

# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



VOLUME 23 • ISSUE #3 FALL 2020

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Cycling During the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic — MARY FOLEY

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## **Pacific Atlantic Cycling Tour**

[www.pactour.com](http://www.pactour.com)

Lon Haldeman and Susan Notorangelo

Contact us... 262-736-2453

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## **Planning Ahead for 2021**

**Due to the ever changing Covid-19 virus restrictions all tours and dates are subject to change.**

PAC tour will have a full schedule of popular tours for the 2021 season including our Arizona Desert Cycling Camp. Many of these tours have been filling up one year in advance. We are listing these tours now so you can prepare to sign up when registration opens.

### **Desert Camp in Arizona**

**Based from Tucson, Arizona - each week has a different theme for different types of riders. You can combine weeks to extend your cycling season in Arizona. Come join us!**

**Full Week #1 Late February**  
**Tour of the Historic Hotels** 50 miles per day

**Week #2 Early March**  
**First Century Week** 60-100 miles per day.

**Week #3 Mid March**  
**Chiricahua Challenge** 75-90 miles per day

**Week #4 Late March**  
**Second Century Week** 60-100 miles per day.

### **Cycling Route 66 (Eastern Half)**

**Amarillo, Texas to Chicago**

Late May to Mid June 16 riding days 1,200 miles The tour will focus on the history of building the highway and the cultural changes that happened during the past 95 years. We will stay in many original motels and eat at the popular cafes and diners on the "Mother Road".

*Check out the PAC Tour website for dates, prices, registration information and a full schedule of available tours.*

[www.pactour.com](http://www.pactour.com) 262-736-2453

## **NEW, Northern Transcontinental**

**Mid July to Mid August**

**34 days, 3,700 miles, 110 miles per day**

We changed 1,000 miles of this route and added two more days across the midwestern states. This tour begins in Everett, Washington and crosses the northern states of Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts before ending in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. **This tour is almost filled with 50 riders on the waiting list**

## **Southern Transcontinental**

**Celebrating Lon and Susan's**

**100<sup>th</sup> Cycling Event Across America**

**Early September to early October**

This will be a 27 day tour from San Diego, California to Tybee Island (Savannah) Georgia. Most days average 110 miles. We will cross the country through a variety of terrain and visit many historical sites along the way.

## **Andes to the Amazon in Peru**

**Late October 9 days 300 cycling miles in 6 days**

This tour is organized by the Peruvian National Women's Cycling Team. The cycling is 80% paved roads and 20% gravel routes in the jungle. This tour travels on a boat on the Amazon for 300 miles and visits several villages.

## **Cycling in Ghana Africa**

**Late November 13 days with travel days**

This unique tour will ride a 320 mile loop of southeastern Ghana. Along the way we will meet and visit many local people of this beautiful country. Road conditions will range from good pavement to red dirt. Bikes with 35mm tires are recommended. The people of Ghana speak English. We will stay in nice hotels and eat in restaurants along the way.

**Registration and Website updates will be available for 2021 in September 2020.**

**Please do not sign up early or contact us for more information before then.**

***PAC Tour***

***Making good riders better  
since 1981***



## American Randonneur Magazine

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**COVER**—Red flag day on Manhattan Beach.

PHOTO CHRIS RANDALL

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# President's Message

It's been a tough year for a national cycling organization. Just when we think that we might be past the viral peak, just when we think that we have a path forward, cases surge in new locations. That happened to us this past summer. We thought that we were going to be able to open on July 1, but infections soared the last two weeks of June. Individual cycling is doing well; organized cycling not so much. Visit your local Walmart and check out the empty bike racks!

A friend sent me a modified "Back to the Future" shot which seems appropriate!

Most of us have been riding, trying to stay fit and preparing for a return to our sport. Some of that riding has been on trainers. Personally, I hate riding on a trainer because I'm easily bored. As a result, I've been spending way too much time at my PC.

We do have to keep things in perspective. My extended family is doing well save for some inconvenience. I hope that this edition of *American Randonneur* finds you and your families healthy and anxious to return to a new normal, whatever that might be.

And ... we have a new and enhanced permanents program!

By the time this edition hits your mailbox you should be familiar with the details of our new permanents program. With any luck you'll also be riding perms! The web team, permanent route contributors and reviewers have all been working feverishly to get things ready. All told, there will have been a couple of hundred members involved in getting the new program ready.

Similar to the old program, permanents are a collection of established routes. Unlike the old program, the contributors do not "own" the routes. You access the library, choose a route and ride.



Here's an overview:

- ride registration is via the RUSA website, including signing an electronic waiver.
- routes are stored in a Ridewithgps club account.
- Ridewithgps route information includes a full cue sheet with controls and services along the route.
- full electronic proof of passage (EPP) is supported as well as traditional brevet cards or some combination, e.g. card and photos.
- you create your own brevet card from a template, if that's your preferred approach.
- while you must hit all controls, the ride is essentially "free route" but you will attest to having "gone the distance."
- you submit your own results, maintaining proof for some period of time.

I've been having fun reviewing routes, "seeing" all the parts of the country with established routes, looking forward to getting back on the road. As one of the route reviewers (remember all that time at my PC), I've been in

contact with members everywhere. My bucket list of places to ride grows every day. The team is working hard to ensure that we have reasonable geographic coverage and clear, complete Ridewithgps cue sheets. We owe a huge debt to the hundreds of members who have developed routes and especially to Crista Borrás who has managed the program for many years and is now heavily involved in getting the new program up and operational. Thanks Crista!

The new program loosens the reins a little—centralized online ride registration, free route riding, self-attested results submission—and yet it's supposed to retain the rigor of endurance riding in our sport. Routes do have established distances, controls and time limits. We hope that you are as excited about the new program as we are.

Now, armed with my expanded geographic bucket list, I may very well see you on the road!

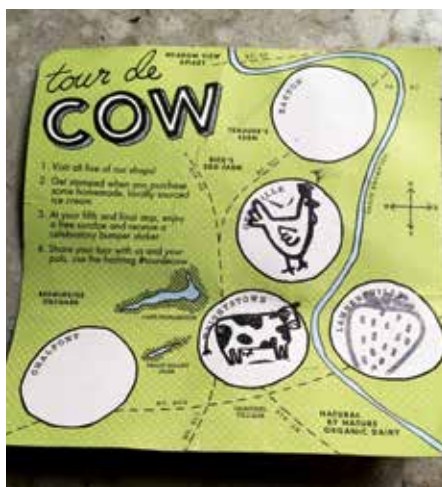
—Dave Thompson  
RUSA President  
president@rusa.org

# From the Editor

“This is the best brevet card ever!” exclaimed Katie as we examined the new stamps just added to our OwWowCow Tour Cards while eating our ice cream. We had three stamps so far with two more to acquire; when we visit the fifth shop, we will have earned a free ice cream sundae and a bumper sticker. It’s just like finishing a brevet, almost....

Like others whose stories appear in this issue of *AR*, my friends Katie and Chris and I came up with a way to ride safely and enjoyably during the pandemic. We stumbled on this Tour de Cow scheme when Chris spotted the cards at the first creamery we visited. After this, I decided to create routes starting and finishing at all five creameries. This adventure has entertained us and allowed us to explore new back roads on our way to eating delicious ice cream.

The response to the call for articles about pandemic riding adventures yielded several pieces. I was gob-smacked by the distance achievements of tandem partners Ann-Benoit Jurczynski and John Jurczynski, and also of Mary Foley. In both cases, creativity, inspiration from George Swain’s Virtual series, and persistence, helped these riders achieve their goals. Susumo Furukubo



from Kyoto, Japan, switched from distance cycling to running around his city to stay fit; he designed pictures and word messages of which he could make gps records while running. Betty Jean Jordan designed destination rides including tours of historic landmarks and also a tour of several fried chicken restaurants to decide which was best. David Nall, as well, decided to do something different. He explored roads he had never ridden, particularly those with signs posted warning “Road Closed” or “Road Ends.”

Jay Fichialos, *AR* ad person, describes a cool adventure riding the length of Utah, from the south to the north, on a route that he and friends designed. Mark Thomas photo-documents his “#notrando exactly” adventures. George Swain reviews the overwhelming response to his Virtual Brevet Series, a creation that helped many randonneurs keep turning the pedals in April, May, and June. In his column, Mike Dayton describes his best pandemic adventures as well as some sweet memories. Mary Gersema looks forward to the time when rando fun will return in a form more like what we’re used to, although she anticipates that it will be different, changed by the pandemic but perhaps providing unanticipated avenues for fun.

The suspension of randonneuring activities, the pandemic, and the myriad of other issues that we have faced in the last few months inspired some writers to be introspective. Chris Newman describes challenges that many of us have faced with sometimes dramatically changed circumstances. What is the best path through the changes? And what works for one cyclist may not work for another. Richard Stum points out that not all areas of the country have been equally affected by COVID-19, and riders in

some areas have been able to ride almost normally. Aaron Suko, randonneur and also market garden farmer in Florida, worries about the long-term effects of the pandemic on the ability of some to participate in randonneuring. As the Black Lives Matter movement makes clear, different life circumstances—with regard to economic, health care, and other resources, and due to systemic racism—impede participation of people of color, women and others in many activities.

Eric Norris offers randonneurs the opportunity to either remember their PBP experiences or perhaps begin planning for the next PBP, should the pandemic allow for it. He describes the video series he created prior to PBP 2019 and provides information for accessing the series.

SF randonneur Roy Ross died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease on May 1, 2020, and some of his friends collaborated in a tribute to him. Roy was known for his dedication to long distance cycling and his acceptance of the hurdles in the toughest rides. Reading the abridged version of one of his ride reports, I admire the attitude with which he approached challenges. His courage and friendship will be missed.

These are tough times, made more challenging by the uncertainty about when and how we will make our way through. Still, there are things we can do: try to stay healthy and protect the health of others, be kind, listen to others, and enjoy the opportunities that become available.

Please be safe out there.

—Janice Chernehoff  
Editor, *American Randonneur*  
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# Bikepacking the WestX Trail, 2020

BY JAY FICHIALOS

The story of the WestX trail starts about five years ago with three friends shooting the breeze, talking about bikes and adventures.

“Hey, did you see that write-up about those guys that rode bikes north to south across Utah?”

“Yeah, was that the one where they had catered meals and slept in hotels?”

One thing led to another and before the night was over we were challenging each other to an unsupported gravel ride from one end of the state to the other, the long way.

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## Six Months Later

We’re standing on the edge of a ridge looking out over the Bonneville Salt Flats, a sea of salt that stretches as far as the eye can see. The flats were created when the remnants of a great inland lake receded, leaving a flat salty surface. Looking out over the miles of salt and desert, I swear I can see the curve of the earth from here.

The day before, we had loaded up an old Toyota Landcruiser to drive us to the start of the trail in Almo, Idaho, the plan being for the Landcruiser to follow along as we scouted (and created) a route. Using only online maps and satellite photos, we mapped out a trail that looked “doable.” That evening as we were riding south through the Hamlin

Valley, we saw our first herd of wild horses running along the ridge among the pinyon pines. We also lost the trail we thought was so clear on the photos.

## Back to the Drawing Board

For the next two years, each of us made trips to the desert. First, we worked to find and test the route, and later we would attempt to ride it. We eventually put together a through track, but we still hadn’t ridden it completely while being self-supported. Timing for this ride is important because of the lack of water and services. April and May, or September and October, turn out to be the best times to attempt it. Even in these shoulder seasons, however, it is necessary to carry six to eight liters of water on the bike, with water stops being 80-100 miles apart, and sometimes it’s necessary to camp between stops.

In the Spring of 2017, we were ready to give our trail a go. Cori Jones, fellow member of the Salt Lake

Sunrise in the Hamlin Valley.  
Packing up for the day.

—PHOTO JAY FICHIALOS





Jay Fichialos ready to get started after a night sleeping in the brush outside Enterprise, Utah.

—PHOTO CORI JONES

Fresh and ready for adventure, posing in front of the Beaver Dam Station in Beaver Dam, Arizona.

—PHOTO JAY FICHIALOS



Randonneurs, and I were dropped off in the small farming town of Almo, Idaho. Riding out of town there is a sign that reads, “Almo, Idaho—where the pavement stops and the west begins!”

We made good time over a small mountain range to a little cow town

named Grouse Creek, where we filled water bottles and continued south. The next eight hours turned into a test of endurance. As time passed, the winds continued to strengthen and the temperature kept rising. Hot winds from the south felt like they were trying to push us back to Idaho. With no back-up plan and no cell phone coverage, we were forced to press on. As we passed the TL Bar Ranch about thirty miles outside of Wendover, we ran out of water. Wendover is a border town that is half in Utah and a half in Nevada. It is also famous for being the home base for the Elona Gay bomber and the closest town to the Bonneville Salt Flats. What we'd planned to ride in eight hours had taken us ten, and we still had a couple more to go. By the time we rolled into Wendover, we had lost all momentum and were seriously dehydrated and mentally fatigued. Our first attempt ended that evening with a bailout call and questions as to whether this route would ever be ridden self-supported.

### Back in the Saddle Again

Fall of the following year I tried the route again, this time with a different tactic. I rode from the south with the hope of taking advantage of a favorable wind and cooler evening temperatures. Everything went great until it didn't. Sometime after dark on the first night I hit a rut in the road and laid the bike down. Nothing broke, but I acquired a good bit of gravel rash. I pushed on for another day making good time, but about eighty miles south of Wendover I had to call it again with mechanical problems. Now I had two attempts and two failures. This wasn't just a silly challenge among friends anymore, this was a monkey that I had to get off my back.





### Third Time is a Charm?

Cori Jones and I decided to try the route again in the Spring of 2020, this time in the midst of a global pandemic. We had been planning on a road tour across the Midwest, but with many states generally closed to travel, we decided to get as far away from other people as we could and try the WestX trail one more time.

We arranged for a local shuttle bus company to transport us and our bikes to Beaver Dam, Arizona. A little town just outside of the Virgin River Gorge, Beaver Dam is a popular pitstop for folks heading in and out of Las Vegas. The bus dropped us off mid-afternoon with the dust blowing and the temperature rising. Luckily, this time the wind was at our backs. We

Still smiling at the end of the trail.  
Tracy Merchantile in Almo, Idaho.

—PHOTO JAY FICHIALOS





Testing the salt on the Bonneville Salt Flats heading out of Wendover, Utah.

—PHOTO CORI JONES

grabbed some quick supplies and water at the convenience store and headed north with a tailwind pushing us up the hill towards the Utah/Arizona border.

Over the next four days, we found a rhythm, rising with the sun to cook a light breakfast, and then getting on the road. Generally, by noon or soon after, we'd hit a water source or store where we could have a big lunch or early dinner. We would buy extra food for dinner and pack it on the bike until we stopped as the sun was setting. Opting to sleep each night rather than to try to ride through, we camped under the stars. Some of the areas along the Utah/Nevada border are as far away as you can get from light pollution in the lower forty-eight states. Looking

at that night sky from your sleeping bag in the middle of the desert has a way of making you feel small as well as part of something bigger. For those few days on the trail, there wasn't any talk of virus or politics, no worries about the riding season or the future. Just pedaling, pushing ourselves, and looking for the next available water.

