

# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



VOLUME 27 • ISSUE #2 SUMMER 2024

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The Great Eclipse Century — JIM HOWELL

Dennis Desmarais and His Climate Rides — MACKENZIE COLE

Paving My Own Road to PBP 2023 — CHRIS NGO



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Summer 2024 • Volume 27, Issue #2

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American Randonneur is published quarterly

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### American Randonneur

is a publication of Randonneurs USA, Inc.  
2811 Hollywood Drive, Arlington, Texas 76013  
president@rusa.org

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**COVER** — Jennifer Moore 1 kilometer  
from the summit of the Col du Tourmalet.

PHOTO RASHID KAHN

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# President's Message

## Why Do We ride?

It was a ride across the U.S. that led me to randonneuring. That ride was about 130 miles per day, 32 days, diagonally from Costa Mesa, California to New Hampshire. It was fascinating, an amazing experience. A friend from that ride suggested a 1200k, which I thought was silly at the time. But I signed up, did the qualifiers, rode the 1200k, and I was hooked.

Why do we ride? For me, I joke that it's because I like to eat, but that's only part of the story. I do like to eat and I need to burn off those calories. More importantly to me, though, I like new experiences, whether that's scenery, terrain, food, people or the camaraderie that comes from being with others who do the same crazy things. I do regular riding for exercise but what I really enjoy are the multi-day rides. I try to get out for 100k every other day but I'm not always successful at keeping that schedule.

I like to ride in new places. Of course that's not something that I can do every second day but that regular riding is my means to an end, the end being international rides. To make the international travel worthwhile, I enjoy the 1200k's, but you don't have to do a 1200k to travel and ride internationally, nor do you have to travel the world. Once hooked on this combo of traveling and riding, though, it's hard to stop!

Many people are motivated by awards. I'm at the point where an award is recognition for doing something that I'm already motivated to do. That said, I admit that there were 200k's in questionable weather that I only rode to continue that R12 streak.

Many members have their eyes on an award as they plan their riding year, whether that's cumulative distance, continuous riding, a range of ride types, states traversed . . . you name it.

Internationally, there aren't many

awards. ACP has the Super Randonneur and the R5000 and R10000. There's the CanAm award for those completing a 1200k in both Canada and the US in the same calendar year. We also have the International Super Randonneur award for those doing events in multiple countries.

## The International Super Randonneur Award

This award was originally designed for someone doing a Super Randonneur series – 200, 300, 400 & 600 – in four countries over any period of time. Since a longer ride can be substituted for a shorter ride, many of the current awardees are those doing 1200k's in four countries. Any ISR where the shortest ride in the series is greater than 200k is an "elevated" ISR. Riding on multiple continents also counts as

"elevated." The ultimate is the 1200k/4 Continent ISR.

The ISR award bestows the feeling of accomplishment, the recognition, and a 3.5" patch. The 1200k/4 Continent version is, of course, a larger patch, at 4.5".

Are you a RUSA member who has done PBP? If so, you already have 2 countries. Remember that the award is not time limited. Add a ride in Canada – many provinces run ACP brevets. Add a ride in Mexico, and you're there! Admittedly, there isn't a huge choice in Mexico. But you get the idea.

We have many members who have achieved one or more ISR awards – 48 by my count. Quite a few are foreign riders who have been a RUSA member at one point in time and are not necessarily current members. One of their rides was likely in the US.

## International Super Randonneur Award



Akbarian, Hamid  
Banks, Debra  
Barach, Charlene  
Bell, Carol  
Blacker, Rick  
Burns, Bob  
Chappelle, Carey  
Chin-Hong, Patrick  
Diehn, Dan  
Driscoll, Dan  
Dusink, Hans

Ende, John	Mikkelson, Ole
Felton, Richard	Morely, Adam
Geisert, Rodney	Morris, John
Gerpheide, Jim	Muoneke, Vincent
Grant, Peter	Olmstead, Greg
Gravesen, Jens	Paterson, Leigh Murray
Inagaki, Mitsuaki	Plopinio, Redolfo
Katzir, Tal	Sato, Jun
Kawano, Takehiro	Sato, Naoko
Klaassen, Spencer	Schipper, Ben
Ledru, Pascal	Smith, Greg
Levitt, Jonathan	Swallow, Judith
Lim, Francis	Thomas, Mark
Lundgaard, Stig	Thompson, David
Matter, Sophie	Trout, Jim
Maytorena, Hector Enrique	Vermeulen, Els
McLeod, James Grant	Wilby, Chris
Midura, Lawrence A	Wilson, Adam
	Zaborac, Gregory

In 2023, we added the 1200k/4 Continent patch. There are 15 RUSA members who have achieved one or more 1200k/4C awards out of 23 world wide. Remember that some of those 15 are foreign riders where one of their rides was in the US and they have a RUSA number.

Get out and ride, whatever your motivation!

—Dave Thompson  
*RUSA President*  
president@rusa.org

## International Super Randonneur 1200k/4 Continent Award



Akbarian, Hamid	Paterson, Leigh Murray
Blacker, Rick	Plopinio, Redolfo
Driscoll, Dan	Sato, Jun
Kawano, Takehiro	Swallow, Judith
Klassen, Spencer	Thomas, Mark
Lim, Francis	Thompson, David
Morley, Adam	Vermeulen, Els
Muoneke, Vincent	

# From the Editor

Yay! It's summer. In Colorado, that means just three short months when you have less of a chance of getting snowed on in the mountains, so we have to make the most of them. This is the time of year to have an adventure, to move beyond our comfort zones and the familiarity of the everyday, and experience something new.

Whether that means exploring new territory, like Jonathan Fey recounts in his article, or tackling an entirely different challenge, like Chris Ngo did when he committed himself to conquering PBP, this is the time of year to do it. Adventure can take the form of a scheduled event – Jim Howell's trip to experience the eclipse is a great example – or a "plan your own adventure" odyssey à la Dennis Desmarais. For some RUSA members, simply finishing an R-12 can provide multiple adventures – just ask Ben Swartz about his first year of riding 200ks.

In the spirit of venturing forth to see new things, I'd like to make a request of everyone planning RUSA

routes, be they brevets or permanents. Ideally, every ride start should have a safe place to park and bathroom facilities. If not right there, then at least nearby and noted in the ride file.

I recently rode a permanent in a state I had never been to before. The ride starts at a park, so I figured that there would be a parking lot and restroom facilities right there. But this "park" was a pro stadium, and not only were the lots reserved for games, but for blocks in every direction, there were signs warning that unless you were a business patron, you would be towed. Even worse, as this was in the middle of a downtown area, there were no discernible restroom facilities anywhere. There were no trees or shrubs in

this concrete jungle, so the first several miles of my ride were pretty miserable.

I'm just asking route designers to consider the out-of-towner who has come to your state to ride, and is unfamiliar with the area. Help them enjoy their adventure by choosing a starting point that is safe and convenient. Yes, this can be a challenge at times, but more people will ride a route if the logistics have been well thought out. On behalf of all us who are new to your area, thank you!

Enjoy the summer months and the opportunities they afford.

—Corinne Warren  
*Editor, American Randonneur*  
editor@rusa.org



Adventuring with Veronika Vacek (#15768) and Colin Allen (#15866).

—PHOTO UNKNOWN

# The Great Eclipse Century

BY JIM HOWELL

In August 2017 the first total solar eclipse visible in the contiguous U.S. in 38 years occurred a few hours north of my home in the Denver metro area. The local news stations covered the event for weeks beforehand and predicted massive traffic jams on rural Nebraska and Wyoming roads as the curious throngs from the Northern Colorado area made the day trip north.

To me, sitting gridlocked on a farm road in the middle of the Nebraska panhandle sounded like a terrible way to spend a vacation day, but many of my friends and co-workers decided to head north as I settled for a midday break from work to go outside and look at the partial eclipse that occurred in the Denver area. It was kind of cool, but even at 75% coverage the sky was still very blue and bright. Over the next few days, I heard stories from those who made the three-hour trip into the path of totality (the area where there is maximum coverage of the sun by the

moon). They said that it was like nothing they had experienced before, that they were really glad they went, and oh, by the way, the traffic was no big deal. I realized I had missed a unique opportunity.

Fast forward to early 2024, and chatter at work started up about the April 8 total solar eclipse that would be crossing the U.S. from the Southwest to the Northeast. This eclipse promised fuller coverage of the sun, resulting in darker skies, and would also be the last total solar eclipse to cross the U.S. for 20 years. I couldn't miss this one. The

closest location along the path of totality for me was Texas, so of course, being a randonneur, my first thought was to check if any of the Texas rando clubs would be hosting an eclipse ride. I can't tell you how overjoyed I was when I discovered the Lone Star Randonneurs were hosting a populaire, the Great Eclipse Century, specifically to partake in the spectacle.

The route is a lollipop-shaped out-and-back that starts in the town of Cleburne, about thirty minutes south of the Fort Worth metro area. It proceeds in a southeasterly direction toward the town of Hillsboro, which was right along the middle of the path of totality, ensuring maximum time at full coverage: 4 minutes and 23 seconds! The entire route was within the 120-mile-wide path of totality, so the sky turned from full brightness to full coverage and back again over a period of 2 hours and 40 minutes. Stephen Hazelton, who created the route, says he chose the turnaround control point, a cemetery, as a good place to watch the eclipse and hopefully not be crowded out by all the predicted sky watchers, but I think he also chose it for the added 'scare factor' – who knows how the dearly departed might react during a total eclipse? Well, we were going to find out.

In the days leading up to the ride, weather forecasts were consistent and somewhat discouraging with clouds and thunderstorms predicted. The ride



Our intrepid group of eclipse watchers.

—PHOTO DAN DRISCOLL



start time on Monday morning was set so we would be at the Vaughan Cemetery just before totality. As we neared the start time in Cleburne, it appeared that we would miss out on seeing the actual eclipse, given the solid overcast skies above us. The six-person peloton, consisting of three gracious and welcoming LSR hosts (Dan Driscoll, Pam Wright, and our intrepid route creator Stephen) and three starry-eyed out-of-towners that included yours truly, Emily O'Brien, and Jake Kassen, representing the New England Randonneurs, headed out with hopes that the clouds would burn off. The group held a nice pace and whiled away the miles visiting, chatting, and enjoying the lovely early spring wildflowers, green pastures, and occasional herd of longhorn cattle (this is Texas, after all!). As we progressed, we noticed that the skies were slowly clearing, and our excitement grew as we realized we still might get to see the eclipse! We also found the predicted 'Carmegeddon' traffic was non-existent; the roads Steve had chosen had light traffic, and we saw only a few folks parked on the roadside to watch the event although

a lot of people were sitting in front of their homes watching.

After a stop in Hillsboro to refuel and gather sustenance for our viewing picnic, we all realized we needed to pick up the pace for the last ten miles if we were going to make the cemetery before totality, so we cranked up the power to make sure we made it in time. We stopped a couple times along the way and quickly donned our eclipse glasses so we could track the progress, which by this time was nearing 50% coverage.

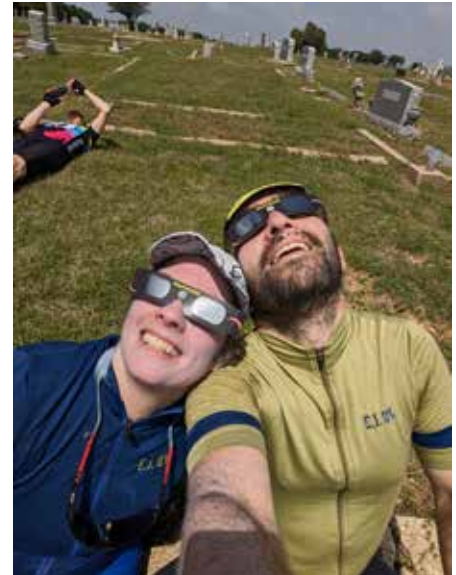
We arrived at the cemetery to widely scattered clouds and were surprised to find a few other groups had set up, but there was plenty of room, and so we picked a spot amongst the tombstones and settled in to watch. We all marveled at how eerie the surroundings became as totality approached. Ever dimmer sunlight trended toward a sunset-like condition, but as we watched through our glasses and the moon completely eclipsed the sun, we took them off to find that it was twilight dark! For four minutes and twenty-three seconds, day turned to night, the stars and planets were visible, and you could look directly at the sun

At totality, the skies were dark and stars were visible, but distant clouds reflected sunlight, brightening the horizon.

—PHOTO JIM HOWELL

Emily and Jake taking in the eclipse in the graveyard.

—PHOTO JAKE KASSEN



without glasses and see its corona with the naked eye – it was amazing! I even think I felt the presence of the long-departed who thought it was time for their nightly haunt.

Then, as the moon began to slip from in front of the sun, it only took a minute or two for the skies to light back up, even though it was probably still around 99% totality – that sun of ours is one bright star! Another few minutes and the skies were as bright as normal, so we took this as our cue to head out for the return, especially given that the latest weather forecast predicted severe weather coming into the area within a few hours.

The return ride was as enjoyable as the outbound leg, and apart from a few overzealous dogs chasing us along the road, it was a nice way to wrap up a great century ride. This ride will remain one of my favorite rando adventures; between Mother Nature's awesome celestial show and the great company, this was just a fantastic day of riding. 🚲

## Bullets and Brevets and the Hot Mess Express

**Prelude.** Thanks to Hamid Akbarian, Shab Memarbashi, and their amazing Atlanta sidekick Wayne King, randos now have an early season “big dance” to kick off the rando year in March. And it turns out it’s a lot of fun, regardless of your fitness level. The inaugural Golden Falcon in 2023 showcased randos at their finest early season fitness; it was, after all, a PBP year, and folks brought their “A game.”

But this year, the talk amongst my friends pre-ride was about who would get kicked off the island first, how we might not survive, how most of us had barely finished a 200k in the lead up to the event. I’d even recently broken my collarbone so my own participation had a giant question mark looming over it. However, once we clipped in, we were easily reminded that so much of our sport is mental; muscle memory, experience, friends, and endurance can help most randos through a difficult ride.

I recommend this ride to anyone who is looking for some fun and is also eager to dust off the winter cobwebs. In my mind it’s meant to be a social ride with friends; you should get the most sleep you’ll ever get on a grand brevet, and it can jump start your preparedness for a strong year of riding. It is not the most scenic route (and that’s not due to design; it’s just because it’s, well,

Florida, and it does not traverse the coastline), and riders should beware that Florida drivers, in my experience, are among the nuttiest in the country.

### Day 1 – Remembering How to Ride a 1200

We started out the vacation – I mean, ride – with a briefing from Hamid early on Wednesday evening as we had a 4 a.m. rollout Thursday. Epicrideweather predicted a cool morning, so knee warmers, wool jerseys, and long-fingered (I may have worn lobster) gloves adorned riders as we assembled around 3:45 a.m. outside the hotel with our reflective gear on. We were also cautioned to take it easy out of the gate; ride-ending potholes awaited from kilometers 10-15, and it was dark. There were about 20 riders.



Alison Carey, Frank DiCarlantonio, Misha Heller, and Georgi Stoychev.

—PHOTOS MISHA HELLER



Georgi Stoychev fixing his 18th flat of the ride.



We quickly broke down into two groups and then about four or five riders dispersed individually off the back. My group did the first 150k without a stop, and when we finally did pause, I was very keen to start discarding some layers of clothing and welcome that Florida sunshine onto my skin. This is why I come to Florida to ride my bike. And to see my old rando friends from afar. Somehow we finished this day around 8 p.m., just shy of 400 westward kilometers, with enough time in the bank to get Thai food takeout and 8 hours of blissful sleep before our alarms went off on Friday morning.

## Day 2 – Victory is Staying Upright in Buckets of Rain

I always say that Day 2 is the hardest of a 1200; your body is angry that you're making it push more after 20 hours in the saddle the day before, but I really don't remember anything super traumatizing about this day. I suppose when you get 8 hours of sleep, somehow your body isn't as angry. Given that we were on the "maximize sleep" ride plan, we opted for a later depart so that folks in our group could utilize the hotel breakfast; I ate home-made granola in my room and bypassed coffee. As I write this, however, I have to confess that I'm getting randonnesia and pulling up Frank's Strava to jog my memory about what happened that day, but it doesn't shed many clues. Ali's Strava ride is aptly titled "The rooster tail" which suggests a wet day and a lack of fendered rando bikes. I'm reminded that this was the rainy

day, but I still can't remember details. There were probably a few punctures and pauses, but still we made it in around 8 p.m.

