed timely to ride my bearings dry before baby #1, Edie, who arrived in October 2016. I surpassed 10,000 RUSA

km 6 days before she was born. Our second child, Maisie, arrived in 2019.

From 4,000-6,000 RUSA km annually seems to continue to be the sustainable number for my household. Prior to kids, I commuted by bike 10 miles daily and tagged on extra distance whenever possible. Since kids, commuting has all but ceased due to day care drops and work schedules. We have an electric cargo bike that we zip the kids around all over town on, which they absolutely love.

There's no space for an annual kilometer count in my household. While I am certainly less spontaneous with my long-distance riding, I probably ride nearly the same amount these days, just with much more planning consideration for my partner.

While it is certainly not the rule for all North Carolina brevets to ride



Edie having a blast!
—PHOTO LUKE HELLER



Bianca bundled in her Hamax cape.
—PHOTO KATIE RASCHDÖRF



Family ride for ice cream and playgrounds.

—PHOTO MISHA HELLER

have less time for brevets and perms, but shorter rides are probably more realistic. What is a normal weekend ride like for you now?

Luke: In general, if it's not on the brevet calendar, the family schedule does not accommodate it. Therefore, I ride shorter, or leave earlier. My in-laws live 100km away. If you aren't in a committed relationship yet, I recommend ensuring that the in-laws be 100km or greater and work out an understanding that you get to ride to/from whenever you go to visit. I never mind going to my in-laws, plus they're all wonderful humans.

Bryan: I'm lucky that my partner is supportive of my riding and we do take turns with childcare, so that we can both have time for our respective hobbies.

I can usually get out for a 50 mile ride on Saturday mornings. I try to be home by lunchtime so I can spend some quality time with the family.

Katie: I have a very time-consuming job. I am very active in both my town and with our school; not only do I host a recurring Friday school-wide activity, but I also sit on two boards within our community government and chair the town-wide Litter Cleanup. I am both of my daughters Girl Scout leader, plus cookie mom for both troops, and in 2024 I will become the Service Unit Manager for our town. I have very little time now to dedicate to the bike like I did pre-kids. There really is no free time to "swap." I love my girls and they are pretty fun to be around, so as much as I miss those 4 a.m. ditch naps I wouldn't change a thing. The days/months/years are passing, and the girls aren't going to stay little forever. RUSA's been around for a while now; I'm sure it will be around when they outgrow me.

together all the time, it is definitely the culture for many Asheville rides. My wife Asia and I approach parenting the same way that I approach brevets. That is, if we got ourselves into this mess together, we are committed to getting ourselves out of it together.

Bryan: I would typically ride at least one or two brevets per month and 60-80 mile rides on most other weekends. My annual RUSA kilometers were between 5000-6500 kms. Annual Strava mileage: 2022: 4,071 / 2021: 3,634 / 2020: 4,237 / 2019: 6,406 / 2018: 4,210 / 2017: 5,496 / 2016: 9,472

Katie: Mileage pre-kids: from 2006-2010, I averaged close to 10,00k RUSA miles + countless fun rides with friends. In 2011, I rode 5,371k RUSA miles + whatever other fun rides I participated in. Then, we started fertility treatments. In 2012 and 2013, I managed 2,823k RUSA miles and very little other mileage. Thankfully (luckily) we had daughter #1 in 2014 ahead of PBP in 2015! I trained mostly in the UK with my daughter in a Tulle bike trailer.

How many children do you have now and what are their ages?

Luke: Edie, 6 and Maisie, 3.

Bryan: I have one daughter who is 3 1/2 years old.

Katie: Two daughters, Bianca, 9 and Thea, 7 (at time of print).

What is your typical month (or year) like now in terms of cumulative miles/kms?

Luke: 4-6,000km per year

Brian: Much less! I typically ride about 80 miles a week with some indoor training sessions mixed in.

Katie: HA! Very little, mostly riding around the block or 15 minutes here or there on my Peloton.

Time is of course the biggest challenge — there's never enough, especially when you need to prioritize family time. Do you have a deal with your spouse/partner to swap childcare for riding time? Most likely, you

Do you ever get out riding with your kids? Are they in a trailer, an attached seat, or on their own bike? Have you done any family rides with the whole crew? What are those like? Any unique demands on you in that situation?

Luke: This isn't a big part of our family culture, as I try to be cautious not to force my interests on the kids and rather foster their curiosities and desires. We do have a family cargo bike and an array of kids bikes.

Bryan: I had a child seat on one of my bikes but my daughter outgrew it. She does have a bike of her own and does enjoy riding it, but she's still getting the hang of it.

Katie: I prepared for PBP in 2015 just as my daughter was turning 2. (She has an Audax UK membership number, I'm hoping that LEL is in her future.) We had been in the UK for about 18 months and she was old enough to sit up in a bike seat, but not old enough to really be bothered by it. As I wasn't working and did not drive

there I was able to ride and train regularly. The bike was our primary mode of transportation throughout the city and into the countryside between naps, and sometimes during. Bianca loved the bike and we lived adjacent to Richmond Park Surrey UK, so it was easy to get out and ride. We moved back to the states soon after Thea was born, and opportunities for what I would consider safe riding with a child in a trailer became more difficult to come by. The double trailer was not as comfortable as the single so Bianca wanted to get out to ride her own bike and not be confined, while Thea was limited to the sled. The benefit was Bianca learned to ride a two-wheeler by age 3. (I am happy to report that even in the final hours of a 1200k I can still ride faster than a 3 year old.)

How does your spouse/partner feel about your desire to do a 200k or longer ride? Do they understand, or do they see it as cutting into family time? Is a passion for cycling something they share?

Luke: Asia is the person who should really be interviewed here; she's the real star. Parenting is hard, there's no way around it. Doing it alone more than doubles the load. One thing I consistently bring with intention is appreciation for her accommodations to allow me to go for rides and acknowledgment for how amazing of a parent she is.

Asia also enjoys volunteering for our rides, which you've likely experienced if you've ever ridden an AIR brevet. Creating access points for her to support the ride or, at a minimum, connect with the riders at the finish, allows Asia to have connection with the experience rather than it be something that I do in complete isolation from her.

Asia also has weekly yoga scheduled

with friends and other social activities that I support. But what we have found and continue to find is that separate activities don't fully give us the connection that we crave with each other and we are needing to find more and more ways to get outdoors as a family. As our kids get older and more mobile, we are able to start scheduling weekly hikes to have frequent shared outdoor activities, and this makes a big difference in the feeling of family cohesiveness for us.

This year, I've taken the girls on two five-day or longer trips to Virginia to see my family while leaving Asia solo. I also encourage Asia to hit the road for trips with her girlfriends sans kids whenever possible to maintain her self-care.

Bryan: My partner is not a cyclist, but she is supportive of my riding. I can usually schedule one or two big rides a month, as long as it doesn't interfere with other plans. I do have to pick and choose which rides I do, but we can usually work it out if there's a brevet I really want to do.

Katie: Luckily my husband is a mountain biker, so he completely understands my desire to have more on-the-bike time. But since I am the primary caregiver, it is difficult to think about an entire day spent away. When they are so little and so needy it really is an effort shared by both of us, we are limited to riding around their schedules. My rando friends with older children have told me as kids get older things do level out, so I am cautiously optimistic we will both be able to get back on the bike with more frequency and regularity (and hopefully duration).

In the beginning I tried to cheat the system and put in the minimum amount of training for the events I was (attempting) to participate in. It didn't work, I felt miserable during the events, miserable about my lack of results, but mostly miserable because I knew it was all due to my lack of training. In order for me to be able to ride long, I have to train long. I do feel a flèche in my future — calling all Escargots Volant! I do enjoy

Bryan and his baby on the bike.

—PHOTO LAURA BENITEZ





The girls balancing on Mom and Dad's tandem.

—PHOTO KATIE RASCHDORF

manning a control here or there, doling out some tough love to my NJ rando friends. Hopefully soon I will be on the receiving end of NJ rando magic.

What one thing would make your life easier right now? A regular baby sitter? A more flexible job? A more understanding partner?

Luke: It's common that I don't get home till 7:00 or 8:00 twice a week, which makes co-parenting very difficult. A different job with a fixed work schedule and summers off sounds amazing but so does eight hours of sleep.

Bryan: I'm actually pretty happy with my situation. I still want to ride more and definitely experience FOMO

when I see the rides my childless friends are doing, but I also really value my family time, so I think it's a good balance right now.

Katie: Older children that are more self-sufficient (e.g. able to make their own meals without burning down the house, bathe on their own, etc.) Haha, I know you are supposed to "enjoy this time", but holy crap, I would love to get through one interval on my trainer without the interruption of "Mom can I have a snack?"

Do you have any advice for those following you into parenthood? Is there anything they should do to prepare? (Purchase a trainer? Mothball their bike?)

Luke: Communicate with your partner. One of the hardest things for me as a parent continues to be the constant reminder that my time is not my time. That's parenting.

Bryan: It's really easy to feel frustrated by a lack of riding time, but family is more important. Even though my daughter is still young, I know this time is short and precious. All those rides will be there later when I have more time again, but I can't have the time with my child back.