On the afternoon of the fourth day we rolled into Almo, Idaho, like a couple of cowboys just off the trail—dusty, tired, and ready for a sit-down meal. The Tracy Mercantile has been the general store, post office, and community meeting point for years, and we were glad they were open when we arrived. We ate a big lunch and topped it off with ice cream.

Years in the planning, we had finally ridden the WestX trail end to end across the state of Utah, the long way. The final distance turned out to be just over four hundred miles with over 80% of that on dirt and gravel roads. It's not a route I'd recommend for those without a back-up plan, but if you're looking for an adventure that resets your perspective and challenges you in a new way, it checks those boxes and more.

Feel free to drop me a line if you'd like to learn more about the WestX Trail. I'm happy to share tips and lessons learned. The GPS file is here: <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29749702>. 🚲

Cori Jones ready to sit anywhere other than the saddle.

—PHOTO JAY FICHIALOS



# Beltway Randonista BY MARY GERSEMA

## In Search of Fun

Fun has gone missing. Have you seen it? It's like a game of Scrabble. I have the U and the N, but I need the F. Without it, what do I have? UN. Not even a word, it's the absence of fun. UNFUN.

As soon as it happened, I naively thought the missing F would quickly be found, and fun could resume. My husband Ed has been randonneuring since 1996, and I've been part of the fray since 2005. Since brevets have been part of our spring and summer fun for so long, I thought surely they would

somehow happen as usual this year.

Instead, life took a different course. Washington, D.C.—where I live— and surrounding areas issued stay home orders. Most businesses closed while cases of COVID-19 escalated. Four months into the pandemic, we play on without the F.

We can't spell fun like we have in years past. Instead, we modify. In the absence of organized rides, my tandem partner Ed and I focus on the fundamentals that sometimes slide during brevet season: sleep, healthy eating, and a steady output of energy and physical movement each day.

We're still working through the week, so we save a weekend day for a ride together. Unlike a brevet, we sleep six or seven hours the night before. It's a decadent change from 2:30am brevet alarms.

The distances covered these days are shorter, maxing out at 100 miles. When we ride, all the food and water necessary for the day goes on the bike so that we limit our risk and exposure by not entering stores.

Because we don't go as far and leave the house later, there is ample time to prepare everything we'll eat along the way: sandwiches, fruit, or whatever else we choose. I'm eating healthier than I ever do during brevets, and, while I miss the occasional bag of potato chips and curbside dining outside a Sheetz or a WaWa, I appreciate the aftereffects of consuming nourishing meals.

Convenience stores are often placed at busy crossroads. Taking all our own food and water also means

A fine afternoon snack spot in Loudoun County.

—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA





Unexpected intersection with Kelly Smith, of D.C. Randonneurs, in Loudoun County.

—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA

we can route ourselves into new-to-us places that avoid these areas. Our lunch stops happen when we see an enticing spot, like a park, outside a church, or under a shady tree.

We have each other for company, and I feel fortunate that Ed and I ride as a team. We have not attempted to expand our circle even though my joy of cycling is wrapped up in both its social as well as its physical aspects.

I met my husband through cycling and have several good friends that I would not otherwise know if it weren't for the bicycle. Riding is such a solitary endeavor right now, and I miss the camaraderie of group rides. This is

one of the hardest parts of playing our current game.

Yet I accept that it's necessary. In the short term we fly solo, refine the fundamentals, and do our best to stay healthy. Once all the letters in fun are found, we'll be well-rested and ready.

Fun will return. We'll be reunited, back with our cycling friends. We'll ride brevets, turn the pedals together, and catch up on each other's lives.

Hopefully we take some of what we learned from these months and carry it forward. Maybe fun will look a little different, better in some way we didn't expect. There will be fun and triple word scores for everyone. 🚲



Time out to save a turtle.

—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA

The Plains, Virginia.

—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA



# 2020: A Good Year to be Creative and Flexible with Your Goals!

BY ANN BENOIT-JURCZYNSKI AND JOHN JURCZYNSKI

We have been riding a tandem bicycle together for almost six years. The summer of 2019 found us both finally retired from careers in high school counseling (Ann) and summer resort management (John). Prior to retirement, our free time and vacation schedules were completely opposite which made training together and getting to cycling events very difficult for us. Given that unfortunate scenario, our primary goal for the first few years of retirement was to participate in the cycling events we had always wanted to do but couldn't because of work and family commitments.

This retirement plan worked very well for several months. Initially sticking close to home, we had a blast doing Mark Beaver's 1000km brevet in Nova Scotia. At Paris-Brest-Paris we enjoyed reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. Upon returning from France, we began our trip across the U.S. in our Honda Element, primarily camping our way across the country from New Hampshire to Portland, Oregon. We went for a bike ride every day and took part in RUSA events whenever we could as we crossed the United States. Racing the Natchez Trace 444 and competing in the 12-Hour World Championships in Borrego, CA, were also highlights. After spending Thanksgiving with two of our children in Portland, we made our way down to Tucson, Arizona.

A sentiment appropriate for the times at the Jamestown town line.

—PHOTO JOHN JURCZYNSKI

We spent most of the winter in Tucson having fun riding with other tandems and training for the 2020 cycling season. In spite of an unexpected medical issue in January, by early March we somehow had managed to take part in six brevets in the Southwest, before things started to get a little

crazy in the world. These brevets included three of Susan Notorangelo's 200km's out of Tucson, a 200km and 400km with Mike Sturgill's Phoenix Randonneurs and a 300km from Joshua Tree to Las Vegas with the Pacific Coast Highway Randonneurs. We were off to a pretty good start in our first full year of retirement.

Our big cycling goal for 2020 was to attempt to become the first "mixed" tandem to complete the Trans Am Bike Race (TABR). TABR is a 4,200-mile self-supported race across America on the old Bikecentennial route. After that endeavor, we planned to spend July visiting family and friends in the Northeast, then take part in the inaugural NY-Montreal-NY 1200km, and then travel to a handful of other events to round out our year.

Come mid-March, like most everything else in the world, all of our planned cycling events were canceled





Maintenance along the way.  
—PHOTO ANN BENOIT JURCZYNSKI

In-N-Out Burgers helped keep us fueled and motivated for our 34 consecutive 200K streak.  
—PHOTO JOHN JURCZYNSKI



or postponed. In limbo for a week or so, we struggled to come up with some alternative goals that would be “okay” to do during a world-wide pandemic. As we pondered our retirement and cycling future, a few things happened concurrently. To keep ourselves from twiddling our thumbs, we decided it would be fun to ride 200 kilometers a day, consecutively, until we reached 4,200 miles, the mileage of the Trans Am Bike Race. We decided to call it the “*TransAm Replacement Challenge*.” On the same day that we came up with this “not so brilliant” idea, a friend also suggested we take part in the Strava Distance Challenge and another friend, George Swain, came up with his “truly brilliant” virtual randonneuring idea. This combination of ideas and virtual events motivated us to ride a lot during this pandemic!

Over this roughly three-month period, we were fortunate to stay in two locations that still allowed and even encouraged outdoor activities, as long as we were social distancing and

wearing face coverings (Tucson, AZ and then Louisville, CO). These areas also happened to have cycling-friendly roads and weather! It was also fortunate that we had each other for company and motivation.

Our first pandemic cycling goal was achieved by the end of March as we managed to place third in the world-wide Strava Distance Challenge, an accomplishment made less difficult because some areas in the world prohibited outdoor cycling during this time. In April, more folks were able to start riding outdoors again, which meant our mileage needed to increase drastically to finish in the top ten. Our 3,775 miles for the month of April was good enough for sixth place out of a few hundred thousand riders.

Pandemic cycling goal #2, our *TransAm Replacement Challenge*, required us to ride a 200km a day for thirty-four consecutive days. Given the tandem-friendly terrain in Tucson, we cruised through this challenge pretty well for the first twenty-five 200kms.

After that, keeping our tandems working and beating the heat became concerns as the temperatures started to exceed 100 degrees and our two tandems were in need of some attention. On our 33rd consecutive 200km day, a rear tire and rim blowout at mile 106 had us worried that we might have a very late finish in record high heat. Fortunately, we were able to bend the rim back into workable shape and limped through the last nineteen miles before the temperature hit triple digits.

On the final day of this challenge, we hoped our trusty old Cannondale backup tandem would get us there. The forecast in Tucson was for another record high of 104 to 107 degrees, so we planned to start our 34th consecutive 200km early in the morning. Of all nights to have trouble sleeping! Up by 1:15am, we were pedaling by 2:30am.



just after we finished our 600K via Everesting ride.

—PHOTO JOHN JURCZYNSKI

was canceled. Once again, we found ourselves floundering for a couple of days, but then George Swain came up with another idea:

**\*\*New Event: The Longest Day Challenge (June 20-21)\*\***

*What's your longest ride so far this season? Well, it's time to turn the volume up to "11." On the weekend of the Summer Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere (June 20-21), Hudson Valley Randonneurs is challenging you to ride your longest ride of the year. While we may be riding separately, it sure will be great to feel the presence of each of you as we all seek to achieve something just a little bit more difficult than we have so far. If your longest ride has been 200K, how about a 250K or 300K? If your longest ride is a 50K, how about a 100K (or even a 60K)? Set a goal that fits you best.*

Game on! Immediately we started brainstorming ideas for *The Longest Day(s) Challenge*. We narrowed it down to two possibilities: a local 1200km spread out over three days or a 600km via an Everesting Challenge. We eventually landed on the latter choice and started learning more about this Everesting thing. We had not even heard of it until about a month earlier and then a couple days later RUSA member Rob Welsh mentioned to us that he didn't think a tandem had ever completed an Everesting Challenge.

According to the creators of the "Everesting" concept, *"Everesting is a fiendishly simple concept, and fiendishly difficult challenge to complete. Pick any climb, anywhere in the world and ride or run repeat after grinding repeat until you have notched up 8,848 meters vertical (29,029 feet, the elevation of Mount Everest) in one activity."*

We found a climb that was somewhat tandem friendly and would reach the elevation of Everest after about 600km of riding. The 8.27-mile



In the middle of the Everesting ride.

—PHOTO BRYCE WALSH

much thought to going for the RUSA K-Hound Award, but, as we traveled across the country, RUSA members Martin Shipp and Dan Driscoll both urged us to give this idea a thought. We finally got on board and then the issue with RUSA's insurance came into play and forced us to put the K-Hound Award on the back burner. Given our high mileage on George Swain's "Hudson Valley Randonneurs" virtual series on the Facebook platform, we thought, "How about a Virtual *K-Hound In Two Months Challenge*?" On May 27th, two months after George started his virtual randonneuring platform, we had accumulated and recorded just over 10,000 kilometers of rides on Strava and on George's V-HVR Facebook page. With that our third pandemic cycling goal was complete.

After learning that RUSA events (and any other cycling event we might be interested in) were all canceled through June, we decided to reduce our mileage a bit, relax, and get ourselves ready for the High Country 1200km in mid-July. Then the High Country event

It was a beautiful morning for the final day of our silly self-inflicted 200km a day challenge! No cars on the road, comfortable temperatures in the 60's and in a few hours we had a spectacular sunrise. Our backup tandem, the Cannondale (known to a few cycling friends as "The Pain Train"), performed exceptionally well. Given the early start, we even decided to do an extra 22km to improve our standing in the Strava April Distance Challenge. We finished our ride before 11:00am, a couple hours ahead of the forecasted record high temperatures.

Now that April was over, and RUSA events continued to be on hold, we needed to come up with a new goal for May. Until last fall, we had not given

Strava segment was called “Jamestown (from Greenbriar)” and had 1,325 feet of elevation gain per climb. It started on a road called Lefthand Canyon Drive and ended in Jamestown, Colorado. Jamestown is at an elevation just shy of 7,000 feet. We parked our car in a convenient spot next to a wooded area, about thirty yards from the start of the segment. We stashed our food, beverages and extra clothing there. We planned to refuel every three trips (roughly every 4 to 4.5 hours), but, given the uphill headwinds, we probably ended up averaging a stop every two trips or three hours. Fortunately for us, there was a Porta Potty at the other end of the segment in Jamestown! We met this challenge on our new Calfee Tetra tandem bicycle on the weekend of the summer solstice. It got down to 36 degrees early on Saturday morning, but overall it was a beautiful weekend to ride a bicycle all day and all night. During the day we enjoyed seeing over



Ann's new Virtual "V" K-Hounds jersey.  
—PHOTO JOHN JURCZYNSKI

400 other cyclists on the road, while at night the many deer sightings made us more cautious than we wanted to be when descending. The headwind, on 19 of our 22 ascents, affected us as well.

Now that it is over, we are happy we did this; but during the challenge we

constantly questioned this crazy idea of ours! It was rough. The day after, we treated ourselves to a day off the bike (the first one in five months) and walked to town (Louisville, Colorado) for a wonderful non-take-out lunch served in the street!

A big “thank you” to George Swain for putting together his Hudson Valley Randonneurs platform on Facebook. It certainly helped us get creative with our cycling goals during this unusual time. It also helped make our training much more enjoyable as we were able to stay connected with many of our cycling friends and the greater randonneuring community.

We are both looking forward to the return of group randonneuring and getting back on track with our retirement plan! 🚲

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

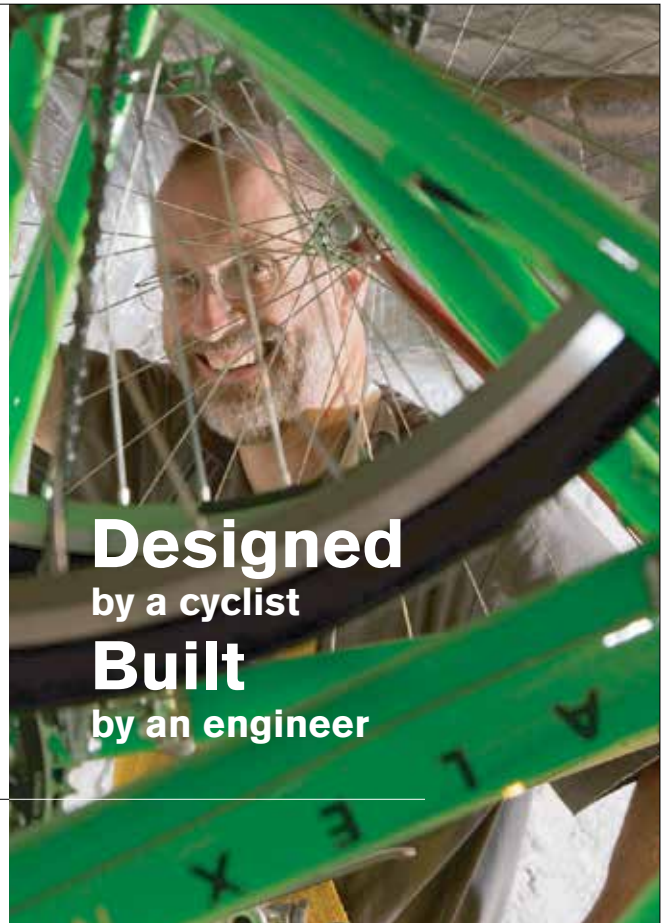
It begins with the right questions; by learning the needs and desires of the customer. I listen to the experiences that led you to me: your riding history, your cycling dreams, and what you want your next bike to be.