## Day 3 – Bullets and Broken Cranks

Simply put, the first two days were unremarkable, as evidenced by my poor memory above. But days 3 and 4 were downright wild, throwing some of the most epic and unexpected BS that we've seen in a while. There was sun, rain, headwinds, and "stray bullets from a meth head doing target practice." By this point our group got a little splintered, but the Hot Mess Express of myself, Alison Carey, Frank DiCarlantonio, and Georgi Stoychev stuck together and knocked out the kilometers at a civilized pace. We had some stragglers join on at various points, but our little trio of Northern Virginia riders (plus Texas), stuck together, predictably riding and knowing what to expect from each other as

we are good ride pals back home. The weather was not ideal, but at least it wasn't cold and I didn't have to worry about that anymore. But we got sprayed, and we got a disproportionate amount of headwind. Alas, that's rando.

This was also the most beautiful day from a course perspective: we traveled north into remote national forest and passed many miles without a car in sight. However, the remoteness also brought some surprises as there were hunters in said remote woods doing target practice – in the direction of the road and the riders passing by. We heard bullets from afar. Then suddenly one was very close. And in a snap the next one whizzed within inches of Ali's face. Somehow we were spared and managed to keep pedaling despite these bizarre and random encounters with stray bullets.

About 90k from our finish control, Ali and I decided we needed some girl talk and left the boys behind us. We

Frank DiCarlantonio riding toward a double rainbow.

Alison Carey and Misha Heller gutting out a painful last day.



thought we dropped them and then decided to wait for them to catch on. As they approached, Frank asked for some electrical tape. The lock rings in Frank's crank had come loose somehow and he was having difficulty pedaling. He thought he had a Macgyver move and could tape it in place and eek out the rest of the ride. But no one had tape, and we were literally in the middle of NOWHERE with no prospects of services until we were basically back at the finish control.

We stood around discussing it for a bit and then Georgi, who has come up with some of the most clever bike mechanical fixes I've ever seen, suggested we put some gum in there to hold it in place. I wasn't sure Frank was going to love this idea, but he had no other options. I always carry caffeinated

gum, so I offered to do the honors, carefully triple checking that I was following his wishes. I chewed up some gum and stuck it in there, and lo and behold, it stuck!! It was about this point that Mother Nature decided to take another dump on us and unleashed even more soul-crushing rain. But we were treated to a double rainbow, so there was a little silver lining.

Just 5 miles from the finish Georgi gets a flat, quickly fixes it, and we think we're in the homestretch when tragedy strikes again. Half a mile from the finish, and the gum inside Frank's crank decides it has had enough and the crank just falls off. It was a blessing that he only signed up for the 1000k because he wouldn't have been able to complete 1200k like that.

We're soaking wet and kind of beat down because, spoiler alert, Ali was also puking off the bike this entire time. But Frank walks it in to finish his first RUSA 1000k and earn his RUSA Cup. Frank and Georgi are now done with

this event and at this point it's up to the ladies to pull it together and ride another 200k the next day for our first 1200 of 2024.

#### Day 4 – What the Actual F

Alison spent the night puking her brains out in our hotel room (She gave me permission to mention this here.) Honestly I'm not sure how she finished this and pulled it together to ride, and I have nothing but respect for this badass woman who is 100000% both grit and fun, what a combo! And she's also just a straight up beast on the bike, so you better watch out. We opined that she had food poisoning from our penultimate control. (In retrospect, it was not, but we'll still maintain our vow of NEVER EATING GAS STATION HOT BAR FOOD EVER AGAIN and will always choose a caloric deficit over fried mystery items.) So we put our money on her getting better as the day went on. We went out a little early to get a head start, and again, I'm just in

awe that Ali pulled it together. We very slowly trudged along in the dark, cold, miserable morning. Mother Nature wasn't trying to give us any advantages, either, as she seemed to want to hurt us with headwinds both ways. Alas, that's classic rando. The highlight of the day was seeing Georgi at the turnaround. He was supposed to be en route back to D.C. but decided we needed one little extra boost before our final push. Spirits lifted from seeing our ride buddy, we slowly fought our way back through 15 mile per hour headwinds to the finish.

Relieved to be done, riddled with saddle sores and other nonsense, we showered and then waited as other riders came back in. Witnessing a rando finish his or her first 1200k is not something to miss. We were so pleased to welcome back first timers Elly Winer and Rodrigo Murua. Rodrigo's finish was especially memorable; he was so caught off guard to see his comrades cheering him in that he was moved to

tears. It was a humble reminder not to take this all for granted and to thank your body and friends and everything and everyone that helped contribute to getting this thing done.

### Day 5 – The Aftermath

Most 1200k ride reports don't get a Day 5 summary. Disclaimer: don't proceed reading if you have a weak stomach. We later learned that, unfortunately, Ali didn't have food poisoning from the gas station. An hour into the drive home, I suddenly become ill and found myself puking my own brains out in Frank's car, multiple times and through multiple clothing changes. Somehow he decided not to leave me naked on the side of Interstate 95 – I wouldn't have blamed him if he had chosen that path – and drove six more hours until his body decided to take a turn for the worse. At this point, lil' ol' me decides I can rally, maybe; but not before I have a

desperate I'm-on-my-deathbed teledoc call and urgently request that some nausea medicine be called into the closest Wal-Mart pharmacy.

The Hot Mess Express continued its decline with unrealistic hopes of returning to work the next day. Georgi claimed he had an iron stomach until 12 hours later when he got taken out, too. It turns out that a bad case of Norovirus was circulating in the south that week and decided it needed to make a mark on four sad randonneurs. I can honestly say that the aftermath of a ride has never been that bad – except for Coulee Challenge where I also found myself puking all day thanks to an e. coli exposure. We probably should have stopped and gotten a hotel room, but that's not what randos do. This one was definitely memorable in all the wrong ways, but at the end of it I can confidently say, despite all of the madness, 10/10 will still do it again. And I hope to see you there!! 🚲

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

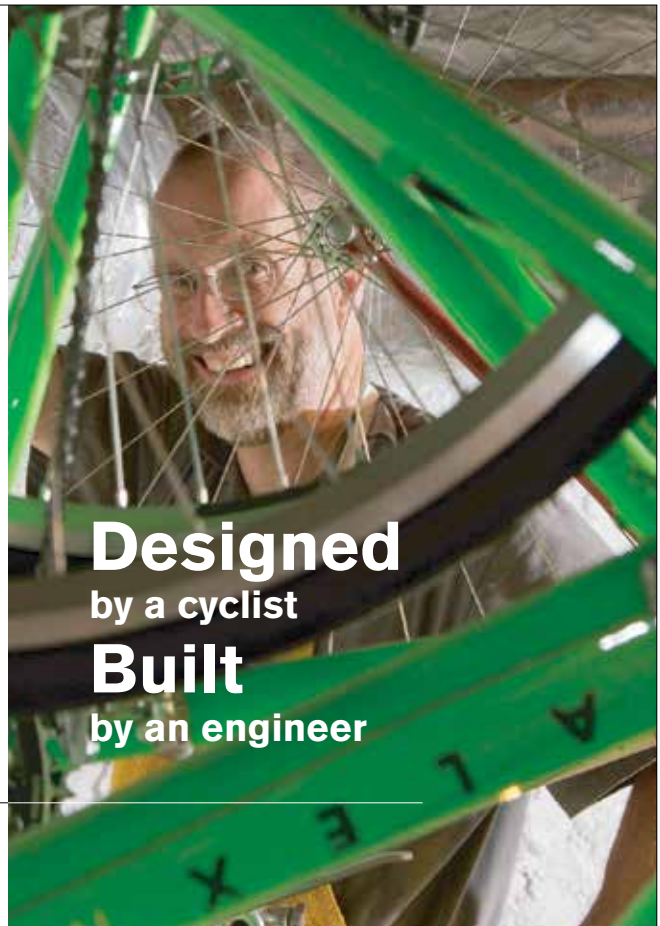
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## Making a Mess into a Mixed Surface Tour of the West (Part One)

I should start off saying that the ride organizers made the right decision to cancel this ride.

In 2021 I flew to San Francisco to ride the SFR Hopland 400K, and in doing so, finish an SR series. I used the ride as an excuse to visit my folks (or maybe it was the other way around), who lived near Sacramento at the time.

I'd spent a little bit of time in Northern California in my late teens and early twenties, cutting my teeth on road riding and floating lazily through a few semesters at community college. It had been some time since I'd ridden bikes there, and I'd forgotten how much I enjoyed the variation in terrain and ecology. To date, Hopland is one of my favorite brevets of this distance.

So the following year I expressed interest in SFR's Golden Gate 1000K. This was to be a mixed-surface brevet, "drawing on inspiration from the SFR adventure series."

That part of the world is prone to some extreme weather in late summer. It's wise to plan for extreme heat and forest fires. Having already bought plane tickets and a night's hotel stay in San Francisco, I watched the forecasted temps slowly creep up in the weeks before my flight. Conservative estimates predicted highs in the mid 110's in the valleys between Sacramento and Williams, where we'd

be on the first day. A week before the start, the ride organizers said they were considering canceling the ride. A few days later, I received the email with the unfortunate news.

But anyway, I'd already paid travel expenses to go out there and I wasn't going to let that deter me from doing some riding on my own. Lemons and lemonade, and so on.

I flew to Oakland on what I recall to be a Friday, broke down my cardboard bike box, assembled the bike, and rolled it alongside me onto the Bart at the Oakland Airport. In the hotel that night, I spent the evening fiddling with the bags strapped to my handlebars.

### DAY 1: 145mi (233km) Daly City, CA – Gilroy, CA

The route I'd mapped for myself was going to be fairly simple: I'd take the train to Oakland and drop off a small backpack of clothes and travel essentials at the Amtrak station in Emeryville, take the train back all the way to Daly City and start my ride in earnest from there.

The climate was unbelievably comfortable that morning when I disembarked the train, given the impending heat wave. Early moves on the pedals through the hills in the South Bay were harder than I'd expected; I must have been shaking off

The road to Henry Coe State Park.

—PHOTOS JONATHAN FEY



Looking south from the slopes of Mt. Diablo.



some travel fatigue, or else I just always forget how steep some of those hills are. I tacked East and West through the hills until I arrived in Woodside, where I stopped quickly for a Coke and something to eat on the go at Robert's Market. It was starting to heat up.

I took the very scenic Skyline Boulevard South and South East, and holy cow what a road. If you haven't ridden it, I think you should. You can look out across what feels like forever.

But okay, it was getting pretty hot by now, I think around 11 a.m. or so. (After writing this sentence, I looked back at the Strava recording of this ride; apparently "getting pretty hot" means 105 degrees Fahrenheit).

I stopped at a volunteer fire department to find a spigot. It's a little hazy this far in the past, but I recall having found one. This isn't the first time I'd fill off a questionable outdoor tap on this trip.

Skyline Blvd T's into another road, off of which I turned right, and spilled into a very steep, twisting downhill in a redwood forest. This road is called Upper Zyante and did I mention it's very steep? I love it; it's got these perfectly cambered 170 degree hairpins at -10 percent slope. Really fun.

You might notice that I haven't yet talked about gravel. Getting to that.

The trees gave some shade, but wow, it was still really hot. I crossed a small creek, turned around, laid my bike down and hiked into the small stream to put my head in the water. The shadows collapsed around me there, and they shook a little, letting in some light which reflected off of the water. It rendered the effect of standing between two stained glass windows illuminated by two suns. I wasn't exactly sure what I was doing.

My goal for this day was to reach Henry Coe State Park, near Gilroy, where I'd meet my sister who had planned to backpack in. We would camp near a small lake. I was only halfway there, so I had some work to do.

I hustled down a somewhat busy highway toward Santa Cruz. There were redwoods there still, but I felt as though I was dodging the shadows. After a while, the heat relented to the cool of the coastal breeze, and then I was winding through slow weekend traffic in Santa Cruz.

I started to track inland some. I crested a few small coastal foothills, and carried wind at my back toward Watsonville, or rather the wind carried me. Early afternoon light met me there. I was really tired. I wandered into a tiny little off-route gas station and bought some sort of ice cream thing and a lot of water. I probably bought some other things.

I made a series of 90 degree turns and a slow run up toward a small, shallow mountain pass. I shared the road with more traffic than I would have preferred to on Hecker Pass. It's just how you get somewhere sometimes. In another situation I might have liked charging up its evenly round, wide hair pins, but that day I was more focused on Getting There.

Air dryer on high and on hot was my reward for the effort at the top. I worked into it like shoveling coal into a fire all the way down into the valley

and Gilroy. At Gilroy, I don't remember the smell of garlic, although that's what I hear it's famous for. It had a certain smell but it was distinctly Not Garlic.

106 degrees Fahrenheit. A probably not-that-quick stop in a 7-11 for some cucumber lime Gatorade (I recommend this) and camp food. Camp food: jerky, some of those ham and cheese combo pre-packaged sticks, a few other things I don't remember now. More water.

South and East. The afternoon gave way to late afternoon gradually, as it does. There were some cows on the hills. The hills were yellow with dead grass. The cows were black or dark brown. They were doing their thing; I was doing my thing. Eventually, after some up and down, the pavement gave way and a gray, chalky gravel carried me forward. There was a bridge leading toward an old hot springs area. I stopped to take a picture of my bike there.

Henry Coe State Park is criss-crossed by a network of narrow gravel roads and ribbons of single track trails. The park itself is vast, stretching across 87,000 acres of steep hills, blanketed in grass and punctuated with clusters of oak and pine trees.

The riding was very hard. I'd read about the "Coe Factor" while doing research for this ride. It's what mountain bike riders describe as the tendency for the elevation in this area to creep up on you. It doesn't help that the dirt is fine and loose, like moon dust. I averaged about 3.5 mph for 4 miles, some of it

The old bridge to be closed  
Gilroy Yomato Hot Springs.



walking. Strava tells me the gradient averaged 8% for that distance. It felt like there were 10% stretches for miles at a time. I'm not ashamed to say I walked quite a lot. It was 91 degrees, still.

By the time I reached the lake, it was dark, but I saw a small light up ahead. My sister had found a good spot on a small hill near the shore of the lake to bivvy. We shared most of the camp food. I made up my sleeping pad. It was still so warm that I didn't need a sleeping bag. Nevertheless I slept hard.

## DAY 2

When I woke up I had welts across my back. Fever dreams of ants poking little needles in me turned out to be true. I itched like crazy. I thought about the writer Richard Braughtigan, that maybe there were trout in this lake, and about where to filter water.

The morning stretched out across the lake and the hill beyond the lake in the way it only can when it's unperturbed by the sounds of engines. When I say it was totally still, what I mean is that you could hear everything important. The small lake was a glass eye, pointing upward.

My sister and I embarked on an ambulatory circumnavigation of this lake seeking a small strip or jetty from which to filter water. It wasn't an easy one; we bushwhacked for a while before finding a spot with a somewhat less slimy surface on the water. The rest of the short hike was actually worse. I collected thorns in my socks, and my shins wore the markings of branches crossing the trail. Even so, we made it. I packed up my pad and set off on the dirt road, while she set off on the path which would take her back toward the trailhead where we'd meet later in the day.

Hard as my two days of riding were, her two days of hiking were likely harder. Bereft of the benefit of

the phenomenon of air moving over sweat over skin at a rate of speed substantial enough to cool a body moving through space, she nevertheless traveled those steep hills on foot and with a backpack in remarkably high temperatures. Chapeau.

I retraced my tire tracks from the night before. It had cooled some, and the little climbing I did was rewarded by a generally trending negative gradient which kept things temperate. The roads in Coe, while steep, have a relatively predictable surface, and I was able to carry a decent rate of speed through the many corners on my way back to meet my sister at the trailhead parking lot.

When I came back to the pavement, I passed that trailhead and continued on a short way to a volunteer fire station, where I refilled my bottles off of a tap on the outside of the building. Strangely, there was a swarm of bees nearby, so I was careful not to disturb them as I took water from the spigot.

I found my sister's car parked in the lot and stopped in the shade, laid out my sleeping pad and napped for a little while. It was still early, but it was already getting hot. A park ranger came by and checked on me; I told her I was waiting on my sister, who was hiking out. They try to keep track of people in there, so she knew what I was talking about. A little later, she came out of the woods, we got in her car, and drove back to Gilroy.

Gilroy: more of the cucumber lime Gatorade, a Michelada in the gas station parking lot, and then we drove back to Oakland for some street tacos. Still so hot.