Katie: Invest in the best child bike seat/trailer you can afford. If you intend to train with your child in all sorts of weather, then quality rain gear is an absolute must. This is the bike trailer I used training for PBP: www.thule.com/en-us/articles/guides/find-the-best-bike-trailer-for-kids-with-this-guide. This is the bike seat I also used for shorter training rides: www.hamax.com/child-bike-seat/. And if you have aspirations of completing a 1200k, the sleep deprivation training that infancy provides is absolutely the best training for the ultra distances. I feel like I slept more at PBP 2015 than I had the entire two years leading up to it! 🚲

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Bike Lust

BY TED DURANT

In homage to Richard and Shoe Schwinn, who are closing down Waterford Precision Cycles

My bike was built by Waterford in 2017, but its story began 20 years earlier, with the prototype Heron Road frame. Although I loved the Heron, I happily joined in Grant Petersen's and Jan Heine's "All Road Revolution" with a sequence of 650B bikes and progressively bigger and better tires. Despite enjoying my fatter-tired 650B bikes, every time I pulled out the Heron I thought, first, this is my favorite bike, and second, what if it had more tire clearance and less trail? So, in 2017 I commissioned Waterford to build that for me: what a Heron randonneur might have been had reliable, longer reach brakes, dreamy 32mm tires, and Jan's influence on steering geometry been available at the beginning. The Waterford ST-22 specs were a perfect start, and we added the Heron round-blade fork with extra rake, which Waterford executed beautifully. I also added stainless chain stays for practical beauty, stainless seat stay caps, just 'cuz, internal wiring for the generator hub and lights, and an internally routed rear brake cable. The bike came out just as I'd envisioned, with a ride just like my Heron, but cushier tires and less trail for carrying a full handlebar bag. My first big ride on it was a six-day loop around Lake Michigan, and it proved itself worthy of many consecutive long days in the saddle. It is now 100km shy of 20,000. 🚲

—PHOTO MEGAN ANDREWS-SHARER

THE BIKE: Waterford ST-22





FULL BICYCLE SPEC:

FRAME: Waterford ST-22 with stainless chain stays

FORK: Waterford with Heron crown and Schmidt SL fork ends

HEADSET: IRD

WHEELS: Joe Young built, Schmidt SL front hub, White Industries MI5 rear, DT TK540 rims

TIRES: Rene Herse Stamped Pass XL 700x32C

FENDERS: Honjo

CRANKS: Rene Herse 42/26

BOTTOM BRACKET: SKF

DERAILERS: SRAM Red 10sp

SHIFTERS: Simplex Retrofriction Bar-end

CHAIN: YBN

PEDALS: VP-538

SADDLE: Berthoud Aravis

SEATPOST: Nitto S65

HANDLEBAR: Nitto 177

HANDLEBAR TAPE: Newbaum's with clear shellac

BRAKE LEVERS: Gran Compe

BRAKES: Dia Compe DC610-N

FRONT RACK: Nitto/Rivendell Mark's Rack

HANDLEBAR BAG: Berthoud GB25

HEADLIGHT: SON Edelux II

TAILLIGHT: Rene Herse

PUMP: Silca

WATERBOTTLE CAGES: Nitto R / VO Retro

Do you think your bike should be in the spotlight?

Send one photo and a brief description of what is special/unique to your ride, to editor@rusa.org. If your bike is chosen, you will be contacted for more information. Not all submissions can be published due to space constraints.

Overview of Garmin and Wahoo Products

GARMIN BY JASON TURNER

Disclaimer: Jason, as head of Unicorn Cycles, is a Garmin reseller

Garmin has a long history with GPS navigation and trackers for aviation, automotive, boats, motorcycles, hiking, running, and cycling. Garmin Edge cycling-specific computers date to 2005, and before that some cyclists used Garmin Forerunner GPS watches. Garmin eTrex is popular with bikepacking, touring, and ultra cycling events, often supplementing cycling-specific computers. Etrex has the advantage of long battery life from easily replaceable AA batteries although it is not necessarily intended to replace a cycling-specific computer.

While no cycling computer is without issues or occasional bugs, overall, the features and reliability of cycling computers have arguably improved. However, with new features/functions, there is bound to be a bit more complexity.

The current Garmin Edge models are the 540, 840, and 1040. The main difference between the 540 and 840 is that the 840 has a touchscreen and the 540 does not. All three models — 540, 840, and 1040 — are offered with or without solar charging — more about solar charging in a moment. This new generation of 40's offers many enhancements over the previous 30's (530, 830, and 1030.) The 1040 was

released in June 2022, and the 540 and 840 were released in April 2023. It's also worth mentioning the Garmin Edge Explorer 2, which seems to be targeting ebikes and recreational bike touring. The Explorer 2 is a simplified version of the Edge 1040 with such things removed as Strava Live Segments, structured workouts, advanced training load metrics, and power meter support. For the simplicity of this article, we will focus on the flagship Edge 1040 and, when necessary, highlight the differences between the 540 and 840.

For the best in-depth reviews on cycling computers, see DC Rainmaker:

www.dcrainmaker.com. As modern cycling computers have many more features than we could possibly cover here, this article is meant to focus on some of the features that randonneurs may find most meaningful.

Battery Life

Battery life is a critical feature for long-distance cycling. Many factors affect battery life, including GPS settings, temperature, number of sensors, display brightness, timeout period, etc. The tables on the next page show possible run times one might expect from their Garmin Edge

Jason at Brainard Lake.

—PHOTO PASCAL LEDRU



Edge 540, 540 Solar, 840, and 840 Solar Battery Life Expectations

	Low	Battery Saver	Mid	Demanding
Estimated Battery Life without Solar	< 48 hours	< 42 hours	< 28 hours	< 26 hours
Estimated Battery Life with Solar	< 78 hours	< 60 hours	< 34 hours	< 32 hours

Edge 1040 and 1040 Solar Battery Life Expectations

	Low	Battery Saver	Mid	Demanding
Estimated Battery Life without Solar	< 90 hours	< 70 hours	< 40 hours	< 35 hours
Estimated Battery Life with Solar	< 180 hours	< 100 hours	< 50 hours	< 45 hours

computer. As you can see, the range is significant, from 26 hours under demanding conditions to nearly 90 hours for the most reserved settings and potentially over 100 hours with optimal solar charging conditions.

The solar versions of the Edge computers have had mixed reviews. Early on some users reported problems while others questioned the value of the little extra time solar charging provided. Solar panels behind the display aren't a new technology; Garmin has had solar power watches since 2019 with the launch of the Fenix 6. However, the Edge 1040 solar is the first solar cycling computer. The display brightness is a little dimmer on the solar computers, and solar does cost more. As far as how much extra time a rider will get from the solar version, your "mileage" will vary (pun intended). Garmin claims solar charging extends battery life up to 42 minutes per hour in battery-saver mode for the 1040 solar. For the 540 and 840, you gain 25 minutes per hour from solar charging. Keep in mind these numbers are based on absolute ideal conditions. In practice, with an overcast sky or if the computer is in shadows, the power gains drop dramatically. One screen reports how much time the computer has gained from solar charging, which is nice. The extra cost for solar is \$100

for the 540 and 840 and \$150 more for the 1040. Is solar charging worth it? Maybe. Like most things rando, it's a personal choice. I have previously owned the Edge 1000 and 1030 and currently use the 1040 (non-solar) and absolutely rave about its battery life. I can easily ride a 600k and still have over 50% battery life left. Does anyone really need solar charging? Perhaps not, but clearly many want it. I expect solar charging to improve with future versions. If you need more power, you can always go with an external USB battery (with or without dynamo), or Garmin offers an external power pack that mounts under the computer, giving you up to 24 hours of additional battery life.

Navigation and Maps

By most user accounts, Garmin computers have the best maps and navigation for cyclists. Again, Garmin has been offering GPS navigation and trackers for aviation, automotive, boats, motorcycles, hiking, running, and cycling forever. The most common criticism I hear/read about navigation is when a rider makes a wrong turn and goes off course. Apparently, computers are not as smart as we would like, and they do not always reroute us in the most intelligent manner. Most mapping programs, including Google Maps,

Apple Maps, and Waze, seem to be less than impressive when it comes to rerouting. I have turned off the automatic routing function and haven't "turned back" (another pun!) Garmin has made several small but noticeable visual and usability improvements to mapping and navigation with the new 40 models. Additionally, the faster processors in these new models mean loading large courses is significantly faster than in previous models. Zooming in and out and moving within the map are also faster. With older models I sometimes consult my phone to help navigate detours, but with the new models I rely on my Garmin map more.

ClimbPro

Related to navigation and knowing what is ahead, Garmin has climbing features. You can see the detailed profiles of all major climbs along the route. Also, when you start a climb, you can see your progress in real time. Consider visiting a hilly or mountainous region for a ride. Inevitably, the local riders know the course well and may have somewhat of an advantage. While you may have studied the course ahead of time, it's nice to know how much of the climb is left, if there is a false summit ahead, and how best to manage your energy without blowing up.

Live Event Sharing

My wife likes the live sharing feature. When the Garmin is paired with a smartphone, friends and family can see the complete course and where I am on it. Sometimes to conserve my phone's battery on a long ride, I turn off the cell service. At control points I turn on cell service again, and my position on the route is updated. Similarly, Garmin uses this same technology to show the distance ahead or behind other riders that you share your location with.