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To begin the process, visit my web site, then email or call me. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.



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## Is Randonneuring Relevant in Times of Pandemic and Social Unrest? More Questions than Answers.

Randonneuring is very challenging, even for those with expendable income, a stable of well-equipped bikes for different types of riding, and plenty of time and money for travel. Imagine the additional layers of difficulty faced by women, people of color, young people, and those in lower income lines of work amongst our ranks who face social and economic barriers to participation in a self-funded endurance sport.

---

I appreciate all that the RUSA board and countless other volunteers have managed to pull off over the decades. Without their work, I couldn't have achieved one of my long-held goals (completing PBP). I appreciate everyone involved in RUSA, and I especially tip my chapeau to the women and people of color in leadership and out on the road.

In the early days of randonneuring in France, women and working-class riders were involved. I find this history and the non-competitive nature of randonneuring inspiring. In the U.S., we don't have a mandatory four weeks of paid vacation, health care for all, a 35-hour work week, efficient train systems, quiet country roads that seem to be resurfaced every two years, and many other things that make cycling safer and easier in France.

Further, the socio-economic fall-out of our nation's response to the Coronavirus will result in an increasing wealth gap that will affect RUSA membership. Will we passively accept this culling of the membership along social and economic lines, or will

View from the carrot patch. I've logged more hours on the tractor in 2020 than on the bike by far.

— PHOTO AARON SUKO







Wintry rest stop on the 250km ride home from the Gainesville, FL 300km brevet in February 2019.

—PHOTO DUBB

we take steps for resiliency as an organization? Is randonneuring even relevant at a time when increasingly more people can't afford food, healthcare, and housing?

Last year by this time I had ridden over 6,000km in preparation for PBP 2019. This year I haven't ridden 1,000km. As someone involved in food production and distribution, my community has deemed me an essential worker. I am happy to be able to work and provide food to people in these times, and to be able to pay myself and employees a living wage as a result of the increase in sales. I worry that more people are having difficulty affording food.

As I write this, many young people, led primarily by black youth here in Tallahassee, as well as across the country and around the world, are marching and rallying to draw attention to the stranglehold racism has on our society. They have called for people of all walks of life to join them in solidarity in demanding change.

Right now, I don't have answers: mostly questions about bigger issues like white supremacy, healthcare, mass incarceration, global warming, and the increasing wealth gap. Occasionally I yearn for the days of endless bike rides. More often I yearn for a new normal, understanding that the old normal did not work for far too many people.

I don't have any specific proposals at this time. I'm just pointing out that there is a lot of suffering in society at large, and among the ranks of RUSA. If we spend too much of our time and ink complaining about not being able to ride or buy souvenir medals, how relevant are we? 🚲

# RUSA Board ELECTION

**Current members may nominate someone for the RUSA Board**

**To make a nomination, contact:**

**Lois Springsteen  
secretary@rusa.org**

**Nominations must be received by  
September 15**

**Voting will take place online.  
However, if you need a paper ballot, please contact:**

**Lois Springsteen  
secretary@rusa.org**

**Votes must be received by  
November 15**

## That's Not Rando

The 2020 randonneuring year started normally enough for me. True enough, the loss of permanents at the hands of a capricious insurance company interfered with a tradition of riding a 200km permanent on New Year's Day. But Seattle International Randonneurs' volunteers stepped up and created a RUSA Brevet that was a more than adequate substitute.

Over the next six weeks, a few 100km populaires and 200km brevets stood in for winter permanents. Then Chris and I headed off to Australia for four weeks of hiking and vacation. While we were gone, the world turned upside down, taking randonneuring with it. Before I got home on United Airlines' last flight from Melbourne, I rode a 1000km brevet and a *fleche* with my Australian randonneur friends, rounding

out the requirements for Audax Australia's Woodrup 5000 Award,<sup>1</sup> which I have coveted for some time.

Returning to a land without randonneuring set me off on a cycling road devoid of its usual landmarks. A brevet here, a *fleche* there, a 1200 farther down the road—all off the map for 2020.

It's no secret to my friends that I'm a bit obsessive about randonneuring

—collecting rides and trinkets like Green Stamps. The suspension of the sport brought a certain freedom. My non-randonneuring friends like to disparage our sport as riding the shortest distance from one convenience store to the next. That characterization does a disservice to the wonderful routes that I ride in the Pacific Northwest and all over the world, but it does have a germ of truth in it.

With the calendar free of set ride dates and the map free of defined routes, I went out to explore. Uncomfortable with interacting with strangers or even riding with friends, I outfitted the bike with big tires, extra water, lots of food, and a satellite tracker, and headed out solo into the forests.

#notrando exactly, but I was off on wonderful and self-sufficient adventures on the bicycle. With cold beer at the end. I guess #thatsrando after all. 🚲

<sup>1</sup> According to the Audax Australia Website, the Woodrup 5000 is earned when a randonneur completes a minimum of 5000km over four consecutive seasons and includes at least a Super Randonneur series, a 1000km, a 1200 km (non-PBP), a Fleche Opperman, and 950km of additional road rides.

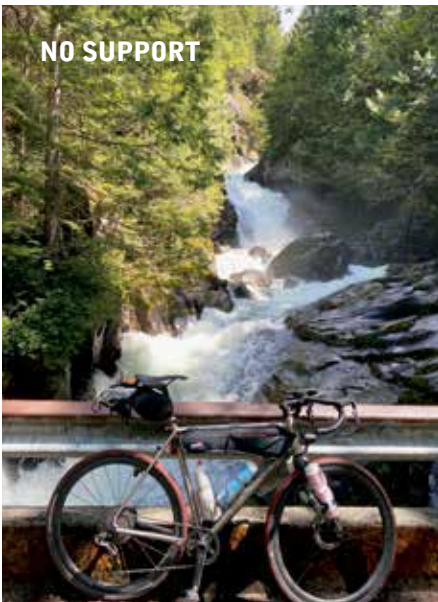




**NO ROAD**



**NOT ALONE**



**NO SUPPORT**



**NO COMPLAINTS**



**NO PAVEMENT**



**NO CARS**

# Theme Rides

BY BETTY JEAN JORDAN

Although RUSA events are still suspended as of this writing, that doesn't mean long-distance cycling in general has to go on hiatus. I love coming up with themes for personal rides, and it's a great way to stay motivated and have extra fun. I'll share a few of these rides I've done in recent months. Maybe you can create your own theme rides to help you work through the pandemic.

(known locally as Preaching Rock), where Lorenzo Dow preached the first sermon in my county in 1803. I don't know that I would have agreed with him on everything theologically, but I do like his quote on the plaque attached to Preaching Rock:

*Upon the great journey of life, eternity is the country to which all are traveling.*  
—Dow's "Road to Peace"

## Local Landmarks

Several months ago, I saw a Local Landmarks challenge on Strava. It turned out to be a running challenge, but I easily adapted it for cycling. I thought of interesting places in my home of Jasper County, GA, that I could visit by bicycle. I also checked my chamber of commerce's tourism

brochure and added a few historical markers and landmarks to my route.

I rode to an old stagecoach route marker, a quirky hunting cabin named the Hillsboro Hilton, and Dow's Pulpit

Toward the end of my ride, I had to stop for a photo of the wonderfully wacky Bearlax mural on the side of a building in downtown Monticello. Murals were a common form of advertising in the late 19th and early



T. rex - RAWR!

—PHOTO BETTY JEAN JORDAN  
(STRAVA SCREENSHOT)

Bearlax mural in Monticello, GA.

—PHOTO BETTY JEAN JORDAN



20th century. I'm glad this one was restored a few years ago. The Monticello Downtown Development Authority secured a grant through the Georgia Grassroots Art Program, researched the original colors, and found an artist to complete the restoration.

Another fun option for a local ride is to visit the highest elevation in your area. I did this on a separate ride last year, visiting Barnes Mountain, a whopping 880 ft! A local landmarks ride is an especially good option if you have to stay close to home.

### Poultry in Motion: A Highly Scientific Analysis of Fried Chicken

When I realized that there were a few local fried chicken places at which I had never eaten, I designed a bicycle ride around fried chicken. It included Bojangles' and Popeyes in adjoining counties as well as the local Big Chic. Although I had eaten chicken fingers from Big Chic, I had never had their bone-in fried chicken. By the way, the Bearlax mural is on the side of the Big Chic building.

Additionally, this wasn't just a bicycle ride; it was a highly scientific analysis of fried chicken. I devised a scoring system in which I rated each restaurant's fried chicken on flavor, crispiness, and juiciness using the following scale:

- 1) Fowl
- 2) Not All It's Cracked up to Be
- 3) A Good Egg...er...Chicken
- 4) Something to Crow About
- 5) Rules the Roost

So, who won? Big Chic! Shop local. Also, bone-in fried chicken is much better than boneless.

My fried chicken ride was patterned after a similar ride I did a



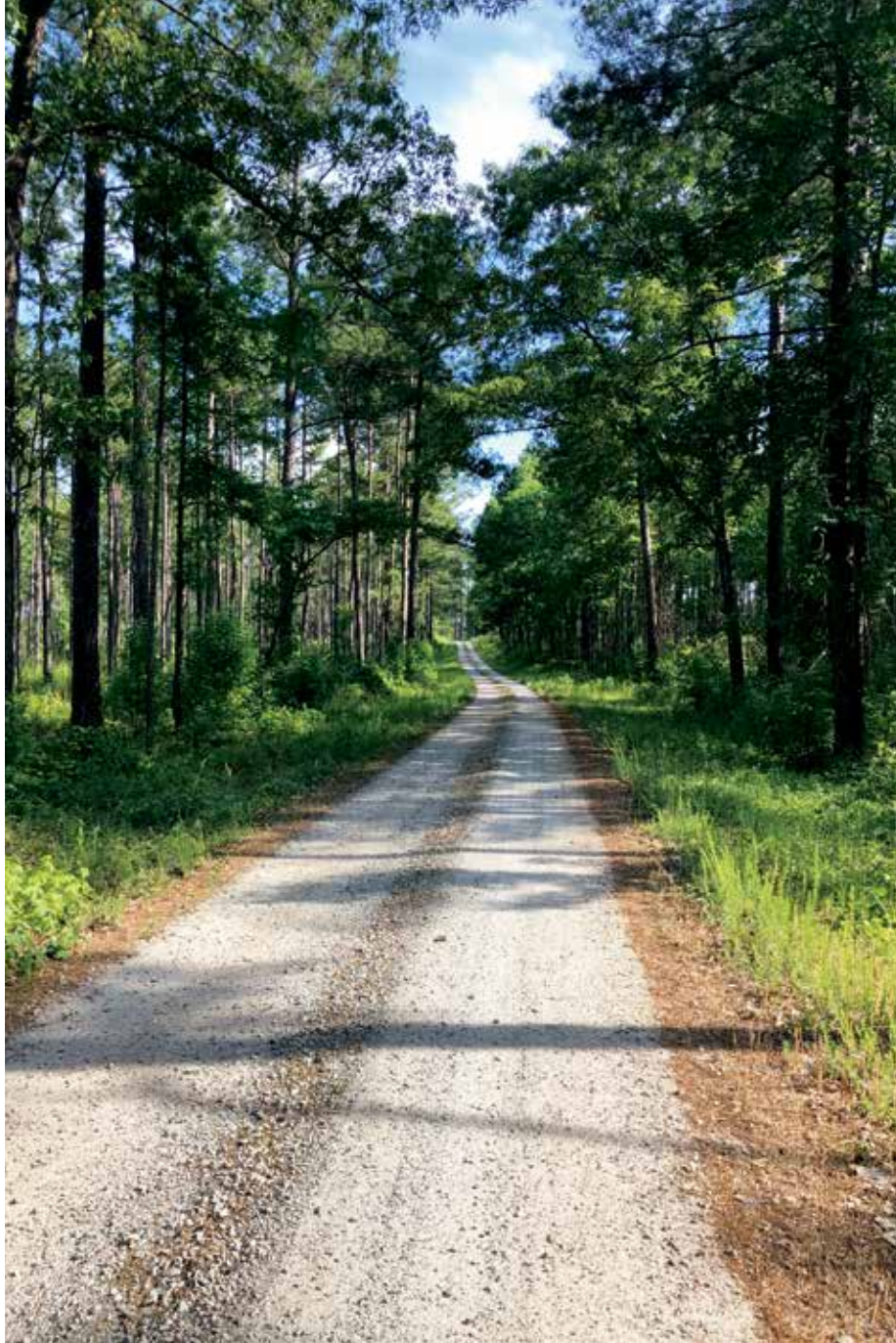
few years ago, the Tour de Peach, in which I rode to four peach farms in Middle Georgia to do a highly scientific analysis of their peach ice cream. The winner in that evaluation was Dickey Farms, which is also a control on Audax Atlanta's Peaches & Lakes 200km brevet. Interestingly, I didn't actually sample the ice cream that day at the fourth location because I didn't want to wait in the mile-long line. I had had their ice cream before, and it was my least favorite of the four—as if there's such a thing as bad peach ice cream.

If your area is known for a particular food, consider a bicycle ride/highly scientific analysis. Takeout might even be an option as the pandemic continues.

### 1066 Ride

One of my favorite hobbies besides cycling is reading. I'm pretty obsessive and structured about both. I've taken the 2020 Library Challenge. In January I picked up a wall calendar from my local library that has 50 categories of books. One of the categories is "A Book with a Number in the Title." History is a weak point for me, and so I decided to read 1066: The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry. This book is about the Norman conquest of England, but the premise of the book is that the tapestry has hidden English and non-Norman French viewpoints—quite intriguing.

Around the same time that I decided to read the book, I realized that there's a nearby dirt road that I



Holy Grail Trail  
(Forest Service Road 1066).

—PHOTO BETTY JEAN JORDAN

had never ridden, Forest Service Road 1066. Therefore, as soon as I finished the book, I did a 50km dirt road ride later that afternoon that included F.S. Road 1066. Ride on and read on!

### **T. rex Ride—RAWR!**

A few years ago, I learned about a route in Southwest Georgia that draws the outline of a T. rex—RAWR! Well, of course I had to do this ride. The route is about 200 miles long. Originally, I thought I might do it as a two-day ride, staying in a motel halfway. However, when COVID-19 hit, that didn't seem like the best approach. Then, George Swain with Hudson

Valley Randonneurs created the 2020 Virtual Brevet Series (VBS). The T. rex route was perfect for the 300km challenge and the Longest Day challenge (first day of summer) that were part of the VBS.

I got up at o' dark thirty and drove to my starting point in Vienna, GA. Although I don't usually wear jewelry on bicycle rides, I made an exception this time, wearing a necklace my husband gave me. It has a picture of a dinosaur and the words, "RAWR! means I love you in dinosaur."

I thoroughly enjoyed the quiet roads through Southwest Georgia farmland. This part of the state is much

flatter than where I live, and so my speed was higher than usual. It was a beautiful, sunny day and not too hot for June in Georgia.