After tacos we drove to Walnut Creek, I unpacked my bike from the trunk of her sedan, we said our goodbyes and I rode down the road toward Mt. Diablo. I stopped at yet another gas station to hydrate. There was a crazy looking modified camper there, on its way back from Burning Man. I finally started to make my way up the mountain with my camping gear. I got off the main road for a little bit, rode on a wide double track toward an overlook to watch the sky start to gray out, then retraced and continued on. I stopped at one of the lower campsites, down a dirt road a little ways, hiked over some small rocks and found a place to lay my sleeping pad.

At a campsite nearby, there were kids singing karaoke to Baby Shark. I was too tired to care and fell asleep with some small clouds making messages across the sky. I was somewhat preoccupied with the agenda for the following day, where I'd planned to ride back into the bay, get a hotel, and get on the Amtrak to meet my friends in Western Colorado to ride back home.

If all of this stuff coming up sounds complicated, it was. I'll get to that too, and more gravel. 🚲

## TO THE EDITOR:

I want to share some thoughts about Mark Mullen's perceptive meditation, *Life in the Fast Lane*, Spring 2024, since I was named as someone who shaped some of those thoughts. When RUSA started offering UAF audax brevets in 2022 I leapt at the chance to organize one, which put Mark and me on the ride he discussed. My path that led to audax-style riding is ironic and unexpected, and therefore is worth sharing. I have been cycling as an adult for 44 years, and randonneuring for 15 years. When I was in the young career/young marriage/young kids phase of life, riding was for maximizing adrenaline at all times. In the late 1990s I even bought a USAC racing license, joined a team, and became a lousy low cat racer.

It was club rides with the best riders on the team that opened my eyes to what I had not dreamed. I was riding with amateurs who had won the Tour of Somerville and the California road race championship, talent which eventually attracted pros Brian Walton, Marla Streb, and Chris Eatough to our Saturday rides. My role in those rides was to show up, keep up (as best I could), shut up (about how to ride a bike), listen, learn, and have fun.

And it was fun, not because we always went so fast, but because for about four months a year we went so slow. Before cyclocross was widely embraced in North America as a fall and winter lactic acid fest, these racers regrouped physically and emotionally from a summer of racing, and went for long group rides full of fellowship, autumn leaves, and even winter snow. Hard efforts were discouraged at that time of year. It was a lot like audax.

You don't have to join a UAF brevet to ride with fellowship. The next time you see a randonneur in your rearview, ease up a bit and join in a conversation, it might turn into a real blast, or the kind of lifelong friendships I made as a low cat racer. The difference between that and finishing your ride a few minutes sooner is unmistakable. I have not abandoned what remains of my speed, but you'll love riding more if you go more than one speed, and ease up on competing with yourself and anyone else.

— Gardner M. Duvall, RUSA 5770



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## The Brake Breakdown

Life is full of trade-offs, like mowing the lawn or going riding. Which food can I keep down, Fig Newtons or Snickers? But some are more important than others. When the time comes to shop for a new bike, one choice that comes up pretty quickly is rim brakes versus disc.

In reality, if you're shopping from one of the international bike brands, there are fewer and fewer rim brake options available in the higher quality bikes. So, depending on the bike you're looking at, this might not be a big choice, but for this Nuts and Bolts article, I'll outline a few of the trade-offs when considering disc or rim brakes.

Before I go any further, I know this is a bit like talking politics at the holiday party, and I'm asking for a

flood of irate emails, but I'd like to go on the record as saying that I've used both rim and disc brakes successfully in randonneuring for years, and both can work great. It's all about the trade-offs and what's most important to you. With that out of the way, let's start with the classics, shall we? Rim brakes have been the trusty sidekick for cyclists for decades, providing a lightweight and budget-friendly option since before the plastic era.

So what are some of the pluses for rim brakes?

**1. Light is Right:** Rim brakes are generally going to be a little lighter. Perfect for those who like to see how light they can keep things. Is this a deal-breaker? Not really, but for some folks, it's a consideration.

**2. DIY Maintenance Party:** Like turning your own wrenches or making roadside adjustments and repairs? Adjustments and pad replacements are generally a breeze. I know cantilevers can be a pain in the @\$&#!, and discs can be serviced roadside as well, but generally for the DIY crowd, rim brakes are tried and true.

So what's not to love, right? Well, there can be challenges.

**1. When it Pours:** Rim brakes might leave you wanting a little more grip. At a minimum, it takes a turn or two of the wheel to clear the water, so you have to anticipate a little more stopping distance. Like to keep things clean? A long day in wet conditions can turn your wheels into a mess of black grime.

**2. Wear and Tear:** Wear and tear on the rims are real. Rim brakes can be a bit hard on your wheel's braking surface, potentially sending your rims into early retirement, necessitating a new wheel build or purchase.

A side note on rim brakes: it used to be one of the positives for rim brakes was that spares were generally more available at local shops, but with the increase in disc brake use, that's not always the case anymore. The best solution? Check your brakes before any ride, and for the longer rides





preemptively replace the pads or cables. You can also carry a spare set of brake pads in your tool kit just as insurance; it's easy and they don't take up much space.

Now, let's talk about the cool kids in town – disc brakes. Are they the right fit for your long-distance adventures? Maybe. Let's talk about some of the benefits of disc brakes.

**1. Stopping Power:** Disc brakes bring the stopping power, rain or shine. They clear water off the disc faster and tend to be more predictable in wet weather. They also have the benefit of still working well even when your rim gets bent (true, you can loosen a rim brake with a bent rim to get you home, but the discs tend to continue to work well even with a bent rim).

**2. Size Matters:** Like to live life on the wide side? Disc brakes give you more flexibility to roll with those fatter tires, allowing you to get off paved roads and be comfy. Depending on the bike set-up, they might allow you to

swap wheel sizes, too, making it possible to have one bike for tarmac and serious gravel riding.

It's not all perfection on the disc brake side either; a couple things to consider:

**1. Brake Jargon Overload:**

Feeling a bit overwhelmed by the brake jargon? Disc brakes come with more components and can be a bit techier, making them a challenge for the DIY bike mechanic, especially if you're running hydraulic brakes. They require additional tools to service, and roadside repairs are more challenging.

**2. Money Matters:** Bikes equipped with disc brakes generally cost a little more over the long haul, both in terms of the initial investment and ongoing maintenance (if you're not doing it yourself). They also tend to require a little more TLC over time to keep things from rubbing, and when replacing pads.

**3. Taking Flight:** Another consideration with disc brakes is air travel.

Special care needs to be taken to pad and secure the rotor to prevent it from getting bumped and bent. If air travel is in the plans and you're using hydraulic brakes, you'll also want to take a little extra time to carefully pack and avoid damaging your brake lines.

To be clear, this is not an exhaustive list; there are lots of other pros and cons for the different types and brands of brakes. But I hope this provides some things to consider as you look at the brakes you'd like to run on your next bike.

So which side are you on? Are you sticking with the classic rim brakes for that old-school reliability, or are you ready to embrace the future of disc brakes? I love all brakes, especially the ones that are dialed in and predictable on a fast mountain descent!

Remember, it's not just about the brakes; it's about the ride. So enjoy your next ride, whatever you use to stop with. 🚲

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17178	Marino, Tim P	St Paul	MN
17188	Marino, Paul	West Saint Paul	MN
17102	Wall, John	Woodbury	MN
16885	Wolf, Bryan	Brentwood	MO
17078	Fuson, Timothy K	Saint Joseph	MO
16888	Hittinger, Charlie	Asheville	NC
17041	Kiser, Nathaniel	Burnsville	NC
16836	Bogges, Kyle	Cary	NC
16875	Odum, Danny	Morrisville	NC
16876	Odum, Megan	Morrisville	NC
16867	Cherry, Jonas D	Raleigh	NC
17066	Jaravovich, Vlad A	Raleigh	NC
16940	Nelson, Robert W	Raleigh	NC
16847	Welles, A	Raleigh	NC
16835	Steelman, David Talmadge	Rolesville	NC
16851	Stewart, Eric	Rolesville	NC
17067	Hayden, Ryan	Wake Forest	NC
17072	Altarac, Curt	Wilmington	NC
17146	Bean, Donna R	Menoken	ND
16930	McClain, John T	Omaha	NE
16931	McClain, Kimmai	Omaha	NE
16980	Palazzo, Lucio	Collingswood	NJ
17064	Healy, Tim	Hoboken	NJ
17179	Rydin, Pontus	Mendham	NJ
17190	McLoone, Peter D	Merchantville	NJ
17127	Schwartz, Joel	Mount Laurel	NJ
17184	Bouchard, Patrick Goerges	New Jersey City	NJ
16963	Sharp, Olivia	Passaic Park	NJ
17047	Lawless, Matthew	Princeton	NJ
16891	Califano, Michael J	Ridgewood	NJ
16992	Qian, Joshua	Sea Girt	NJ
16928	Caro, Brook J	Albany	NY
17024	Su, Amanda	Astoria	NY
16949	Grant, Justin M	Brooklyn	NY
17110	Kimundi, Liz	Brooklyn	NY
16870	Panitch, Tucker B	Brooklyn	NY
16838	Schack, Paul S	Brooklyn	NY
17107	Servais, Quentin	Brooklyn	NY
16880	Shyr, Eric	Brooklyn	NY
17180	Smith, Wendy	Brooklyn	NY
17166	Meszier, Patrick J	Buffalo	NY
16917	Herron, Tim	Canandaigua	NY
17097	Joyce, Thomas Jake	Chelsea	NY
17194	Batista, Kelvin	Corona	NY
17056	Harbin, Beau	Cortland	NY
16820	Harvey, Levi K	Elmira	NY
16977	Kather, Aaron T	Elmira Heights	NY
16911	Tinelli, John	Franklinville	NY
17094	Brooks, Ellen Grace	Ithaca	NY
17093	Garner, Thomas Austin	Ithaca	NY
17055	Nicholson, Zac	Jackson Heights	NY
17151	Horan, James B	Jamesville	NY
17015	Loscalzo, Daniel P	Mineola	NY
16879	Scharner, Juergen	New York	NY
17053	Crane, Linc R	New York	NY
17131	Stein, Jeremy	Pittsford	NY
16973	Strack, Keith	Saratoga Springs	NY
16844	Tracy, Cheryl L	Saratoga Springs	NY
17115	Swank, Katy A	Scottsville	NY
17140	Alonge, Domenic	Southfields	NY
17017	Caimano, Thomas B	Walworth	NY
17126	Wunderlich, Brian M	Woodstock	NY
16981	Main, Richard W	Columbus	OH
17058	Pennza, Patrick Joseph	Columbus	OH
17040	Persaud, Jim	Columbus	OH
16852	Hoyer, Eric	Dayton	OH
16972	Hathaway, Julia L	Granville	OH
16925	Hardewig, Patrick J	Hamilton	OH
17177	Schulz, Kristen	Milford	OH
17025	Widenhofer, Gene	Richmond Heights	OH
16915	Davis, Cynthia	Beaverton	OR
17034	Fisher, Danny	Bend	OR
16822	Faris, Tanner	Eugene	OR
17008	Zoleta, Joseph Feliciano	Eugene	OR
16896	Anderson, Carl Ray	Mill City	OR
17059	Baskett, Brian S	Milwaukie	OR
17001	Daly IV, Tom A	Milwaukie	OR
16914	Simons, Tori	Milwaukie	OR
16855	Wish, Jonathon Reed	Milwaukie	OR
16960	Freed, Jason	Portland	OR
16967	Heisler, Jane	Portland	OR
16856	Keane, Ryan	Portland	OR
16984	Patrick, Lucia	Portland	OR
17068	Wroblewski, Paul	Portland	OR
16832	Bradley, Mark	Roseburg	OR
16998	Ceraolo, Joseph	Bethlehem	PA
16936	Fox, Nate D	Doylestown	PA
17028	Crispell, Brian	Media	PA
17098	Weaver, John F	Newtown Square	PA
17161	Hreha Jr, Ron A	North Apollo	PA
16997	Sohnly, Kevin M	North Wales	PA
16897	Crouch, Tim	Philadelphia	PA
17154	Donovan, Phoebe	Philadelphia	PA
17165	Faller, August	Philadelphia	PA
17139	Gadomski, Mike	Philadelphia	PA
16857	Gleeson, Molly	Philadelphia	PA
17104	Kell-Fien, Timothy M	Philadelphia	PA
16862	Ngyuen, Mai-Linh	Philadelphia	PA
17023	Piven, Jakob	Philadelphia	PA
17048	Smith, Christopher J	Philadelphia	PA
17145	Van Duyen, Dylan	Philadelphia	PA
16941	Donnelly, Anna S.	Pittsburgh	PA
16942	Donnelly, William Dean	Pittsburgh	PA
17162	Weber, Christopher	Pittsburgh	PA
16827	Key, Spencer	York	PA
17118	Sosa, Alfredo	Cumberland	RI
17101	Adams, Tony	Providence	RI
17106	Batten, Alexander D	Providence	RI
17026	Bottenus, Tyson E	Providence	RI
16988	Cole-Kink, Dylan	Providence	RI
17120	Nicholas, Khristopher	Providence	RI
16989	Carr, Nicholas Olcott	Westerly	RI
16818	Dowsley, Joseph	Greenville	SC
16843	Fink, Jonathan M	Greenville	SC
16959	Morejon, Sharon K	Apison	TN
17012	Graves, Joe A	Knoxville	TN
17141	Ward, David Lynn	Dallas	TX
16905	Varghese, Tennyson	Grapevine	TX
17181	McLean, Stuart	Belfast	UK
17133	Hughes, Elijah Z	Logan	UT
17132	Longson, Connor J	Logan	UT
17038	Pelka, Michal B	Ogden	UT
17128	Gilfether, Patrick Stone	Salt Lake City	UT
17037	Russell, Jamie	Salt Lake City	UT
17135	Stum, Rosemary	Salt Lake City	UT
16829	Wright, Grady	Salt Lake City	UT
17136	Lundgren, Kari	Sandy	UT
17158	Butler, Wayne S	Syracuse	UT
16842	Griffin, Jaimie C	Alexandria	VA
16979	Nath, Prithaj	Arlington	VA
17153	Amos, Liz	Roanoke	VA
16986	Williams, Ken	Vienna	VA
17144	Jordan III, W. Daniel	Burlington	VT
17196	Hansen, Krishan G	Bellevue	WA
17150	Potter, Michael A	Bothell	WA
17046	Richardson, Steven D	Bremerton	WA
17174	McCorison, Jim	Eastsound	WA
17031	Herdlevar, John E	Everett	WA
17095	Sonne, Andre J	Goldendale	WA
17054	Rhoades, Byron Donald	Olympia	WA
17099	Williams, Karin	Olympia	WA
17173	Wiersma, D	Rochester	WA
16996	Bannister, Elizabeth	Seattle	WA
16863	Claessens, Adam J	Seattle	WA
17123	Goheen, Grant	Seattle	WA
17030	Harmon, Aryn	Seattle	WA
17039	Hartigan, Calder J	Seattle	WA
17035	Hunt, Benjamin S	Seattle	WA
16869	Ketterle, Holger	Seattle	WA
17091	Kim, Sora	Seattle	WA
17086	Kong, Xiangzhou	Seattle	WA
17042	Lilly, Ben	Seattle	WA
16975	Moorthy, Thangam	Seattle	WA
16944	Movius, A James	Seattle	WA
16859	Petrie, Evan	Seattle	WA
17057	Young, Ryan T	Seattle	WA
16922	Kupinse, William	Tacoma	WA
17063	Klein, Carlton	Vancouver	WA
17062	Riemersma, Tori	Vancouver	WA
17168	Halper, Peter	Fond Du Lac	WI
17169	Halper, Robin	Fond Du Lac	WI
17187	Dirnbauer, Karie K	Holmen	WI
17000	Murphree, Joseph D	Madison	WI
16884	Wagner, Wyatt	Union Grove	WI

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# Dennis Desmarais and His Climate Rides

BY MACKENZIE COLE, CLIMATE RIDE PARTNERSHIPS AND PARTICIPANT MANAGER

When Patrick Colleran first met RUSA member Dennis Desmarais (#8003) at the 2017 Climate Ride in Glacier National Park he remembered thinking, “This guy really likes to bike.” As the Operations Manager for Climate Ride, a non-profit dedicated to helping people turn their passion for sport into good for the planet, Patrick has seen a lot of hardcore cyclists, but Dennis might be the most hardcore of them all.

