

AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



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NOWHERE



Pacific Atlantic Cycling Tour

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

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

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Cycling in Ghana Africa

Late November 13 days with travel days

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

PAC Tour

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



American Randonneur Magazine

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COVER—“Nowhere, KS” along a
historic railway south of Baldwin City, KS.

PHOTO KEITH GATES

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President's Message

Giving credit where credit is due! In the last edition of *AR*, the short piece on the new permanents program missed mentioning two key contributors—Lynne Fitzsimmons and Erin Laine. Each and every person on the web and permanents team played a key part, and I apologize to both Lynne and Erin for the oversight.

Are you interested in numbers? Permanents opened for August and we had 611 rider days. Scheduled events opened for September but not every region was ready to handle riders—we had 291 event rider days and 432 permanent rider days in September, for a total of 732. Each year is different, of course. In 2019 we had 404 event rider days in September (a low month following PBP). Permanents ridden in September 2019 were 656.

Every day that goes by sees more members registering for the new perms program. Route reactivations have slowed to a trickle, with a few coming in every day, and we are now accepting new routes. Crista Borrás is

handling those. Kerin Huber is working with contributors making changes to existing, activated routes. A few of us are reviewing those initial route submissions for reactivation. It's been a real learning curve for us on the review team and for contributors, since we are relying heavily on Ride with GPS's ability to create and maintain custom cues and print cue sheets for those who are not EPP equipped.

The permanents program depends on Smartwaiver for electronically signed waivers. Mike Sturgill, Phoenix RBA, is working with other RBAs interested in utilizing Smartwaiver for their region. Hamid Akbarian (VA Northern) and Dan Driscoll (TX Dallas) are early adopters; others have expressed interest.

In terms of route submissions, we're getting good distribution by State and by distance and amount of climbing. The number of available routes changes almost daily; below is as of early October and does not include the SR600 routes.

2020 has been a volatile year, to say the least. We are now living with the pandemic. Permanents are being ridden and RBAs, in some parts of the country, are holding events with an abundance of caution. Careful camaraderie. Tentative schedules have been submitted for 2021 with the knowledge that ACP will provide flexibility as necessary.

As I write this, some things are behind us now: we have already renewed our insurance for 2021 and the new permanents program is in place. We all hope that there will be a gradual return to some sort of normal, even if it's a new normal, that will allow us to travel and celebrate together with our friends before, during and after our rides.

As 2020 winds down, here's to a safe 2021 for you and your families.

—Dave Thompson
RUSA President
 president@rusa.org

Climbing	Distance			
	Feet/Mile	>300k	200k-300k	<200k
0-25	8	68	73	149
25-50	10	162	218	390
50-75	1	75	75	151
75+		19	27	46
Total	19	324	393	736

Routes	States
1-2	AK DC ID MI MT ND NM PR WY
3-5	IA IN LA ME MN MS NH OK SD
6-10	AL AZ GA IL PA VA VT WI
11-20	FL KS MA MO NC NY OR TN UT
21-50	CO MD NJ OH
>50	CA TX WA

From the Editor

We have been living with the pandemic in the U.S. for nine months and, as I write, doctors and leaders globally are talking about another wave of infections. It's important to continue to take precautions as we head into winter and the holiday season... it appears this year will end the way it started.

It has been a challenge in 2020 to edit a cycling magazine whose primary focus is on events that, for most of the year, have been cancelled. I have also had a peculiar realization about randonneuring: despite its creed concerning self-sufficiency, the pandemic has made clear just how social this sport is. We have missed the camaraderie, the bakery stops, and the beer and pizza post-ride festivities with friends. Even though contributors to this issue have been creative in the ways they have managed to ride with COVID restrictions in place, there is an undercurrent of longing for the more social aspects of randonneuring.

The pandemic has also been a catalyst for a renewed global call for social and environmental justice. During my rides exploring corners of southeastern Pennsylvania not previously visited, I've encountered much evidence of the industrial age that sustained this state for decades, but a notable lack of evidence of the earlier inhabitants of the area—the Lenape Nation. Monuments to “early settlers” greet travelers at the entrances to many tiny Pennsylvania towns, so many of which are now clearly rundown and economically impoverished. I've been thinking about where I live, who lives around me, who lived here before me and what it means to live responsibly and ethically at this time in this place.

2020 has been a loud year, in our faces—full of apocalyptic natural events and discord from the start. COVID



was already spreading as the new year dawned. And at the end of 2019 and start of 2020, I was in Australia and watched with dismay as millions of acres burned while people and animals did what they could to get out of the way. October brought similar scenes to our tv screens in the U.S. as record-breaking fires burned through the western states and hurricanes relentlessly pounded southern coastal regions.

As my friends and I have cycled the hills and back roads of eastern PA and western NJ over the last few months, practicing social distancing, we have talked about the effects of COVID on us, our families, our work, and on people with fewer resources. We have talked about reflecting on the reach of white privilege in every part of life. I understand a little better that I can choose to pay attention to issues that others live every day, and I understand that we all pay a price for that difference in our realities.

It matters to use the platforms we have to make things better. In AR, for instance, the writing, with a few

Janice hanging out among artist Steve Tobin's Roots sculptures in Quakertown, PA.

—PHOTO CHRIS NEWMAN

exceptions, has not typically addressed issues of access to our sport or asked why the membership skews as it does. It could be valuable in 2021 for more of us to pay attention to the contexts in which we ride, and it might also be productive for more of us to address this issue in the writing we do as well as in our thinking about the future of randonneuring.

It's hard to predict what randonneuring in the U.S. will look like next year. I hope it's a better year for us. I hope it's a year of good health for all of us, a year of good rides and good writing, a year of good fun, and a year of productive thinking and positive change.

Please be safe out there.

—Janice Chernehoff
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While Randonneuring Lay Sleeping: A Tale of Two Trails

BY MARK MULLEN

One of the worst aspects of the Covid pandemic that has scourged the US is that it has deepened the nation's addiction to information technology. Many of us have spent more time than we would have believed possible—and definitely more than is healthy—Zooming and Teaming and Slacking. Every day I see my neighbors make their grateful afternoon escapes with kids and/or pets in tow, only to immediately pull out their phones and disappear from the present.

Bereft of brevets, and facing a semester—at least—of teaching online college classes, I needed a break from screens and the endless doomscrolling. I decided to take a week and ride from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC, via the 149-mile Grand Allegheny Passage (GAP) and the 184.5-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (C&O) trail. I am relatively new to solo bike touring and learned a great deal, battling a troublesome slow tire leak, a broken stove, and unwise sleeping gear choices. However, even at its most troublesome and even at the height of a pandemic, bike touring is restorative and generous with its rewards: new people, new scenes, new opportunities for inspiration and reflection.

Of the two trails, the C&O is older and better known than the GAP. A famed through-hike by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglass in

1954 helped quash plans to turn the canal into an automotive parkway; it was finally designated a national park in 1971. By contrast, the GAP was pieced together over a long period of time, with the first section laid out in the mid-80s and the whole thing not completed until 2013. But the C&O feels like the more recently developed trail. The GAP was created through a

variety of public-private partnerships, and through piggybacking on other infrastructure projects. The C&O, by contrast, is run by the chronically underfunded National Park Service, a sad reflection on our tendency to build nice things and then let them slide into neglect and ruin.