Self-sufficiency is a hallmark of randonneuring, and I got to hone these skills even further on the T. rex ride. Because of the pandemic, I wanted to avoid convenience stores and potential contact with other people. I carried plenty of food with me, but I knew I would need to stop for water several times. There weren't as many churches (for outdoor spigots) as I expected. However, I managed just fine with water from a few unexpected places: a sink at an unoccupied, open-air deer processing facility and a spigot sticking out of the sidewalk in the tiny town of Parrott.

There were two surprise dirt roads on the route, one at T. rex's hand and one at the tip of his tail. I had studied the route ahead of time and was fairly confident in some detours that were paved, but I didn't want to mess up my cycling artwork. In particular, the paved option at T. rex's hand would have made his arm longer, which defeated the purpose. Therefore, I stuck with the original route. Some of the dirt sections were hard-packed enough to ride on, but I had to hike-a-bike nearly two miles total on loose, sandy soil. No problem—what's a long ride without a little adventure?

Perhaps you can search the Internet and find an artistic route near your home. If you're a lot more talented than I am, you might even draw your own picture. 🚲



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## American Randonneur — CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We welcome submissions of interest to readers of *American Randonneur*. Articles with photos or other visual elements are particularly welcome. While the focus of AR is

on randonneuring events held in the U.S., articles on international events are also published.

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

- Ride reports
- Ride promotional articles
- Technical and gear articles
- Training, health, nutrition articles
- Collage articles incorporating tweets, facebook quotes and/or short quotes from blog posts
- Reprints of blog posts (However, original material preferred)
- Reports on non-rando long-distance/endurance events of interest to randos
- Letters to the editor
- Book reviews
- Cartoons, sketches or other humorous articles

**Length of articles:** articles of up to 2000 words. No minimum length requirement, but please contact editor about longer articles.

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

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

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

**Paid advertising:** is available. Please contact Jay Fichiolas ([quadmod@gmail.com](mailto:quadmod@gmail.com)) for details.

### Submission deadlines:

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

**Questions?** Please contact the editor at [editor@rusa.org](mailto:editor@rusa.org).

# Under Review

BY GEORGE SWAIN

This review was supposed to recount my journey across Wales in the May 2020 edition of the Bryan Chapman Memorial 600km, but like so many other events, it was canceled due to the pandemic. Registration in hand, reservations complete and training well underway, I was so disappointed that I could scream. This epic ride has been on my radar for over ten years and I was finally locked and loaded.

While ride organizers canceled events *en masse*, I was spending my days working with schools throughout New York State that were not only forced to close their doors, but also to

create online pop-up schools in fewer than forty-eight hours. If entire schools can transform themselves overnight, I thought to myself, there ought to be some way to help endurance cyclists

stay active and motivated. Thus was born the Hudson Valley Randonneurs Virtual Brevet Series.

While I'm not an official RBA, and I don't even play one on TV, I have maintained several beautiful permanent routes since the dawn of the permanent program and manage a lightly used Facebook group to connect randonneurs from near and far who enjoy riding in New York's beautiful Hudson Valley. As a way to translate my own disappointment into action, I dusted off the Facebook group and launched the Virtual Brevet Series to build community and provide structure at a time of great uncertainty.

The concept could not have been simpler. All rides over 50km would count towards awards celebrating the completion of a particular number of rides at various distances. Indoor and outdoor rides would stand on equal footing. To keep things manageable, no "proof of passage" would be required; the honor system would prevail. Also, everyone was required to follow appropriate social distancing guidelines in their local area to keep one another healthy while limiting the chance that we would inadvertently become a collection of randonneuring super spreaders.

Awards were designed across a spectrum that enabled individual riders to find challenges that matched their level of fitness and comfort at this time. Folks could focus on distance or



Bike and mask.

—PHOTO JIM VREELAND





number of rides or both. As this was randonneuring, there was of course a virtual SR Award that celebrated variety with shorter than average distances to account for present realities. Here are the original award categories with the letter “v” indicating their “virtual” or unofficial character:

- v50 (50km x 8)
- v100 (100km x 6)
- v150 (150km x 5)
- v200 (200km x 4)
- vSR (50/100/150/200)

The original series was designed to run from March 28 through May 31, but with the RUSA Board decision to extend the riding pause through the month of June, I extended the season through June 30 and created additional awards such as the v250 (250km x 2), the v300 (300km x 1), the Super vSR (50/100/150/200/250/300) and the ability for riders to “super-size” any of the original distance awards by simply

doubling the number of rides required.

By late April, it seemed as though some sort of team event would help raise everyone’s spirits just as it would connect folks separated by short and long distances. We launched a virtual Fleche weekend on May 1-3 that borrowed some rules from ACP while adding a few modifications to suit current circumstances. Teams would need to include between 3-5 riders and all members would need to ride the same distance (the minimum was 100km) simultaneously in real time. Unlike a usual fleche, teammates did not need

Rider in red—Martin Winchester.

—PHOTO TIFFANY WINCHESTER

to be in the same time zone to ride “with” one another. In all, our 19 teams with names like Vast Seclusion, The Synchronized Pedalers, and Pandemic Pedal Pushers included a total of 87 riders. We had indoor teams that rode together on Zwift while outdoor teams included those that rode similar or interlocking routes in opposing directions and others that rode in different states but communicated

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**As with randonneuring in general, it’s been a big tent, with riders focused on personal goals across a broad spectrum united by a love of self-supported long-distance cycling.**

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Wings.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH

cultural sites in her native Georgia while also serving as a savior to the local turtle population.

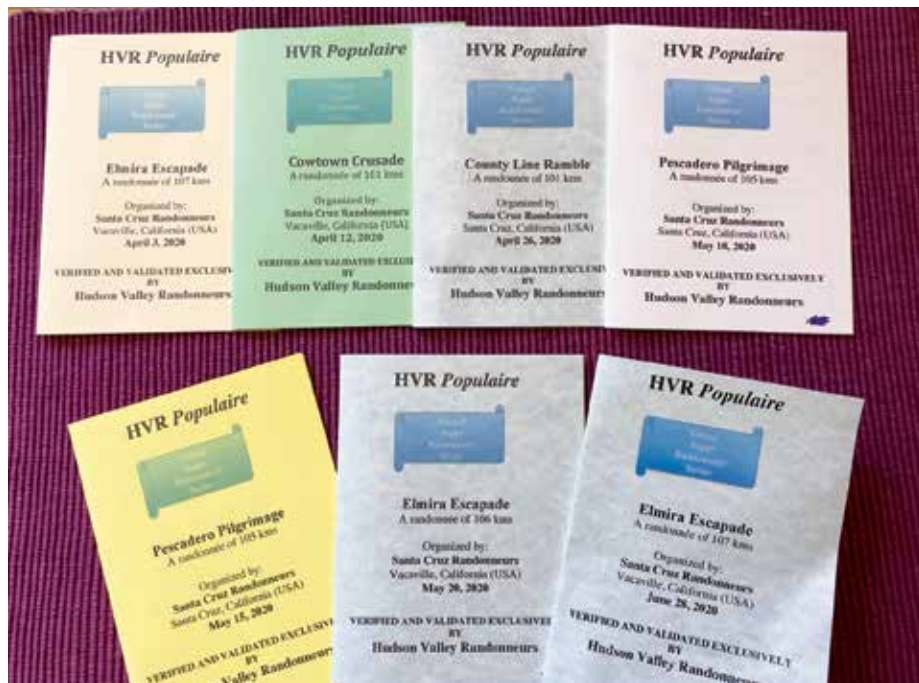
Some folks are born organizers, and both Dawn Piech and Brian Burke deserve credit for corralling dozens of friends near and far into joining the effort. One of those friends, Mary Lee St. Aubin, was a randonneuring newbie who achieved the Super v50 Award and challenged herself to ride a full 100km—her longest ride ever—on the longest day of the year. My own riding buddy Susan Blickstein celebrated the longest day of the year by riding 300km (her longest ever) in the virtual Trek Across Maine and completed the Super vSR series in the process. We also witnessed multiple Everesting accomplishments, both indoors (Charlie Martin) and outdoors (Jim Vreeland). While I could go on at great length, there is one more story to tell, and that one belongs to Bill Bryant (RUSA #7), who kept us rooted in randonneuring by generating customized brevet cards for each and every one of his personal rides.

through video conferencing apps like Zoom and Facetime during and after the ride.

Who were the Hudson Valley Randonneurs this year? While hundreds of riders participated at some level, 71 persisted to the award level, racking up 284 awards and riding over 130,000 kilometers or three laps of the Earth's surface. These 71 riders came from 24 states and 6 countries, with 31% female. Riders such as Leigh Paterson and Tiffany Winchester joined us from another season entirely from as far away as Victoria, Australia, while Daniel Ridings and Sven-Erik Olsson brought a bit of the Swedish countryside into our lives, and Anthony Menona emerged from quarantine in Spain to share his jubilation at riding outdoors once again.

Closer to home, we saw incredible variety and a few stories stand out: Keith Moore earned his v50 Award riding entirely indoors on Zwift while Oliver Zong started the season indoors with some incredible efforts of up to

200km on Rouvy and then sprang outdoors as soon as he felt the coast was clear in the NYC metropolitan area. Ann and John Jurczynski swapped plans for a cross-country tandem effort with daily 200kms throughout the American Southwest and even completed a K-Hound this spring in the process. Velonaut Bill Russell maintained his characteristic high training volume by riding his velomobile in increasingly larger circles around his beloved island home in Martha's Vineyard. Betty Jean Jordan, on the other hand, documented a wide range of important historical and



Cards.

—PHOTO BILL BRYANT

## AWARD RECIPIENTS

Andy Akard (GA)	Joshua Haley (FL)	Susan Otcenas (OR)
Craig Bailey (GA)	Thomas Hartwick (CA)	Leigh Paterson (Australia)
Lisa Barwick (SC)	Christopher Heg (WA)	Eric Peterson (IL)
Bill Beck (MD)	Bruce Herbitter (AL)	Dawn Piech (IL)
Carol Bell (IA)	Betty Jean Jordan (GA)	Craig Plesco (MI)
Marc Bernardo (NJ)	Ann Jurczynski (MA)	Michael Povman (NY)
Bob Bingham (NC)	John Jurczynski (MA)	James Reuter (ME)
Carl Birdsell (MO)	Jonathan Karpick (OH)	Daniel Ridings (Sweden)
Susan Blickstein (NY)	Denis Kervella (OR)	Bill Russell (MA)
Joe Bolan (IN)	Spencer Klaassen (MO)	Martin Shipp (NC)
Bill Bryant (CA)	Ted Krischak (IN)	Greg Smith (WI)
Brian Burke (GA)	Russ Loomis (MA)	Kenneth Smith (IN)
Bob Counts (MD)	Charlie Martin (WA)	Brent Soderberg (CT)
Kenyon Cox (OH)	Keith Moore (WA)	Mary Lee St. Aubin (IL)
Sharan Daniel (WA)	Vincent Muoneke (WA)	George Swain (NY)
Polly Dawkins (CO)	Paul Murray (WA)	Paul Tiogo (MO)
Gary Delnero (KS)	Jay Nadeau (OR)	Tru Tran (NJ)
Sara Delnero (KS)	Jeff Newberry (TX)	Lydia Trott (IN)
Dan Diehn (WI)	John D. Nguyen (WA)	Jim Vreeland (NJ)
Norman Ehrentreich (MN)	Mike Nichols (IL)	Rob Welsh (MN)
Mary Foley (NJ)	Karen Nutter (MA)	Tiffany Winchester (Australia)
Ian Frederick-Rothwell (TX)	Sven-Erik Olsson (Sweden)	Gernot Wolfram (Germany)
Lyn Gill (WA)	Chuck Opperman (NJ)	Oliver Zong (NJ)
	Jeffrey Orlin (MA)	

As unpleasant and scary as living through a pandemic has been and as unsettling as the current period of racial reckoning has been, there are silver linings in this time of crisis, and the Hudson Valley Randonneurs Virtual Brevet Season has been one for me. In just over three months, we've grown from a group of about 120 to a community of 422 members from all over the globe. We've raised each other up at this time of fear and uncertainty. The Virtual Brevet Series enabled riders to push themselves just a bit more than they might have otherwise to connect with others they might never have had the pleasure of meeting. As with randonneuring in general, it's been a big tent, with riders focused on personal goals across a broad spectrum united by a love of self-supported long-distance cycling. While I long to ride in traditional brevets again, I feel grateful to have met or reconnected with so many interesting people at this strange and difficult time.

My past experiences with the Rapha Festive 500, Mary Gersema's Coffeneuring Challenge and Nigel Greene's Spring Forward Challenge gave me confidence that riders completing virtual challenges can feel quite united across space and time, and I was not disappointed here. What does the future hold for randonneuring? When will we be able to ride together without fear again? How might virtual riding continue to bind us together through structure and community?

While the formal Spring Brevet Season ended on June 30th, Hudson Valley Randonneurs will remain a place for riders to share stories and photos of long-distance adventures. All are welcome. Just navigate to our group on Facebook and say hello. Will Hudson Valley Randonneurs sponsor another virtual brevet series in the months ahead? Perhaps an early season opener to sweep away the cobwebs next winter? Who knows? If there's a need, it would be an honor to serve.

Even Davis Phinney gets in on the action by riding with Hudson Valley Randonneur Polly Dawkins outside of Boulder.

—PHOTO POLLY DAWKINS



## AWARD RECIPIENTS

The community that came together to share and support one another was truly astonishing. In classic randonneuring form, it was a diverse group of riders that included PBP *anciens* and *anciennes* as well as riders who had never heard of randonneuring or ridden anything beyond 50km at one time. To watch folks across this spectrum encourage and support one another's accomplishments often brought tears to my eyes. The photographs and stories also transported us to new and interesting places and many of us found entirely new ways to enjoy cycling in our own backyards. While there were far more who posted rides from time to time in the group, the following group of 71 riders achieved at least one award. 🚴

# New RUSA Members

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
13888	Bowman, Brannon	Millbrook	AL
13898	Rivers, Jeffrey	APO	AP
13881	Hart MA, Michael J	Arcata	CA
13900	Gonzalez, Hector J	Berkeley	CA
13886	Seilen, Benaiah Josef	San Francisco	CA
13897	Cardell, Greg	Santa Clarita	CA
13896	Hoenk, Michael E	Valencia	CA
13889	Rosales, Manuel	Whittier	CA

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
13880	JessupSearcy, Aприel	Conyers	GA
13882	Astle, Randel Dale	Kennesaw	GA
13893	Stone, Michelle	Boise	ID
13899	Nath, Mayukh	West Lafayette	IN
13883	Sherstad, Brian	Hudsonville	MI
13884	Sherstad, Pamela	Hudsonville	MI
13894	Jackowicz, David A.	Sterling Heights	MI
13890	Foss, Jeff R	Brainerd	MN

RUSA#	NAME	CITY	STATE
13879	Bourke, Daniel E	Canton	NC
13887	Greenberg, Maximilian	Philadelphia	PA
13891	Kunsak, Steven	Pittsburgh	PA
13895	Sinha, Prajesh	Pittsburgh	PA
13885	Perman, Frederic	Pierrefonds	QC
13892	Jones, Bill	Edmonds	WA



## SPECIAL CALL December issue of AR

**Let us know how you've handled the absence of a randonneuring season with high rates of infection, as well as stay-near-home, and social distancing orders in place. Tell us about your virtual and actual adventures. What new realizations, what new talents, what new roads, what new ways to enjoy rides, have revealed themselves to you?**

Please think about writing something...  
**250 to 1500 words and photos, lots of photos.**

Alternatively, maybe there is a **ride report** you always meant to write about that extremely challenging, fun, hilly, windy, rainy ride. Now might be a good time to write it and submit it to AR. Again, 250 to 1500 words and photos. Please send essays in Word and photos as jpeg files.