Glacier Ride is a hallmark Climate Ride event that covers over 200 miles in and around Glacier National Park. For most folks, the big climbs and long days are more than enough. As Patrick remembers it, the bear grass was blooming and riders were discussing the long miles as well as if they might run into a grizzly. And then there

was Dennis, coming in after long days of riding with the group, asking if there were options for “bonus miles.” According to Patrick, “It didn’t matter if it was a long route or a short route, he always would double the miles. He even rode on the rest day!”

I wasn’t lucky enough to meet Dennis back in the early days of Climate

Ride when he still joined us for group trips, but I’ve been fortunate to work with him for the last several years as he brought that same drive to his independent Climate Rides, each of which he planned and carried out on his own. These solo routes have been epic, both in terms of the funds raised and the miles put in – often more than 1,000 miles and over \$10,000 per ride. The money Dennis raises goes to fund the activities of the Connecticut chapter of the Sierra Club, where he also volunteers and provides IT support.

His devotion to the climate cause is exemplified by moments such as: the year he zipped past Niagara Falls without stopping because he had another 100 miles to get to his hotel and only five hours of daylight remaining. In 2019, he biked 2,000k from Connecticut to Florida through torrential storms and a tornado. Last year, after already raising over \$20,000, Dennis was all set to do another 1,000 miles when he broke his ribs. He felt he owed his supporters an epic ride, so for six days he got on his trainer in his basement and didn’t get off for 12 hours straight each day, clocking a whopping 1,400 miles.

This May, he’ll be back at it and he’s plotted yet another grueling challenge biking from Columbia, South Carolina back to his home in Glastonbury – over



Dennis about to single speed through the pouring rain.

—PHOTO STEVE BARRY

On Going to the Sun Road in  
Glacier National Park.

—PHOTO UNKNOWN

1,000 miles. It's not just the miles though. With this ride, Dennis will blow past the \$100,000 mark in his lifetime fund raising. He's also hoping to inspire 100 people to take action on our climate. To mark this occasion, I sat down with Dennis to check in and learn more about what drives him.

**Mackenzie Cole (MC): How did you get into cycling?**

**Dennis Desmarais (DD):** I had been an avid skier, but one too many knee surgeries forced me to find another sport. While I struggled to leave behind snow sports, I now realize that the injuries led me to discover my passion. At this point, it is hard to imagine that cycling wasn't a part of my life until age 30. Few things give me more joy than exploring the world on two wheels.

**MC: Your love of cycling has shone through to all of us at Climate Ride. This is your fourteenth ride to inspire action and raise funds for our planet. Let's go back to the beginning – what started you on this road?**

**DD:** My journey began when I stumbled upon a Climate Ride ad in a magazine. It struck me as unique amidst the typical charity ride promotions I'd seen before. While I had taken part in various charity rides previously, it wasn't until that moment that I truly felt empowered



to contribute to a cause as impactful as advocating for a cleaner, greener future. Seeing that advertisement sparked a realization within me that I could play a part in ensuring a livable planet for future generations, including my own children.

**MC: When you look at all of your rides, are there any stand-out moments?**

**DD:** There are so many memories (or should I say nightmares?) One particularly unforgettable moment occurred during my Climate Ride expedition three years ago, another 1,000-mile six-day challenge. On the fifth day the weather took a turn, with temperatures lingering in the mid-40s and downpours relentlessly pounding

me. With 70 miles left to cover in a day's ride stretching about 165 miles, disaster struck as my electronic shifter malfunctioned amidst the rugged terrain of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Stranded in the cold, drenched by the rain, and unable to shift gears, I faced a daunting challenge. However, driven by determination and fueled by the support of those who had backed me on this journey, I pressed on. Not only did they contribute to support my fund raising, but they motivated me to push beyond what I thought was possible – or rational.

**MC: There's something to knowing all those folks have your back that really can help you push past your limits. What do you hope people who hear about what you are doing will take from it?**

**DD:** My aspirations have evolved over the years. Up until this year, I had hoped that people hearing about my Climate Ride would feel inclined to contribute to my fund raising efforts, knowing that their donations would support the Connecticut Chapter of

***Every action, no matter how small, contributes towards the collective effort to create a more sustainable future, and I aim to inspire at least 100 such actions through my ride.***



Dennis meeting his daughters at the end of a Climate Ride.

—PHOTO LISA DESMARAIS

the Sierra Club in making a positive impact. While I still appreciate the financial contributions generously made by many, this year, my hope extends beyond monetary support.

I aim to inspire at least 100 actions in support of a cleaner and greener future. While donating remains a significant form of action, I recognize that not everyone can contribute financially. This year I am encouraging individuals to take tangible steps towards positive change, whether it's purchasing a recycling bin, joining the Sierra Club, engaging in conversations about the science of climate change with friends, etc. Every action, no matter how small, contributes towards the collective effort to create a more sustainable future, and I aim to inspire at least 100 such actions through my ride.

**MC: What's your advice to someone who looks at what you've done, raising over \$100,000 to help our planet, and thinks, there's no way I could do that?**

**DD:** When I started 14 years ago I also would have said "There's no way I could do that!" I was especially uncomfortable looking for donations during my first few rides, and just meeting the fund raising minimum was about as big of a goal as I could commit to. But as the signs of global warming increased over the years, I felt that I had to do more. The Climate Ride team offered great support as I tried to increase my fund raising. And of course, more and more friends and family chose to take action and contribute each year. So I had a small and modest start, but now I have momentum on my side.

**MC: Why do you feel cycling is uniquely suited to bringing attention to the issue of climate change?**

**DD:** That's a great question. To be honest, I don't think cycling is somehow better or more uniquely suited. I think there are so many ways in which people can take action and bring attention to the climate crisis. However, cycling is uniquely suited to

me. It is my passion, and there is nothing more rewarding for me than to use that passion to take action on climate change.

**MC: Are there talking points you use when out on a fund raising ride?**

**DD:** My Climate Rides are usually five- or six-day journeys, with daily mileage totals between 150 and 210 miles. I have to admit that my most common talking points when speaking to people along the ride are "Where is the next convenience store?" or "I'm out of water – could I use your hose?"

My strategy over the years has been to do extremely physically challenging endurance rides, and to use the magnitude of the ride to bring attention, through social media, after finishing each day.

In my experience, most people I meet when I'm on a brevet or other long-distance ride are impressed with cyclists, but at the same time they think we are crazy.

**MC: How do you overcome that "What nutty thing are you doing?" incredulity and establish interest in your goals in the people you meet?**

**DD:** In years past I used the "crazy" angle to my advantage by connecting it to a "crazy" (or at least very ambitious) fund raising goal. I also used "crazy" to describe the inaction on the climate crisis (or outright opposition) of many of our leaders. I'll still do some of that in my messaging this year, but I also have some messaging that attempts to minimize the emphasis on what I personally am doing. Instead, I am pointing out that if it wasn't for the support and action of others, my bike ride would be just that -- a fun but selfish thing to do. But because of the actions of those who support me, and

***When considering the magnitude of climate change and the challenges it presents, it's natural to feel overwhelmed.***

those who might get inspired to also take some sort of action, I now have the power of the peloton; my ride is making a difference in the fight for a cleaner and greener future.

**MC: It almost feels like you are taking on the role of a traveling salesman, and that you have to sell the future of the planet. A big ask. How does cycling help you close the deal?**

**DD:** Cycling is my passion. I'm not what you would call an extrovert, and I definitely wouldn't succeed as a sales professional. But whenever the opportunity comes up to talk about cycling, you might think that indeed I

am a traveling salesman. That's why I think the Climate Ride is so uniquely suited to me – it allows me to use my passion to engage and inspire others to help the Sierra Club take action in the fight against climate change.

**MC: A lot of people feel overwhelmed when they think of climate change – where do you find hope, or at least the inspiration to keep doing these rides?**

**DD:** When considering the magnitude of climate change and the challenges it presents, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. Personally, I've encountered daunting moments during some of my most crazy adventure rides,

where doubts and fears of failure creep in. However, I've learned to combat these feelings by approaching the ride one pedal stroke at a time.

Similarly, when confronting the enormity of addressing climate change, it's easy to feel disheartened. Yet, I find hope and motivation by focusing on taking action in the present moment, and doing what I can to contribute. Instead of becoming paralyzed by the enormity of the task, I choose to inspire others to join in the effort, recognizing that collective action is crucial in tackling this global challenge.

**MC: Thanks Dennis, for pushing for the planet and inspiring so many to take that first pedal stroke towards a better future for us all!**

If you've been inspired to follow in his draft and take action, he'd love to hear from you. You can email him at [dennis.desmarais@gmail.com](mailto:dennis.desmarais@gmail.com). 🚲

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# Riding in the Heat

BY TIBOR TAMAS (# 9902)

Spanish Fort 200k on August 9 th, 2014 was my first ever rando ride. What is special about that you ask? Two things: 2024 marks my 10th year of randonneuring, and the ride was during the height of Texas heat.

In the scorching heat where the sun beats down relentlessly and the air shimmers with heat waves, an unlikely scene unfolds: randonneurs navigating the blistering asphalt, their determination unflinching despite the oppressive temperatures. Riding a bicycle in the heat is not merely a physical endeavor; it's a test of endurance, resilience, and an indomitable spirit. As someone who has experienced the challenge firsthand, I can attest to the unique blend of struggle and triumph that accompanies every pedal stroke under the relentless sun.

Southern summers are notorious for their intensity, with temperatures often soaring well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38C). The air feels thick and heavy, as if every breath is a struggle against the oppressive heat. The snap-crackle-pop of the tar in the road as you ride over it is a reminding song of heat warning.

Cycling in such conditions presents myriad challenges. Enduring the heat on a bicycle requires more than just physical strength; it demands mental fortitude of the highest order. With every mile, doubts creep in, whispering that it would be easier to turn back, to seek refuge in the shade. Yet, it's

in these moments of doubt that the true test begins. Pushing through the discomfort, and embracing the challenge rather than shying away from it, is where the magic happens.

## Heat Acclimation & Challenges of Riding in the Heat

Before we discuss the challenges of riding in the heat, a word about heat acclimation is in order. Heat acclimation, also known as heat adaptation or acclimatization, refers to the physiological and behavioral changes that occur in response to repeated

exposure to hot environments.

This process allows the body to better cope with and tolerate heat stress. Heat acclimation is essential for those of us riding our bicycles in the heat. During heat acclimation, several physiological adaptations occur:

**Increased Sweat Rate** – The body becomes more efficient at producing sweat, which helps to dissipate heat through evaporative cooling.

**Lower Core Body Temperature** – Heat acclimated individuals tend to have lower core body temperatures during exercise in hot conditions compared to those who are not acclimated.

**Reduced Heart Rate** – The heart becomes more efficient at pumping blood, resulting in a lower heart rate during exercise in the heat.

These adaptations typically occur over a period of about one to two weeks of regular exposure to heat. The process involves gradually increasing the duration and intensity of heat exposure to allow the body to adapt without experiencing heat-related illnesses. It's important to note that these adaptations are reversible and can diminish if exposure to heat is reduced or discontinued.

Challenges of riding in the heat include dehydration, heat exhaustion, sunburn and potentially skin cancer. Let's review each in detail:

**Dehydration** – Perhaps the most immediate concern for cyclists in the heat is dehydration. The combination





of intense physical exertion and excessive sweating can rapidly deplete the body's water and electrolyte levels. Symptoms of dehydration include thirst, dry mouth, dizziness, headache, and dark-colored urine. Left untreated, severe dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion or even heatstroke.

To prevent dehydration, cyclists must prioritize hydration by regularly drinking fluids before, during, and after rides. Additionally, electrolyte replacement drinks can help replenish essential minerals lost through sweating. Other remedies we've used include: chicken noodle soup, salt packets, V-8 juice, pickle juice and olive juice (buy a jar at a control and drink it down), Roloids for cramps (carry 1-2 rolls on your bike for the calcium and magnesium. For a cramp, chew the roll and drink 1/2 bottle of water.)

### **Heat Exhaustion and Heatstroke –**

Cycling in extreme heat increases the risk of heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Heat exhaustion is characterized by heavy sweating, weakness, nausea, and fainting, while heatstroke is a life-threatening condition marked by a high body temperature, confusion, and loss of consciousness.

Cyclists should be vigilant for early signs of heat-related illnesses and take immediate action if symptoms arise. This may include finding shade, cooling the body with water or ice, and seeking medical attention if necessary. Stopping every 25-30 miles for ice cream and adding ice to polar bottles/ Camelbaks is a must.

Prevention strategies for heat-related illnesses include acclimatizing to the heat gradually, wearing lightweight and breathable clothing, and scheduling rides during cooler times of the day whenever possible.

### **Sunburn and Skin Cancer –**

Excessive sun exposure during cycling can also lead to sunburn and increase the risk of developing skin cancer over time. The intensity of the sun, com-

bined with extended periods of outdoor activity, heightens this risk for cyclists.

To protect against sunburn and skin cancer, cyclists should apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a high SPF rating before each ride and reapply it regularly, especially if sweating profusely. Wearing UV-protective clothing, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat can also provide additional protection.

Regular skin checks and seeking medical attention for any suspicious changes in moles or skin lesions are crucial for early detection and treatment of skin cancer.

### **Suggestions for Riding in the Heat**

**Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of liquids before, during, and after your ride to prevent dehydration.

**Dress Appropriately:** Wear lightweight, breathable clothing that wicks away sweat to keep you cool.

Light-colored clothing can also help reflect sunlight and heat.

**Take Breaks:** Plan your route to include shaded rest stops where you can take breaks and cool down.

Use these breaks to rehydrate and rest.

### **Early Morning/Evening or**

**Overnight rides:** Try to ride during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening, to avoid the peak heat hours. Riding thru the night has its own beauty.

**Use Cooling Accessories:** Consider using cooling accessories such as a cooling vest, neck gaiter, or bandana soaked in cold water to help lower your body temperature.

**Ride at a Slower Pace:** Riding at a slower pace can reduce exertion and help prevent overheating. Avoid pushing yourself too hard in extreme heat.

**Stay in the Shade:** Whenever possible, ride in shaded areas to reduce direct exposure to the sun and heat.

**Use Sunscreen:** Apply sunscreen with a high SPF to exposed skin to protect against sunburn and do not forget to reapply at controls.

**Monitor Your Body:** Pay attention to signs of heat exhaustion or heatstroke, such as dizziness, nausea, headache, rapid heartbeat, or confusion. If you experience any of these symptoms, stop riding immediately and seek shade and water. Also, don't forget to check in with your riding buddies.

Sometimes asking what's wrong will allow you to offer them tips, especially if you're an hour from a store. We've all been the recipient of reminders, so it's always good to pay it back.

**Plan Your Route:** Last but not least, choose routes that offer more opportunities for shade and rest stops, and avoid routes with heavy traffic or long stretches without amenities. Look at the route in advance to scout for additional stores. Churches, post offices and fire stations often have water spigots for quick refills. Know where the most exerting segments are so you can plan in advance and plan for the recovery.

Cycling in the heat offers unparalleled opportunities for adventure and exploration, but it also presents significant medical challenges that riders must address proactively. By understanding the risks associated with dehydration, heat-related illnesses, and sun exposure, cyclists can take appropriate precautions to safeguard their health and well-being on the road.

Riding a bicycle in the heat is not for the faint of heart. It's a grueling test of endurance, both physical and mental, that pushes cyclists to their limits and beyond. Yet, amidst the struggle, there's a sense of exhilaration, a feeling of accomplishment that comes from overcoming such formidable odds.

As the sun sets on another day of riding, casting long shadows across the landscape, one thing becomes clear: in the face of adversity, the human spirit is capable of extraordinary things.

Ride long & ride safe! 🚲

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# LIGHTNING BOLT

## CANTI-LIGHTNING BOLT



The Canti Lightning Bolt is a lightweight road/ randonneuring focused bike. Tig welded, heat treated chromoly construction, and designed to flex and feel like you're actually floating millimeters above the road on top of Dynamic clouds. This planing sensation will leave you feeling like you're the star of the Brevet, leading everyone into a marshmallow and ice cream victory meal. The Champagne, Lilac and Light Sea Green frames feature our new Gran Trajet Fork Crown. The Gran Trajet fork crown fits a 48b tire and is designed to perfectly mimic the arch of a fender like the Honjo Smooth 62, leaving a seamless look. The newer fork also features Imperial Oval fork blades, which are believed to provide the optimal passive suspension. This leads to greater over all comfort and speed, making the bike they're attached to a true randonneuring machine.