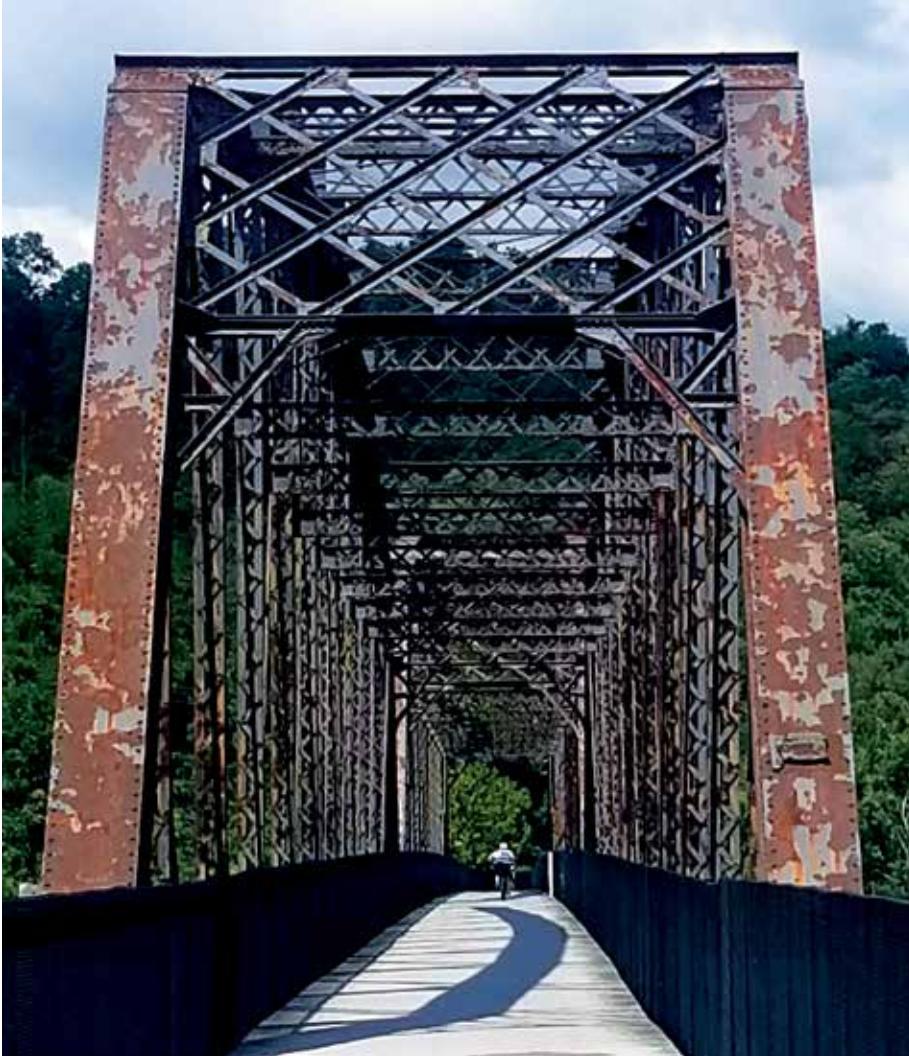
GAP Trail as Community Infrastructure

The GAP offers a beautiful journey through compelling and diverse scenery. The Pittsburgh suburbs, laced with both neglected and repurposed relics of the region's former industrial glory, soon give way to beautiful views of the Monongahela, Youghiogheny, and Casselman Rivers. Over 120 miles the trail climbs steadily and—on a laden bike, sometime insistently—toward the Eastern Continental Divide, passing through the impressive Ohiopyle State Park. The eastern part of the route traverses numerous trestle bridges—

A rare water-filled stretch of the C&O Canal.

—PHOTO MARK MULLEN





In the Steel Valley area outside Pittsburgh, rust indeed never sleeps.

—PHOTO MARK MULLEN

including the massive Salisbury viaduct—that offer spectacular views of river gorges, rolling agricultural valleys, and lazily revolving wind turbines atop the Divide. Over the years, trail developers have worked hard to rebuild and stabilize a number

of tunnels including the 3300-foot passage through Big Savage Mountain which is paved, lighted, and—best of all—on a downhill.

The trail is also rich in history. Parts of it trace the route General Braddock took in his attempt to capture Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh) during the Seven Years War, an expedition that led to his own death and the worst defeat ever handed the British Army. Trail exhibits excel in conveying the region's rich labor history; a standout is the site of the 1892 Battle of Homestead, where steel workers fought and won a pitched battle against Pinkerton strikebreakers. The route is replete with reminders of the grimmer aspects of the area's industrial past. A monument near mile marker 105 honors those who died in the 1901 Port Royal mine disaster, a particularly tragic episode in that most of the dead were volunteer rescuers caught in a second explosion. On the western part of the trail there are also two striking waterfalls, one

red and one white, which appear considerably less attractive when you learn their color is due to leachate from abandoned mines.

There are plenty of places to camp that are either free or cheap; the towns along the route are numerous and large enough to offer a variety of food options. Bike repair stations dot the trail at regular intervals as do visitor information centers, several of them in beautifully restored old train stations. The GAP is a mature trail, fully integrated into the lives of the communities through which it passes. I spoke with several seniors who described biking lengthy stretches of it for daily exercise and one man who used it regularly to visit his mother in a nearby town. Indeed, you always know you are approaching a town because of the dramatic increase in the number of parents with strollers. Nevertheless, I would advise caution if you are planning to bike the trail during the pandemic. In campgrounds and towns along the trail, I encountered people behaving as if Pennsylvania were the Land that Covid Forgot; mask wearing was rare and social distancing virtually non-existent.

Nature and Neglect on the C&O

The C&O itself is essentially two trails. The middle portion—from Hancock through to Edward's Ferry, roughly 90 miles—gives you a sense of what the C&O could be with a little love and more investment: a pleasantly rideable surface, excellent signage, fascinating historical and infrastructure artifacts and some lovely scenery. The eastern and western portions of the trail (30 and 60 miles respectively) offer poorly maintained surfaces and views that range from ho-hum to nonexistent. In addition, the eastern end is over-crowded, particularly on weekends.



Evidence that the C&O trail isn't the most well planned enterprise begins with the fact that the trail's real start/end point in Cumberland is so well hidden that even regular trail riders don't know it is there. It is located across a bridge, on the other side of a replica fragment of canal, along a bank, and behind a building that looks like it might be the innocuous above ground entrance to a zombie nest in a first-person shooter. Astonishingly, the trail's eastern terminus in DC is also hidden; locating it requires navigating

a promenade swarming with people, circling behind a boat house, walking through an overgrown lot, and crossing a rickety foot bridge.

The entire Western section of the trail, as far as Hancock (almost 60 miles in) offers a jarring contrast with the GAP. Literally. Ruts, washouts, potholes (many of them hidden in shade), criss-crossing roots, patches of mud, and puddles of indeterminate depth abound. Much of this portion of the trail also has a soul-deadening visual sameness to it, with banks of

creeper-choked scrub masking anything more than a glimpse of the Potomac. Many riders abandon the portion of the C&O around Hancock for the 22.5 miles of beautifully paved Western Maryland Rail Trail, and after a bone-rattling ride over the first fifty miles, I did the same.

Fortunately, the middle portion of the trail features a surface that occasionally puts even the GAP to shame. One of the most enjoyable stretches of riding I have experienced in many years was along the Big Slackwater portion, where the trail juts into the river and makes you feel as if you are biking on water. This stretch is dense with historical sites, ranging from the 1760s Fort Frederick to the Antietam battlefield (a short but hilly side trip). Unlike the GAP, the C&O skirts most towns and while some of these—like Harper's Ferry—are sufficiently well known to draw a lot of



The marker post for the start of the C&O trail in downtown Washington DC needs all the visibility help it can get.

Ice in August? Water discolored by chemicals leaching from abandoned mines.

—PHOTOS MARK MULLEN

Stone viaduct on the C&O, glimpsed from the much more forgiving Western Maryland Rail Trail.

—PHOTO MARK MULLEN

visitors, even some of the smaller ones like quirky Shepherdstown are worth a visit. In the apparently nondescript town of Brunswick I encountered a candidate for the nation's friendliest convenience store owner and a fabulous coffee shop—Beans in the Belfry—in an old church.

Nevertheless, the neglect evident along large portions of the C&O troubled me. There is one obvious remedy: Americans could start paying taxes at the level necessary to fund a modern developed nation. Back in the real world, the National Park Service has been exploring other funding possibilities. It is possible, for example, to rent some of the canal lock houses; the NPS has also partnered with some trailside communities to raise money for local trail amenities. However, some obvious mechanisms for supporting a trail that could—and should—be a national treasure are going begging.

The C&O offers numerous free primitive camping sites at regular intervals, each with treated water and a portalo. While the NPS has recently



begun charging a nominal fee for the two large car accessible sites, it is puzzling that there isn't a fee box at every campsite. The congested nature of the lower portion of the trail, on the doorstep of one of the wealthiest regions in the nation, suggests that it is also high time the NPS implemented some form of voluntary trail access fee (the Cannon Creek Trail in Minnesota is a successful example of such an approach).

In times of economic crisis, support for these kinds of amenities is often the first thing to be cut from national and local budgets. As we cyclists are increasingly driven off the paved roads

—sometimes literally—building new off-road trails and maintaining and enhancing the existing routes that bring joy and inspiration to so many is vital. 🚲

Mark Mullen teaches writing at the George Washington University in Washington DC and rides with the DC Randonneurs. This article is excerpted from multiple entries on his cycling blog, Alchemy: Battling the Elements.