Send contributions to [editor@rusa.org](mailto:editor@rusa.org) by September 25. Looking forward to reading and featuring your work in the winter issue.

Jan Acuff and Bob Brudvik  
bike the pandemic.

—PHOTO MARK THOMAS

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# My Activities During COVID-19 in Kyoto, Japan

BY SUSUMU FURUKUBO

Hello from Kyoto, Japan. Hope all of you are doing well now.

Though there was no lockdown in Japan due to COVID-19, a nationwide state of emergency was in place from the beginning of April until late May. Staying at home was strongly encouraged for working, studying and spending leisure time. So, I stopped long distance cycling for a while and switched my exercise to short distance running in the Kyoto city area where I live.

The streets of Kyoto are laid out like a grid, with north-south streets and east-west streets intersecting perpendicularly. This grid-like pattern of Kyoto's streets was created more than 1,200 years ago when it was being built as a capital city of Japan, and you

can see this pattern in the overview picture of Kyoto city.

This layout has an advantage in that it is easy to follow when running, but sometimes I got bored. Soon, I came up with the idea that I could use this information to create pictures or

letters while running by keeping a GPS track record.

It was a lot of fun to imagine and design pictures or letters with the map before running and then to check afterwards to see whether I had correctly drawn what I had planned. Can you identify the "running man" in the photo below? It took some 6km of running to create this picture.

To draw letters was a bit more challenging but worth doing because I could leave messages. "Stay safe" was the phrase that I wanted to say most, and I believe that I managed to write these words. Do you agree? (See photo on next page.)

Sometimes I ran in a cycling jersey. This photo shows me in my Paris Brest Paris jersey from the Midwest (Minnesota and Driftless) Randonneurs



Running man.

— PHOTO SUSUMU FURUKUBO

Riding the Coulee Challenge.

— PHOTO DEB FORD





“Stay Safe,” the plan and  
 “Stay Safe,” the actual run.  
 —PHOTO SUSUMU FURUKUBO



Selfie in Minnesota and Driftless  
 Randonneurs’ PBP Jersey.  
 —PHOTO SUSUMU FURUKUBO



in my city area while running. I enjoyed riding the Coulee Challenge 1200km in 2018 that visited Minnesota and Wisconsin. Two photos show me during the Coulee Challenge; both were taken by Ms. Deborah Ford, official photographer of Coulee Challenge. I was pleased to get the jersey and wear

it during Paris Brest Paris, and I still wear it sometimes in Japan.

It was a great fun to remember many American randonneurs and I really hope that we can meet again during future randonneuring events in the USA, Japan, or anywhere in the world. 🚲

Overview of Kyoto, Japan.  
 —PHOTO SUSUMU FURUKUBO



# Cycling During the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

BY MARY FOLEY

Honestly, cycling during the pandemic has not been so much different for me than prior to the arrival (or appearance) of the global “invisible enemy.” I often ride solo, so this was not an issue. The timing of the official declaration of the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic by WHO also worked in my favor. I had announced my desire to retire from my healthcare profession but agreed to stay on “as needed” until a new therapist was hired. My last day working was March 10th, but I was also scheduled to work on the 12th and 13th. WHO announced the global pandemic on March 11th. The new therapist’s license was issued the same day as the pandemic was announced and she started the next day, on March 12th, so my services were no longer needed. Great timing for me, but not so great for the new therapist.

Cycling during the pandemic has had some advantages. There has been less motor traffic, especially during my weekday rides. No school buses speeding past me, squeezing me to the far side of the shoulder. In many respects, I feel much safer riding on the road. Also, since my husband is working from home, I know that I can count on him to rescue me if I have a mechanical or get caught in a storm.

Along with the advantages, there have been some disadvantages. I miss the camaraderie of weekend rides with my rando pals. My last “Bare Bones Brevet” was with my friend, Mac, on

March 14th when we rode the beautiful and challenging Nockamixon 200km covering parts of NJ and PA. We both had an R12 goal and had done several rando rides together, including

permanents and brevets, prior to the pandemic. A few days after that ride, the RUSA Board suspended all calendar events nationally for the safety of all members. The permanent program would have been a perfect way to keep RUSA members motivated, but without insurance, even permanents were suspended.

A few weeks ago, I dropped off my Roubaix (my rando bike) with my bike mechanic for some maintenance. I can normally count on a quick turnaround and usually have my bike back the next day. However, I was surprised at the number of bikes in the shop needing repair. It seems that the pandemic has had the unexpected benefit of getting people outside riding their bikes again. Consequently, my bike was not a priority. Luckily, I have my backup Bianchi, so I was able to keep pedaling.

I had been looking forward to the flèche and the start of New Jersey’s brevet season. Fortunately, George Swain started a Virtual Brevet Series

Common theme in NJ during March and April.

—PHOTO MARY FOLEY





Just me and my shadow doing  
another solo ride.

—PHOTO MARY FOLEY

(VBS) on Facebook and that has been an amazing success and a great way to keep many of us motivated. Two of the distances that George added to the VBS, the 50km and the 150km, have become popular during the pandemic. Since the permanent program had ended in December, well before the announcement of the pandemic, I had begun riding different versions of permanents and brevets. Since I did not have to worry about “controls,” I could change a route easily due to time constraints, weather, or wind direction. This new freedom to “just ride around” worked well with George’s VBS. In addition, I have met lots of new rando friends “virtually” and enjoy their posts, reading about their adventures and seeing photos of their rides. I have managed to keep my P12 and R12 streaks alive “virtually” and when I added up the Ks, I found that I had surpassed the 10,000 kilometers needed for a “virtual” K-hound.

As we enter the summer months and temperatures rise, it has not been possible to complete the longer distances without stopping at a convenience store for additional fluids. I wear a bandana when I ride, so this has doubled as a mask when I need to enter a store. I also carry hand sanitizer with me and use it before and after stopping at a portable toilet. Our new “normal” seems so surreal at times. Apparently, this will be the way of the future for many more months.

During the last weekend in May, as the New Jersey governor and other state leaders were lifting some of the pandemic restrictions, one of my rando pals asked if I would be interested in doing a small group ride. I happily agreed and five of us set out for an interesting experience as we cycled to the Jersey shore on a beautiful day.



Mac and I during our last Bare Bones  
Brevet, the Nockamixon 200km.

—PHOTO MAC VERGARA

It was the first time many of us had ventured out in public since mid-March. The beaches were packed and most of the people we passed along the way had on face masks. When we entered the Dunkin Donuts to replenish our fluids, we donned our face masks and all employees had on face masks. The cashiers were protected with plexiglass shields and wore gloves. Some businesses would not accept cash so you needed a credit card to make a purchase. Public restrooms had monitors, limiting the number entering the building. Social distancing markers were in place on the boardwalk leading to the restroom. This was the first time I was



witnessing all the “new normal” things that I was reading about online or hearing about on the news.

Since the end of May, I have reached out to another rando buddy, and we have done several 100km rides together. It is wonderful to re-establish the friendly camaraderie that is the trademark of randonneuring. 🚲

## I Miss Randonneuring

After I left Paris Brest Paris unfinished in 2019, I decided 2020 was going to be the year where I reset my rando clock. For starters, I planned to tackle our local brevet series. Also on my schedule was a 1200km in August. I'd signed up for the Great Lakes Iron Porcupine, and I was looking forward to kilometer after kilometer with my longtime riding buddies. Along the way, I hoped to form some new friendships. Yes, my rando future looked promising.

---

Then Covid-19 hit. As the pandemic picked up speed, RUSA officials wisely paused events and that pause remains in effect as I write. Gone, like a cool breeze, was the entire rando season. I consoled myself with George Swain's virtual brevet series. I also took two-hour spins on the local greenway. The 50km became my new benchmark.

Then, lo and behold, a potential group ride knocked on the door. Brad Waffa, my local riding buddy, texted that his brother Bryan was turning 29. To celebrate the birthday, they both planned to ride from Raleigh to the coastal North Carolina town of Scranton, where Brad had rented a vacation home. Brad asked for a copy of the cue sheet and GPS file for Blackbeard's Permanent, one of my routes. Brad said he wanted to use my route to help plan theirs. I checked the map. Scranton was about 280 kilometers away, and only a short hop from the Swanquarter ferry, the final stop on Blackbeard's permanent. Brad texted one final question: "Any interest in joining us?"

And there it was. I suddenly had

an invitation to a group ride. It was the first—and only—group ride I'd heard about in months. This was a no brainer: I was in.

I mentioned the ride plan to my beautiful wife, Kelly. She agreed it was a good idea but cautioned me to social distance during the ride. Kelly also came up with a game plan of her own. She would drive down from Raleigh and pick me up in Scranton. From there, Kelly proposed that we head out to the Cape Hatteras lighthouse. Our 20th wedding anniversary was coming up, she said, so why not celebrate the occasion at the very spot where we exchanged vows?

A birthday party and an anniversary celebration? The game plan kept getting better and better.

### Ready, Set....

As the ride date of June 5 approached, I made a slight modification to the original route. Rather than start at my house, I suggested we start on the east side of Raleigh. The George Floyd protests were under way and

riding through downtown Raleigh might be problematic. Brad agreed. He also made alterations to the GPS file and sent me a copy. Brad's GPS file took us down several side roads to finish at the rental home in Scranton. The total distance: 283 kilometers.

Our journey kicked off Friday, June 5, at 7:24 p.m., an hour before sunset. We pedaled east, darkness fell, and we switched on our front and rear lights. The nighttime riding had begun.

In true rando fashion, the weather forecast called for rain, starting around 10:00pm. We could see lightning in the clouds and hear thunder rumbling in the distance, but on that Friday night, we got lucky. Although we traveled down several roads that had just been soaked by the storms, we somehow dodged the rain. When the night sky finally cleared, a bright moon illuminated our nighttime path.

I kept a close eye on my watch. When midnight struck, Brad and I sang a birthday song to our birthday comrade. I suddenly remembered why I was drawn to randonneuring. It was all coming back to me now—the friendship, camaraderie, the fun times, the quiet moments, the nighttime adventures, the physical and mental challenges. And, as always, the spiritual reward. That 13-hour ride to Scranton aroused sweet memories of past events. It also made me keenly aware of the randonneuring pleasures I'd been missing. When I returned home from Hatteras, I dug through my ride reports and relived some treasured randonneuring moments.



Ende in Liberty laundromat.

—PHOTO MIKE DAYTON

### Signs of the time

But back to present day.... Team Scranton took a greenway out of town, then joined public roads. As we passed through the town of Black Creek, I saw a sign for Eureka. On a previous rando ride, I'd taken a picture of the historical marker near that town. According to that sign, a U.S. Air Force plane crashed there in 1961. Unfortunately, the plane's three crew members did not survive. The crash could have been one of monumental proportions. Why? The plane was loaded with two nuclear bombs. Thankfully, disaster was averted.

On the lighter side of things, I recall once seeing a sign that foreshadowed the physical torture my riding buddies and I were about to face. Allow me to jump back in time to 2014 and the Ronde Aliénor d'Aquitane, a 1200km in southwest France. We were riding toward a serious climb up Mt. Aubisque, a mile-high mountain pass in the Pyrenees. Leave it to riding buddy Mark Thomas to point out a sign in Aubertin, France, that foretold our future.

### Flèche Fun

Team Scranton stuck together for nearly the entire ride, much like a flèche team. That team spirit evoked fond memories of my flèche events.

On my first fleche in 2004 I was a humble member of Team Flèche Wound which was led by John Cap'n Ende (FYI: that's where the name Cap'n comes from). We started at Cap'n's house near the top of Grandmother Mountain. It's safe to say everything went downhill from there.

I became friends with the randonneurs on that flèche ride, including Rich "Go Faster" Bruner, Gregory W. "Dive Bomber" Schild and John "Game Face" D'Elia. And Cap'n Ende became one of my best riding buddies. We signed up and pedaled together on many, many challenging events, including several more flèches. Credit goes to Cap'n for coming up with our 2007

flèche name—Team N.D.D., short for:

"Night of the Day of the Dawn of the Son of the Bride of the Return of the Revenge of the Terror of the Attack of the Evil, Mutant, Hellbound, Flèche-Eating Subhumanoid Zombified Living Dead, Part 2, In Shocking 2-D!"

I won't bore you with the details of how or why our team ended up buck-naked at 4:00am in a small-town laundromat. I will say that, thankfully, the statute of limitations has passed on that unforgettable adventure.

Eureka historical marker.

—PHOTO MIKE DAYTON





Mark Thomas pointing at “bread” sign in Aubertin, France, July 2014.

—PHOTO MIKE DAYTON

### Super Duper Group Shots

Speaking of great locations, most randonneurs know that group shots are de rigueur on our longer events. You get bonus points if you take the pictures in a place where the background is almost—but not quite—as stunning as those folks in the foreground. A case in point is the group shot we got on the Belgium ride. Our route took us right through the heart of Paris. Sure, we all stopped for photos at Sacre Coeur, Moulin Rouge, the Arc De Triomphe and Notre Dame. But for the group shot, only one place would do....

### Bedtime for Bozos

On the Scranton ride, I felt a little drowsy around 4:30am. That was no surprise, really, as I had been up just about all night. I was able to shrug off that drowsiness when the rising sun announced a new day.

Feeling a little sleepy was in striking contrast to the way I felt in 2012 on Australia’s Grand Southern Randonnée. My riding buddies and I were bone-tired from the heat and hills we’d been through. We’d been riding nearly all night and the finish was still kilometers away.

### The Sights We’ve Seen

Our route to Scranton took us through the historic town of Bath. That happens to be North Carolina’s oldest town. Bath is also known as a former hangout for the legendary pirate Blackbeard, which is why my permanent through Bath bears his name.

On the morning of June 6, the Scranton team stopped and snapped a picture or two. Taking pictures at a place like Bath seems to be a common practice among randonneurs. I’d wager that just about every American PBP rider has stopped for a picture on that bridge near Brest. Picture-worthy places are part of the randonneuring territory. I feel honored to have ridden in many picture-perfect locations,

including Australia’s Great Ocean Road, California’s redwood forests and the verdant stretches near Edinburgh, Scotland.

One of my prized randonneuring pictures is from a 2014 Belgium event, Herentals Cosne Sur Loire Herentals, or HCH 1200km. While in Brussels, I snapped a shot as we rode past the Atomium, a landmark building originally constructed for the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair.

John Cap’n Ende at Atomium.