## SINGLE-SPEED LIGHTNING BOLT



## CANTI-LIGHTNING BOLT V1



The Single Speed Lightning Bolt shares the same geometry with the other Bolts, but opposed to having vertical or thru axle dropouts it has rear facing horizontal dropouts. It also has 120mm rear spacing to accommodate your typical fixed/ flip flop hub. It makes for a super fun Randonneur style bike, commuter, or all-around-do-whatever bike.

The Galaxy Black has a different fork crown, which means it fits a 42b tire perfectly, but a 48 is too close a squeeze in the fork. If you want to run fenders we suggest 38s. Like the other Lightning Bolts, the Galaxy Black is designed around a 650b wheelset.

# Hello Rando

A CONVERSATION WITH SEAN KEESLER

Oh, hello. Thanks for stopping to read my article. I'm glad you're here. Have a seat and make yourself comfortable. Need a drink? Make yourself at home, and I'll get you one out of the fridge.

I'm looking forward to this! Let's take a minute and get to know each other. I'll start!

So, I'm 55 and have lived in Upstate New York for all of it except for 6 years in my teens and early twenties. I landed on this randonneuring thing just a few years back. Not that I'm new to cycling, mind you. In my teens I was inspired by Greg Lemond. I loved "American Flyers," but then I had a family and fell away . . . But now, I'm back, and let me tell you all about... yada, yada.

Sorry, I'm dating myself. Let me try this again.

Well, I was a bit of a couch potato. You know how it is with a family and kids, right? When I turned 40, I decided to get myself back in shape and started running for a few years 'till my "dad bod" started to hurt . . . you see, I had this cartilage injury in my ankle from back in the day.

Um, sorry. Maybe I'm starting us off on the wrong 'foot' here (haha).

Another try . . .

Hey, man, when I'm out there all night long, rolling over the terrain, just the wind in my face, the rubber on the road, and my headlight lighting the way, I get this sorta Zen feeling. Do you like philosophy? Because I had this epiphany that these rides are like LIFE, man, ya know?

That sounds stupid. Sorry. Don't go!

I think everybody needs to get involved in this cycling thing, don't you? I was never much of a "group guy," but then I found my people in the rando crowd. Isn't it something? Folks don't know what they're missing: the simplicity of the bicycle and the independence. The epic rides! The sense of accomplishment and growth. There are some downsides, sure. What about the bonks? I learned how to eat for it, but everyone is different. The pain? You have to find a saddle that's right for you. There are these creams you spread around down there (don't be shy). Here, let me show you my fav.

OK. I give up.

I still feel like a newbie, an amateur, an imposter. I know everyone gets nervous jitters before a ride, but you don't know what it is like for us in the back half of the pack – more like the rear quarter. OK, I'm as likely to be the lantern rouge as not. Thank you in advance for waiting for me at the top of the hill and saving me a burger and a lukewarm drink at the end of the ride. I appreciate it. I really do. I'll take what I can get. I finished, and it ain't a race anyway. That's why I like it, you know.

Did I mention that I live in the Finger Lakes region of New York? Well, I do. No, it's not very close to "the city." You wouldn't believe it, but New York has some truly world-class cycling. It's true, trust me! I've ridden in more than one state, so I know! Yup. I could create a route around here that is so gosh-darned beautiful you'd swear you were in France. You would! We have these wineries on the hillsides, apple orchards all over the place, spectacular waterfalls, and lots of cornfields on rolling farmland. World class, I tell ya! And then there are these lakes. I mentioned the lakes, didn't I?

These eleven long, deep lakes are the main feature of the region. We like to pick one and ride around it for





James in front of the Genesee Arch Bridge.

fun. I never paid them much attention until I started these rides. But it's so cool to climb out of one of these lake valleys at sunrise or sunset and see the light shimmering off their waters. You should ride with us sometime and check them out. It'll change how you see the area! Most people see them from the car, but they don't get to REALLY see them like we do. I was ready to move out of here a few years ago, but now I'm seeing the roads and lakes around here in a brand new way.

What's that? You want to know about the climbs? What's the terrain like? Sure, it can be pretty hilly here. I thought I'd never get up some of these hills when I started cycling again. But I just plugged away at it and learned to take it easy and try to make up my time on the downhills. The first time I tried riding around all eleven Finger Lakes, I thought I would die. It took so long that I had to stop and sleep in a cold ditch in the middle of the night, and when I woke up, I was all stiff and achy. It was definitely Type 2 fun.

Just look at me now, though! After a few years of training, I can finish that ride under the time limit. I did the same ride just last year to qualify before I went to France.

Wassat? Why did I go to France, you ask? Oh, didn't I mention it? There's a big event in France every four years. It's like the Olympics, but for bikes, but no one wins. Everyone just

tries their best, and you either finish it or you don't. I did. Believe it or not, it was like riding around the Finger Lakes, except three times in a row. Like I said, it's a lot like France, without the crepes. I'm an expert now, so I can say so. Want to see my medal?

I'm really enjoying our talk! How's your drink? Looks like you need a refill. Here ya go!

It's too bad there aren't more randonneurs in New York to talk to about this. A couple of years ago, I rode some rides in Philly, and there were a bunch of riders there. I couldn't believe how cool it was to meet up at the controls and chat. It was nice and social. A lot of riders volunteer in Philly, and I think it makes a big difference! What do you think? Mhmm... yes, me too, and I'm glad we agree. Please – enjoy your drink.

So, I got to thinking. Maybe I could volunteer right here in NY and put a little more “oomph” into our club. So I did. Be the change you want to see in the world, right? I helped support our region's 1200k (The WNY Waterfalls), worked on the club website, and created a few new permanent and brevet routes for the region. We're getting a fresh series together that highlights the Finger Lakes region. Remember, that 400k I did and slept in the ditch? That's one of them.

Do you need anything to eat? No? Let me know...

The Around the Finger Lakes 400k is already on the calendar for June 8 as an ACP brevet, or you could ride it as a permanent (#4261). The idea is to get you within “wheel-dipping distance”

of each lake. It has about 12k ft of climbing, so it was a good training ride for PBP. Maybe it's because I made the route myself, but I don't mind sharing that it's one of my favorites. I know, no one's baby is ugly, but still. You should try it. Bring your family for the weekend. Let them play in the lakes or take a wine tour while we have different fun.

I took some pictures the last time I rode that 400k. I wish I could take a picture of what it was really like. Pictures never seem to capture it, do they?

We're also hosting a new 600k on July 13. It's a cloverleaf that starts smack dab in the middle of the Finger Lakes in Penn Yan. The first day goes west, weaves between some of the smaller lakes, and heads south through Letchworth State Park with plenty of views of the Genesee River in the park's 550 ft. gorge. The return leg of the first loop runs through some hilly regions of the Southern Tier of New York and then back to Penn Yan alongside Keuka Lake.

After a nap and a buckwheat pancake breakfast (if that works for you), we'll head southeast through Watkins Glen and Ithaca with a few waterfall views, then make our way north on a rail trail and country roads between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes (the longest of the 11). You'll have lots of lake views before rounding the north side of Seneca Lake and heading back to the finish.

We named this the Letchworth Cayuga 600k. Maybe we need a marketing department?

What's that? Gotta run? I understand. Sorry to have bent your ear for so long. I feel like I've monopolized our time. It's just that I can get on a bit of a roll when I start talking about rando stuff, but it's been great meeting you. I hope I didn't scare you away. Don't forget to register for these rides. Just Google “Finger Lakes Randonneurs”, and I'm sure they will come up.

Thanks for stopping by! 🚲

James Bondra at the Great Bend Overlook in Letchworth State Park.

—PHOTOS SEAN KEESLER

# Bike Lust

BY GARY KANABY

My bike is a limited edition Felt Z1 with Bontrager Race Lite XXX wheels. As an old randonneur in California I wanted the best bike for climbing, but it had to also to be a bike for endurance with the ability to absorb some of the bumps on the road. The Felt Z1 was originally designed for the Paris Roubaix Race for the Argos Shimano team Felt sponsored in the 2012 Tour de France. The geometry and carbon layup are designed specifically for rough roads while also delivering maximum power to the drivetrain. I had to wait until early 2013 for Shimano to release the Dura Ace Di2 11-speed in the US and I am glad I did. I have had four accidents with this bike involving trips to the emergency room with broken bones, yet my bike endured with only broken handlebars!

I plan never to replace my bike because I believe it is the best for my randonneuring rides. This bike has been ridden over 75,000 miles and is still going strong. I plan to ride it many more later this year as I expect to earn my Galaxy Award. 🚲



Gary visiting with alpacas.

—PHOTO AMY RUSSELL

## THE BIKE: Felt Z1





### Put your bike in the spotlight!

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

### SPECIFICATIONS:

**FRAMESET:** Felt Z1 Endurance Road UHC Ultimate + Nano carbon fiber, MMC with InsideOut construction, BB30 and dropouts. 58cm

**FORK:** Felt Endurance Road UHC Ultimate + Nano carbon fiber monocoque construction, ControlTaper 1.125"-1.5" carbon fiber steerer tube with integrated crown race, crown and blades dropouts

**HEADSET:** FSA NO.42 integrated sealed cartridge bearing

**BOTTOM BRACKET:** Ceramic Speed with hardened-steel races

**FRONT DERAILEUR:** Shimano Dura Ace Di2 11 speed braze-on

**REAR DERAILEUR:** Shimano Ultegra Medium Cage Di2 Rear Derailleur 11-speed

**CRANK:** Shimano Dura Ace Hollowtech-II 50/34

**SHIFTERS:** Shimano Dura Ace Di2 STI with secondary climbing shifter

**CASSETTE:** Ultegra 11-32 with Ceramic Speed pulleys

**CHAIN:** Dura Ace 11-speed

**BRAKES:** Shimano Dura Ace Super SRL dual pivot (rim)

**BRAKE LEVERS:** Shimano Dura Ace Di2 STI

**HANDLEBARS:** ENVE carbon

**STEM:** ENVE carbon

**SEAT POST:** Easton EC-90

**SEAT:** Specialized Power Pro with Mirror, Titanium Rails

**WHEELS:** Bontrager Race XXX Lite

**TIRES:** Continental 5000 25mm

**TUBES:** RideNow TPU 36gr

**LIGHTS:** Front NiteRider OLED 1200 Boost, Rear NiteRider Sabre 110 Cherry Bombs

**CUP HOLDERS:** Bontrager RL

# The Legacy of Major Taylor – The Fastest Man in the World

BY DAWN PIECH (#10146), PHIL FOX (#12365), JAY READEY (#15817),  
SARAH RICE (#9480), AND KRISTINE JIMENEZ (#15209)

Marshall “Major” Taylor was a lone African-American figure in professional bike racing during the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. Despite battling racism and constant opposition on and off race courses, he was the Michael Jordan of his day – a transcendent athlete who raced all over the world in front of tens of thousands of fans in what was one of the most popular sports of the time.

Before the advent of the car, bicycle racers were the fastest human beings in the world. “Safety bicycles” – a new innovation representing the form we know today with two wheels of matching size, replacing the “penny farthing” high-wheeled bicycles of old – enabled speeds that had not previously been seen and times that still hold up today.

Andrew Ritchie’s comprehensive biography of Major Taylor should not be missed by any modern fan of cycling. Ritchie writes that in just a few years, Taylor climbed to the top of the sport. “He became world champion in 1899 and American sprint champion in 1899 and 1900. He broke a series of world records and in 1901 received rapturous acclaim during a triumphant tour of Europe – the most important international tour of European countries

ever taken by a Black American athlete.” His struggles to participate and win during segregated times rank him, Ritchie writes, “as the earliest, most extraordinary, pioneering Black athlete in the history of American sports.”

Give this a try. Warm up and race your very best single mile. Go ahead and follow your friend in a hatchback car. How fast can you hold for a mile? Major Taylor set a world-record motor-paced mile at better than 45 miles per hour in 1:19 on November 15, 1899, the same year he won the world championship. At the beginning of December 1896, when he turned 18 and had just turned pro, Major Taylor rode 1,732 miles in the Madison Square Garden 6-day race, placing eighth. That’s 289 miles a day for 6 days straight. He was exhausted and hallucinating when he finished, and it would be the only 6-day race he would enter. But just a few years later, he would reach the zenith of the sport

Jay Readey of Major Taylor Chicago and  
Sunnie Jimenez of Major Taylor Iowa.

—PHOTO PHIL FOX







Major Taylor's first European bike race in Berlin, 1901.  
—PHOTO WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

## MAJOR TAYLOR'S LIFE HIGHLIGHTS

YEAR	ACCOMPLISHMENT	DATA/STATS/DETAILS
June 30, 1895	First Major Win – 75 mile road race near Indianapolis (age 16)	Only Rider to finish – qualified for Black national championship
July 4, 1895	Black national championship – 10-mile (age 16)	27:32, won by 10 bike lengths
December 6-12, 1896	8th Place in the Six Day Race at Madison Square Garden (age 18)	1,732 miles in 142 hours
August 12, 1898	1-mile world record	1:41 2/5; paced standing start, record stood for 28 years
August 11, 1899	1-mile world sprint champion Montreal, Canada	Also won the half-mile championship
November 15, 1899	Four motor-paced world records in 1899 at Garfield Park in Chicago, IL including the 1-mile world record	1:19 – earning Taylor “the fastest man in the world” moniker
1900	American Sprint Champion by points	Beat his closest competitor at Madison Square Garden in front of 50,000 spectators
1901-1904	European Tour and Australia / New Zealand	Beat National Champions from France, England and Germany; earned nearly US\$1 million in current dollars
August 1908	Resumed racing after 2.5 year hiatus	Set three more world records in France

Sources: Wikipedia and Andrew Ritchie's Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer

by defeating all of the professionals in America and most of the European national champions in a string of championships, world records, and a global tour de force.

Despite Taylor's achievements, he existed at the dawn of the 20th century, when America's experiment with Reconstruction after the Civil War gave way to the “Redemption” period of white supremacy and Jim Crow, and he died penniless in Chicago.

Taylor spent his youth in Indianapolis, where he worked in bike shops, gave demonstrations of skill and speed on bikes, and discovered racing. A mentor and friend, “Birdie” Munger, brought him to Worcester, Massachusetts, then the center of American bicycle manufacturing, where he worked for Munger's Worcester Cycle Manufacturing Company and began racing professionally. Having mainly given up racing after 1910, his fortunes suffered downturns, and after the dissolution of his marriage and several failed business ventures, he lived alone and in poverty at a Chicago YMCA until dying a pauper

during the Great Depression at Cook County Hospital.

Taylor faced racial discrimination even in death. After his passing in 1932, his remains were interred in an unmarked grave in a Chicago cemetery due to financial constraints. In 1948, a group of cycling enthusiasts led by Frank Schwinn, president of the Schwinn Bicycle Company, raised funds to honor Taylor's legacy. They erected a monument, ensuring his final resting

place reflected the significance of his contributions to cycling and civil rights.

Starting with African-American bicycle clubs in 1979, the memory of Marshall “Major” Taylor has been gradually brought back to life and given the honor he is due for his towering achievements.

**Phil:** I've biked in the city of Chicago for 15 years. You learn to connect one bike path to another. What streets take you out of the city

so you can get your miles. But when I started learning about Major Taylor and the connections he had to this city, I had to find out more. The more I dug, the more I found. Right in our backyard. The trail. The murals. Long murals. 400 foot murals. His final resting place and the story behind his gravesite. Right under our noses. Only if we knew where to look. The Major Taylor Pilgrimage route was created to bring those points together but also invite others to join in that meaningful experience.

**Jay:** I have now ridden the Major Taylor Pilgrimage five times. On the first ride I was overwhelmed with the personal significance for me. I knew The Major was buried in the same segregated cemetery as my wife's family, Mount Glenwood Memory Gardens, but I didn't realize that his grave site was in the same "Memory Garden" as her family members – the Garden of the Good Shepherd. Once I found the Major's plaque, there they were – 30 feet to the right (west): grandparents Walter and Marie Dorsey, Aunt Louise Wilson, Aunt Doris Mayberry, Uncle Sam Dorsey and

**Starting with African-American bicycle clubs in 1979, the memory of Marshall "Major" Taylor has been gradually brought back to life and given the honor he is due for his towering achievements.**

their forebears. I realized I had been there before and knew instinctively where to look for them. Finding their headstones dropped me to my knees. I had been to some of their burials and not realized how close by The Major was buried. But for someone who fell in love with cycling at 12, and then majored in African-American Studies in college and has made a life in civil rights and community development, all my worlds come together in that space. Going back there by bicycle is a repeated homage to lives well-lived and the challenge and promise of America's history. As a cyclist, no life better embodies that than Major Taylor's.