Music Controls

Listening to music as you ride is a personal choice. If you do listen to music, Garmin makes it a little better.

Pair your Garmin with your smartphone or iPod and see the title/artist of the song currently playing, skip a track, or control the volume. Music Controls is currently only offered on the 1040 and Explorer 2. To be clear, the Garmin doesn't store or play music; instead, it can act as a remote to control the music playing on your smartphone or iPod.

Custom Apps

Various Garmin devices, including the cycling computer, support custom apps, which Garmin offers in their Connect IQ store. Most of the apps are free although some have a small fee. While the out-of-the-box fields and layouts are enough for most people, having access to a library of custom fields/layouts could be useful and fun to play with. For example, one app called "Time in Hand Calculator v2" is specifically related to ACP rides and displays the "time in the bank" or "time in hand." Similar apps include "BRM Time" and "BRM Grupetto." Another app called "Super Randonnee" displays rando-specific fields, including the map on a single screen. AccuWeather has created a weather app for Garmin although Epic Ride Weather has proved to be the most useful and accurate smartphone app for long-distance rides. If you don't know about Epic Ride Weather, check it out. If you use the Garmin Varia radar, there is a cool app called "My Bike Radar Traffic" that counts the vehicles that pass you and displays the overall traffic on a heat map after the ride. Or maybe you're the type of rider that tapes a piece of paper to your stem or top tube with key route information. Instead of using a piece of paper, upload that data or a picture using the "StemSticker" app.

Honorable Mentions

With some riders using the larger Garmin 1000 and 1030, the quarter-turn mount on the back of the unit has broken off over time. This was less of an issue on the smaller 5xx and 8xx units. Regardless, it was enough



John doing some gravel riding.

—PHOTO MIKE TUREK

used, how they work for randonneuring, and what I like and dislike.

Wahoo's website currently shows three GPS bike computers to choose from: Elemnt Roam version 1, Elemnt Roam version 2, and the Elemnt Bolt version 2. (Side note: the Roam version 1 is currently offered at a discount.) Several websites offer details about the differences between Roam versions 1 and 2. The main upgrades seem to be that the version 2 offers more memory space, better colors on the screen, USB C charging, and multi-band GNSS. More details can be found on the DC Rainmaker website Jason mentioned above.

My experience with Wahoo began with the Elemnt somewhere around 2016 or 2017. I was immediately impressed with the easy setup. Just install the app on your phone and sync with the third-party apps you use, such as Strava and Ride with GPS (RWGPS). This was a main selling point for Wahoo early on — the easy user interface.

I use RWGPS for building routes, and the routes easily sync to the unit. The original Elemnt had lackluster maps with no street names or color. However, for navigation purposes this did not pose a problem for me. One feature that I would like to have is the ability to pan the maps to see what is close by. The only way to do this is via the "zoom out" feature, which isn't always effective. My other main complaint about the original Elemnt was that the audio prompt for turns was not very loud. After several years of dependable usage, my original Elemnt was not holding a charge for more than four hours.

The version 2 Bolt and Roam share other functions with the Garmin units, like Strava Live Segments, climbing features, and the ability to customize the display pages. A deeper dive into

of a problem that a few third-party companies started offering replacement quarter-turn mounts that could be attached to the back of the unit. The new 1040s come with an aluminum quarter-turn mount on the back that hopefully will solve the problem.

Pro Tip

I have found that the touch screen is sensitive to sweat (likely due to the electrolytes). Sometimes during a hot, sweaty ride, fields might change when sweat lands on the screen and acts as a virtual finger. There is a screen lock feature that stops the fields from changing. It can be frustrating to glance down at your heart rate and notice or perhaps not notice that your heart rate has been replaced by the temperature or some other piece of data.

WAHOO BY JOHN MANGIN

When I consider my usage of GPS for brevets, my primary requirements are simplicity and dependability. I started riding brevets with only cue sheets and a cycling computer, but like most randonneurs I added a GPS for navigation several years ago. I started with a Garmin 800 and eventually switched to Wahoo products. My intent is not to compare/contrast with Garmin; my experience with Garmin units is far too dated. Rather, I offer a few points about the Wahoo units I have

one of the on-line reviews will lay this out in detail. However, as a randonneur, I just would not use many of the “bells and whistles” that Garmin offers and Wahoo doesn’t. Therefore, I do not take these features into account in my assessment of these GPS devices.

Although I was able to find a tutorial to replace the battery on my aging Elemnt, I decided that a new unit was the prudent choice and acquired an Elemnt Bolt version 2. Screen clarity improvements were immediately obvious. My experience with the Bolt V2 has been positive; routes load easily, color on the maps is a nice upgrade, and it charges quickly via a USB-C port. However, because my main reason for using a GPS is for navigation, I found the smaller screen less than desirable. The Bolt version 2 has a 2.2” display size, so its best application may be for racing and hard-core training. I subsequently purchased the Roam version 1. The Roam V1 has a screen

size of 2.7”. This may not seem like much of a difference, but I found it significant. After over a year of usage, I have been pleased with the performance of this unit.

Although the Bolt still sees usage, (as does my original Elemnt for muddy off-road rides), I use the Roam V1 most often. I appreciate the ability to quickly sync my routes. I have not had any issues with turn prompts on routes, and it has been dependable on all my rides. The volume for a turn alert is louder than the original Elemnt.

At about 10 hours, my battery life during navigation is what would now be considered on the low side when compared to other units. It charges easily via a dynamo charger or an external battery pack. Ride results sync easily with the phone app and then are shared with RWGPS or Strava. I have used the arm-band heart rate monitor, and it has worked well for me. The results seem dependable, and I do not

notice the sensor on my arm. Battery life for the heart rate monitor is about 30 hours, which is convenient for me.

Will I upgrade to the newer Roam V2? Possibly, but for now I am quite pleased with the Roam V1, so there may be a Roam V2 available for someone else!

So, which GPS to purchase? There is also the Hammerhead Karoo to consider. Thankfully, ample information is available to help with this decision making. I would consider things like screen size, battery life, and navigation dependability, which are the features I value most as a randonneur. However, all the GPS manufacturers have many additional features related to training, safety, and staying connected to others. Although I highly recommend carrying cue sheets for almost all brevets, I do not see myself ever going back to not using a GPS. For me, a GPS helps alleviate the essential task of navigation! 🚲



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Embrace Equity

BY DAWN PIECH, KERIN HUBER AND LYDIA TROTT

International Women's Day (IWD): March 8, 2023, was the 112th anniversary of International Women's Day (IWD). IWD is a global day that celebrates the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality. IWD belongs to all groups collectively everywhere, and is not country, group or organization specific. Embrace Equity was the official theme of 2023.

The Forth Annual International Women's Day (IWD) Together We Ride: A Bike Ride for Equality, Inclusion and Empowerment took place from March 8 through March 12, 2023. Everyone was welcome. Everyone always has a seat at our table of positivity and sunshine in our yearly global movement to celebrate International Women's Day.

The consistent concepts of Together We Ride include:

- Ride Wherever You Are!
- Ride Indoors or Outdoors!
- Ride Any Bike!
- Ride Your Pace!
- Ride at Your Place!
- Ride alone or with friends and family!

Equity and inclusion were demonstrated by many of the participants, both within and outside of Randonneurs USA (RUSA). This annual bike pilgrimage continues to grow exponentially, both in the U.S. and globally. Together We Ride welcomes everyone to be part of this bike ride for equity, inclusion, and positive social change.

RUSA held 26 calendared events March 8 through March 12. Although

not all RUSA regions and members were part of this global empowerment bike ride, we hope that those who rode their bike during this time frame did so in honor of someone who inspired them and/or took a moment to keep the courageous women and girls of Iran in their heart as they rode their bicycle. Here are recaps from Kerin Huber, the RBA of Pacific Coast Highway Randonneurs and Lydia Trott, of Indiana Randonneurs.



Kerin Huber writes:

Very excited to participate in the Together We Ride celebration, PCH Randonneurs (the Los Angeles region) held a populaire on March 11. To entice more women to try randonneuring, the club offered to rebate the cost of one year's RUSA membership to any new women who joined and registered for the populaire. Four new-to-RUSA women registered, although two ended up having to miss the ride because of grandmother duty.

Drizzly weather did not dampen the spirits of the 13 riders who attended the ride. It was a flat course, mainly on bike paths, so groups were able to stay together with plenty of chatting and smiles. All riders received a spiffy Together We Ride patch. Six of the thirteen riders were women, which is better than our usual ratio. PCH Randonneurs hopes to build on the success of this ride and have even more participation in 2024.

Lydia Trott shares the following:

In the fourth year of the event, we were excited to be able to raise enough funds to give back to two charitable organizations. We had a silent auction via Better World and also raised funds from the sale of patches, stickers, jerseys and t-shirts. We raised enough funds to give back to two organizations who are aligned with Inspyrd Movement's mission to

Jay Ready participated in a populaire from Lisle to Sugar Grove, IL, in honor of his late mother.

—PHOTO JAY READY



inspire individuals to elevate diversity, equity and inclusion through the act of movement. We raised \$330 to build one Buffalo Bike via World Bicycle Relief and also supported the Siihasin Bike Program, located in Indian Wells, Arizona, in the southwestern region of the Navajo Nation.