—PHOTO MIKE DAYTON





Eiffel Tower group shot. (l-r) Mike Dayton, John Ende, Rick Blacker, Mark Thomas, Spencer Klaassen, Vincent Muoneke.

— PHOTO MIKE DAYTON

Riders take a short snooze on benches in Australia.

— PHOTO MIKE DAYTON



What to do? As tired as we were, concrete was starting to look like a soft and comfortable bed. And then, what do you know, we stumbled on these relatively plush accommodations. Thirty minutes later and somewhat refreshed, we hit the road and soon had the fish in the boat. Sometimes, heaven is nothing more complicated than a place to sit and a place to sleep.

to my fellow randonneurs. By the way, there's also a little bonus on the way up. As you climb from the Col du Soulor to the Col d'Aubisque, you'll be riding on what has been called the world's most beautiful stretch of road.

Brevet or not, you will have created some of your sweetest memories ever.

Enjoy the ride and safe travels. 🚲

Sunrise in Bath during Blackbeard's permanent.

— PHOTO BRAD WAFFA

### Bikes. Bikes. Bikes.

On the Scranton ride we passed a handful of cyclists. No, not crazy cyclists like us. They were just the local folks who used their beater bikes to get around town. Those cyclists reminded me that no matter where I might be, I love to see fellow cyclists, and I love to see the bikes they love. I've always marveled at the antique beauties that Drew Buck brings to PBP. Seeing those bikes reminds me that I am celebrating the timeless beauty and the eternal magic of my foot-powered machine.

Which brings me back to the Col D'Aubisque. The road my riding buddies and I took to the top is an hors catégorie climb. However, once there, we celebrated our arrival near the bicycle sculptures at the mountain's pinnacle. I highly recommend that view



# #RandoPirate

BY RICHARD STUM

As an RBA I have always been envious of most “real” regions in the U.S. They are near big cities, they have great participation and *great* support. In Utah, the number of riders is comparatively puny and we are 100% self-supported. On one California 400km I attended, it wasn’t just a matter of having a supported checkpoint, but when I arrived at the checkpoint, instead of being asked, do I want hot soup and a sandwich, it was what *kind* of hot soup would you like and *how* would you like your sandwich made? On a recent Utah 400km, with strong headwinds for the last half, I dropped out with only eight miles to go. Why? Nobody to draft with for nearly the whole distance. I was just spent. And cold. 65- year-olds run out of steam quicker.

---

When RUSA shut down brevets earlier this year, our state had a very low virus contraction rate so things were mostly “business as usual,” especially in rural communities where many of us ride. In March and early April, it was cool enough that I could do a full solo 200km on two bottles of water and not have to stop at a convenience store. In many cases, I saw no other roadies the whole day. Social distancing was easy!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is an advantage to be living in our “not-so-real, flyover region” where randonneuring is a foreign word. We

are not in lockdown and we can ride to our heart’s content. Salt Lake Randonneurs has carried on, making last minute adjustments to our schedule based on members’ personal plans (since the usual RUSA or ACP calendar rules no longer applied). Even a few frugal non-members came out... delighted that they didn’t have to purchase an annual membership for just one ride. In early March we did our usual ACP Zion 200km and then we switched to “rando pirate” mode and rode a 300km in April and a 400km in May. All certified routes. Our members just wanted to get out and ride—credit or not. Sure, if we had had 50-150+ riders show up like many “real” regions, it would be rather difficult to all start at the same time as required by randonneuring rules and still keep social distancing. Personally, I was planning on riding the Colorado High Country 1200 in July. Although I had

Riding some easy rollers on the east side of Bear Lake (Utah) on the Salt Lake Randonneurs Raspberry Ramble series (combined 300, 400 or 600K distances).

Riders: Ben Meyerson, Ken Moss, Byron Welch, Jimmy McGee & Andrea Christensen.

—PHOTO RICHARD STUM





my doubts that it would really happen, I only needed a 400km to qualify. With John Lee Ellis's permission, I rode our unofficial-official 400km to qualify. It kept me motivated. It kept me fit.

Several of us then rode our 600km in June: the Raspberry Ramble in rural northern Utah and southern Idaho that makes a lap around fabulous Bear Lake. Although I finished well within the ACP timeframe (and still got

six hours of sleep) the riding on day two was...well, not so fun. My maximum heart rate was just like day four of the 1200kms of yesteryear—really low, indicating extreme fatigue or exhaustion. Fortunately, there was very little climbing and minimal wind on the second day; otherwise, I could have been in trouble. My recovery from the prior day was horrible, so I was moving at a snail's pace which was frustrating.

Riding such a distance was no longer enjoyable. An occasional epic sufferfest is expected due to bad weather or mechanical problems, but for every 600km? No thank you. Towards the end of this brevet, riding

Bryon Welch (left) and Roger Peskett in their first SR600 on the Wasatch Range Super 600 at Electric Lake, elevation 8600 feet, near Skyline Drive feet in central Utah.

—PHOTO RICHARD STUM



Richard Stum's rando bike midway through Salt Lake Randonneurs Raspberry Ramble 600K, in southern Idaho.

—PHOTO RICHARD STUM



Abandoned shack as seen on highway 30 southern Idaho, midway through the Salt Randonneurs Raspberry Ramble 600K (which travels through both Utah and Idaho).

— PHOTO RICHARD STUM



Benjamin "Jay" Fichialos (left) and Andrea Christensen on a flat section of the Wasatch Range Super 600 near Fountain Green in Central Utah. It was Andrea's first ever 600K of any sort! They finished in under 40 hours with no sleep.

— PHOTO RICHARD STUM



alone, I got a little emotional, realizing that this could be "it." My last 600. This, of course, means it will be my last full series. To me, doing a series is the essence of randonneuring. So did I finish a full series in 2020? According to RUSA, no. I know that recent litigation has really rocked the American randonneuring boat, making our leadership especially cautious about

steering the ship in a straight line. But this year, I wish that RUSA had given each region more autonomy, allowing us to stay open based on the guidelines of our state's or our city's level of COVID-19 instead of locking down the whole country based on a handful of the "real" RUSA regions of the country. 🚲

Byron Welch (thrilled at having just ascended a 9400-foot pass!) on the Wasatch Range Super 600 in central Utah.

— PHOTO RICHARD STUM

Roger Peskett of Tucson, climbing toward a summit of 9400 feet on the Wasatch Range Super 600 in Utah.

— PHOTO RICHARD STUM





## Attention Members

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

**Update your address online at:**

[www.rusa.org/cgi-bin/memberaddresschange\\_GF.pl](http://www.rusa.org/cgi-bin/memberaddresschange_GF.pl)

**...and to renew your RUSA membership!**

Memberships run from January through December.

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# Rando(m) Thoughts BY CHRIS NEWMAN

## Finding My Way

If someone had told me that there might be an opportunity to put randonneuring on temporary hold while I explored other cycling options, and if it had further been explained to me that every randonneur would have their season put on hold so there would be no adverse impact on my RUSA “palmares,” my initial reaction would have been one of disbelief and disinterest.

But once the thought took hold, I might have relished the opportunity to ride those roads we always bypass on brevets. I might have tried riding 50kms or maybe riding a 100km at a pace that allowed for lingering at that fabulous lunch spot.

I might have begun some long rides at a reasonable hour and finished whenever I wanted. Raining today? No worries, I would ride tomorrow. With all that free time I might have increased my mileage and expanded my horizons. Maybe I would ride with a local group or sign up for a cycling adventure in a novel location.

I might have done all of this and more, but the reality of the past four months is that I have done none of that. I have barely ridden my bike.

I have not spent this much time off my bike since 2008 when I quit the randonneuring season in June, burned out by my rigid training and brevet schedule.

At the time the pandemic hit, I had completed a 100km every month since January 2011 and was cruising toward the ten-year-without-missing-a-100km mark. My monthly 200km streak had not been interrupted since February 2015. When RUSA shut down permanents and brevets, I naively assumed I would just keep on riding, motivated by extending my run, even if the rides “would not count.” Riding, after all, was not just my passion, it was also what kept me emotionally balanced and reasonably sane and not impossible to live with. (You will just have to take my word on that last claim....)

But this pandemic turned my life—and most everyone’s life, I suspect—

What happened to bike rides?  
—PHOTOS CHRIS NEWMAN





Through the woods.  
—PHOTOS CHRIS NEWMAN

upside down. My mom moved in with us in March, and each week, after my three-day, thirty-six hour work shift, I took over “mom responsibility” from my wife. I quickly realized that heading out for a 100km on one of my days off was not in the cards if I wanted to stay happily married.

I still needed a stress reliever and I still needed to be outside, so I turned to a project which I had previously only pursued in the off-season: clearing weeds, multiflora, and raspberry bushes to make a trail around our property. This quickly became all-consuming as the trail expanded to circle the house. My need for physical exertion was satisfied by moving dozens of yards of mulch and wood chips from here to there. I often planned to trail blaze in the morning and take a short ride later in the day, but those plans inevitably failed as I moved “just one more” load. The ONE bonus of all this

physical exertion was being able to marry working in the woods with birdwatching, another passion which was sidelined every year during the cycling season.

But it was not the same as riding my bike. It did not get me out of the house and into the world which had shrunk so suddenly. I could not escape my responsibilities, if only for a few hours. It was a solitary pursuit and did not ever provide interesting dinner conversation. (Hey dear, guess how many bushes I whacked today?)

So, I missed cycling. Friends were issuing challenges on Facebook which I could not attempt due to my home situation. A paralyzing malaise seemed to take hold. I stopped carving out time to ride. I did not set goals or challenge myself in any way. I think the uncertainty and never-ending quality of the pandemic trashed me mentally in an unexpected and disquieting way.

Fortunately for me, my randonneuring posse had maintained their upbeat and creative attitudes, and their enthusiasm was contagious. JB started Wednesday night hour-long zoom group “rides” which have persisted into the summer. I think we have all become a bit addicted to visiting once weekly, and I’ll admit that sometimes a few of us join in without riding. Janice has unearthed her inner GPS route developer and we have headed out on several 50km rides with a food reward at the finish. She recently issued a challenge for July which is decidedly open-ended and therefore doable. The challenge? Develop your own challenge and stick to it. Does not matter what it is, just plan it and do it.

Her personal challenge is to pedal at least 1200km in July after climbing the equivalent of Mt. Everest in June. Sadly, 1200km for me is out of reach, a July statement I would never have thought possible six months ago when I was hoping for a summer with two 1200kms and intensive training for LEL next year.

But my reality is vastly different now that we are in the middle of July and I am trying to wrap my head around a year of this insanity. My modest goal, after completing a 50km route a few days ago, is to ride each remaining day in July. I am four days into my streak and starting to feel a bit better. Just like the pre-pandemic days, my friends and cycling will keep me sane and get me through. I hope you are safe and healthy and finding your way as well. 🚲

# Minor Celebrity Spotted in Rambouillet

BY ERIC NORRIS

The voice came from across the main street in Rambouillet, strongly accented but insistent: “Cam-p-only-guy? Are you Cam-p-only-guy?”.

My daughter and I had been walking to the store from our rented Airbnb space just off the town square, but we stopped now to say hello to the rider who had called out. My daughter rolled her eyes a bit, “Here we go again!” We met the rider, shook hands, and took a selfie with him before continuing on our way.

It was a scene that would be repeated numerous times over the next week, in Rambouillet and Paris, and on the course. Riders who had never met me wanted to say “thank you” for my help in getting them to France.

“Camponlyguy,” for those who don’t know, is my YouTube name, and the Asian rider (who I believe spoke no English) was one of many riders who had viewed my “PBP Tips” video series and then found themselves face-to-face “IRL” (in real life) with an internet celebrity.

PBP was happening, and it was becoming clear that my little series of “how to” videos had made an impression on many randonneurs around the world. And some of those randonneurs

were in France for the event and looking for the guy who had been talking to them online about the many basic and arcane aspects of the sport.

## PBP Tips: The Videos

PBP Tips developed as a result of my desire to share my knowledge of the event, most of which I freely admit came to me from other, more experienced riders (Peter Burnett, that’s you, my friend). By 2018, I had completed three PBPs—2007, 2011, and 2015—learning by experience about the myriad of details involved in getting to the ride, dealing with being in

France and riding 1200 kilometers with several thousand fellow riders.

But I had learned that aside from other riders and resources such as *American Randonneur*, there was little to be found in terms of concrete, specific information about what was needed to execute a successful PBP. A search on YouTube for “PBP” in early 2018 turned up only a few videos, mostly by British YouTuber Damon Peacock.

There is much information out there about training before the event and as explained in my video series, I was leaving that aspect to others. I’ve never viewed my training as being noteworthy! Instead, my focus would be on the many details that aren’t very well known except by the relatively small coterie of riders who have been there.

In May 2018, with a new video camera in hand, I set out on an evening ride and recorded my first video, which



Dorian Kelly, left, and me at the cafeteria in Villaines-la-Juhel. Dorian waited for me so he could grab a selfie.

—PHOTO ERIC NORRIS

PBP Tips Episode #1, the one that started it all.

sought to answer the basic question that any sane person should ask, “PBP: Is It Worth It?” The answer, of course, is “yes,” as I explained in that initial examination of this great event. I was off and running, and that video has now been viewed more than 4,000 times.

### Videos and More Videos

Over the course of the next fifteen months, I produced almost forty videos in the PBP Tips series, covering everything from picking a start time, to making a plan to handle the weather, to being efficient with time or “rest stop management,” as Peter, my mentor, hammered into my skull when we were training for and riding the very difficult 2007 edition.

I brought viewers along with me as I trained for the ride, thought about which bike to bring, and dealt with the inevitable stresses. “Will there be enough spaces for everyone?” was answered in a PBP Tips episode titled, “Relax!” Viewers were there as I rode the qualifying events and they learned almost in real time about my disastrous 600km qualifier, which ended some thirty miles out in a multi-bike pileup that left me concussed and sore. I completed another 600km a couple of weeks later while nursing a sprained shoulder.

By the time I was done, I had created hours of content and generated thousands of views. Go to YouTube today and search for PBP and my videos are three of the top five results.

### A Worldwide Phenomenon

I knew that people had been watching the videos. What I didn't realize until I started meeting them in France, was just how far-flung that viewership is. I met riders from Ireland, India, and England, which made sense.



But it was the riders from non-English speaking countries that were the most surprising. Our friend on the street in Rambouillet was one of many cyclists from other countries who had listened to my advice and was putting it to use.

I was out on the course early on Day One when I ended up riding with a cyclist from Chile who said that all of the riders in that country had watched my videos. Later that day, I ran into Dorian Kelly, a rider from Skibberee, County Cork, Ireland, who had been scouring the cafeteria at Villaines-la-Juhel hoping to meet me.

Recently I have been contacted by a randonneur in China, who has asked if he could translate the videos into Chinese to make them more accessible to that country's growing rando community. I happily agreed to his request, and I expect to start

I switched to “PBP Tips Europe” mode to present several videos from France in the days leading up to and following PBP.

growing my online following and spreading the word about American randonneuring there as well.