**Sarah:** After completing Paris-Brest-Paris and earning a RUSA American Explorer award, I rode my

bike from my house to the start of a randonneuring ride for the very first time. The Major Taylor Pilgrimage forged a brand new connection between the sport that I had come to love and the city that I have always loved and that I choose to call home. The route took me through places of distant memories, close to where I went to college, close to where my husband grew up, close to where we first dated. On the Major Taylor trail, I reflected on how Chicago's champion faced the ugliness of racism while exhibiting impeccable sportsmanship as the world's fastest cyclist. Major Taylor chose Chicago as his home. On that ride, I resolved to bring randonneuring home to Chicago.

As his final resting place, Chicago is the perfect place for the Chicago Randonneurs to honor Major Taylor with a ride to his grave site from downtown through the South Side of Chicago, known as the "Black Metropolis," along Martin Luther King Boulevard in both the city and suburbs, and for the entire length of a bicycle trail established in the Major's honor.

**Dawn:** Major Taylor continues to inspire today, across the United States and globally. In 2022, the Major Taylor Cycling Club of Central Indiana and the Black Girls Do Bike Indianapolis chapter collaborated to start the first Major Taylor Convention



On the Circle City 100k permanent (#5000) in Indianapolis.

—PHOTO MAXINE WALLACE



The headstone for Major Taylor, placed 16 years after his death.

—PHOTO PHIL FOX

Kranish and Andrew Richie’s book titled “Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer” to name a couple. In recent years, there has been momentum in making a full length movie titled “Whirlwind” by executive producer Cyrille Vincent, and PBS released a documentary on February 26th, 2024 titled “Major Taylor: Champion of the Race.” Furthermore, Representative Jonathan L Jackson, Illinois District I 118th, introduced H.R. 6672, a bill on December 7, 2023, to award a Congressional Gold Medal posthumously to Marshal Walter “Major” Taylor in recognition of his significance to the nation as an athlete, trailblazer, role model, and equal rights advocate. The bill is gaining traction and currently has 59 co-sponsors.

As we continue to examine and celebrate the life and legacy of Major Taylor, we invite you to ride the Major Taylor Pilgrimage 100k Permanent (#4775) in Chicago, which traverses the Major Taylor Trail, various murals painted in his honor and his grave site in Mount Greenwood, Illinois. Additionally, we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with other regions to continue to highlight the history of Marshal Walter “Major” Taylor. You may also consider doing all three Major Taylor-themed permanents available via our permanents program in Chicago (#4775), Indianapolis (#5000) and Massachusetts (#3789) to reflect and celebrate the legacy and life of Major Taylor. In addition to paying tribute to him on the bike, you may consider a visit to the Major Taylor museum in Worcester, Massachusetts and the Major Taylor exhibit at the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis. Or connect to a Major Taylor Cycling Club in your state/region by visiting <https://majortaylorinternational.com>. 🚲

in Indianapolis, Indiana. This was held there in both 2022 and 2023. In June 2024, Major Taylor cycling clubs from all over the US and globally will meet in Chicago to honor and celebrate the life and inspiration of Major Taylor at the 3rd annual convention.

There are numerous Major Taylor Cycling Clubs throughout the United States and globally. In 1979, the first Major Taylor cycling club formed in Columbus, Ohio. In 2022, Major Taylor International Cycling Alliance (MTICA) was founded by Bill Gaston with the goal to provide clubs with operational guidance and support. MTICA won the 2023 League of American Bicyclists Club of the Year Award. Currently, 90+ clubs are part of MTICA and the community continues to grow with a recent club added in Virginia. Internationally, there are clubs in Taiwan, Nairobi (Kenya), France and the United Kingdom as well as a possible new club starting in Japan in the next year. Gaston stated, “The synergy for Major Taylor cycling clubs and the seed of MTICA began back in 2019 when many leaders of Major Taylor clubs in the US started a Facebook leader page. This

group began to talk about governance, insurance, bylaws and membership.” Furthermore, he shared that a youth program has also been recently formed called the Major Taylor Middle Georgia Youth Group.

Randonneuse **Kristine Jimenez** (#15209) started Major Taylor Iowa Cycling Club (MTIA) in 2022 and rode the inaugural Chicago Randonneurs Major Taylor Pilgrimage 100k on March 2, 2024. She shared, “March 2022, my family visited the Major Taylor exhibit in Indianapolis. His story deeply resonated with me. The following week, MTIA was established. Major Taylor moved with moral integrity when faced with ugly and unfair persecution. I am inspired by his talent, persistence and resilience. The inaugural event allowed me to pay homage to a man whose legacy has left such an impact on me personally and the history of cycling.”

There are many books to reference about Major Taylor which include “The World’s Fastest Man: The Extraordinary Life of Cyclist Major Taylor, America’s First Black Sports Hero” by Michael

# Paving My Own Road to PBP 2023

BY CHRIS NGO

My cycling journey started in 1982 while attending college at the University of California, Davis. I had heard about the Paris-Brest-Paris Randonneur (PBP) in 1985, but did not start randonneuring until much later, in 2018.

The 2019 PBP was my first attempt at the Grand Randonnée, but discouragingly, my result was a DNF after 900k due to stomach issues. I was not eating frequently enough, which caused my stomach to fill up with acid to the point where I could not eat or even take a sip of water. Even though I did not finish that year, I learned a lot about my stomach! I fell in love with PBP in 2019, and wanted to give it another try. But next time, I needed a unique bike with a front handlebar bag to give me easy access to food supplies to allow me to consume enough calories throughout the event.

My quest to build my own bike started when I picked up a book called *The Golden Age of Handbuilt Bicycles* and fell in love with every photo in the book. After reading and admiring the text and photos, I came up with the crazy idea of building my own bike! My mind was working overtime thinking how incredible it would be if I could build and ride my own bike at the next PBP. That would be the ultimate comeback.

As far as bicycle frame building experience goes, I had none. But I did have a strong desire to learn. I considered enrolling in a short-term bicycle frame building school in Oregon, but then COVID-19 came along, and

isolation began. Suddenly, I had a lot of free time on my hands. I used it to do extensive research through the internet, read books, and watch countless YouTube videos on bicycle frame building, brazing lugs, filet brazing, bicycle tubes, frame geometry, tools and materials, and more.

Then, I bought an unused second hand jig from eBay, and fully committed to building a bike of my own. There was no stopping me now!

Aside from my research, the only other applicable knowledge that helped me build a bicycle frame was from 35 years of building radio control giant-scale model airplanes from scratch. Also, as a practicing dentist of 35 years, I knew how to do gold soldering. I was (and still am) a huge fan of some professional frame builders, such as Brian Chapman and Alex Meade, and learned a lot just from watching their content on Facebook and Instagram. Other than that, I was largely self-taught and relied on accessible resources on the internet to help me build my first bike. I knew that I wanted my bike to be light, comfortable, and rideable in mixed terrain. These were the criteria I set for myself.

I completed my first bike in the spring of 2021. For my first frame, I wanted to design something that

was set up for 42mm tires on a 650B wheelset with a geometry of a longer wheelbase, 445mm chainstays, 55mm fork rake, and a lower bottom bracket drop. I had built my own fork jig to align the fork before final brazing. I also bought a set of Columbus SL tubes and standard 1" lugs from framebuilders-supply.com. The standard lugs were set up for a 73.5 degree head tube and seat tube angle. I brazed the main triangle first, then the chainstays, and then the seatstay triangle. There was a lot of finishing work, grinding, and polishing around the lugs even after all of that. I purchased Valspar automotive primer, paint, and clear coat from a local paint supply company to do my own paint job. I even produced my own water slide decals with an inkjet printer. The complete bike with rack, fenders, frame pump, and Sondelux SL hub lighting system weighed about 24.8 pounds.



With a group of other  
Adrian Hands finishers.



The experience of riding my first self-built bicycle and wheelset was exhilarating and daunting at the same time. Many scary thoughts crossed my mind. Are the silver soldered lugs strong enough? Is the fork straight and strong? Is it going to break going downhill at 40 mph? I remember that during a 300k ride, the bike rattled so much that it was absolutely unrideable. I had to stop and figure out what was wrong. I discovered the spokes' tension on my wheels had come loose, causing the rims to wobble from side to side. After 30 minutes of truing the wheel set on the road, I was good to go, and finished my 300k.

As time went on, I was able to fine tune the bike and used it for the 2021 randonneuring season. My longest ride was the 1000k Burnet-New Braunfels-Barton out of Austin, TX.

After riding this first prototype bike for the 2021 season, I wanted to build and even lighter, more responsive 650B frame with shorter 425mm chainstays. I used Kaisei tubes with Shogun 73.5 degree stainless steel lugs. The completed bike weighed 22.5 pounds. For me, this second frame was the ultimate road bike, as it was very comfortable, balanced, and responsive for a 53cm top tube frame. I used this second frame for my 2022 season, and my longest ride was 1200k. Along the way, I learned to eat constantly to control and satisfy my stomach.

By now, I had a very good idea of what I wanted for my 2023 PBP bike, and I started building a third frame around the same geometry as my second frame. This frame was built of stainless steel tubes because I love the sleek and shiny cool look. I used KVA

stainless steel tubes with Nervex 73.5 degree lugs. Rather than use the dynamo Sondelux SL hub, I switched to the Velogical rim dynamo because it only has a small amount of drag resistance when used at night. The complete bike with rack, fenders, frame pump, and lighting system came out to be 21.5 pounds. This third frame was a much more nimble ride since it was made out of stainless steel and it was still comfortable enough for a light touring ride. I finished this bike in September of 2022 and used it for all my PBP qualifiers in 2023.

In deciding which bike to take to the 2023 PBP, it was a toss up between the second and third frame. I ended up taking the lighter stainless steel frame. Choosing a favorite frame is like choosing which of your children you love most – it can't be done. I really enjoy riding all three frames because each has its own unique characteristics and feel.

After all that I learned about myself and the adjustments I made, I was able to finish the 2023 PBP with a time of 89:06, and joined the Adrian Hands Society! Who knew that a DNF in 2019 would lead to completing PBP on a bike that I built myself? I certainly didn't! I was so happy to finish PBP with a group of friends from RUSA on my own bike. This was the comeback I had envisioned for myself, and I am already planning my next frame set for PBP 2027. 🚲



In France with my stainless steel bike.

At the start of 2023 PBP  
on my third frame.

—PHOTOS CHRIS NGO

## Tour de France Film Festival

The ink was still wet on my annual list of cycling goals when I was unexpectedly sidelined by injury. While shoveling some heavy, wet snow in early January, I aggravated a disc in my lower back and developed significant sciatica complete with partial foot paralysis.

Despite six weeks of chiropractic adjustments, acupuncture treatments, and physical therapy sessions, I could not avoid the knife in late February to repair a badly herniated disc and compressed sciatic nerve which led to six more weeks of somewhat home-bound (thankfully, I work in a remote office environment) rest and recovery.

Feeling more than a little bit sorry for myself, I bought a new gravel bike and watched quite a few films, some about cycling. In turn, I present a special “Tour de France Film Festival” for your consideration just as the 2024 edition of the world’s grandest bicycle race unfolds.

Sports are far more interesting when you understand the rules. I realize this each time I see a game of cricket being played and find I don’t even know where to look or what to expect. There are many legitimate reasons why even seasoned cyclists might not find professional bicycle racing all that enjoyable to watch (recent doping scandals, access issues, a lack of American riders, long periods with no action, etc.).

The list goes on, but I wonder if, on some level, it comes down to simply not understanding the rules, tactics, and strategies. Not raised on professional cycling, I came late to the party only after I had developed a passion for riding myself. I’m also not too proud to admit that I continue to be somewhat mystified by

the complexities and learn more with every race I watch.

I also notice that the more I learn, the more I enjoy. Netflix appears to have been banking on the fact that I am not alone when they released their eight-part “Tour de France: Unchained” series last summer.

I rewatched this engaging eight-part series this winter to great enjoyment. The French filmmakers did a remarkable job on this project that follows teams through the 2022 Tour. We get to enter team buses and hotel rooms and follow along in the team cars where directors sportif bark commands and messages of encouragement into their radios that communicate with those that their racers wear on their bodies.

We see the impact of crashes, mechanicals, poor decisions, betrayals, and sheer luck, as the race unfolds like an Italian opera before us. By the end of the eighth episode, viewers will better understand how cycling functions as a team sport even though it is individuals who win stages, points competitions, and ultimately the race itself.

The riders may or may not be doping, but the series itself seems fueled

**Tour de France:  
UNCHAINED** (2023)

**Uphill Climb** (2023)

**The Last Rider** (2022)

**Impossible Route:  
Tour de Gravel** (2023)





# THE LAST RIDER

by an outsized amount of testosterone.

On the other side of the gender spectrum comes *Uphill Climb*, a short film by Shimano, which follows the first women's race at the Tour de France in 1984. (There was a single edition of a woman's Tour in 1955, held by a different organization.)

Over 80 years after the men's race started, 1984 was a big year in women's cycling with both the Tour de France – specifically, the Tour de France Féminin – and the Olympics including them for the very first time.

The route included 18 abridged stages that ran immediately before the men's event, so both the infrastructure and fans were in place. (*Ed. note: American rider Marianne Martin figures prominently in the film.*)

Unfortunately, riders were not provided with much information before each stage, which would have helped them prepare or strategize, and some claimed that it felt a bit more like an afterthought or a sideshow than a main event.

The Women's Tour lasted only from 1984 to 1989 when it was canceled until it was brought back in a different form in 2022 as the Tour de France Femmes avec Zwift. Following the pandemic and fueled by the popularity of online cycling, the race was reintroduced with 8 stages held on

different days than the men's race with 24 teams and 124 riders.

Unfortunately, the activism of professional cyclists like Marianne Vos that led to the reintroduction of international competition for women connected to the Tour de France is overlooked. Regardless, this film adds an important chapter to the history of world cycling and it's wonderful that several of the original participants were able to tell this story in their own words.

*The Last Rider*, on the other hand, has a laser focus on the rise and fall and rise again of



one cyclist, Greg LeMond, the first (and only) American man to have won the Tour de France now that Lance Armstrong's string of victories has all been vacated due to doping.

LeMond's dramatic personal story, which includes repressed childhood sexual abuse and a freak hunting accident, helps us better understand his epic performance in the fabled 1989 Tour. His complex, career-long relationship with Bernard "The Badger" Hinault, whose long-time dominance is no small part of the cycling enthusiasm one feels while riding even today in Brittany, also plays a large role in this film.

Finally, *Tour de Gravel* is an episode in the engaging *Impossible Route Series* which follows the antics of National Mountain Bike Champion Jeremiah Bishop and journeyman cyclist Tyler Pearce (AKA TheVeganCyclist) as they design, execute, and film epic route challenges that may or may not be "impossible."

One episode of this two-season series focuses on recreating a stage

of the 1926 Tour route adding a few long sections of gravel to simulate the conditions of that earlier edition which contained roads so unlike the smooth pavement riders expect these days. Stages in those early years were typically 300-400 kilometers in length and riders used single-gear bikes and swapped out wheels for different gearing in the mountains.

Organizers sent riders out in the middle of the night so that stages would end with crowds in the afternoon of the following day, to please sponsors. As in these earlier editions, Jeremiah and Tyler start before daybreak and log considerable miles by headlamp in the dark in ways that will seem familiar to randonneurs.

Each of these films is worth watching for different reasons. What do randonneurs stand to gain from watching them? Well, beyond their sheer entertainment value, they serve to introduce or reintroduce the world of competitive bicycle racing to our community. Bicycle racing is enormously popular in Europe and

most of us who enjoy it here in the US are self-taught and a little primer goes a long way.

In fact, some of the team tactics and ongoing struggles against the elements may bear lessons for immediate value that are easily transferable to success on brevets. In addition, stories that cast light on the struggles of marginalized cyclists are always welcome. Hopefully, you'll get a chance to see them before tuning into this year's Tour de France. Surely, you won't look at the race in quite the same way.

As I write this piece in early April, I've just recently been given the green light to ride outdoors again despite some rather troubling ongoing nerve pain. My future feels anything but certain as my new gravel bike collects dust in the foyer and my brevet calendar continues to morph and evolve.

While I was planning to complete my tenth Super Randonneur Series this year, I would currently see completing a simple 200k as a huge victory.

Hope to see you on the roads again soon. 🚲



\*\*\*\*\*  
SUBMISSIONS  
ARE  
WELCOME  
\*\*\*\*\*

Do you have a story to share?

Maybe a tale of an epic adventure?