Early evening near the Indian Flats campsite on the lower Potomac.

—PHOTO MARK MULLEN



Beltway Randonista

BY MARY GERSEMA

Enough

Growing up, and especially during my teen years, I obsessed over my physical appearance. I spent excessive amounts of time in front of the mirror assessing my physical qualities, trying to determine if I passed society's acceptability test.

I scoured beauty and health magazines, inspecting the models to see how I measured up. Was I thin enough? Was I pretty enough?

Most days the answer was no. I honed in on all of my perceived flaws and tried to scold myself into action.

I began to use food and physical activity as mechanisms to achieve this unattainable benchmark. I restricted calories. I worked out to lose weight, and not because I really liked it.

This extremely limited view of food and physical activity continued

for many years into my adulthood. My physical self continued to disappoint as my disordered patterns around eating and exercise persisted. I'm not telling you this for sympathy. That is simply what I believed and how I lived for quite a long time.

In my late 20s, I moved to Washington, D.C., and started cycling to work. It was the easiest and fastest form of transportation. I rode primarily to commute and familiarize myself with the District. In the process I discovered that I really liked riding.

I began to use my bike to access areas further and further from home. Cycling was increasing my fitness, but I saw it more as exploration not exercise.





Done and dusted—completing an SR series.

—PHOTO BILL BECK

Fleche team—table for five.

—PHOTO BILL BECK

Washington, D.C., and the area around it, has so much history and—compared to many places—it is bicycle and pedestrian friendly. The city invites exploration.

My endurance increased and eventually I became friends with someone who invited me to be part of an all-woman fléche team. I had never heard of the sport of randonneuring until this time, but the idea of covering 360km in 24 hours intrigued me. Was my body capable of such a feat? Pedaling that far—for that long—was something I had never considered, let alone imagined possible. I said yes.

Despite being the slowest and most inexperienced rider of the group, my fléche teammates pulled me along and somehow I reached the finish with them. Fraternizing at the end and eating breakfast in a sleep-deprived delirium, I basked in the accomplishment. My body had held up well. It had proven itself strong and durable, and come through for me.

I had peeked beyond the horizon of my imagination and it held so much possibility and excitement. I had never felt this way about my body. Randonneuring turned my sense of self on its head, in a totally great way. My body was stronger than I believed



it could be, and I was capable of what I thought were great things—great randonneuring things.

During this time period I also met my now-husband Ed and we took on a Super Randonneur series together on tandem. My self-confidence and appreciation for my body continued to bloom. I carried that confidence into my relationships and into the other arenas of my life. Randonneuring didn't save me exactly, but it was the means to seeing myself, my body, and my value in a completely new way.

Now, when I look in the mirror, a strong beautiful woman looks back. I don't look for flaws; my body is doing

just fine. My body is capable of feats I never thought possible and covers distances that most people just drop their jaws about and consider crazy. Not me. I can ride more than 250 miles in one day and tell you all about how it feels, how hard it is, how wonderful it can be.

It's been over fifteen years since I became a randonneur, and even now I have moments of awe about the distances and terrain we cover, the durability of our bodies. The horizon of possibility is more than we can imagine, and then we start pedaling toward it. It lures us forward. We are beautiful. We are enough. 🚲

Embracing at the finish.

—PHOTO BILL BECK

The BRM Centennial is Approaching!

BY BILL BRYANT, RUSA #7

Looking forward to the end of summer 2021, September 11 will be a special day. Yes, a sad day for the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States twenty years ago, but it will also be the 100th anniversary of the first Audax Club Parisien *allure libre* 200km brevet in 1921. Randonneurs and randonneuses around the world will be riding and celebrating the centenary of what we call “randonneuring.”

A little background—the Audax Club Parisien was founded in November of 1904 to participate in the new *audax* 200km endurance rides that were

starting to take place. *Audax* signified always riding in a group at an average pace of 16-18 kph, and with a road captain who kept the group from going

too fast, together the entire time. The rides often lasted from dawn to dusk and were fairly popular around the Paris region in the years before World War I. Upon a successful completion of the ride, participants were awarded a certificate or diploma (*brevet* in French) for their athletic feat—no small thing in that bygone era of dirt roads, cobblestones, and primitive bicycles.

Following the war’s end in 1918, some of the ACP members wanted to ride faster than the steady *audax* pace, while others wanted to include group hiking activities on the club calendar, and some were adamantly opposed to these changes and wanted the club to remain true to its group cycling origins. Club meetings became pretty heated affairs and in the summer of 1921 it all exploded. A majority of the ACP members voted to start doing *allure libre* or free-pace brevets that allowed riders to choose their own pace so long as they stayed inside the minimum and maximum speeds, and they could ride alone or in a group—the same as we do today. Following the vote, the *audax* cyclists angrily decamped and formed their own organization, as did the hiking contingent.

So, there was no more *audax* in the Audax Club Parisien. On Sunday, September 11, 1921 the ACP held its first free-pace brevet of 200km. The route was a big loop that went west and south of Paris to Dreux, Chartres, and then back to Paris. Twenty-six randonneurs and randonneuses completed the ride in the time limit, arriving at intervals at the finish control. Brevet #1 was issued that



ACP medals.
—PHOTO DEB BANKS

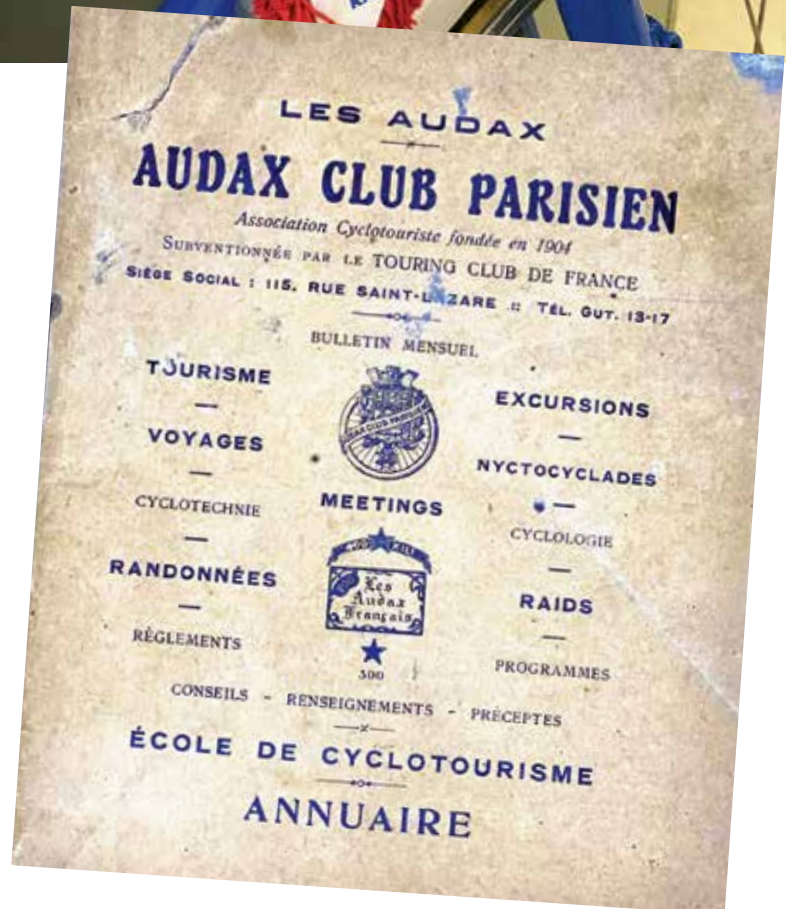
ACP pennant.
—PHOTO BILL BRYANT

day, starting a continuous string of numbered brevet results that we still earn today. The free-pace randonneuring format gradually spread around France during the 1920s and 1930s, and then around the globe starting in the 1970s. Here we are in the 21st century, still riding and earning our brevets while choosing to ride our own pace and with however many people as we wish. This is the formula of the *Brevets de Randonneurs Mondiaux*, or BRM that you see on the front of RUSA brevet cards sanctioned by the ACP.

In 1921 the world was just coming off an awful pandemic that killed millions of people, while we are still in one ourselves; it is curious how history can repeat itself. Perhaps our covid-concerns will be ameliorated by next summer, but for now it will be best to remember to use safe social distancing methods on all our brevets, including the big birthday bash. (At the ACP's centennial in 2004, they held a 200km audax brevet with over a hundred riders cycling shoulder to shoulder, just like they did in 1904. That obviously won't be a good approach to this coming year's rides...)