### After the Ride: More Videos

As my viewers learned, knowing how to finish PBP and actually finishing are not the same. My 2019 ride ended on the first day, as I found myself hours behind schedule heading into Villaines-la-Juhel and lacking the desire to keep riding. I posted a video from Rambouillet about what happened ... and why my PBP adventure turned into a different but still very memorable experience that included, of all things,

meeting up with the widow of a true Rock 'n' Roll legend.

I posted my PBP wrap-up in September, and then rolled right into what I dubbed the “PBP After Party,” in which other riders shared their experiences and their own tips. To date, I’ve posted nine videos in the “After Party” series, which has featured riders from the US, the UK, and Kazakhstan. In one After Party episode, San Francisco RBA Rob Hawks and I talk in depth about the lessons of PBP 2019 and the future of the sport.

### Looking to the Future

As I write this, randonneuring in the USA is shut down due to the COVID-19 crisis, and we are all waiting to learn when we can gather again for the start of a brevet or sign up to ride a populaire. I’ve been out riding, which has done wonders for my physical and mental health, but for now PBP 2023—or even a long brevet—seems impossibly far off in the distance.

My videos and their tips remain, and it is my hope that as interest in the next edition of PBP ramps up, a new generation of riders will find the videos and, hopefully, glean some wisdom from them. Randonneuring has given me so many great memories, and I’m glad to return the favor and help others create their own. 🚲

The entire PBP Tips series can be found on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9F4jNLzee1GgyYKH-KaAmIjGBHeH3n3Kb>

Or: <https://tinyurl.com/PBPTips>

Eric Norris, RUSA #3971, rides with the San Francisco Randonneurs from his home near Sacramento, CA. He completed PBP in 2007, 2011, and 2015. He wrote for *AR* in 2017 about taking part in the Great American Eclipse 238km brevet to see the total eclipse in Kansas.



Among the many topics in the series is a primer on the vagaries of French roads (top video).

Recording an episode from my home studio (middle).

Many PBP Tips episodes were recorded on the American River Parkway in Sacramento, a favorite route of mine for training and making videos (bottom).

# The American Randonneur Award

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

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

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

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

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

You may nominate a member by email. To make a nomination by email, send your name and your RUSA membership number with your nominee's name and RUSA membership number to Johnny Bertrand at [JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com](mailto:JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com). Alternatively you may fill out a candidate submission form and mail it to the address below. All nominations must be **received** by December 15.

## PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

2001	<b>Johnny Bertrand</b>
2002	<b>David Buzzee</b>
2003	<b>Jennifer Wise</b>
2004	<b>James Kuehn</b>
2005	<b>Daryn Dodge</b>
2006	<b>Bill Bryant</b>
2007	<b>Robert Fry</b>
2008	<b>Dan Driscoll</b>
2009	<b>Mark Thomas</b>
2010	<b>Don Hamilton</b>
2011	<b>Mike Dayton</b>
2012	<b>Crista Borrás</b>
2013	<b>John Lee Ellis</b>
2014	<b>Lois Springsteen</b>
2015	<b>Vincent Muoneke</b>
2016	<b>Bruce Berg</b>
2017	<b>Shab Memarbashi</b>
2018	<b>Dan Shadoan</b>
2019	<b>Spencer Klaassen</b>

## NOMINATION FORM

YOUR NAME

YOUR RUSA #

YOUR AMERICAN RANDONNEUR AWARD NOMINEE

NOMINEE'S RUSA #

BRIEF REASON FOR NOMINATION

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

**E-MAIL:** [JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com](mailto:JohnnyBertrand@mykolab.com)

# High Hopes Dashed but a Silver Lining Emerges

BY DAVID NALL, RUSA #11791, DETROIT RANDONNEURS

The high hopes I had for the 2020 randonneuring season were dashed on the rocks of COVID-19. Besides looking forward to a full slate of rides with the Detroit Randonneurs, and a full season of gravel racing, I was looking forward to volunteering for the Great Lakes Randonneurs Iron Porcupine 1200km in August. This was going to be the crowning event of 2020 for me.

As Michigan began its stay-at-home orders in March, I was laid off from my job, like many others, and found that I now had plenty of time on my hands. We were still allowed to ride bikes for exercise outdoors but strongly urged to ride solo except with family/household members. RUSA had cancelled all randonneur events. And all of the gravel races were also being

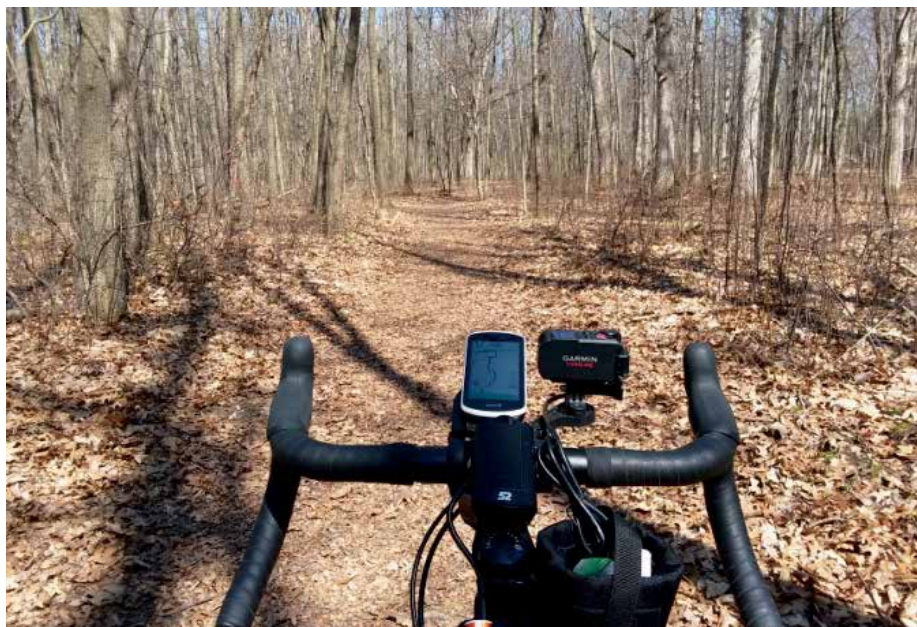
cancelled and postponed. The scenario was a bit bleak. While riding solo was fine, I enjoy the company of others on my rides—especially before and after the rides. A quick beverage or meal with fellow cyclists reviewing our exploits is always fun.

I had purchased a new gravel race bike in January and now had plenty of time to go exploring. I started searching

for areas in southeast Michigan where I had never ridden and began venturing further and further afield. Endurance is my strong suit and many of these were 100km rides.

My randonneur rides over the past several years have helped me become quite self-sufficient in terms of knowing what to carry to be ready for all sorts of unexpected situations. Additionally, my mapping and routing skills have improved and my confidence has increased, so I began to venture deeper into unknown areas. Soon my favorite sign was “Road Closed” or “Road Ends” which just invited exploration. Only once did I encounter an area where I could go no further; a river crossing that was unfordable and a recently removed bridge that did not show up on the Google map satellite view. The bottom was too slippery to walk it and the river too wide and deep to ride through it.

I began to enjoy these rides and looked forward to each new adventure. I made sure to increase my safety awareness as I was often exploring quite remote off-road areas alone and could find myself in serious trouble should I be injured. I would remind myself of how difficult it might be to explain to someone just exactly where I was and how to get to me since I had come by bicycle on a route which no



Perfect for the gravel bike.

— PHOTO DAVID NALL





The beginning of an adventure.

—PHOTO DAVID NALL

Sometimes... no track.

—PHOTO DAVID NALL



vehicle could traverse and no one walking could travel very fast.

As the spring weather improved, my range further expanded and I was glad I was by myself as I did not have to adhere to anyone's schedule, pace or route preference. By now I was covering all of southeast Michigan and an area of approximately one hundred miles square, almost all gravel, two-track, single track or no track. We also have an abundance of good gravel roads with hills.

I started to add complexity to some of these new routes and found even more areas to ride and now have a nice catalog of about a dozen go-to routes. All are challenging with a lot of climbing and more complex navigation. As mid-June approached, Michigan relaxed its stay-at-home orders and now allowed for small groups to ride and gather.

Summer is now here, but the reality is that COVID-19 has no intention of leaving and its impact on cycling is significant. I will ride with a small group with all the social distancing guidelines, using a mask when needed and carrying hand sanitizer with me. I don't go to restaurants, don't share

items and try to keep my distance from other riders. This virus is not something I want to contract.

The saddest moment for me was when I had to reluctantly withdraw from volunteering for the Iron Porcupine 1200km in August. The health risk is too high for me and my wife. I had been a volunteer for the previous Great Lakes Mac and Cheese 1200km in August of 2018 and had enjoyed that immensely. Meeting so many serious randonneurs was a privilege and experience I will never forget. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming that I was avidly looking forward to a return. Some day another opportunity will arise. Hopefully in July we will be able

to start with some local brevets and maybe longer rides as the year goes on. And one day COVID-19 will be gone and we can begin to experience a new normal. For now, my solo rides of exploration will continue and they are the silver lining of the 2020 ride season for me. 🚲

River fording skills also much improved this season.

—PHOTO DAVID NALL



# Tribute to Roy Ross, San Francisco Randonneur

CONTRIBUTIONS BY ERIC LARSEN, JULIAYN COLEMAN, SOURAV DAS,  
BRIAN KOSS, ERIC WALSTAD, ANGELA NAVARRO, AND MAX POLETTO

## Introduction by Max Poletto

Roy Ross was a passionate long-distance cyclist and a member of the San Francisco Randonneurs. In eight seasons with SFR, he rode over 68,000 kilometers of events, earned six K-Hound Awards, and completed three 1200kms, including PBP.

Tragically, Roy died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease on May 1, 2020, barely a month after being diagnosed. His

sudden passing was a profound loss for those who knew him. Some of us, his former riding partners, have collected a few of his memorable cycling quotes and shortened one of his epic ride reports to share with the RUSA community.

## A Personal Tribute to Roy by Brian Koss

I first met Roy at the San Francisco Hill Climb ride in 2013. We hit it off because we were both riding vintage bikes. Our paths crossed frequently on subsequent randonneuring events, and hours of conversation solidified our friendship.

I could always count on riding with Roy on a brevet because he rode them all. We spent countless hours together exploring the less-traveled trails of the Santa Cruz Mountains on our road bikes. Often, we'd emerge from the woods into someone's ranch or backyard. We never got into trouble, but we did have our share of equipment mishaps and hike-a-bike experiences. Our annual New Year's Day centuries almost always included a bone-chilling descent down some steep road. Together we discovered splendid scenery that most people never take the time to find.

We were a tandem "couple" once for a double-brevet weekend. We probably shouldn't have started with back-to-back 200km's, but we quickly annulled that arrangement and remained good friends. We traveled to

and from France together for PBP last year and had a great time.

Roy and I often discussed that the best thing about randonneuring is the friends we make: real friendships, created by spending hours together while doing something we love. Roy really loved the randonneuring community and his friends who came along for the ride.

## Quotes by Roy

*On the spirit of randonneuring*

"We definitely have a lot of stars in the collective who have done amazing feats.... I'm glad I am part of this obsessively joyful sport. Just what I needed."

"One does have to wonder why [we do this]. The Monday after I feel like an irritable zombie. Tuesday I'm better and Wednesday I'm good to go. Short term memory riders perhaps?"

"We have a perfect group to ride back [with]: not too large, and we will encourage each other the whole way, in a silent way."

"I'd like to thank [the group for being] concerned for me [when] I wasn't feeling up to par and my pace was embarrassingly slow. I feel bad about slowing you guys down and hopefully I'll learn to eat on the bike... to prevent future embarrassments. Thanks again for helping me get back.... I am looking forward to repaying the favor soon."

*On riding in the rain*

A wet Marin Mountains mixed-terrain 200km: "I remember that! Finished with a minute to spare!! It was raining hard and the puddles were so deep that my wheels sank to the



Roy, Orr Springs.

—PHOTO PAUL SAUER

Roy Ross (waving) and others navigate a detour through a riverbed during the Davis populaire in February 2020.

—PHOTO BRIAN FEINBERG

hubs. I was running 28mm tires. I fell behind on the mud on Pine Mountain. Those tires sink deep in the mud. Yes, adventure indeed.”

“I really have to get used to this kind of suffering and mentally embrace the wetness with a wry and determined smile across my face. Only then will I become a complete cyclist.”

### Other

Crossing the Golden Gate Bridge crowded with tourists on rental bikes at the end of a 600km brevet: “I can still remember the ‘gut-punch’ feeling of not keeping up with those front-basket-riding rookies. That hurt.”

### Orr Springs 600K ride report

**Edited and introduced by Max Poletto, Sourav Das, Juliayn Coleman, and Angela Navarro**

Following is an abridged version of Roy’s ride report for the 2014 Orr Springs 600km. Roy was known for his write-ups of cycling adventures. They often portrayed his internal feelings and emotions as much as the ride itself. We chose this report because we felt that it best illustrates some of Roy’s qualities: his love of challenge, his determination, and his love of the cycling community. We also chose this report because Orr Springs is by far the hardest brevet that SFR offers, due to the distance, climbing, and remoteness. Roy rode it within approximately six months of his first randonnée of any kind, and it was his fourth 600km in that same timespan. Despite the grueling climbing, the need for self-reliance due to the remoteness, and the fatigue of any 600km—not to mention a total fork failure—Roy completed the brevet. This may have been the first ride report he posted to our local group’s listserv. What an introduction! And this was just the beginning of



Roy’s impressive rando career. It was practically impossible not to at least see him at the start of any given SFR (or Davis, or Santa Rosa, or Santa Cruz...) brevet, and it was also common to see him any time I (Juliayn) rode anywhere near his area, mostly doing perms in the south bay. We will all miss him, though since he was such an inspirational (though very low-key) figure, I’m sure he will be in our thoughts for a long time.

### Orr Springs 600km Ride Report (edited)

I remember when I first heard about Orr Springs. I took a look at the description, saw how difficult it would be, and instantly wanted to do it. It was a challenge, a gauntlet; I hate to just leave gauntlets lying there. I’d done a lot of mountain biking in my life, but my longest ride had been a double century. Max, the organizer, warned me that Orr Springs shouldn’t be my first 600km. So, in the weeks leading up to it, I rode three other 600kms across California. That was tough. There were times on those rides when I just wanted to stop and lie down and have someone sweep me up and put me to bed for a long time. I was nervous, but I signed up.

One night in June, hours before sunrise, I park my car near the Golden Gate Bridge plaza in San Francisco. The start is familiar, the riding good. We head toward the coast on Highway 1 in

a big paceline. The weather is cold; fog, sometimes heavy, surrounds us.

After some hours we stop for food in Occidental. The day is getting warmer and I am riding with Metin, Steffen, and Eric. We enjoy Steffen’s long and well-told story about a flèche ride involving a hurrying pace to catch a train. I wish I had more such anecdotes for long rides, so useful and entertaining.

Pretty Austin Creek Road leads us to our first significant climb, King Ridge. It is long and very steep in places. I am impressed. It is satisfying to finally reach the top. The ridge is hot, and I remove some layers while Metin repairs a flat.