Or a ride gone comically wrong?

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

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

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

### SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Spring issue – December 15

Fall issue – June 25

Summer issue – March 25

Winter issue – September 25

**QUESTIONS?** Please contact Corinne at [editor@usa.org](mailto:editor@usa.org).



# Remembering John Hughes

BY JOHN LEE ELLIS

John Hughes (RUSA #46) – friend to many in the rando and ultra communities – passed away unexpectedly on February 4. He was 74. John was a seasoned ultracyclist and randonneur, coach, tour organizer, and past CEO of the Ultra-Marathon Cycling Association.

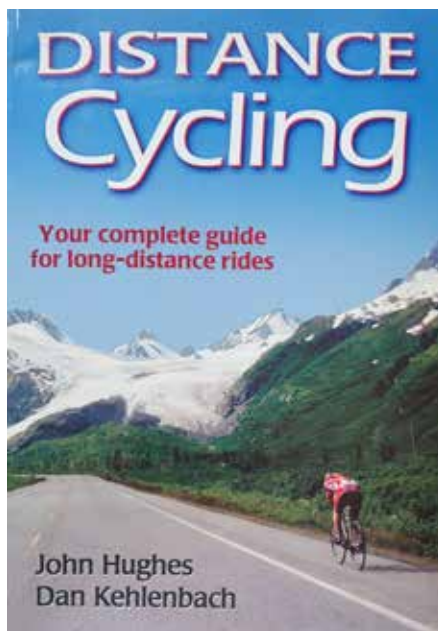
He held coaching certifications from USA Cycling and the National Strength and Conditioning Association. After a 24-year career at Stanford University, he moved to Colorado, where I got to know John. More recently, he moved to the Colorado mountains with his wife Carol, enjoying a life of cross-country skiing and on- and off-road cycling.

**Palmares** – John was a Paris-Brest-Paris ancien, riding and finishing PBP in '79, '87, '91, '95, and '99. I rode a delightful stretch with him at PBP '99 with his gruppetto of friendly randos, stopping strategically at bakeries and cafes on the way back from Brest. John set a course record of 52:53 at Boston-Montreal-Boston in 1992. His final 1200 was the Rocky Mountain 1200k in British Columbia in 2004. John raced the Race Across America (RAAM) twice as a solo rider. In 1989 he won the prestigious Furnace Creek 508, a grueling 508-mile trek across the California desert and through Death Valley.

**UMCA** – John was involved with the Ultra-Marathon Cycling Association (UMCA), now World Ultra Cycling Association (WUCA), for many years. He was UMCA executive director from the 90s through the first decade of

the millennium. This was a full-time job: dealing with RAAM-qualifying races and other ultra events, and nurturing other programs such as the Year-Rounder Challenge, which he lured me into managing in the 1990s. Year-Rounder riders in particular have spilled over to the rando scene; some have become today's K-Hounds.

**Tours** – John put on a series of western tours - the Red Rocks tours in Utah, the Pacific Crest tours in California, along and up and over the Sierra Nevada mountains, and a



Colorado Rocky Mountains tour. John's tours were challenging and incredibly scenic, but doable. John invited me and other friends to pre-ride his inaugural Red Rocks tour, which was a special treat.

**Coaching and Education** – John was a longtime cycling coach, dispensing advice to clients based on his personal lessons learned in ultra-cycling, coupled with scientific expertise. John tried especially to help older cyclists deal with how age impacts performance levels and training. John had a weekly column in Road Bike Rider, which he wrote until his passing. Articles like "Aging Up and Wising Up: Why Coach Hughes is Thankful He's 70" and "12 Ways to Conquer Winter Cycling" typify John's focus for readers. John wrote an authoritative book on Distance Cycling in collaboration with Dan Kehlenbach.

John was a mentor to local randos in Colorado, rode some of our events, including the flèche on Team Prairie Dog, and helped out on events such as the Colorado Last Chance 1200k.

We will all miss this wonderful spirit and companion. 🚴

# Random Thoughts BY CHRIS NEWMAN

## Road Blocks

I find that spring can be a uniquely challenging season for randonneuring. I am sure many riders in the colder regions of the country find that winter is the most trying time of year but realistically a snowy, windy, sub-freezing day gifts you an unassailable reason to skip the ride and just stay home. Spring weather, on the other hand, is just unpredictable enough to propel you out the door in the hopes that the weather will improve/stay the same/not deteriorate, depending on initial conditions.

On my recent March rides, I have noticed another harbinger of spring: Road Closed and Detour signs. Some of the most recent sightings have occurred after storms but many are caused by long-planned road work that commences as the warmer months approach.

I have found I have a love/hate relationship with Road Closed signs

and my recent encounter with multiple signs on a road very close to home started me wondering how other randonneurs deal with this issue.

I am a “Lets ride around the sign or lift our bike over the barrier” kind of rider. If there is any way I can get through the closed area I am going for it. Of course, the dilemma is that the feasibility of passing through on a bike

is often not discernible from the erected barrier. This usually doesn’t dissuade me unless there is a hill involved, at which point the stakes increase exponentially and I might touch the brakes monetarily as I evaluate my chances of success. That hill is going to be a lot more painful on the way back up.

If the detour is at all passable, the reward often seems disproportionate. There is the smug satisfaction of knowing that my form of transportation is, in this instance, superior to a car. There is the enjoyment of a short stretch of car-free road, and finally the feeling of winning a high stakes gamble.

There are different types of detours to consider. There are after storm detours of flooded roads, downed wires, and fallen trees. Cycling around or under potentially dangerous hazards adds a certain thrill to the ride. My calculus for braving the hazard involves how much additional mileage will be incurred by following the detour versus how muddy/wet I might become while “cyclocrossing” off road and around downed wires and the overall chances of injury, which would be entirely my fault for pedaling past the orange cones.

Construction sites present a different set of challenges mostly falling into two categories: Is the bridge/road totally or partially missing and are there construction workers present? Partially missing roadways accessible



I like my machine better.

—PHOTOS CHRIS NEWMAN



I like to think of it as more of a suggestion.

road was truly flooded with deep water flowing rapidly across the bridge and roadway. This type of detour allows us to use our map reading skills and our velomobile pilot Len figured out a reasonable work around which only added 4 miles to the route. These surprise closures also allow interaction with locals who must also turn around. Fortunately, these folks are often eager to offer alternative routing. Unfortunately, major highways are often involved.

We encountered several more construction related closures which we easily traversed. We were informed at one site that local police officers handed out citations for transgressions such as ours, thus requiring a reroute to prevent the 70 registered riders from receiving a summons as a brevet souvenir!

Overall, I think I enjoy a good road closure. It adds a bit of drama and excitement and can be embellished when recounting your riding adventures! 🚲

by foot or bike are the holy grail of detours and seem to be well represented on my rides.

Bridges which no longer exist are the soul crushers, made even worse when I am the one who assured the other riders that the route was “probably” passable. Construction workers present a chance to employ all our cyclist charms as we seek to disrupt their work zone. My experience has been that workers are generally willing to let bicycles pass if it is safe and feasible for us to do so. Being polite, respectful, and grateful is crucial to being allowed to sneak through an off-limits area.

There are also road closures which have been present for years and now are just part of the route. There is one bridge over a railroad which features in several of our southern New Jersey brevets. The road initially was just closed and passable, but it has been neglected for so many years that nature has started to reclaim it. Crossing it now requires weaving around the vines and bushes which have thrived in the absence of traffic. I suspect at some

point the vegetation will make the bridge impassable or force the local authorities to remove it all together.

It seems to me that most of the time we can safely ignore road closures but a recent pre-ride for our Jersey Shore 200k proved otherwise. Our ride was scheduled for the day after another torrential rainstorm and the first closed



The next group will be fined.

# Falling Head Fi(R-12)st into Rando

BY BEN SWARTZ

While I had been cycling since I was a kid, I started in earnest when COVID-19 began. In 2022, I completed my first century. In February 2023 I completed my first 200k and much to my surprise completed one every month after for the full year to earn the R-12 award in 2024.

In 2021, inspired by my brother's recent interest in randonneuring, I decided to push myself to ride farther than I ever had before. Every time I completed a new distance, whether it was 20 miles, 40 miles, 62 miles, 80 miles, or eventually that first century, it felt like the next distance wasn't so far away, and my ability to persevere kept increasing.

When 2023 rolled around, I decided to sign up for my first 200k in February organized by the D.C. Randonneurs.

Even though my past rides had proven that I was strong enough, I was so incredibly nervous for that first 200k. Intellectually, I knew that it was only about 24 miles more than the century I had done, but the requirements of a rando event – the distance, the time limit, the lack of support – just felt so daunting. I feverishly Googled for advice and landed on the blogs of Mary Gersema and Ed Felker – both DCR members. Worried about every possible way the ride could go wrong, I packed my huge 12-litre handlebar bag with snacks, studied the route closely,

mapped out every place I could eat, and got in my car to arrive bright and early at the start.

Much to my surprise, the ride leader was Ed. He was excited to hear that there was a new rider – and another DCR member who actually lived in the District of Columbia.

Before I knew it, the ride began. Unused to the immediate start of a brevet, a huge pack of riders sped away while I was still futzing with my bag. Thankfully Mimo DeMarco, after hearing this was my first brevet, stuck back to ride with me.

Like Ed, Mimo was incredibly

welcoming, chatting with me about his first rando ride and how he prepares and paces himself. Considering how nervous I was I'm not sure I would've completed the ride, let alone continued randonneuring, if it weren't for the kindness Mimo showed me.

After riding together for around 20 miles, we hit the first control. I hopped off my bike to get some water and a snack. Much to my surprise and chagrin, Mimo glanced back at me and said "Sorry, I don't stop," and sped off. So much for having a riding buddy.

That first ride was really tough, but not impossible. If it hadn't been for the crushing headwind the last 20 miles, I would've felt energetic at the finish. But in the end I had done it and as the now familiar randonesia set in I thought to myself, "Huh, that wasn't so bad, I could do this again."

So I did. My next ride, the March brevet, was a true trial by fire. It was

Mimo caught in the snow as sunset descended.

—PHOTO BEN SWARTZ





After the January ride with (L-R) Mimo Demarco, Me, and Pat O'Connor, with me trying to use my hands to show "12."

—PHOTO MIMO DEMARCO

Pat O'Conner taking a nap on the August ride.

—PHOTO BEN SWARTZ



pouring rain the whole time, nearly everyone dropped out the night before, but now I had my eyes set on an R-12 and decided to give it a shot. Once again, I rode with Mimo at the beginning, and once again we parted ways midway through the ride, and once again I finished. Mimo shot me a text when I got back home: "Velominati Rule #9: If you are riding in bad weather, it means you are a bada\*\*. Period."

Although I wouldn't have said so at the time, looking back on how miserable the weather on that ride was, I suppose I was. So I kept doing it.

The 200k brevet in April was easier and I did a 200k permanent in May. June's brevet was my favorite of them all. I rode a 200k which was the second day of Pennsylvania Randonneurs' 600k, which my brother rode in. It was great to see how other clubs operated – PA Rando in particular made adjustments to ensure that the ride was accessible: they rented an entire hostel that I stayed in the night before (along with my brother) and they picked a location that was accessible by Amtrak.

Despite starting in the middle of Philadelphia, there was no shortage of accessible, beautiful country roads. I wish more clubs would hold brevets that are accessible to riders without cars. Although I was now committed to riding a 200k brevet every month, I hated having to rely on my car to get me to the start. I feel badly for the would-be randonneurs who don't have

a car to get them to the far-away starts that are common.

It felt great to bike with my brother – though every time I peeked at his GPS I was reminded that his legs were 400k more tired than mine.

As the months went on, the rides got harder and harder. Mimo invited me to do a permanent with him in August – a "Crista Route," a route by Crista Borrás – which are known for their endless climbs and tasty lunch spots. This one lived up to the stereotype and included a fun little stretch with a 17% grade, as well as a quaint Amish market at the halfway point. I then rode with DCR in their September brevet – another climb-filled ride, but thankfully a little less difficult than the previous month's permanent.

In October, I happened to be in California and decided to do a 200k permanent with my brother and some of his San Francisco Randonneurs friends to add some variety to my R-12. Despite the sweltering heat, unseasonable even in California, the camaraderie of familiar and fresh faces, coupled with new roads, hills, and vistas, made for an exhilarating ride.

Now just a few months away from completing my R-12, November's ride served as testament to my continued perseverance. DCR commonly uses a "Flatbread" route on the Eastern Shore of Maryland each November; this one had only 568 feet of elevation gain.

The day began with a foggy sunrise that made the horizon glow angelic. I

hopped into a paceline and flew along at 20 mph for the first 40 miles. By the end of the ride I felt like I could easily do more. The struggle of that first brevet had faded from my memory.

However, just as I thought I had finally gotten the hang of this rando thing, my last two rides pushed me to my limits. December's brevet was the Woodbine Wallop. The route essentially jammed every hard climb in Maryland together into one 200k. While the first climb wasn't until mile 30, barely 10 miles in the ride took a harrowing turn. The club's president, Ed, got hit by a car when the driver failed to stop at a stop sign. The driver then drove away.

I rolled up the scene after it had happened and just as the ambulances had arrived. For the rest of the ride I wondered if he'd be okay. Panic set in at every subsequent stop sign. The reminder of the danger of sharing the roads with drivers and the thought that one would just drive away after a crash kept bubbling to the top of my mind.

By that first climb, my legs began



Noah and our bikes taking BART to the start of our October 200k perm

—PHOTO BEN SWARTZ

to cramp. Despite my discomfort and agitation I didn't want to quit, but every hill pushed me to my limits and the route made me feel like that first ride was a simple 100k populaire by comparison.

During the ride, I had gotten word that Ed had made it safely to the hospital and was recovering, which eased my mind somewhat. But the ride remained challenging and I finished with my slowest time to date – nearly 13 hours.

So I had nearly done it, or so I thought. My final ride needed to be a 200k in January. As you might expect, January was quite cold in D.C. I kept checking the weather report to see if there was a weekend that would be good, and decided to pull the trigger on MLK Jr. day.

Mimo, now one of my closest riding companions, and Pat O'Connor said they wanted to join and we picked a relatively flat and easy route to do.

The day before, I checked the weather report. It was still going to be cold, but it was now supposed to snow in the late evening. I texted Mimo to see if he was still game and he responded "I'm 50/50, but Pat is 100% in. And we both know I can't say 'no' to a bike ride."

When I woke up, I noticed that it was snowing. I hopped in my car en route to the start, sort of assuming that Mimo would message me telling

me he was out. Yet, he didn't, and soon the three of us were underway, covered head-to-toe in every item of cold-weather gear we owned.

By the time we started, the snow had stopped. The sun came out, and the first 70 miles were beautiful. We were making good time and stopped at Crista's suggested lunch place. As we scarfed down our cheesesteaks I noticed it had started snowing outside. "I'm sure it'll be fine," I naively thought.

By the time we hopped back on our bikes, the snow had turned from a dusting to a deluge. "Only one way home, I suppose," I thought. Thankfully, it wasn't sticking, but as soon as the sun began to set things started getting bad. Visibility was bad, traction was bad, my derailleur had frozen shut so my bike essentially converted into a single speed and I had to start walking up hills.

My brake pads froze which led to a cliffhanger-like moment where I barely came to a complete stop before barreling into an intersection.

When things got completely dark, the true challenge began. We stopped inside a store to wait for Pat to catch up. Despite being in a heated building, my heart rate dropped and I began shivering. The only way to warm myself up was to hop on my bike, but the snow and cold made descents feel more like skiing than biking.

I slipped and fell around 10 miles

from the finish and again about a mile from the finish, but thankfully, given my slow speed, the tumbles were relatively minor. I thought about walking that last mile, but hopped back on the saddle and rolled into the parking lot without further disaster.

I had done it. Through rain, snow, heat, and pain – I had done it. I earned my R-12.

Reflecting back on the progress I made over the year, I think about how I prepared for that first 200k. As I scoured every piece of information on the internet, I came across the explanation of the sport on DCR's website: "Randonneuring is non-competitive, but we challenge ourselves and each other—to ride farther, to ride faster, to ride longer than we might have thought possible...We ride together, creating bonds of friendship and camaraderie along the way."

A year and an R-12 in, I couldn't agree more.

After getting in my car after that cold and difficult ride, my body sore, my fingers numb from the cold, my stomach growling, I made the slow, snowy drive back to D.C. After a much-needed shower and some food, I hopped into my bed.