Happily, September 11 falls on a Saturday in 2021 so please think about riding a BRM centennial 200km and join in the big celebration. Look on the RUSA calendar for the clubs organizing a birthday brevet to find the one nearest to you. There will be a special ACP medal for purchase by all those who finish the ride. *Bonne route!* 🚲

ACP publication.
—PHOTO MARK BEHNING



Randolicious

Haute cuisine is not typically associated with long distance riding. None of the stars featured in the All-Star Special at Waffle House or on the Hardee's sign refer to Michelin. Randonneurs seek fast, inexpensive, and voluminous calories. Some long-distance riders can fuel themselves on powdered drinks and gels, but I am not one of those.

Early on I learned that my engine runs cleanest on real food. During PBP 2003 I attempted to fuel myself with powdered maltodextrin and gels, but by the end of day one, my gastrointestinal tract had revolted.



The All-Star Special from Waffle House has sent many a randonneur down the road with a full belly.

The author tucks into a box of Kouign Amann in Sizun during PBP 2015 as Mike Dayton, Luke Heller, Simon Palmer and Jerry Phelps sample the pastries. C'est délicieux!

—PHOTO JENNY OH

A rookie experimentation nearly ended my ride, but fortunately I was in France. The food offered at the controls had not been chosen at random. The menu had been cultivated from over 100 years of trial and error. I was grazing at the buffet of Audax savoring the terror of long miles in the saddle. Slowly I recovered, fueling with mashed potatoes bolognese, riz au lait, pasta and endless jambon baguettes.

I certainly have spent my share of time wandering the aisles of minimarts searching for that perfect flavor of the moment food item that would carry me to the next control. Like many others

I have also used fast food restaurants as an efficient source of rando fuel. But I'm not here to discuss value menus or happy meals. Let's take a moment to savor the high gastronomy of Grand Randonnées. I hope you're hungry.

Bonifay Challenge 2006

Breakfast was long gone on day one of the Bonifay Challenge. We were 150 miles into the ride crossing from the Florida Panhandle into southern Georgia. Our fuel gauges were reading near empty when an oasis appeared. Michelle's Restaurant in Georgetown, Georgia, announced itself with the aroma of fried chicken. Like bloodhounds we followed the scent to a sign that read "daily buffet." We didn't need any more information. We just needed plates. Walking the aisles of Michelle's buffet we were the proverbial kids in a candy store.

During my wife Amy's pregnancies she had unusual food cravings. While I could don the pregnancy belt at our Lamaze courses to empathize with the burden of carrying the added





The full Irish that launched our Mile Failte in 2018.

The famous Moules Frites of Saint Martin des Pres, PBP 2011.

—PHOTOS JOHN CAP'N ENDE



weight of a pregnancy, I couldn't truly understand the food cravings until randonneuring. Long miles drain calories and nutrients, and those need to be replaced. Michelle was there to help. With heaping plates, we grabbed a table in the outdoor section well away from the other patrons. This feeding frenzy would best be without witness.

If there was a theme to my meal, it was yellow. Baked macaroni and cheese, cheesy grits, chicken and dumplings, creamed corn, sweet potato casserole and a corn muffin. As they say in the South, my meal was easy on the gums. No teeth required! Of course, this was washed down with 32 ounces of the sweetest tea this side of the Mason-Dixon line. Some readers will revolt at this plate of good ole Southern cooking but to my stomach this was rocket fuel.

London Edinburgh London (LEL) 2009

We would pass through Traquair, Scotland, twice in relatively quick succession: at kilometer 680 and again at 750 after the turnaround. Our initial passing was during early breakfast hours and I found myself bleary eyed

with a bowl of porridge searching for condiments. I was directed to the "condiment" table where I found only Scotch. A kilted man assured me that I was at the correct table but I passed on the suggested wee dram for now. I had my porridge straight up despite hearing about the wonders of the peat filtered Islay on offer.

When we returned four hours later, things were much more festive and we were awake. The main course for lunch was sheet cake with a side of Scotch. As the saying goes, when in Rome.... I consented to the sample of the Islay 10 Year and the Glenmorangie. To refuse would have been insulting. The control worker/bartender beamed with pride as he described the notes of flavors that I would be encountering, that is, after I finished my second generous serving of birthday cake. It was all washed down with a mini biere d'Or and we headed into the hills and high winds of the borderlands.

Paris Brest Paris (PBP) 2015 Fougères

Mention your favorite control at PBP amongst a group of anciens/

anciennes and you are well on your way to a spirited debate. I have always favored Villaines La Juhel, particularly for the festive atmosphere on the return, but especially for the volunteer children who carry the riders' trays. In 2015, however, Ian Hands made a strong case for Fougères having the best cuisine.

The cafeteria is in a separate building from the control so I had often skipped it. Trust me, a visit to the cafeteria in the lower building is well worth your time. The menu is extensive. Decisions can be difficult for the weary randonneur, particularly with a language barrier. I decided to stick with my tried and true color scheme, this time light yellow. Pasta Carbonara, riz au lait, cold pasta salad, beer and a banana. I felt these nutrients directly entering into my bloodstream, somehow bypassing my stomach. Note to self and friends: don't forget to feed in Fougères.

PBP 2011 Saint Martin des Prés

Between Loudéac and Saint Nicolas du Pelém there is a small village that goes all out in the celebration of PBP. Saint Martin des Prés should not be missed. Often the route passes through twice, although in 2019 it was only visited on the outbound leg. Everyone in town seems to be there. Roadside tents are filled with riders and villagers all seeking their famous moules frites.

Feeding frenzy at Fougères 2015.

—PHOTO JOHN CAP'N ENDE

The mussels and fries are both cooked in massive tubs over open flames. Mussels might not seem the safest of ride foods but they sure are délicieux! They pair well with accordion music and content smiles. Excuse the blurry screenshot of a video of mine from 2011.

In 2015 there was a mussel shortage so only frites and sausage were on offer and in 2019 I didn't study the route closely enough to realize my plan of stopping on the return was flawed. I will be back in 2023 and look forward to the tidal bounty of Saint Martin des Prés, hopefully outbound and inbound. Vive les moules frites!

Mile Fáilte 2018

1200km is a long way to ride so you might as well start with a full Irish. The full Irish breakfast is guaranteed to get you to the first control, unless you are a vegetarian. Vegans and vegetarians may need to supplement.



A closer look at the Kouign Amann that changed my life!

The yellow plate special of Michelle's Buffet, Bonifay Challenge 2006.

—PHOTOS JOHN CAP'N ENDE



Being omnivorous I absolutely love the full Irish. Rashers (thick Irish bacon) sausage links, fried eggs, beans, black and white pudding, and mushrooms. This will come with coffee/tea, toast and brown bread, and probably cereal. It will have you sailing down the road. I try not to experiment with food during an event. If possible I stick with items that have no known conflicts with my digestive tract. US riders may not be familiar with the puddings, particularly the black pudding which is illegal in the US! The puddings are not puddings at all, they are sausages. They have many of the same ingredients as typical sausages with the black pudding containing blood. If you feel a little low on iron, black pudding has you covered.

Nebraska Sandhills 1000km 2018

When it comes to hearty breakfasts, the Irish don't have a monopoly. Day two of the 2018 Nebraska Sandhills 1000km would have riders slogging into a headwind for ninety miles with the only respite at a breakfast stop at the Antelope Creek Café in Gordon Nebraska. I felt like a 777 fueling up for a cross oceanic flight. With sausage patties the size of hamburgers you'd better have two. No, make it three because one comes on your side breakfast sandwich! Eggs, toast, hash browns, two jelly packets, coffee and a coke. Stops can be few and far in between in Nebraska but don't worry because they really know how to fill up your tank.



Ricky Blacker stares down the breakfast special at the Antelope Creek Cafe, Gordon Nebraska, 2018.

