

2021 American Randonneur Award

JAKE KASSEN

BY SARAH BERGSTROM

I had briefly met Jake before, but the first time we really talked was when we were volunteers at the overnight control of a 600km in 2014. As we waited, half awake, for riders to pull in, our conversation rambled over many subjects, but kept coming back to one single driving philosophy.

Jake Kassen wants to make randonneuring better.

Better routes, better tools, better communication, better procedures; he's never satisfied with good enough. If there's anything he can do to smooth out the potholes of putting on events, he's on it. Anyone who's ever ridden with, volunteered with, or just sat around the finish of an event with Jake knows this; he's always brainstorming ideas and bouncing them off his fellow riders and organizers—and then doing the harder part: turning those ideas into reality.

Let me quote Jake himself: "Not many cyclists understand how difficult it can be to design a RUSA approved route, let alone know the time and effort it takes to organize the support needed to pull one off." Jake said this when he was just taking over as RBA, and he followed it up with six years of tirelessly putting in that time and effort as Boston RBA. He designed new routes for every distance, riding countless miles to scout new gems of roads and catch problems before they could become problems. He fundamentally changed the style of route design in our region: every turn, every road is looked at to give riders

the best experience possible. He's also shepherded lots of new route designers and ride organizers through the process—myself included—encouraging us and helping us make our events the best they can be.

His contributions to his fellow RBAs and the RUSA national organization are just as noteworthy; he has served as RBA liaison and leveraged his professional skills to design a bunch of tools. There's the Card-O-Matic tool, which makes creating all the paperwork for an event or permanent a breeze. There's the search-by-location for events and permanents to help riders connect with events across multiple regions. Additionally, he designed and maintains the code behind the Rando Scout award.

Please join me, the New England Randonneurs, all RBAs, the RUSA Board and Awards Committee, and everyone involved with RUSA in thanking Jake for his tireless work over the years and congratulating him on being this year's American Randonneur Award winner. 🚴



Congratulations to Jake Kassen, 2021 American Randonneur of the Year!