Together We Ride also asked everyone to keep the courageous women and girls of Iran in their heart

as they rode this year. Women, Life, Freedom is global action in solidarity with Iranian women and girls who are courageously demonstrating peacefully for their fundamental human rights. The Northeastern Florida Randonneurs, led by Hamid Akabarian, held the Golden Falcon 1200k Grand Randonnee March 16-19, 2023, and displayed the theme of Together We Ride and Women, Life, Freedom on their participant t-shirts. 🚲

Dawn Piech (far right) on her UNITY ride on the National Votes for Women Trail in Lombard, Illinois (www.nvwt.org).

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH



Some of the Indiana randonneurs embracing equity.

—PHOTO LYDIA TROTT

Join us in 2024 for Year Five!!! As each region and RBA considers their respective calendars for 2024, the dates for the Fifth Annual Together We Ride event will be Friday, March 8 through Monday, March 11. We hope you will consider joining us, either via a brevet, populaire, permanent, or maybe a ride in your Rouleur Series or by doing a solo ride with your family and friends.

Additionally, we welcome collaborations, partnerships, and/or organizations to join us who align with our values of equity, inclusion and positive social change. Feel free to contact me at iwdbike@gmail.com and check out our website at www.inspyrdmovement.org.

Pedal Forward. Ride Inspyrd.

Dawn Piech, RUSA #10146

Founder, Together We Ride & Inspyrd Movement

www.inspyrdmovement.org/together-we-ride

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Summertime and the Ridin's Easy

...Or something like that. I was on a ride yesterday and jamming to some tunes when a Sublime cover of an old Janis Joplin and Ella Fitzgerald song came on with the words “summertime and the livin’s easy.” Well, sometimes it’s summertime but the riding isn’t always easy. And while the riding might be hard, it’s not bad to remember the silver linings of summer riding.

Since my last #ThatsRando column was wintertime focused, I figured it would be appropriate now to devote some time to thinking about why I love summer riding so much, while also recapping the most recent rando adventures.

I have always loved June/summer solstice season and historical data shows that for many years it is the main quarter in which I spend a big chunk of time in the saddle. First, we have the most daylight of the year, so if you are doing any night riding, your time in the dark will be shortened by hours depending on where you are. Second, you can shed many layers (though we all know that a smart rando will come prepared for all weather patterns, and I am not always smart and often employ what I call “Classic Heller Move #1,” dress for the weather you *want*, not the weather you’re gonna get). And third, riding in summertime is spectacular just because everything is more beautiful! There are flowers in bloom, trees on the east coast are so lush, oftentimes you feel like you are riding through a rainforest, and there are still some baby animals to see and

coo over. Hands down, it is pure delight to come out of the winter months into the warm blanket of summer solstice season. There are tradeoffs of course (mostly heat), but I am willing to accept this sacrifice year after year.

My summer solstice season is generally going to be the opposite of winter riding. In the winter I intentionally seek out the flattest and easiest routes. For whatever reason I seem to lose any ability to put out power when it dips below 50 degrees. I don’t need to be struggling up climbs when my power is so low, only to get to the top of a climb and then experience the utter horror of *having to go down* — when it is cold as hell frozen over. So let’s just avoid that scenario completely. My overall strategy is pretty simple: easy, gentle riding in winter and try to finish before the sun goes down (not always successful in this regard), followed by challenging and vertical and all day rides when it warms up. With that in

mind, somehow I ended up with two climbby 600ks and one climbby 400k in the span of three weeks in June, for a total of over 90,000 feet of climbing over the three rides.

Big Savage SR600k

Ten days before we were slated to do this ride, I called a hotel in the small West Virginia town of Lost River to book a room for the first overnight. Apparently, I should have done this well in advance because accommodations are sparse and they had no vacancies, as Lost River is a fun weekend getaway for local Washingtonians. I texted my



John D’Elia is all smiles on the Super 600.

—PHOTOS MISA HELLER

The whole train: Luke Heller, Jose Blanco, Charlie Martin, Adam Garry, Misha Heller, Dan Colvin, and Doug McLerren.

fellow Savage ride buddies, Brad Tanner and John D'Elia, and told them I was out because I couldn't get a room. They responded that they weren't letting me off the hook that easily and they would bunk up and give me one of their rooms. I had no escape route.

With the generous 60-hour time limit for an SR600, we planned to take the whole time and maximize sleep. Brad and John did all the legwork and planning. I was just along for the ride and fun. Wildfires in Canada taunted us leading up to the ride, but we were lucky and had clear air for most of our time on course. I hadn't been out to this area of western Maryland/West Virginia in over 10 years but knew that several gnarly and steep climbs awaited my buddies and me. More often than not we were recording climbs of over 1,000 feet in two miles and it was relentless and punishing. And more often than not, the descents were more



punishing than the climbs. Technical hairpin turns awaited us and no doubt did some damage to our brake pads. The ride was broken down into three segments of roughly 150, 130, and 90 miles and very manageable. This allowed sleep and adequate refueling throughout the long weekend. Services were often abundant, something I have heard can be a rarity on SR600s which tend to be very remote. I will also mention that I found plentiful vegan options, for folks who are worried about finding plant-based foods on extended jaunts like this.

I tip my hat to route designer Bill Beck for developing a beautiful and challenging ride. Brad, John, and I were always captivated by the scenery and mountain views, and had a good time helping each other out as we tackled this beast of a ride. My bike computer may have slightly inflated my total elevation with over 44,000 feet, but I would feel comfortable saying over 40,000 is very accurate. I highly recommend this route to others seeking something epic with the caveat that for maximum enjoyment, you absolutely must bring along fun ride buddies and also take your time to get this monster done!

DC Randonneurs Firefly 400k

If you know me or have followed any of my "shoulder saga," you might remember that I broke my shoulder at the end of last year and had to have surgery to repair it. I'm sorry for bringing it up, yet again, but on this ride I learned another important

human lesson as a result of that surgery.

The Firefly is a nighttime 400k that D.C. Randonneurs often runs in a PBP year as preparation for *The Big Dance in France*. It's usually run on a Saturday which gives riders a solid day to rest and recuperate before clipping in. I was pre-riding and we had settled on Friday as our date. I planned to telework, scoot out of work a little early, and take a little power nap before heading out to the Warrenton start. Of course, work got in the way of things and I had to go into the office that day for some meetings, so my plans of a relatively easy and restful day were totally blown up. Instead, I biked in, rushed around to meetings, and then got home with little time to feed myself and head out for the ride.

I must confess that I was very apprehensive and nervous — feelings that I will also admit I don't usually experience before a ride start. After chatting with my boyfriend Eli (a physical therapist) about it, he very sensibly explained to me that I was reliving the trauma of my crash because the circumstances (leaving work late, missing out on some sleep, feeling the stress of work and life in general) were so similar to those circumstances leading up to my crash last October. I was scared to start because the last time I left work stressed and headed out for a ride, I crashed traumatically, ended my season prematurely, and needed surgery. Eli said that my brain was putting up defenses, and then reassured me that while the circumstances felt similar,



On Dale Houck's 35th birthday ride – an actual party!

I would be fine and not to worry. He also said “Good job, brain” for doing the work of protecting me. I share this because it was kind of a light bulb moment and helped me to better understand some of the mental aspects of riding comebacks after crashing and injury. It was helpful for me to realize that what I was going through in my head is perfectly normal and a part of that process.

And Eli was right. We completed the ride successfully, and not only that, we had a party while getting it done. And no, that's not just a reference to the “Party Train.” We had an actual party! Jose Blanco carried an entire birthday cake in his handlebar bag (high five for old school randos!) which we devoured in celebration of Dale Houck's birthday. We pushed through all night with thoughts of delicious cake coupled with Sheetz lattes at 7a.m. It was the most luxurious rando breakfast any of us had ever experienced!! Twenty-one hours and 17,000 feet of climbing later, another once-every-



four-years 400k was checked off the list and in the bag. The aptly-named “Firefly” delivered the usual challenges: climbey roads, “the sleepies,” and then an oppressively hot and under-serviced final 100k. With the help of my ride buddies, we happily got it done. And when we finished, we celebrated even more, as Dale's girlfriend brought us Thai food and birthday treats galore.

Asheville International Randonneurs “You Asked For It” 8k600k

This was the final ride I needed for my ACP Randonneur 10,000 award. When the rules changed last year, I remembered that my brother's Asheville 600k is about 300 feet short of the required 8,000 meters. (Sidenote: apologies for repeatedly speaking in both imperial and metric, and for any confusion or consternation that causes!)

Mish on the cargo train to Bonk Town.

I asked Luke to modify the route so that we could take on the new challenge of completing 8,000 meters of climbing across 600 kilometers in under 40 hours. Again, my buddies don't fail me, and Luke dutifully stepped up to the challenge. You might think, as I did, that adding those extra 300 feet would be easy, but Luke ran into lots of issues as ACP requires route verification through OpenRunner, which has a less inflated elevation calculation than Ride-WithGPS. Thanks again to Bill Beck for helping get this route to standards.