— PHOTO JOHN CAP'N ENDE

PBP 2015 Sizun

Honorable Mention goes to a bakery in Sizun, since it is just one item rather than a meal. The bakery is just off the main court in everyone's favorite non-control town of PBP. You've gotten over the Roc'h Trevezel and it's always a good time to stop in Sizun. It's a lively place. Nearly everyone stops. In the Boulangerie/Patisserie just behind the ruins I scored the tastiest item that I have ever encountered on a ride. I was seeking the Breton delicacy the Kouign Amann but they were all out—all out of the individual ones that is. They had a 10" family size version. Oui, oui indeed. The name derives from the Breton words for cake (kouign) and butter (amann). It literally is 50 percent



yeasted dough, 50 percent butter, and 50% caramelized sugar. Don't ask how they get 150 percent into this thing, just enjoy. Mademoiselle boxed it up and I took it outside, drooling like one of Pavlov's dogs. My riding buddies

asked what plans I had for such a large pastry but I was only speaking in tongues by this point. Tongues dripping with butter and caramelized sugar that is. Once my eyes had rolled back into my head, my friends saw the open door—or box—and swept in for a bite. "Oh my," was all we could muster until we rolled across the Albert-Loupe Bridge in Brest.

Randonneurs love riding their bikes a long way, and many of us also love food. Coincidence or cause and effect? Whatever your motivation for long distance riding you will require fuel. Figure out what works for you, particularly over three to four days. Keep your eyes open and your nose in the air for that lurking rando cuisine. Perhaps your family sized Kouign Amann is just around the next corner. Bon Appétit! 🚲



LEL 2009 collage of the offerings at Traquair, Scotland. Sheetcakes, single malt and porridge. I've never seen a molecule of alcohol pass the lips of Mike Dayton but he enthusiastically posed with a Biere d'Or after asking for a whiff.

— PHOTO JOHN CAP'N ENDE

Southern Appalachian Five Hundy

BY MISHA HELLER

For those who recognize my name, you may know my twin brother, Luke Heller, and it's without a doubt his fault that I am entangled in this whole randonneuring world. He lives in the mountains of Western Carolina and got me to join him and our buddy Ian Hands for my first 1000km, to Crater Lake, in the summer of 2018. These boys are climbers. I am not; I'm a recovering triathlete. Whenever I ride with AIR (Asheville International Randonneurs), I am without a doubt the weakest link in the group. So I knew I wanted to be a better climber, and I suppose that evolved into "The Goal" for 2020 when all RUSA-sanctioned events were canceled.

There is plenty of good climbing where I live in Washington, DC, once you get out of the city, but that's beside the point. For years I've avoided all that and focused on my strength: riding on flat roads. I told my brother that we had to do AIR's SR600 so I could work on The Goal. As you may know, Super Randonnées are mountainous permanents of 600 kilometers with over 10,000 meters of elevation gain. I figured if I could manage that, then I could consider myself a climber. Luke agreed and we picked a date that would work for us and our buddies: Father's Day Weekend. Since half the crew has kids under the age of five, it seemed like

a gift to ourselves that spouses couldn't argue with too much. We decided we would take the whole sixty hours and get hotels for two nights! We'd do roughly 300/200/100 and while there'd be a lot of climbing, there'd still be some resting, too. Easy, right?

Weather was looking good for the weekend and we set out on Friday morning at 5:16am. We were 6 people and I was the only non-Ashevillian. The morning was perfect and quiet; there was not a lot of traffic due to

coronavirus as we began the climb to Mount Mitchell at 6000+ feet. I remember seeing red spotted newts on this section and thinking about how beautiful they were. I remember stuffing my arm warmers on my bike that morning, hesitantly, and later being glad I had them. Before we descended Mount Mitchell, in the middle of June, mind you, we had to put on rain jackets to stay warm. I'm sure that as you read this, everything I write confirms that I am still in fact quite a rando rookie.

We meandered north toward the Tennessee border. It became clear to me that while I might in fact have had the weakest climbing legs, I also wasn't doing myself any favors with my gears, so I made a mental note to make changes before my next hilly ride. As we made our way to the delightful lunch spot, Chris Graham spotted the most beautiful sight a forager could see along the road: a massive chicken of the woods mushroom. I knew better than to stop myself and slow my roll, but Ian and Ryan collected it, and we'd later feast on it at midnight at the aforementioned sleep stop!

We climbed to Carvers Gap at around 5000 feet and then made our way back southwest toward Hot Springs, North Carolina. Doing both Mitchell and Carvers Gap in the same day was one of the most rewarding feelings I've ever had as an athlete—and it was also super fun and gorgeous. I was definitely riding a high and still inexperienced enough to forget that day 2 is always toughest for me and there would be some carnage to come.



From left: Luke Heller, Chris Graham, Ian Hands dancing on top of Mount Pisgah.

—PHOTO MISHA HELLER



It's always a party with Ian Hands, Misha Heller, and Chris Graham.

—PHOTO LUKE HELLER

AIR representing: from front left: Brian Burke, Ian Hands, Luke Heller, Chris Graham, Misha Heller.

—PHOTO COLEMAN ROSS



The start of day 2 in Hot Springs brought a new friend, Brian. Ryan had ridden back to Asheville because he wasn't doing the whole thing, so our pack of six remained (friends can come and go as they please and not run afoul of RUSA rules). As we climbed out of Hot Springs, with me pulling up the rear, I remembered day 2 of Crater Lake, wanting to fall asleep on my aerobars while Ian kept me awake with stories of Donkey Dan. I also remembered riding back from Brest and feeling like death and dying, only to be lifted back to life by Alina, another rider and now a lifelong friend, who possessed magical superpowers and boosted my spirits simply because we were two women toughing it out on this really hard thing. But no one brought me back to life on the SR600 and I started feeling sorry for myself. At one point we passed some road that would have taken me back to Asheville but Ian wouldn't let me quit. We pedaled on. I think Luke might have tried to scare me away from the detour by mentioning that it involved gravel.

Then there was a crazy descent—the most fun descent I have ever done

because there were no switchbacks. We passed people on motorcycles as I saw my Wahoo hit 51.9 mph! I was starting to feel better but as you may have already guessed from the title of this article, I still have some unfinished business with the SR600.

My mantra for 2020 has been that I don't need credit to ride and I just want to ride for the joy of riding. But it turns out that, for me at least, getting some credit helps get me to the finish line. By the middle of day 2, I had already started circulating the idea of quitting early and getting beers. I'm not sure who agreed with me most, but no one seemed too argumentative. We still had an overnight though, and I guess we could have continued the pedaling into South Carolina, but the appeal of a 40-ish mile downhill, and cutting out 6000 feet of climbing on day 3, was just too tempting.

On day 3, we said goodbye to Brian who was heading back to Atlanta and our group was now five riders strong. We began the long and spectacular climb out of Brevard to bag our last big climb of the ride: Mount Pisgah. There was dancing, silliness, and awesomeness

at the top. We even had lighter loads because Brian had graciously offered to drop our bags off at Luke's house. It was an easy day. We finished in West Asheville early and still had time for some socially distanced beers in the backyard of Ian's house.

So, while there's still some debate about our total mileage and while Chris now famously refers to this as the SR480, I will still proudly refer to it as the Southern Appalachian Five Hundy. I guess I have to go back and attempt it again, maybe with better gears and stronger legs, perhaps next year, when more events may be back on the RUSA calendar. My brother Luke told me at the end, "You know, I've attempted this four times and only finished it once." I was glad he didn't tell me that at the beginning! 🚲

In her June 2020 *Bicycling Magazine* article, “We Must Talk about Race When we Talk about Bikes,” Tamika Butler argues that we won’t get to the heart of understanding the sport we love without exploring how racism and specifically anti-Blackness operates within it.

Once explicitly racist and exclusionary (as when the popular League of American Wheelmen excluded Black cyclists like Major Taylor from participating in certified races), endurance sports remain overwhelmingly white and male, which should prompt us to ask not only why

this is, but also what we can do to make them more inclusive. Two recent memoirs written by Black female athletes, one a cyclist and one an ultra-distance runner, provide readers with some clues.

Jools Walker is not an endurance cyclist so much as an urban bike

commuter who falls deeply in love with cycling and has been evangelizing the sport with tremendous enthusiasm and good cheer on her popular VeloCityGirl blog since 2010. In *Back in the Frame*, she writes about the evolution of her cycling passion from her earliest days to the present. Like many of us, Walker’s love of cycling can be traced back to her childhood. The youngest of three in an immigrant family in London, Walker watched her older brother and sister intently from a distance as they dabbled in more adult pursuits like riding a bicycle and listening to popular music. Once she inherits a shiny BMX bike from her older sister, she experiences a level of independence and joy that persist to this day. She started blogging as a way to share this passion with the broader world and succeed she certainly did. We learn in *Back to the Frame* that the right combination of passion and self-confidence can open all sorts of doors. Once Walker accepts a job at Vulpine, a start-up cycling apparel company based in London that produces some lovely clothes that are both fashionable and functional, she becomes a cycling industry insider and her reflections on this experience are both illuminating and insightful.