As I lay there, waiting to drift off to sleep, I began to stretch out my muscles, still tense from a big day on the bike. Randonnesia began to set in and an impulse came over me to check my phone and take a look at the schedule for the coming year.

Is there a brevet I can travel to in February? Maybe an event I can do with my brother when I visit San Francisco in March? Is the weather in D.C. going to be good enough next weekend for a 100k?

I guess it's hard to stop after just one R-12. 🚲

# RUSA Awards

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

## Randonneur 10000 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Mark C Behning	Sacramento, CA	5/15/23
Mark Brogan	San Jose, CA	10/2/23
Patrick Chin-Hong [2]	Amherst, MA	4/26/23
John D'Elia	Middletown, CT	10/12/23
Dan Driscoll [4]	Arlington, TX	10/2/23
Joshua J Haley	Canton, OH	10/2/23
Misha Marin Heller (F)	Alexandria, VA	6/26/23
Jonathan Karpick	Cleveland, OH	9/28/23
Charlie A Martin [2]	Sunnyvale, CA	10/2/23
Doug McLerran	Aurora, IL	6/29/23
Jeff Newberry [4]	Austin, TX	10/2/23
Christopher Ngo	Clovis, CA	10/7/23
Sarah Stolz (F)	Seattle, WA	8/11/23
Robert F Tulloh [2]	Austin, TX	10/2/23
Kevin J Williams	Carmichael, CA	10/8/23

## Randonneur 5000 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Mark Brogan	San Jose, CA	10/3/23
Jeffrey S Cannon	Los Angeles, CA	6/29/23
John D'Elia [3]	Middletown, CT	8/3/23
Dan Driscoll [7]	Arlington, TX	10/2/23
Kitty Goursolle (F) [4]	San Ramon, CA	10/1/23
Joshua J Haley [2]	Canton, OH	10/2/23
Adam Hunt	El Cerrito, CA	10/3/23
Betty Jean Jordan (F)	Monticello, GA	6/4/23
Jonathan Karpick [2]	Cleveland, OH	10/2/23
Rashid Khan	Fort Collins, CO	10/2/23
Narayan Krishnamoorthy [3]	Kirkland, WA	4/24/23
Charlie A Martin [2]	Sunnyvale, CA	10/2/23
Jennifer Moore (F)	Fort Collins, CO	10/5/23
Jeff Newberry [4]	Austin, TX	10/2/23
Christopher Ngo	Clovis, CA	10/7/23
Mark Thomas [7]	Kirkland, WA	10/10/23
Robert F Tulloh [2]	Austin, TX	10/7/23
Corinne D Warren (F)	Monument, CO	10/2/23
Kevin J Williams	Carmichael, CA	10/10/23
Pamela Wright (F) [3]	Fort Worth, TX	10/2/23

## RUSA American Explorer Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	TOTAL STATES	APPROVED
Ray, Joseph	Bernardsville, NJ	16	2/13/24
Speier, Andy	Olympia, WA	18	2/22/24
DiCarlantonio, Francis Aloysius	Crofton, MD	12	3/27/24
Driscoll, Dan	Arlington, TX	12	3/29/24
Ledru, Pascal	Denver, CO	10	4/1/24
Nichols, David Andrew	New York, NY	14	4/1/24
Greene, Nigel	Elkins Park, PA	24	4/12/24
Torres, Bob	Carlstadt, NJ	20	4/18/24
Adams, Charles J	Midland, TX	10	4/22/24
Fox II, Phil	Chicago, IL	20	4/29/24
Birdsell, Carl L.	St Joseph, MO	21	5/1/24
Peterson, Eric	Naperville, IL	24	5/6/24

# RUSA Awards

## RUSA Rouler Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Randy Carey [3]	Shoreview, MN	5/5/24
Dan Driscoll [4]	Arlington, TX	2/11/24
Gary P Gottlieb [4]	Aledo, TX	3/11/24
Shaun Ivory [3]	Woodinville, WA	4/17/24
Audunn Ludviksson [3]	Seattle, WA	4/8/24
John Murphy	Minneapolis, MN	5/5/24
Dana A Pacino (F) [4]	Aledo, TX	3/11/24
Owen Richards [3]	Seattle, WA	4/8/24
Martin Shipp [3]	Raleigh, NC	3/25/24
Pamela Wright (F) [4]	Fort Worth, TX	4/9/24

## RUSA Cup Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Francis Aloysius DiCarlantonio	Crofton, MD	3/27/24
Dan Driscoll [16]	Arlington, TX	4/1/24
Phil Fox II	Chicago, IL	5/7/24
Joshua J Haley [2]	Canton, OH	4/1/24
Pascal Ledru	Denver, CO	4/4/24
Georgi Emilov Stoychev	Ashburn, VA	5/8/24
Elly Winer	Shaker Heights, OH	4/1/24

## Mondial Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Michael L Chalfant	San Francisco, CA	3/13/24
Juliayn Clancy Coleman	Oakland, CA	4/29/24
Amy L Russell (F) [2]	Waco, TX	4/14/24
Mark S Schenkel	Orlando, FL	5/6/24
Sarah Stolz (F)	Seattle, WA	2/4/24
Peter C Wick	Granby, CT	5/7/24

## Galaxy Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Dan Driscoll [3]	Arlington, TX	2/11/24
Mary Foley (F)	New Egypt, NJ	1/28/24

## Rando Scout Award

NAME (25-49 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Bacin, Robert J	Chino Hills, CA	5/6/24
Blalock, Pamela	Conway, MA	4/22/24
Blumenfeld, Daniel J	Pittsburgh, PA	4/15/24
DiCarlantonio, Francis Aloysius	Crofton, MD	3/24/24
Fox II, Phil	Chicago, IL	4/28/24
Gwildis, Ulf Georg	Kirkland, WA	3/18/24
Hawkins, Bradley A	Seattle, WA	4/17/24
Henderson, Brook	Woodland Hills, CA	4/8/24
Hirschbruch, Estevam	Weston, FL	2/5/24
Jones, Gregory A	La Canada Flintridge, CA	2/19/24
Landry, Joe	Dallas, TX	5/7/24
Mann, Deirdre	Whittier, CA	3/11/24
Moreels, Pierre	Los Gatos, CA	2/4/24
Schenkel, Mark S	Orlando, FL	4/29/24
Slater, Bret A	Springfield, VA	2/23/24
Weigel, David	Wheat Ridge, CO	4/2/24
Wolff, Robert A	Sherborn, MA	4/15/24
Young, Howard S	Kirkland, WA	3/18/24

NAME (50-74 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Haley, Joshua J	Canton, OH	4/1/24
Ross, Graham A	Portland, OR	4/30/24
Russell, Bill	Vineyard Haven, MA	4/22/24
Slocum, Christopher C.	Toms River, NJ	5/5/24
Smith, Vernon M	Monument, CO	3/26/24

NAME (75-99 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Andersen, Carl	Woodside, CA	4/15/24
Geisert, Rodney D	Columbia, MO	3/31/24
Otcenas, Susan	Willamina, OR	3/23/24
Peterson, Eric	Naperville, IL	4/30/24

NAME (100-124 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Heg, Christopher	Seattle, WA	4/22/24
Martin, Charlie A	Sunnyvale, CA	2/4/24
Olson, Gregory	Gresham, OR	4/18/24

## RUSA Coast-to-Coast Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Ian Shopland [2]	Olympia, WA	2/12/24



## P-12 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Greg Cardell [3]	Valencia, CA	2/8/24
J Andrew Clayton [8]	Powell, OH	3/8/24
Dan Driscoll [15]	Arlington, TX	3/12/24
Peter W Dusel [4]	Ontario, NY	4/25/24
Dawn M Engstrom (F)	Myrtle Beach, SC	1/27/24
Mary Foley (F) [7]	New Egypt, NJ	3/2/24
Andrew Gavenda	Burbank, CA	3/19/24
Ross Gridley [11]	Pickerington, OH	5/6/24
Geoffrey Hazel [6]	Bellevue, WA	4/6/24
Jim Howell [3]	Niwot, CO	4/28/24
Ted Meisky [2]	Columbus, OH	4/15/24
Wayne W Methner [6]	Lake Forest Park, WA	2/3/24
Michael OConnor [6]	Durham, NC	2/11/24
Shan Perera [13]	Seattle, WA	4/8/24
Eric Peterson	Naperville, IL	2/1/24
Emily Ranson (F) [6]	Ellicott City, MD	4/2/24
Jay Scott Readey	Flossmoor, IL	4/30/24
Graham A Ross [3]	Portland, OR	2/5/24
Elizabeth A Smith (F) [4]	Redmond, WA	2/24/24
David N Staats [9]	Columbus, OH	4/7/24
Sharon Stevens (F) [5]	Richardson, TX	1/23/24
Wei P Sun	San Diego, CA	2/13/24
Ben Swartz	Washington, DC	2/3/24
Tibor Tamas [8]	Fort Worth, TX	3/18/24
James C Taylor [3]	Cottage Grove, OR	4/14/24
John Vincent [7]	Rochester, WA	2/1/24
Peter C Wick [2]	Granby, CT	2/10/24
George Winkert [4]	Highland, MD	3/29/24

## Ultra Randonneur Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Drew Carlson	Sacramento, CA	2/2/24
Doug McLerran	Aurora, IL	2/9/24
Jeff Newberry [5]	Austin, TX	3/26/24

## R-12 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Jeffrey S Cannon [5]	Los Angeles, CA	2/6/24
J Andrew Clayton [8]	Powell, OH	3/2/24
Matthew D Close [2]	Woodinville, WA	1/31/24
Tucker Cullum	Austin, TX	2/28/24
Dan S. Diehn [6]	Black River Falls, WI	4/14/24
Clif Dierking [2]	Severna Park, MD	2/4/24
Jon Dowling [2]	Canton, MI	3/29/24
Peter W Dusel [12]	Ontario, NY	3/17/24
Dawn M Engstrom (F) [4]	Myrtle Beach, SC	1/27/24
Christopher M Gross [2]	Washington, DC	1/29/24
Joshua J Haley [7]	Canton, OH	5/6/24
Christopher Heg [11]	Seattle, WA	3/7/24
Jim Howell [5]	Niwot, CO	4/28/24
Betty Jean Jordan (F) [10]	Monticello, GA	3/2/24
Gary Kanaby [9]	Salado, TX	4/14/24
Richard Lentz [7]	Vineland, NJ	2/4/24
Richard G McCaw [15]	San Jose, CA	5/9/24
Kyle R McKenzie	Falls Church, VA	2/11/24
Doug McLerran [2]	Aurora, IL	4/7/24
Derek Minner	Medford, NJ	4/8/24
Jay Nadeau (F) [2]	Altadena, CA	3/20/24
Chris Nadovich [10]	Easton, PA	2/6/24
John D Nguyen [5]	Seattle, WA	1/31/24
David Andrew Nichols	New York, NY	4/8/24
Jerry Riccardi [4]	Prairie Village, KS	4/29/24
Mihir Sambhus	Fremont, CA	1/31/24
Mark S Schenkel [9]	Orlando, FL	3/3/24
Bennett M Sigmond [5]	Broomfield, CO	5/1/24
Mark Thomas [16]	Kirkland, WA	1/31/24
Lydia Ellen Trott (F) [2]	West Point, IN	4/1/24
Bryan W White	Portland, OR	4/8/24
Nao Yamada	Brooklyn, NY	4/8/24
John Zenter [8]	Hanover, MD	4/26/24

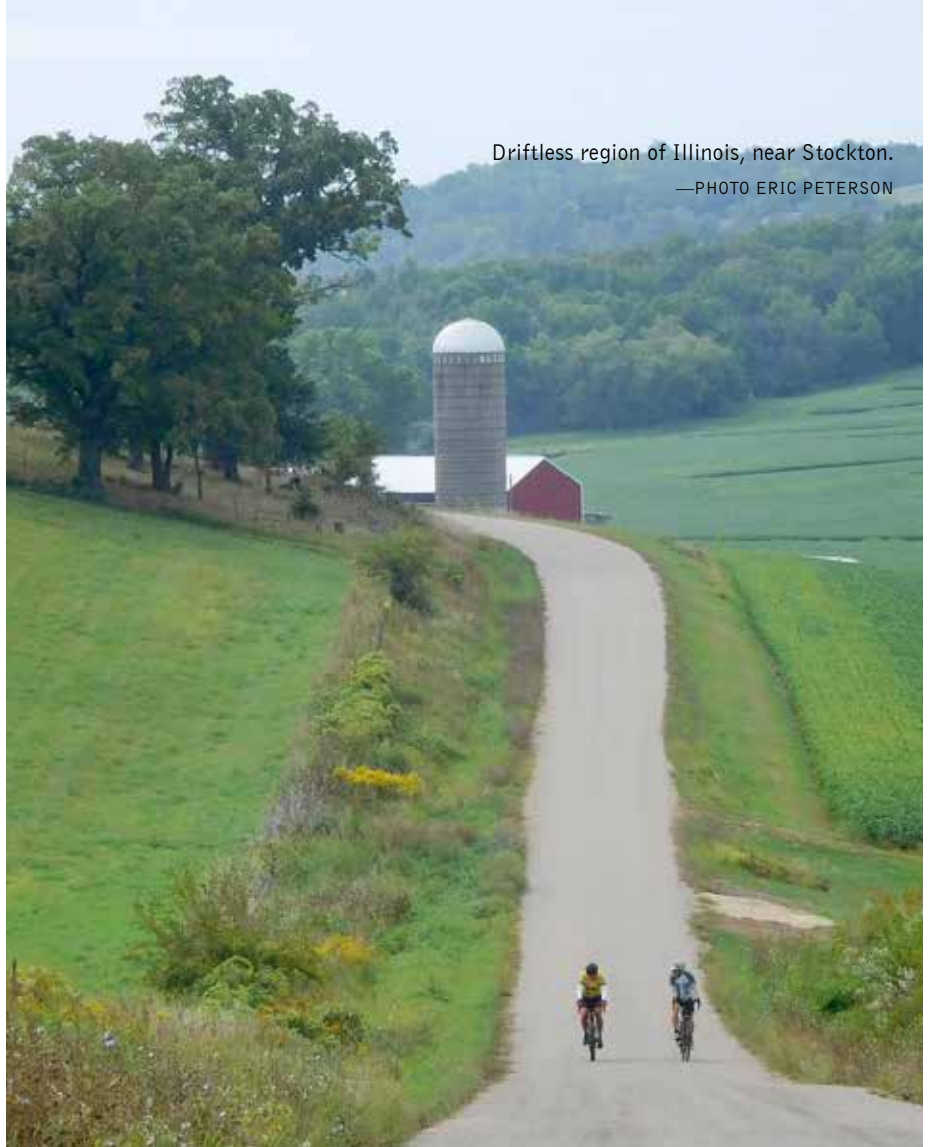
## Ultra R-12 Award

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Paul A Foley	Golden, CO	4/6/24
Betty Jean Jordan (F)	Monticello, GA	3/2/24
Chris Nadovich	Easton, PA	2/6/24

# Parting Shots



Greg Cardell, Pat Huber, Kerin Herber, and Terry Boykins on the PCH Randonneurs *Live Long and Populaire* in April 2023.  
—PHOTO DIANA ST. JAMES



Driftless region of Illinois, near Stockton.  
—PHOTO ERIC PETERSON



The Chicago Randonneurs on the Two Brothers Campton Hills Loop 100k in March.  
—PHOTO BOB BOOTH



Wei Sun, Andrew Gavenda, and Daniel Hernandez posing with the Gorn in front of Kirk's Rock at the Star Trek Historic Film Site.  
—PHOTO DIANA ST. JAMES



Eddy Merckx's Molteni team car with both vintage and modern Colnagos at the Tour de France.  
—PHOTO GEORGES SCHWARZ

# *SON Ladelux*



Yup, Wilfried Schmidt went and changed the name!

The new SON Ladelux dynamo headlight adds USB charging, with a 1,200 mAh battery fully integrated in the headlight housing. The battery acts as a buffer for USB charging when the rider stops. It also powers the high beam. The optical design is the same as the Edelux II but the standard beam is brighter at 120 lux. The high beam is controlled by the handlebar mounted switch, which also incorporates the USB-C port. Production begins in late summer, 2024.

Don't worry. The Edelux II continues in production for those riders who don't need to be charging a mobile phone or GPS device, and who don't need a high beam.

## PETER WHITE CYCLES

24 Hall Rd. Hillsborough, NH 03244

603 478 0900

[www.PeterWhiteCycles.com/schmidt-headlights.php](http://www.PeterWhiteCycles.com/schmidt-headlights.php)

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