I rallied randos near and far to join this party train. Unfortunately a few friends had to bail last minute for various reasons. Texan Dan Colvin spends some summer-time in southwest Virginia and couldn't turn down a chance to board the party train. Californian Charlie Martin flew in (from back-to-back Colorado rides), Doug McLerran joined us from Illinois, and my tried and true buddy Jose Blanco made the journey down from



D.C. Luke Heller and Adam Garry were our local riders with the most recent knowledge and awareness of western Carolina's most punishing mountains.

These randos weren't used to the luxurious amount of fueling that happens on an AIR ride. We stopped for breakfast at a Bojangles (vegans opted for avocado toast at Dunkin'). Riders devoured the *Speedy Gonzales* at a Mexican place near Roan Mountain (critical nutritional value for the climb up to 5512 feet that awaited). And, at a secret control in Celso, they enjoyed delicious sandwiches (impossible burgers for the vegans) provided by the RBA's wife, Asia Heller, and their children. I suppose some of this eating cut into sleep time, but we were well prepared for all the climbing we were asking our legs to do. We got in late on Saturday but had checked off close to 400k by then, and the RBA promised us a flat and easy Day 2.

Never trust an Asheville RBA when he/she says something is flat! With

three hours of sleep under our belts, we set out for Day 2, which was a western jaunt toward Cullowhee. I logged about 4,700 feet of climbing in just the first 27 miles! I was no longer on the party train, but rather the cargo train to Bonk Town. I had eaten two bagels but was probably still inadequately fueled while on the bike (this is something I am still struggling with because of shoulder strength issues and bike handling/multitasking challenges).

We rolled into a stop and I was the carnage of the ride. Any dead body on the ground would have been mine. I tried to refuel and failed. Promised a mostly downhill stretch to the next control, which was also the turnaround point, I somehow made it there, but again, I failed to refuel. It quickly became clear that my stomach was not going to allow solid food, and I wasn't sure how the rest of the day would go.

Our group broke up into pairs as we left the control. This made sense given my circumstances, and a primary

goal of getting Adam finished and PBP qualified (secondary goals were 8k600k and R10,000). Dan and Jose leapfrogged while Charlie stuck with me and provided entertainment in the form of launching my *Grand Brevet Playlist* through the Bluetooth speaker that he carried. This is also known as Classic Heller Move #2: a dance party on the bike. We danced and climbed our way back to Waynesville and somehow I came back to life and **got this bad boy done**. Luke asked me if it was the nausea medicine that brought me back to life, but as I write this I am convinced that it was Classic Heller Move #2.

Cheers to summertime riding and doing epic things. Cheers to seeing other randos in Paris (or, by the time you read this, I hope I got to see and meet you in Paris), and cheers to randonneuring and an amazing summer filled with adventure, challenges, growth, and fun! 🚴

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Fabulous Fall Foliage Rides

BY BRAD TANNER AND MARK LOWE

With the days cooling down and the leaves around the country turning color, we asked a couple of our members to put together some easier rides that highlight the best of the colors in their respective necks of the woods.

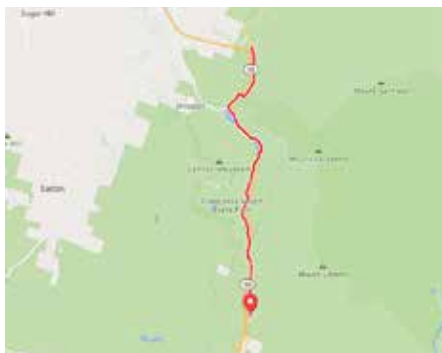
Brad Tanner weighed in with four fabulous jaunts through several states in the New England area, probably the best place in the country to see Mother Nature at her fall finest. In the Rocky Mountains, Mark Lowe has curated some gravel routes that show off both the beauty of the aspens and the mountains, where gold is the glory of autumn. We hope you find these inspirational, and if you can't make it to either of these regions, that you get out and find some pretty leafy paths of your own.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Franconia Notch Bike Path

ridewithgps.com/routes/43312467

The Franconia Notch Bike Path was constructed as part of the Franconia Notch Parkway, but is completely



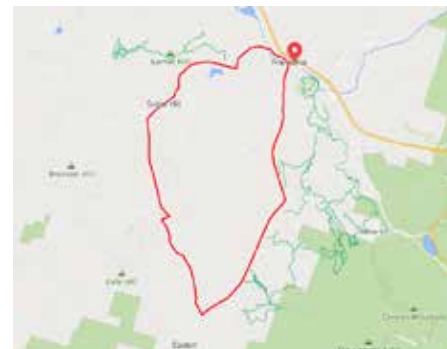
separated from the parkway. The bike path traverses the length of Franconia Notch and provides access to all the park facilities and natural features. It's fully paved and though it is relatively short, it is rather hilly in places. Bring your water bottles, a snack, and your camera, since you will want to take a break and take in the stunning scenery.

Franconia Notch State Park is located in the heart of the White Mountain National Forest. The Notch is a spectacular mountain pass traversed by a unique parkway which extends from the Flume Gorge at the south to Echo Lake at the north. Franconia Notch was the home of the famous Old Man of the Mountain, the same "Great Stone Face" immortalized by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Daniel Webster. The rock formation collapsed in 2003, but its profile remains a symbol of the state of New Hampshire. For eight miles, Interstate 93 winds between the high peaks of the Kinsman and Franconia Mountain ranges. The Park is also home to Cannon Mountain ski area, which is operated by the State of New Hampshire. To get an even better view of the foliage you may want to ride to the summit on Cannon Mountain's aerial tramway. Foliage in this region peaks earlier in the White Mountains

than in areas to the south, so be sure to check the internet to know the best time to go. The bike path is open to cyclists from about early May after the snow melts until mid-November. It's a pleasure to ride throughout that entire period.

White Mountain (Franconia Start)

ridewithgps.com/routes/43312369



Franconia, New Hampshire, is a small town just north of Franconia Notch in the heart of the White Mountain National Forest. Anyone who has ever traveled through "the Notch" will tell you that things are different on the other side. For one, the scenery is magnificent. There are fewer people and those you encounter seem to be going at a more relaxed pace. There is also a lot less traffic, especially if you pick the right roads. It's worth the trip just to experience the gentle pace but it's something very special during peak foliage.

Park in the public parking area adjacent to the Franconia Town Hall. If you need to air up your tires or adjust your saddle height, there's a self-service

—PHOTO BRAD TANNER

bike maintenance kiosk in the parking lot. The route is quiet and very scenic any time of the year but the autumn air and foliage offer the best cycling experience. The route starts out mostly flat as you ride toward Easton on NH Route 116S. The views are great in all directions. In about six miles you'll turn onto a town road and start a gradual climb, eventually coming to Sugar Hill. Between Sugar Hill and the end of the ride you'll be treated to some of the best views anywhere in the world, with the Franconia range and the Northern Presidentials in plain view, including Mount Washington, home to the world's worst weather! This route is relatively short and can be ridden between April and November, but from mid to late September during the height of foliage in the White Mountains, it's a real treat!

VERMONT

Windsor County Route

ridewithgps.com/routes/43365171

Located in the Upper Valley region of New Hampshire and Vermont lies Windsor County, Vermont. You can



access this area easily from all directions via Interstate-89 and Interstate-91. The eastern boundary of the county is the Connecticut River, which also forms the boundary between New Hampshire and Vermont. The Vermont side of the valley has a more pastoral feel as opposed to the New Hampshire side which is more developed and has fewer working farms. Most of the region's farms were used to raise Merino sheep in the early to mid-nineteenth century so you'll see lots of open fields bound by stone walls.

The route begins and ends at King Arthur Flour in Norwich, and follows a counterclockwise loop through the region. The roads are mostly paved but this area has some of the nicest gravel roads anywhere in the world! Bring your gravel bike, especially if you want to explore the area further. The route passes through a variety of tiny villages like Sharon and Pomfret but also some of the more popular towns like

Woodstock, a famous tourist destination. The unique combination of hilly terrain and open fields and hardwood forests makes this route stand out as one of the best for viewing fall foliage.

MASSACHUSETTS

Franklin County Route

ridewithgps.com/routes/43365739

As the Connecticut River flows south and eventually out of Vermont and New Hampshire, it enters Massachusetts into what is colloquially



known as the Pioneer Valley. When most people think of the hills in Western Massachusetts they think of the Berkshires, which are a bit further to the west. Don't be fooled, however, because the hills in Franklin County are quite numerous and formidable indeed. In this area you can easily pass between Massachusetts and Vermont without a hint you've crossed state lines. The roads are a mix of pavement, gravel and the more ancient, non-maintained variety. Because of the amazingly fertile soils in the valley, there is an immense Native American history here, where English colonists first settled in Deerfield, Massachusetts in 1673.

The route starts in Historic Deerfield and follows a generally clockwise loop through the neighboring towns, eventually returning to Deerfield. Most people in the Northeast who ride gravel bikes know this area because of the famous D2R2, the immensely challenging gravel road, fund-raising event that has been successful at conserving Franklin County's farmland for more than two decades.

Our route is a bit more relaxed

since it's mostly paved but you'll be treated to excellent views throughout. Be sure to stop in Shelburne Falls to enjoy an ice cream cone. You have a few more hills but it's mostly downhill back to Deerfield.