Walker experiences setbacks as well as great successes as she builds relationships with industry insiders and civilians alike. She writes about the influence that other cyclists like

Jools Walker.

—PHOTO IAN JAMES





Ayesha McGowan, who blogs as the Quick Brown Fox and seeks to be the first professional Black female competitive bike racer, and ultra-cyclist Emily Chappell have had on her as part of what Emily refers to as her “invisible peloton.” What Walker does exceptionally well in *Back to the Frame*, though, is to demystify cycling and

welcome newcomers to share in her joy. She outlines in some detail how difficult it can be for new cyclists to understand the cryptic and somewhat exclusionary secret language that is too often the *lingua franca* of the cycling world. She writes that, “There is an obsession with glorifying suffering, training, racing, and winning. It’s such an exclusionary message, one that is disconnected from the pure joy of diving into something and giving it a go for the first time, regardless of your level of ability or confidence.”

A countervailing force, Walker reminds us, though, is that “In the cycling world, I’ve [also] found there tends to always be someone around the

corner to take time out to spur you on in a low moment.” This principle will be familiar to randonneurs.

Mirna Valerio, or “The Mirnavator” as she is also known, is an accomplished ultra-distance endurance athlete who chronicles her experiences running rather than cycling in *A Beautiful Work in Progress*. Valerio’s journey to ultra-distance running is as unpredictable as it is impressive. Growing up in Brooklyn in a family where athletic pursuits were not common, it was not until she found herself running in high

Mirna Valerio on bike.
—PHOTO CITO NIKIEMA

Back in the Frame

BY JOOLS WALKER

Little, Brown
368 pages, 2019

A Beautiful Work in Progress

BY MIRNA VALERIO

Grand Harbor Press
333 pages, 2017

What Walker does exceptionally well in *Back to the Frame*, though, is to demystify cycling and welcome newcomers to share in her joy.



school that she began to question how far she could go. The transition from runner to ultra-runner came during her years as a teacher in New Jersey while coaching teenage runners on her school's cross-country team. Valerio makes clear in the opening pages of her memoir that she does not possess a classic runner's physique. In fact, she describes herself as obese, which illustrates another feature in her quest to expand the public perception of what it means to be a successful ultra-distance runner.

Valerio's inspiring account of her ascent into ultra-distance running parallels many we have heard about the journey from casual cycling into randonneuring. She begins by wondering how any normal human can accomplish these superhuman undertakings. This is a question, we soon learn, that she pairs with a determination to answer and a very healthy sense of adventure. Valerio also recounts a number of technical problems (broken headlamps, hallucinations, water deficits, etc.) that will remind randonneurs of their own lessons in mortality as well as of the "trail magic"

that saves us when we fear the worst. While the suffering she experiences as an ultra-runner is very real, Valerio shares that it also inspires her to make "a silent promise to all of my family members who had mobility issues, and to those who had heart disease and diabetes, that I wouldn't forget this. I was able. I was strong, and this little bit of suffering I could stand—for their sake."

While we often hear randonneuring described as a "big tent," the current outcry for racial justice and the experiences of writers like Walker



and Valerio should prompt us to ask why our tent is not bigger. What are the obstacles and challenges that limit participation by a wider range of people? What are the hidden (and perhaps not so hidden) aspects of racism and anti-Blackness at play in our community and in our sport? It's time for us to heed Tamika Butler's call to action to talk more about race when we talk about cycling. While neither of these books is overtly "political," both relay the personal experiences of Black female athletes intent on seeing greater equity and inclusion in their sports. These two books are welcome additions to the collection of memoirs more frequently written by white athletes. A new, expanded edition of *Back in the Frame* will be published this winter by Little, Brown, and readers who enjoy *A Beautiful Work in Progress* will be pleased to learn that "The Mirnavator" has recently written about her newfound love for cycling. Perhaps a career in randonneuring is on the horizon. 🚲

Jools Walker.
—PHOTO IAN JAMES

SAVE THE DATE: The 2nd Annual

International Women's Day: Together We Ride bike event on Monday, March 8th 2021



Details for the event are still being finalized so please check thIs website for more details as we get closer to the event: <https://inspyrdcyclist.wordpress.com/2020/09/09/international-womens-day-together-we-ride-2020-randonneurs-usa-100k-populaire-summary/>

If you have questions, are interested in sponsorship and/or want to be on the e-mail list for the event, please contact Dawn Piech at iwdbike@gmail.com.

Let's continue to all be a part of the equality revolution as we ride our bikes on International Women's Day 2021.

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—Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate



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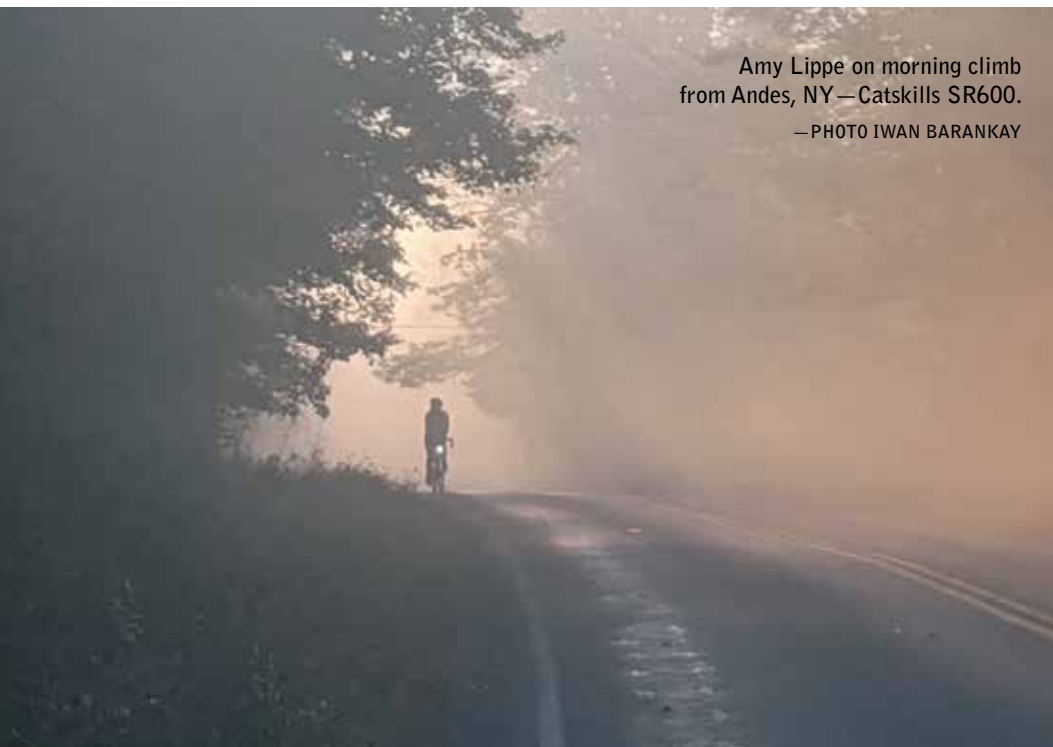
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Amy Lippe on morning climb
from Andes, NY—Catskills SR600.
—PHOTO IWAN BARANKAY

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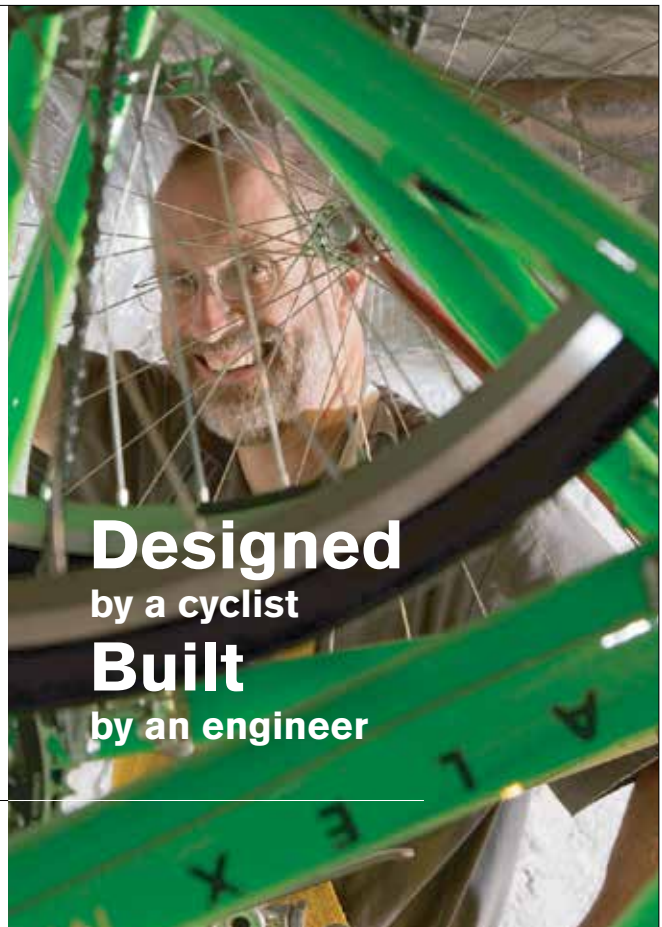
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Types of articles include but aren't limited to the following:

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- Collage articles incorporating tweets, facebook quotes and/or short quotes from blog posts
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- Reports on non-rando long-distance/endurance events of interest to randos
- Letters to the editor
- Book reviews
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Length of articles: articles of up to 2000 words. No minimum length requirement, but please contact editor about longer articles.

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

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

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

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Submission deadlines:

Spring issue — December 15 Fall issue — June 15
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Questions? Please contact the editor at editor@rusa.org.

Returning to Abnormality

BY GARDNER DUVALL

Brevets are back! RUSA is back!

Like so many Sundays over the last decade, after riding 200km I'm nursing sore muscles while half-heartedly watching the NFL. My randonneuring history includes more than 200 RUSA results of 200km and more, PBP, and becoming RBA in one of the most active regions in the country. Today I read the *American Randonneur*, with authors reflecting on randonneuring life during COVID, while the Ravens rack up a boring win.

DC Randonneurs held its first comeback brevet on September 12, 2020, hence my soreness. We had to seriously rework our methods of running an event to offer reasonable COVID safety and hold our breath about whether anyone would want to ride such a thing.

My take on randonneuring during the COVID shut down was different than that expressed by most of the *American Randonneur* writers. I did not pine to ride long and did not try the rides it seemed everyone else was hankering for. I stayed on my bike, enjoyed the change of format, and wondered whether I really wanted to ride another 200km ever. When the halting summer reopening occurred, we scheduled a 200km for July 3 that

I planned to attend, but I was not heartbroken when the plug was pulled on that brevet.

Instead, I reveled in rides of a couple dozen miles, which provide the joy of riding while leaving the remainder

of the day for something else. There was no planning of brevets, running brevets, following up on brevets, plus no riding them and having them consume the weekend. T and I joked that this is what life must be like for normal people.

I even worried about being RBA, since all this slacking was fun. We were planning for a 1200km in 2022 and thinking about how to better organize DC Randonneurs, but the time demand was greatly reduced. It felt like a forced retirement; it turned out to be more like a sabbatical.

August brought the surprise renewal of the permanent program, and the option to restart the completion of my Ultra R-12. T and I bit on the chance, and I was surprised by how good it felt to ride 125 miles, though

Up the scenic, easy side
of Catoclin Mountain.

— PHOTO BOB COUNTS





A mountain church photo control.

—PHOTO BOB COUNTS

Below, historic Monocacy Aqueduct, through which the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal used to flow.

—PHOTO BOB COUNTS

T suffered mightily from a recent back injury inflicted by a car as she pedaled to work one day.

Then September dawned with the chance to run brevets, and we had an ACP 200km on the calendar already. We also had a COVID plan left over from the aborted July brevet, so we picked a favorite route with a central location

in DC that drops into agricultural preserve land near the city.

We ran touchless, with the organizer not needing to hand out or receive anything from riders. We encouraged riders to carry more and stop less. And most significantly, to encourage riders to spread out we used a two-hour start window rather than a hard time when the clock started ticking.

This was achieved by completing registration online. Almost a year ago we adopted Michele Brougner's Great

Lakes Randonneur website, which she helped Roger Hillas adapt for DC Randonneurs. This includes electronic waivers, and distribution of the GPS file and cue sheet through the website. We accepted GPS tracks and photo controls, along with a traditional control card, distributed by email. All of this made less work for the organizer, Bob Counts. Kelly Smith, who is nearing 50,000 RUSA kilometers, said that he “really liked the new touchless system and the EPP, and [he] think[s] it will make organizing easier, too.” After more than six years Rodney Caswell returned to randonneuring and found, “With the EPP I was able to concentrate on moving the pedals instead of worrying about where I was or if I missed a control.” Nobody lamented the optional control card, though one rider submitted both EPP and a card.

Riding 200km on these terms, in these COVID times, proved to be an attractive proposition, as we had a good





Dave Judkins won the COVID beard contest before it started, controlling with Gardner Duvall.

—PHOTO BOB COUNTS

number of registrations. Ten percent of the finishers had no prior RUSA results, and a larger number either had never ridden with DC Randonneurs before, or had been inactive for the last few years.

A key question, though, was whether this would feel like a brevet. We borrowed so much from permanent practices that people wondered whether this would just feel like a permanent, without the social attractions of a brevet. We usually try to make the gathering for a brevet special, and now we were dissuading riders from gathering at all. One of the newcomers, Brian Crowe, understood that “there is usually a bit more fraternizing in non-pandemic conditions, so [he] certainly looks forward to that in the

future (fingers crossed for the not too distant future). [He] appreciated the COVID era procedures, and Bob did a great job explaining and organizing everything.”

It worked. My little gruppeto started at the unofficial 7:00am launch, just to see what happened then. Not much, as many riders had rolled out a bit earlier, and more started in the permitted hour afterwards. I had the chance to at least say “howdy” to two-thirds of the starters, and some time for meaningful discussion with many of them without feeling too physically close. Our riders string out anyway, and we missed the excitement of a mass start, but different starting times probably mixed up the riders more

during the day than the immediate sorting that usually occurs. Meena Alladin was one of our first-timers, and she had been “diligently avoiding group rides since COVID started, but this was ideal in that we rode together but separate. So there was little to no risk of transmission when [she] was a half a mile from other cyclists but also knew that if [she] found [her]self in trouble someone was available to lend a hand.”

None of the riders expressed concern about COVID laxity, and I sensed that riders felt safe. If you plan for it and are dedicated, a 200km does not require much time indoors. I felt no more threatened by the situation than on my many shorter rides in the last six months and spent less time inside than on the weekly grocery run.

I can’t wait to ride brevets for the rest of 2020 and get closer to the R120. We’ve got new routes, revised routes, and old favorites. We are living through tragic times but making randonneuring normal again is a way forward.

What about those secret pleasures of shorter rides and free hours? The intrigue of randonneuring has shunted those joys aside. One of the objectives of finding a new normal, however, is to hold on to what we learned and what worked after the world we knew cracked. For instance, I just deferred the invitation to take on a whole lot of interesting bike volunteering, because I’ve learned the wisdom of sometimes doing less, and sometimes doing more. Keep riding. 🚲



R to L: Newcomer Tony Pavel talks to Theresa Furnari and Jack Nicholson as David Judkins starts the brevet.

—PHOTO BOB COUNTS

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Behind our Perms Relaunch!

BY JOHN LEE ELLIS

When RUSA Permanents relaunched in August—after seven months without perms and four months without either permanents or events—so many RUSA members were energized and enthusiastic. Myself included!

In that first month alone, 605 permanent rides were successfully completed. As I write in September, over 650 permanent routes—contributed by 147 RUSA members—have been activated, with more being added every week.

As you can imagine, this was not a matter of simply flipping a switch to activate routes, or pushing a button to turn on ride registration and results processing. Dozens of RUSA members worked behind the scenes to design new systems and new procedures, update routes, and review them. This is their story, the story of the RUSA Web Team, Permanents Committee and the routes contributors

New Software, New Webpages

In the old permanent program, the route owner took care of rider waivers, provided materials such as a card and cue sheet, and submitted results. For the new, centralized, automated system, the Web Team had to create ways for riders to:

1. join the new Permanents Program and pay the annual fee,
2. register to ride a route online and sign a waiver online, and
3. submit results directly based on the ride registration.

That meant changes to the database, new programming, and new webpages. It also meant integrating with two third-party packages—PayPal and SmartWaiver—which generally turned out to be more work than expected!