We fly down Skaggs Springs, careful to avoid potholes, and soon we are on the Coast Highway again. But this time it is windy...very windy. Metin pulls for a while. I am getting ready to take over when Patrick and Megan pass. The Patrick Express carts us all the way to Gualala, where we stop for food at the Surf Market.

Soon we are off to what should be the namesake for the ride, Fish Rock Road. I have feared this climb for some time. Pacific Wood Road gives us a portent of our trials ahead; the climbing eases briefly on Old Stage Road, and finally we hit Fish Rock. Boy... dirt... steep... ball-bearing-like rocks all over. This will be tough. I bull ahead and find it very much to my liking. I have to go

faster since my gears are so high. I look back and see no one. I continue on, not wanting to stop. Must have looked impressive from back there. This is what I love: remorseless, endless climbing, gravel just about too loose, almost slipping out many times. Yet I never slip. I don't put a foot down at all.

Back on CA-128, the sights are familiar from the SFR Fort Bragg 600km. I stop for an ice cream sandwich while I wait for the others. We hope to be in Ukiah by midnight so we can get some sleep. Distances are so different on a bike, but you really just keep going and surprise yourself. Best not to focus on the long, long stretches of uninterrupted riding: just put your mind in neutral and think of other things.

We stop again to regroup at an informational control. We are in need of water. Tom has just half a bottle left, so I give him half of mine. But soon we see a man in front of his house and ask if he knows of a water source. He offers us water from his home, for which we are very grateful. (I would do the same for a group of marathon riders—total respect for that sort of thing.) Water will become an issue tomorrow, but surprising solutions will appear.

Larson Grade is up next. We all have a great time conversing with each other during the climb. Metin and I stop to put on reflective gear. It's four miles to the top, then a descent marred by potholes. Dodging them in the dark becomes a real-life video game. My bag feels loose but I don't have time to move the bungee cord back on it. It gives me an unsettled feeling—a portent of future disaster?

The downhill is long and taxing with the bad road surface. I take it easier than the others. Finally, Ernesto, with that cool accent of his, tells me my bag is really jumping around. It takes me a second to understand him. I stop and stabilize the bag.

Then we have it: the mighty Orr Springs climb. It does not disappoint. There is none of the, "Yeah, but when does the hard stuff happen?" No, this

is the hard stuff.... On and on, no letting up. We pass, get passed, change positions, talk. Some shift into their small rings. These roads are what you have a triple for.

Downhill in the dark. Tom and I are out in front; he descends faster while I linger and take it easy. I feel uneasy in the dark and look forward to the control. We've made good time; it's not even 11:30pm! With that we will be able to get 2 or 3 hours of sleep. Metin has the times worked out on a cue sheet and it is very useful.

The descent complete, we roll through the streets of Ukiah. Funny how long three miles can be when you are so close to a control and need a break. But suddenly my bike feels funny. I think, "Oh, great. A flat." Then I have trouble steering and find myself veering into traffic. Luckily the traffic is light. Next, I feel a bit of a "sinking" feeling in front of my bike. Alright, that's it: I unclip and take a look. What I see doesn't make much sense. The front brakes are jammed into the tire, preventing it from rolling. I look to the fork and see the problem, but reality seems to be taking a holiday in my brain. My forks are broken and pitched forward. I am dead in the water. How is it that it happened now and not on the downhill? I feel amazingly lucky, but at the same time this is a sucker punch to the stomach. My bike! What do I do? The group is all together at this point: they are glad it didn't happen sooner and feel bad for me.

I put the bike on my shoulder and walk to the Ukiah Control. Angela and Paul are there. Paul is very good at capturing the moment, and I am grateful for that.

I am torn between impressing everyone with my story and extreme depression for my only road bike. So many miles—it has had its share of issues but has carried me far. I believe I have been pushing its limits in some ways. Then the horror of those three letters floats into my brain. D! N! F! I feel like a quitter. Even though it is not

my fault, I still think poorly of myself. I slowly resign myself to my first DNF.

Angela senses my feelings and asks if I would want to complete the brevet if she could find me a bike. Part of me is almost relieved by the stop, so I am on the fence, but I say yes. I grab a room and go to sleep.

I am woken by a hesitant, polite voice. Steffen has come up to my room and is offering his bike so that I can erase that D! N! F! My mind is still in relief-and-give-up mode: I really didn't think this scenario would present itself but somehow it has. I hear myself telling Steffen that I will get ready. I have learned to be ready to ride at the drop of a hat, or a helmet. Steffen lets me try out his bike in the parking lot. He mentions that it is a 61cm frame [Roy was about 5'8"], and that worries me, but the bike feels surprisingly good. Tom is out there giving me confidence. The flat pedals are an issue: I am used to clipping in. Why wouldn't you: especially for roads like Fish Rock and Orr Springs and King Ridge. Also, the saddle is hard as rock. That will hurt. But "Blue Tentacles" is a fast bike—great brakes and no concerns about mechanicals.

Angela says Metin is still asleep, but Tom and I decide to leave anyway. I feel a bit bad about that, and uncertain about riding in a paceline on an unfamiliar bike. I don't want to slow anybody down, and really don't have that luxury if I want to finish on time. And I definitely do.

I feel refreshed after the sleep, but we continue to wonder about Metin. Old River Road is completely empty. Then we see a single light behind us. Is it a bike light? It has to be: there is no engine sound. It must be Metin! He catches up. He had to have poured it on to do that. I am very happy. We have a perfect group to ride back: not too large, and we will encourage each other the whole way, in a silent way.

We climb Old Toll Road before sunrise. The slippery dirt in the dark makes me unhappy. I'm still getting

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**“This is what I love: remorseless, endless climbing, gravel just about too loose, almost slipping out many times. Yet I never slip. I don't put a foot down at all.”**

---

used to the bike and miss being clipped in. But we have a good group and the talking is always helpful. Eventually we reach the summit and regain pavement. Downhills are starting to be very much fun on this new bike.

The weather is heating up: we have many miles ahead with no prospect of water. Our water dwindles—mine not so fast (“You are a camel,” I imagine Matthew joking). We see Bob Redmond [Santa Rosa RBA] on the side of the road and he gives us loud encouragement. That feels so good! But conversation turns to water more and more as we climb Bottle Rock Road. Then, suddenly, something unexpected and unbelievably good happens: a cooler marked “Orr 600K” appears on the side of the road! We can't believe it: the cooler is full of bottles of cold water. We fill up and drink. It's so delicious. Bob is a saint.

And the descent off Bottle Rock is faaaaast and fun. This bike is a corker.

“Blue Tentacles” can fly, maaaaan!

We stop for food in Middletown. Funny how the world just continues on even though your own world is so different on a long ride. People don't know what this is about. So much is all about just keeping on: be mentally tough, hang on, put your mind in neutral, gut up and just do it. Pain doesn't matter. You have to continue on. Such an experience.

Before long we're at Western Mines Road, the last big dirt climb. I don't know what to expect and am a bit fearful. The bike still feels different, the gears strange and too low. The dirt begins. Metin takes the lead, but soon I find a good gear and take off as the pitch increases. That, and the unsettled surface, make for what I seem to be enjoying best on this ride: the challenge of slicks and climbing on loose dirt. I wait at the top.

The downhill is long and treacher-

ous, with dirt and bad pavement. We regroup at the bottom and continue to Sebastopol. I don't have a cue sheet, so when I lead the pace line, Tom or Metin call out directions. Pulling is something I am getting better at and am starting to enjoy. It can be heroic, especially when you pull someone for many miles while they recover. I want to be that hero sometimes.

We summit Wilson Hill and stop at another informational control. No time to scribble things down on brevet cards now: Metin takes a picture and I memorize the answer. We count the remaining hills. Mill Valley, Sausalito, bike paths: the last few miles seem to take an eternity.

Winding around the masses of people on the Golden Gate Bridge, we pull into the toll plaza. A large cheer: it hits me hard that the ride is complete. I feel a giant swelling of emotion and could easily start bawling—such a long and hard effort, so many moods, events, obstacles, grit, and pain. It is hard to believe. I see Steffen and am glad he is there. What a kind soul to lend his bike to me. One brevet, two bikes, no D! N! F! I did it. Jenny asks if I want a cream cheese bagel. Yes! She brings me hot chocolate also. The taste is so good. I did it. My toughest ride ever. Thanks, Max for such a great opportunity! 🚲

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# RUSA Awards

## R-12 Award Recipients

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

### Events that count toward the R- 12 Award are:

- Any event on the RUSA calendar 200km or longer.
- Foreign ACP-sanctioned brevets and team events and RM-sanctioned events of 1200km or longer, provided that these non-US events account for no more than 6 of the 12 counting months.
- RUSA permanents 200km or longer.

RUSA congratulates the latest honorees, listed below.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Bernardo, Marc [4]	West Windsor, NJ	5/3/20
Cannon, Jeffrey S [2]	Los Angeles, CA	5/3/20
Chauhan, Satish	North Lauderdale, FL	5/28/20
Klingbeil, Fred [5]	Des Moines, IA	5/3/20
Smith, Kevin J	Seattle, WA	5/1/20
Thompson, W David [11]	New Smyrna Beach, FL	5/21/20
Warren, Corinne Downs (F) [4]	Monument, CO	5/5/20

## ACP Randonneur 5000

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

### To qualify, the randonneur must complete:

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

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

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

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Behning, Mark C [3]	Sacramento, CA	7/8/20
Ende, John Capn [4]	Asheville, NC	5/3/20
Feringa, Craig E	Grosse Pointe Park, MI	5/3/20
Karpick, Jonathan	Cleveland, OH	5/3/20
Nicholson, Jack	Arnold, MD	5/3/20
Smith, Gregory H	Richland Center, WI	5/4/20
Trott Jr, Steven Kent	West Point, IN	5/3/20
Trott, Lydia Ellen (F)	West Point, IN	5/3/20

# RUSA Permanents Are Back!

Our new program works differently from the old. All information about the new Permanents is now under one Permanents menu, so go there to for details.

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## HOW DO I REGISTER, RIDE, AND SUBMIT RESULTS?

There are three steps

- 1: Create a RUSA Website account (or log in if you already have one).
- 2: Register for the Permanents Program and pay the annual fee (\$10 for the balance of 2020).
- 3: Register to ride one or more perms—you just specify the route and the date to ride, and electronically sign a waiver.
- 4: Submit your result yourself on the website.

## AVAILABLE ROUTES

As of early August more than 350 routes had been activated. The Permanents Committee has tried to get good geographic coverage geographically. If there is no active route near you, consider contacting someone nearby who might contribute an existing permanent route.

The Committee is accepting existing routes to start, and will be accepting new routes when the backlog of existing contributed routes has been updated, vetted, and activated.

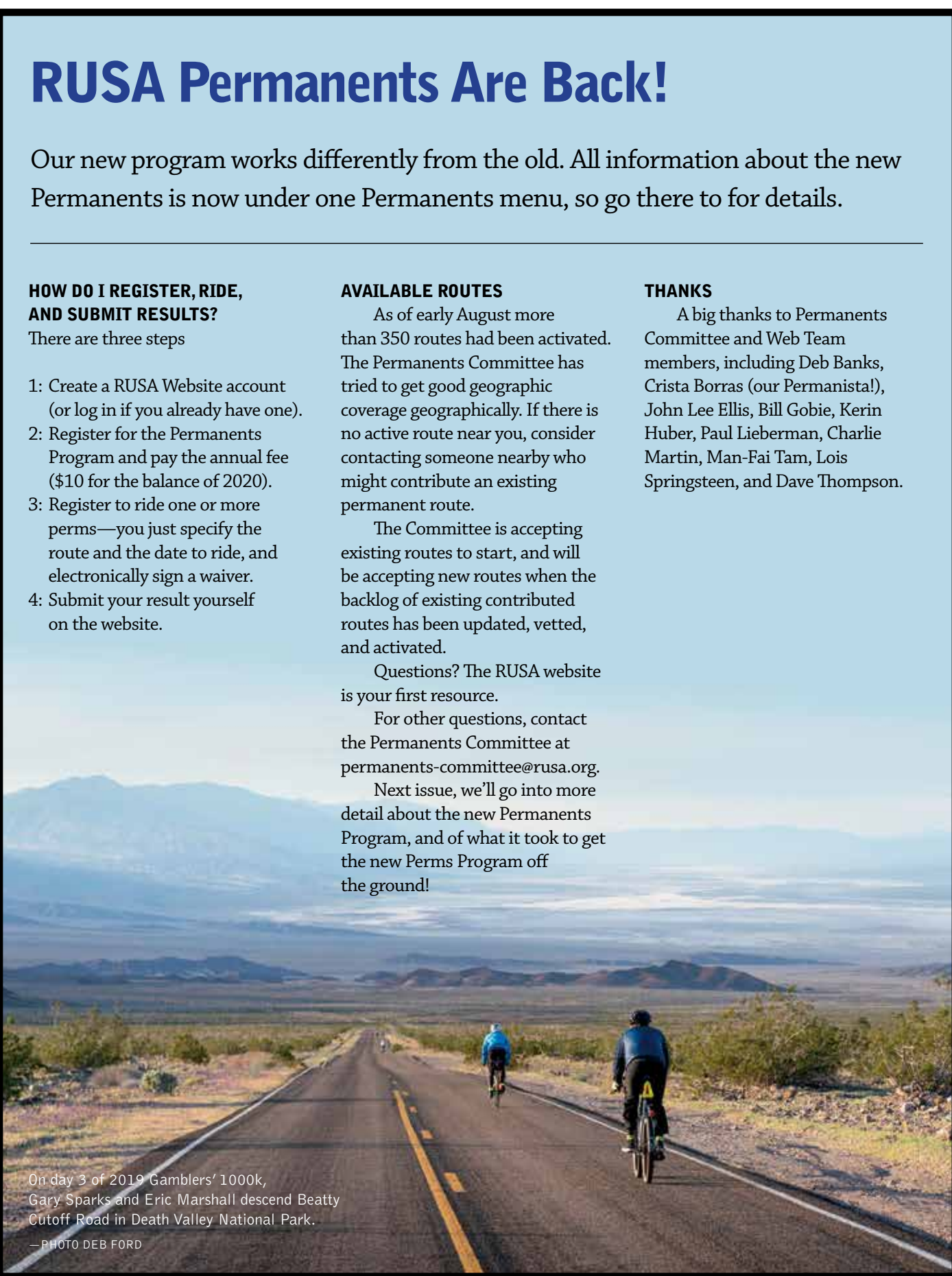
Questions? The RUSA website is your first resource.

For other questions, contact the Permanents Committee at [permanents-committee@rusa.org](mailto:permanents-committee@rusa.org).

Next issue, we'll go into more detail about the new Permanents Program, and of what it took to get the new Perms Program off the ground!

## THANKS

A big thanks to Permanents Committee and Web Team members, including Deb Banks, Crista Borrás (our Permanista!), John Lee Ellis, Bill Gobie, Kerin Huber, Paul Lieberman, Charlie Martin, Man-Fai Tam, Lois Springsteen, and Dave Thompson.



On day 3 of 2019 Gamblers' 1000k, Gary Sparks and Eric Marshall descend Beatty Cutoff Road in Death Valley National Park.

—PHOTO DEB FORD

# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR

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