COLORADO

Silver Reservoir/Ouray CR 5 (Ridgway)
ridewithgps.com/routes/43318113



Loaded with jaw-dropping rock formations and picturesque aspen groves, this route includes two out-and-back segments, mostly gravel, and starts from Ridgway, which is nestled on the northern flank of the rugged San Juan Mountains.

The first out-and-back includes a moderately steep climb over Owl

Creek Pass before descending to Silver Jack Reservoir. This route passes the stunning Courthouse Mountain in the Cimarron Mountains, a very remote but spectacular corner of the San Juans. This route can be extended by continuing north on CR 858 (Cimarron Rd), ultimately connecting to US-50. CR 861 also offers a different vantage point of the Cimarron Mountains.

The second out-and-back from Ridgway includes Ouray CR 5, which offers stunning views of the Mount Sneffels Range, cloaked in large aspen groves. CR 5 can be ridden for several more miles. The road condition eventually deteriorates and is strewn with large ruts and rocks, but it is worth the adventure! CR 7 and CR 9, located off of the Dallas Divide, are also worth considering and offer different vantage points of Mount Sneffels.

Outside of Ridgway, there are no services on either route, but there are plenty of locations where it's possible to filter water, so carrying a portable water filter is a must! Recommended minimum tire size: 40 mm.

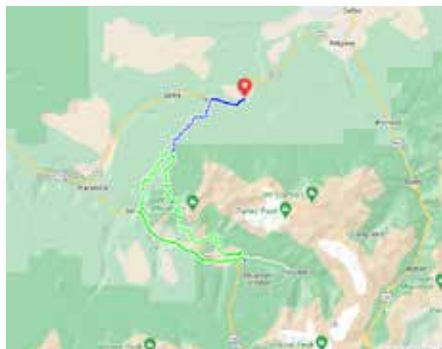
—PHOTO MARK LOWE



—PHOTO MARK LOWE

Last Dollar Road Loop (Ridgway)

ridewithgps.com/routes/43333768



The Last Dollar Road is one of Colorado's most iconic mountain roads. Every autumn, photographers from around the world flock to the Last Dollar Road to capture views of some of Telluride's most rugged and spectacular autumn scenery. There is not a better way to experience this road than on a gravel or mountain bike! This route requires a sense of adventure as there could be creek crossings and muddy sections well into August. Riders can ride into Telluride to grab lunch before returning to the postcard-worthy Dallas Divide.

The starting point for this route is the parking area at the San Juan Mountains scenic view near the high point of CO 62. However, riders can start this ride from Ridgway and ride the paved but incredibly scenic CO 62 over the Dallas Divide to the Last Dollar Road. Minimum recommended tire size: 40 mm.

There are many other gravel routes in the Telluride area worth considering. Here are a few:

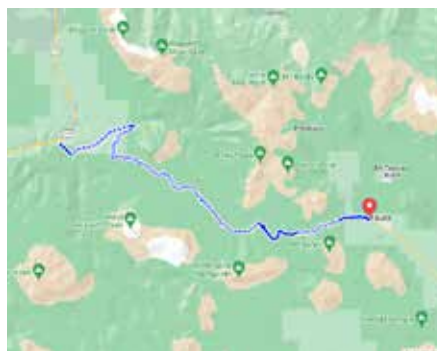
- 63L and D65 to Ophir
- 63L to Sunshine Mesa Rd
- Alta Lakes Rd to Alta Ghost Town
- 57P Rd to Wood Lakes Campground



Kebler Pass (Crested Butte)

ridewithgps.com/routes/43334230

Kebler Pass is one of Colorado's most scenic passes! Kebler is equally beautiful in the summer, with its famed wildflowers, as it is in fall with the foliage. This gravel road route (CR



12) is ridden as a 31-mile out-and-back from Crested Butte to Kebler Corner (small store, variable hours) at the western terminus of CR 12. The route passes to the south of the stunning Marcellina Mountain, which is cloaked in one of the largest aspen groves on the planet. Recommended minimum tire size: 32 mm.

Other routes in the area to consider:

- Ohio Pass Loop: ridewithgps.com/routes/37025756
- Crested Butte – Schofield Pass – Washington Gulch Loop: ridewithgps.com/routes/4333429. 🚲

My First Super Randonneur Series

BY SALLY ROZELLE, #9965

This season, at the age of 14, I completed a full ACP brevet series on my single bike. This is my story about how I got here, why I did this, how it went, and what I learned.

My Path to Randonneuring

I have been cycling my whole life, starting on a balance bike at age two. As my bike handling skills grew, Dad (Paul Rozelle, the RBA for Central Florida) would take my brother Joe and me, and sometimes my mom, too, out on rides. We started off by going around the neighborhood and gradually explored longer distances as we got stronger and more capable. There was a time when my brother and I had a longest-ride-ever competition, and by the age of seven, I had ridden 75 miles, which was, if put into perspective, pretty far for a little kid!

I knew about randonneuring and brevets from helping my dad with the RBA responsibilities: organizing brevet cards, doing artwork and addressing postcards for the postcard controls, and even volunteering on rides. If you did the Sunshine 1200k in 2015 or 2019, Joe and I checked in riders until our 7:30 pm bedtime. Riding-wise, I did a couple of 100ks and centuries with Dad on the tandem, but mostly we rode to playgrounds, restaurants, and I always looked forward to coffeeneuring each fall.

As I got older, bigger, and stronger, I thought about doing a 200k; it's not that much farther than a century. So, when I was nine, Dad and I did one (the

RUSA 20th anniversary brevet) on a tandem. Even though we live in Florida and it was August, it was insanely cold, and we got soaked.

Despite how much the weather sucked on that ride, two years later I did my next 200k on my single bike, the Up-All-Night 200k in San Antonio, FL. It was fun riding through the night. I found I liked the 200k distance, but after I finished it (thankfully it was warm, and we didn't get soaked!) I thought about trying a 300k. So, in 2022, when I was 13, I rode two 300ks as well as some other brevets.

Mostly, though, I was riding to school and for fun around town. But I still like long rides, and so last year I also rode the Sebring 12-hour and finished with 195 miles. That was really fun; I love riding fast! And after I did it, I thought that maybe someday I could ride even farther.

My Not Entirely Intentional SR Series

When 2023 started, I never thought I'd do an SR series. Dad didn't either. We never even talked about it. I began the year intending to try the 300k/200k that Dad organized on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. We'd just see how it went. If the weather was okay and I felt good, maybe I could do both rides. My one and only goal was to ride both and have fun. Mostly it was to have fun. I had done a back-to-back 100k/300k the previous year, and I wanted to try the 300k/200k and see if I could do it. It wasn't that much farther, and I was a year older and had more riding experience.

We arrived in Clermont the night before and headed out for dinner with some other riders. Dad spent a lot of time explaining how our goal was to finish - to ride nice and easy with a pace I could ride all day. And we talked weather because it was going to be cold. Or at least, cold for us Floridians. I had packed some gear for the cold, so I thought I was prepared, but at the start of the 300k, I wished I was back in the hotel room under a blanket.

However, once Dad had given all his pre-ride announcements, we were off! The first hour or so went by pretty fast because it was still dark outside. We rode through the sunrise, which was beautiful, and many hours later, the sunset, which was also beautiful. I was able to manage my blood sugar (I have Type 1 diabetes) really well throughout this ride, and I have the immense amount of protein and fat I took in to thank for that: Muscle Milk and peanut butter at the controls were very helpful, and really kind of gross to think about

At the 400k finish!
—PHOTO SALLY ROZELLE





Real meal – well-earned lunch at Poncho’s Villa on the second half of the 600k.

—PHOTO PAUL ROZELLE

now that I’m not on a ride. For carbs, I eat Honey Stinger Waffles and potato chips and drink Gatorade mixed half-strength until I can’t stand it anymore, and then I just drink water. Not very exciting, but it gets the job done.

We got to our first control around 0800 and planned to stop sometime before the next one at mile 95, which was a pretty decent jump from the first stop at 33 miles. It got warmer throughout the day, but by late afternoon it began to cool off again. And we had 95 miles of headwind to deal with. Ugh.

The end of this ride seemed to drag on because it was dark, and it got hard to read the cue sheet (yes, Dad still uses

those paper cue sheets for the rides). Dad put me on cue sheet reading detail, and I used my headlight to do so.

We rode most of the way back with Josh Haley (Ohio’s new RBA!), who helped to block the wind, and rolled into the finish in 14:24.

Inside – where it was warm! – those who had already arrived were sitting around in the lobby, eating chili and rice. After showering (which felt so awesome!), eating (a lot!), and being social, I fell asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow so I could rest up before the 200K in the morning.

The ride had gone well, I felt pretty good, and we got in early enough that

I decided to give it a try even though I knew I would be riding really slowly.

The ride start for the 200k was at 0700, which was an hour later than the 300k, giving us more time to sleep. Thanks, Dad! It was still pretty cold outside (there was frost on the ground), and the first couple miles felt pretty bad because my legs were sore from the day before. However, it got better after a while. Our pace was slow, but that was okay, because our only goal was to finish and say that the ride was fun.

We kept it easy all day and rode with a couple other riders, which was nice. We rode with Josh again and kept leap-frogging with Dave Thompson. I like riding with other people – it makes the time go by faster.

This route was hillier, and we went through Howey-in-the-Hills and climbed Sugarloaf (which is what passes for a mountain in Florida), which was not exactly pleasant for my already sore legs. As we rode, it was nice being able to tell myself that this ride was less than what I did yesterday. Even though it was a long 200k, it felt nice and seemed like



Paris is in the rearview and it’s time to look towards future goals. Whatever your plans, if you’re going far on a bike you’re likely to encounter fueling challenges. Ever had stomach issues on a long ride, or seen a bonk coming and not been able to avoid it?

Geluminati Endurance Drink Mix is a new fueling solution made by fellow Rando Andrew Adere (RUSA #13914). Unflavored and so light that it mixes clear, our drink mix packs 60 grams of carbs (240 calories) and 420mg of sodium into each bottle. We use **Cluster Dextrin™** – a unique complex carb – as our number one ingredient, which gives the mix its lightness and keeps it hypotonic so you’ll stay hydrated for longer on less plain water.

Visit www.geluminati.com to order. Use discount code **RAND05** for \$5 off your order!

GELUMINATI
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Unflavored Hypotonic Cluster Dextrin™ Formula
240 cal **60g carbs** **420g sodium**
per serving
fuel for flight

Sally pulling the paceline.

—PHOTO JOHN ENDE

it would be easier to do the shorter ride on the second day.

We finished in 11:25 at the same hotel as before, though this time it was earlier (which is good; it should've been considering that it was 100k less than before!) Some people who DNF'd or decided not to start, as well as the riders who finished before Dad and me, were in the lobby eating and being social. We joined them, sharing stories from the rides, and then Dad and I headed back home.

Lucky me, I got to sleep the whole way back! And we crushed our goal! We finished both rides, and it was fun despite the wind, cold, hills, and sore legs.

Soon after the 300/200, I was thinking about doing the 400k in March. It would be my longest ride ever. I kept riding every day like always and was hoping that the weather would be good; if it wasn't (too windy; rain all day), I decided (and Dad agreed) that I wouldn't do it. As the ride approached, the weather was looking great, and I was both excited and hoped that it wouldn't suck too much. I knew I would be sore and that it could be a very long day.

There were fewer riders, but plenty of people who'd done the 300k and 200k were back again for the 400k, which was nice. This ride started in Dunnellon, and Dad and I went out to eat dinner the night before again. This is a fun tradition, eating with some of the riders before going to bed early. Following dinner we set up bikes and whatnot in the motel so that we had less to do in the morning. After getting up and eating breakfast, we finished gathering all our stuff and headed out to the truck for pre-ride announcements, and then we were off!

For the first 30 miles or so to the first control, we rode really fast in a big group where the riders at the front were pulling at over 20mph. Some of them



could ride like that all day, but I knew I could not. Therefore, after the first control we let them go, and Dad and I hung back and kept it more mellow. We ended up riding by ourselves for most of the rest of the day, although we'd run into other riders at the controls, which was always fun.

Even with the mellow pace, we had a really strong ride, and once again, my blood sugar numbers were pretty well controlled with the loads of protein I had on board. After lunch, on Dad's advice, I had some caffeine, and that gave me a much-needed kick for the rest of the ride. I never drink caffeinated beverages; caffeine really works!

We got back just before midnight and had some food before showering and heading to sleep. I was so proud of myself for having completed my first 400k in 18:13.

It was after finishing the 400k so strong that I really began thinking about doing the 600k – whether I could do it (Dad told me that there was “no doubt” that I could) and more importantly, whether I wanted to do it. I had a few weeks to think about it. Like with the 400, I was aware that the 600k would be “weather permitting” for me. I liked that the route was set up as a 400k loop (and that it was the same one I had done previously, so I knew it) and then a 200k out-and-back. I also wanted to do a full ACP series, and because it was a PBP year, too, it would be even more special.

While we waited to find out

whether the weather would cooperate, I kept riding, and we made our ride plan. We would ride 400k on Saturday, try to get in early enough to get a good(ish) night's sleep at the overnight control, and then ride the remaining 200k on Sunday really easy, just trying to finish. Dad kept reminding me that my 400k time was “ripping” and “really fast” and “amazing” and all sorts of stuff like that and that we might be a lot longer this time, so I should “manage my expectations accordingly.” My goal was the same: to have fun and finish.

The weather cooperated once again, and our ride started similarly to the other ones, with dinner the night before and setting up all our stuff for the next morning. The 400k section felt long and was really, really hot, but I had more confidence in myself because I had gone 400k before. We rode with others for most of the day, which was really fun: Jim Solanick (who had done PBP many times), “Cap'n” John Ende and John Morris (who traveled from North Carolina), and Tom Rozwadowski and Alex Muknicka (from Florida).

When we made it back to the motel around midnight – I was really happy to be done riding for the day! – we ate, showered, and slept during our luxurious seven hours at the overnight control. Having so much time to rest was awesome!!

I woke up feeling refreshed, and in new cycling clothes we hopped on the bikes and headed out to

complete the last 200k of the 600k. Knowing that the end of the ride was so close and we were way over halfway, I felt fully committed and ready to knock out the rest of the ride.

The route for that part of the 600k was pretty boring: 80 or so miles of trail with some annoying hills in San Antonio (the Florida town, not Texas). We headed out with Jim and had some pleasant conversation on the trail all the way out to San An. At the turnaround, Dad and I filled our hungry stomachs at Pancho's Villa, where we ate so much food, and enjoyed our time out of the sun and off the saddle.

Feeling more energized than before, we headed back out. The whole way back I was feeling ready to get off the bike and be done with the ride, but I was super stoked that I would finish a whole 600k! We got back shortly before sunset, feeling proud and ready for a nap. We completed the 600k in 37:31.

We had dinner with Cap'n John and John and then headed back home.

On the drive back, Dad played AC/DC, Metallica, and Iron Maiden, which weren't exactly sleep inducing (Dad note: That was the point), but after such a long ride, I fell asleep pretty easily anyway. At some point Dad told me that I was probably the only person ever to finish a 600k and then go to ninth grade the next morning.

Epilogue

About a week after completing the series, I got a small package in the mail from Bill Bryant, on behalf of RUSA, with a very nice, handwritten letter congratulating me on my rides and enclosing an old SR medal from the 1983 ACP series, which is the first series Bill rode. Reading Bill's note, it really began to sink in for me about what an accomplishment completing a series at my age was, and I felt like I was many steps closer to a handful of my cycling goals, one of which is to ride Paris-Brest-Paris in Charly Miller time when I'm old enough to do so, in 2027 when I

will be 18. (Dad note: Her idea entirely – not mine. She even spelled his name correctly in the draft of this I saw.)

Since I can't ride the regular PBP this year, I'll be riding PBP pour les jeunes, which is an audax-style ride for juniors ages 14-17 that, like PBP-Randonneur, is held only every four years, so it will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me. I'm really excited to do this because it's been a goal of mine for pretty much as long as I can remember.

I'm looking forward to doing more long-distance rides in the future and also some USAC races to switch it up a bit and see if I like bike racing.

I learned a lot while doing this series and enjoyed meeting and riding with a lot of new people, too. Randonneuring is more about the experiences rather than the distance, which is one of the things I really like about it. I love meeting so many new people and getting to see so much of, in my case, Central Florida when I ride, and I hope to continue for a long time. 🚲



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RUSA Awards

For a list of requirements for each award, please see the RUSA website. Click on **Members** and then **Awards** on the drop down tab, where each award and the qualifying rides for it are listed.

Galaxy Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Drew Carlson	Sacramento, CA	4/29/23
Karel Stroethoff	Missoula, MT	7/26/23
Mark Thomas [2]	Kirkland, WA	6/19/23

R-12 Award Recipients

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Charles Christopher Argo [2]	Lake View, AL	6/6/23
Dave Brillhart	Orlando, FL	7/28/23
Dan Driscoll [19]	Arlington, TX	6/12/23
Peter W Dusel [11]	Ontario, NY	7/4/23
Joe Edwards [8]	Glenwood, IA	6/12/23
Gary P Gottlieb [18]	Aledo, TX	7/24/23
Joshua J Haley [6]	Canton, OH	6/1/23
Jim Howell [4]	Niwot, CO	4/29/23
Adam Hunt	El Cerrito, CA	6/13/23
Spencer Klaassen [17]	Saint Joseph, MO	5/7/23
Stacy Kline (F) [10]	Newport Beach, CA	5/22/23
Ken A Lanteigne [8]	Gresham, OR	7/7/23
Christopher Maglieri [10]	Weatogue, CT	6/5/23
Richard G McCaw [14]	San Jose, CA	5/25/23
Chris Nadovich [9]	Easton, PA	6/6/23
Dana A Pacino (F) [16]	Aledo, TX	7/24/23
Michael D Povman [5]	Sleepy Hollow, NY	5/22/23
Jerry Riccardi [3]	Prairie Village, KS	4/28/23
Eric Senter [11]	Santa Rosa, CA	5/4/23
Michael Gerald Turek [7]	Longmont, CO	5/3/23
Jasmine Wu (F)	Cupertino, CA	6/16/23

P-12 Recipients

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Ron Alexander [12]	Overland Park, KS	6/27/23
Randy T Anderson [4]	Peoria, IL	5/5/23
Charles Christopher Argo [3]	Lake View, AL	7/15/23
Steven J Castellano [2]	Metuchen, NJ	6/9/23
Kary Conaway [3]	George, IA	5/5/23
Kelly DeBoer [13]	Avery, TX	7/30/23
Mark W Dennin	Cooper City, FL	6/18/23
Peter W Dusel [2]	Ontario, NY	7/4/23
Gary P Gottlieb [11]	Aledo, TX	7/24/23
Ross Gridley [10]	Pickerington, OH	5/10/23
Christopher Heg [5]	Seattle, WA	7/3/23
Jim Howell [2]	Niwot, CO	4/29/23
Kerin Huber (F) [9]	Pasadena, CA	7/6/23
Shaun Ivory [3]	Woodinville, WA	7/2/23
Ken Knutson [10]	Tracy, CA	5/16/23
Richard Lentz [3]	Vineland, NJ	5/24/23
Kirk Mandus	Port Orange, FL	5/21/23
Douglas McLerran [2]	Aurora, IL	7/8/23
Thai Nguyen	Bothell, WA	7/17/23
Tohma Nguyen	Bothell, WA	7/17/23
Dana A Pacino (F) [6]	Aledo, TX	7/24/23
Christopher C. Slocum [5]	Toms River, NJ	4/30/23
Gregory H Smith [6]	Richland Center, WI	5/3/23
Lois Springsteen (F) [7]	Santa Cruz, CA	6/4/23
Amitoj Singh Sukhija	Windham, NH	7/2/23
Mark Thomas [10]	Kirkland, WA	7/1/23

RUSA Rouler

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Dennis P Anderson	Rochester Hills, MI	6/26/23
Mike P Campbell	Shakopee, MN	7/16/23
Dennis Carl DeMilner	Belmont, MI	6/26/23
Stephen Hazelton [3]	Garland, TX	5/21/23
Amy L Russell (F) [3]	Waco, TX	6/11/23
Rob Welsh [2]	Apple Valley, MN	7/16/23

Rando Scout Awards

NAME (25-49 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Bell, Matthew	Boise, ID	6/19/23
Dorobek, Russell	Austin, TX	5/28/23
Erard, Julien	Portland, OR	5/30/23
Haidinyak, Grant	San Leandro, CA	7/15/23
Kydd, John	Bainbridge Island, WA	6/12/23
Layer, Jacob Virgil	Dedham, MA	4/24/23
Linser, Eric J	San Francisco, CA	6/13/23
Morehouse, Ryan	Missoula, MT	4/29/23
Morical, Keith	Minnetrista, MN	5/16/23
Mosimann, Rob	Saint Paul, MN	5/7/23
Murphy, John	Minneapolis, MN	7/3/23
Qi, David	Clarksburg, MD	5/10/23
Safstrom, Kiel M	Bothell, WA	5/24/23
Shelso, John H	Sioux Falls, SD	6/26/23
Shin, JinUk	Santa Clara, CA	4/26/23
Smith, Steve	Carlisle, MA	6/4/23
Tam, Man-Fai	San Ramon, CA	4/25/23
Tanjuatco, Francis	Castro Valley, CA	7/26/23
Tracy, Todd D	Redwood City, CA	7/11/23
Trott, Lydia Ellen (F)	West Point, IN	5/1/23
Wilderson, P	Greenbelt, MD	6/1/23
Zavestoski, Stephen	El Cerrito, CA	5/13/23
Zong, Oliver	Edgewater, NJ	4/24/23
NAME (50-74 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Andersen, Gabrielle Friedly (F)	Woodside, CA	5/8/23
Boykins, Terri (F)	Los Angeles, CA	7/11/23
Chalfant, Michael L	San Francisco, CA	4/26/23
Goebel, Gregory K	Cypress, CA	5/8/23
Kreger, Matt	Woodinville, WA	7/15/23
Tanner, Bradford D	Concord, NH	5/30/23
NAME (100-124 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Acuff, Jan (F)	Seattle, WA	7/15/23
Brudvik, Robert	Edmonds, WA	6/18/23
Kanaby, Gary	Salado, TX	5/31/23
NAME (175-199 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Gottlieb, Gary P	Aledo, TX	7/23/23

Attention Members

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

Update your address online at:
rusa.org/cgi-bin/memberaddresschange_GF.pl

**And, don't forget to
renew your membership!**

Memberships run from January through December.

Renew online at:
rusa.org/cgi-bin/memberrenew_GF.pl



RUSA Awards

RUSA Coast-to-Coast Award

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
5/4/2023	Charlie A Martin [4]	Sunnyvale, CA
6/16/2023	Vincent Sikorski	Bend, OR
5/4/2023	Mark Thomas [4]	Kirkland, WA

Ultra Randonneur Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Randy T Anderson	Peoria, IL	5/28/23
Norman Ehrentreich	Shoreview, MN	7/24/23
Stephen D Haas	Alameda, CA	5/9/23
Joshua J Haley	Canton, OH	6/13/23
Corinne Downs Warren (F)	Monument, CO	7/4/23

TOP TEN WAYS to connect with RUSA

1. **Website and Announcements on our home page**
rusa.org/
2. **American Randonneur magazine**
rusa.org/pages/magazine
3. **Email**
rusa.org/report-issue
4. **Between Controls monthly e-newsletter**
rusa.org/pages/between-controls
5. **Randonneurs USA Google group**
randonneurs-usa@googlegroups.com
6. **Regions list**
rusa.org/cgi-bin/regionsearch_PF.pl
7. **Public Facebook page**
facebook.com/rusa.org
8. **Members ONLY private Facebook page**
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9. **Instagram**
instagram.com/randonneurs.us/
10. **And our NEW YouTube channel**
youtube.com/@RandonneursUSA

Mondial Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Hamid Akbarian [3]	Lanham, MD	6/26/23
Randy T Anderson	Peoria, IL	5/13/23
James Bradbury	San Francisco, CA	7/14/23
Geoff Hastings	San Francisco, CA	5/14/23
Shaun Ivory	Woodinville, WA	7/13/23
John Jurczynski	Box Elder, SD	6/20/23
Bryan Kilgore	Richmond, CA	4/21/23
Pascal Ledru	Denver, CO	5/3/23
Shai Shprung	Encino, CA	6/17/23
Mark Thomas [5]	Kirkland, WA	6/19/23
Michael Gerald Turek	Longmont, CO	5/16/23

RUSA Cup Recipients

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Randy T Anderson [2]	Peoria, IL	6/20/23
Mark Brogan [2]	San Jose, CA	5/14/23
Greg Cardell	Valencia, CA	7/29/23
Jeff Newberry [11]	Austin, TX	6/3/23
Eric Peterson [3]	Naperville, IL	7/16/23
Corinne Downs Warren (F) [2]	Monument, CO	7/4/23

Ultra P-12 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Joshua Crixell	Temple, TX	4/24/23
Mark Thomas	Kirkland, WA	7/1/23

Ultra R-12 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Stacy Kline (F)	Newport Beach, CA	5/26/23
Christopher Maglieri	Weatogue, CT	6/5/23

RUSA American Explorer Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	TOTAL STATES	APPROVED
Anderson, Randy T	Peoria, IL	21	6/22/23
Argo, Charles Christopher	Lake View, AL	24	7/30/23
Behning, Mark C	Sacramento, CA	10	7/4/23
Clark, Lynn	Hudson, OH	10	6/1/23
Clark, Rebecca (F)	Albany, NY	12	5/21/23
D'Elia, John	Middletown, CT	24	6/7/23
DiCarlantonio, Francis Aloysius	Crofton, MD	12	6/5/23
Driscoll, Dan	Arlington, TX	51	6/11/23
Hazel, Geoffrey	Bellevue, WA	22	6/3/23
Heg, Christopher	Seattle, WA	18	4/23/23
Heller, Misha Marin (F)	Alexandria, VA	19	6/26/23
Huber, Kerin (F)	Pasadena, CA	43	6/19/23
Lakwete, Angela (F)	Auburn, AL	14	7/30/23
Martin, Charlie A	Sunnyvale, CA	28	6/28/23
Nichols, David Andrew	New York, NY	11	7/28/23
Shopland, Ian	Olympia, WA	26	5/8/23
Wright, Pamela (F)	Fort Worth, TX	39	6/11/23



Do you have a story to share?

Maybe a tale of an epic adventure?

Or a ride gone comically wrong?

If so, we'd like to hear about it!

SUBMISSIONS should be up to 2,000 words, include photos or other visual elements, and be saved as a Word file. (No PDFs, please.) Please send photos as separate files.

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

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Spring issue – December 15 Fall issue – June 25
 Summer issue – March 25 Winter issue – September 25

QUESTIONS? Please contact Corinne at editor@rusa.org.



Parting Shots



Front Range 1200k in Colorado this past June. Pascal Ledru, Mark Thomas, Mike Turek, and Patrick Chin-Hong fighting the wind in Lefthand Canyon.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

The Shiver Covered Bridge in Greene County, featured on the Pittsburgh 300k.

—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA



Roger and Sam on the DC Randonneurs Woodbine-Dillsburg 200k.

—PHOTO BILL BECK

One of many long climbs on the Ohio Randonneurs April 300k. Left to right: Jonathan Karpick, Josh Haley, Elly Winer.

—PHOTO JIM VAJDA



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