The initial idea for waivers was to upload images of signed paper waivers.

But what you see today with online signing seemed more streamlined and convenient for users. The rest of the process was also designed to flow naturally. For example, to report a ride result, you just go to the list of rides you've registered for and click on the one you want to report.

Permanent riders told us it's a system easy to understand and easy to use.

New Permanent Routes Library

We also decided to create a central RideWithGPS library of active routes as the sole data necessary to do a ride. No separate cue sheet or brevet card to keep up to date. The RideWithGPS route would include cues for controls, services, advisories, and overall introduction to the route. A rider could print out the cue sheet or download the route to a GPS-capable device, and ride.

This meant stuffing the extra information into each RWGPS route, a



Top, l to r: Lynne Fitzsimmons, Michal Young, Mike Bratkowski, Paul Foley.

Bottom, l to r: Paul Lieberman, Paul Toigo, Scott Taylor, Tibor Tamas.

manual task that the route contributor needed to do. It was a lot of work. Here are the steps for contributing a route and making it active:

Route Contributor

1. Update the route with any changes since it was originally submitted—which may have been 10 or 15 years ago.
2. Add the control and info cues.
3. Submit it to the Permanents Committee.

Permanents Committee

1. Review it at a high level for required elements.
2. Review it cue by cue to make sure the route was all the rider needs to successfully navigate the ride and execute the controls.
3. Enter the index data in the RUSA Database—the data you see when you search for Permanent Routes—move it into our Routes Library, and activate the route so people can register to ride it.

This works out to be a few minutes of work per route, and a lot of aggregate effort for the hundreds of routes to be contributed and activated. It's made possible by those over 140 route contributors, and more than a dozen members who've stepped up to join the Permanents Committee and review routes.

The New Permanents Project spanned three months, kicking off with Deb Banks' permanents exploratory committee in May, until we were ready to launch permanent riding again.

That's the key point of this story—a program that members love, brought to life through the hard work of dozens of volunteers. We can all be proud of that ... and go out and ride a permanent! 🚲



Top, l to r: Crista Borrás, Dave Thompson, Deb Banks, Erin Laine.
Middle, l to r: Josh Haley, Julien Erard, Kerin Huber, Lois Springsteen.
Bottom, l to r: Jim Shanni, John Lee Ellis, Bill Vanderslice, Charlie Martin.

Web Team Permanents Project Members

Paul Lieberman *	Man-Fai Tam	Lois Springsteen
Charlie Martin *	Erin Laine	John Lee Ellis
Lynne Fitzsimmons *		

** Special thanks to Paul Lieberman and Charlie Martin for the major code design and programming, and to Lynne Fitzsimmons for the page and workflow design.*

Permanents Committee and Route Reviewers

Crista Borrás **	Lynne Fitzsimmons	Michal Young
Dave Thompson **	John Lee Ellis	Mike Bratkowski
Deb Banks **	Paul Foley	Paul Toigo
Kerin Huber **	Jim Shanni	Scott Taylor
Bill Gobie **	Josh Haley	Tibor Tamas
Lois Springsteen	Julien Erard	Bill Vanderslice

*** Special thanks to Deb Banks for leading the initial project team, Dave Thompson for setting up route review, Bill Gobie for RideWithGPS methods and standards, Kerin Huber for her Permanents Committee work, and Crista Borrás as RUSA's tireless Permanents Coordinator.*

Ian Hands' Story: Ride Your Heart Out

I happened to be on the very first brevet that Ian Hands ever rode. The year was 2010. The brevet, our local 200km, kicked off the North Carolina randonneuring season. As Ian finished, I snapped a photograph of him that captured his pure joy and enthusiasm.

In his rookie year, Ian completed a full series, earning his first of many Super Randonneur Awards. Ian also completed a full series in 2011 and qualified for Paris Brest Paris (PBP) 2011. Ian tackled that grand randonnée with a finish time of 88:55. And therein lies a story.

Ian's time of 88:55 was the same time that his father, Adrian Hands, logged at the final contrôle of PBP 2003. Sadly, in 2005 Adrian was diagnosed with a neurodegenerative disorder that turned out to be ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). That disease took Adrian's life in February 2011, just six months before Ian's first PBP.

Ian's PBP finish of 88:55 was the perfect two-wheeled tribute to his father. Ian's time also earned him membership in La Société Adrian Hands, a group formed in 2009 by Cap'n John Ende to honor Adrian and other like-minded cyclists.

Here's Cap'n's description of the group: "La Société Adrian Hands recognizes those randonneurs and randonneuses who believe that every ride should be enjoyed to its fullest. Membership is not for the fleetest of foot but for those that savor every moment of the journey, often using the full allotment of allowed time."

Ian at start.

—PHOTO MARY HANDS

Under La Société's rules, cyclists become eligible for membership by successfully completing PBP in a time equal to or greater than 88:55—Ian's precise PBP time in 2011. If you scroll through the Society's online membership roster, you will see Ian listed as the second member, right after his father.

Ian has now logged two PBP times that meet the discriminating standard of the Adrian Hands Society. In 2015, he reached PBP's final contrôle with a time of 89:36.

However, at PBP 2019, Ian set his sights on another magical number: 56:40, the PBP finish time of U.S. rider Charly Miller in 1901. Miller was the first American to ride in France's legendary cycling event. RUSA has formed La Société Charly Miller to recognize other U.S. riders whose PBP time equals or surpasses Miller's time.

Charly Miller likely rode PBP on a fixed gear, according to Bill Bryant, the author of RUSA's website article about that rider. In 2019, Ian rode a fixed bike at PBP for a much more practical reason. "A coupled fixed gear is heaven," he said. "I can take it anywhere and not break anything."

PBP 2019 was not Ian's first attempt at a Charly Miller. He also tried to hit the Charly Miller mark at PBP 2015. However, he switched to Plan B once he reached Brest, then waited for several of his riding buddies and cycled the return trip with them. "I got to Brest in 28 hours, and that was half of a Charly Miller time," he said. "But there was no way I was going to do a negative split. So I did 28 hours down, and 50 hours





Ian with Adrian.

—PHOTO MARY HANDS

back. I call that my Charly Hands ride.”

Cap'n Ende once predicted that some intrepid randonneur would attain membership in both La Société Adrian Hands and La Société Charly Miller, and Cap'n thought one of those riders might be Ian. “I wouldn't be surprised to see him post a 56:40 sometime,” Cap'n said. “He has it in his legs although he might not have the desire to race through PBP.” Ian made Cap'n's prediction come true by clocking a PBP time of 56:06. Two other randonneurs, Mark Thomas and Thai Nguyen, have also earned memberships in the Charly Miller and Adrian Hands Sociétés.

As Ian reached the final contrôle at PBP 2019, he knew he had achieved his Charly Miller goal. However, he was not quite finished with the event. After a shower and a short snooze, Ian took a train—and his bike—back to Mortagne. He patiently waited for several of his riding buddies, then

cycled back with them. Several of those riders recorded times worthy of La Société Adrian Hands.

American Randonneur caught up with Ian to learn more about his successful strategy at PBP 2019.

Your father, Adrian, had a 2003 PBP time of 88:55. Why did you log the same finish time in 2011?

That time felt really important to me. I wanted 88:55 on my card. Dad had just died. I knew he would be happy about the time and tell me it was great.

In 2015, you aimed for a Charly Miller time. Why did you not reach your goal that year?

I had planned on doing it that year. I rode a 23-hour 600 km as one of my qualifying rides, [NC RBA] Alan Johnson's brevet. I thought, “Oh, man, I've got PBP in the bag.” But I didn't have it. I got to Brest in 28 hours, which

was half of a Charly Miller time. There was no way I was going to do a negative split. So I did 28 hours down, and 50 hours back. I call that my Charly Hands ride.

Why did you ride a fixed gear at PBP? Did it have anything to do with Charly Miller riding one?

Nah, I just love riding fixie. Somebody once told me that the rider who completed Charly Miller on a fixed gear would be the first fixed rider on the books. And I said, “Yeah, except Charly.”

Before PBP last year I got my bike coupled. That's a game changer, by the way. A coupled fixed gear is heaven. I can take it anywhere and not break anything. I love that bike, and it's also the fastest bike I have. I'm really comfortable on it. I'll probably ride fixie at PBP as long as I do it.

How did you train for your Charly Miller time?

I think it helps a ton living in Asheville. [Ed. Note: Asheville, NC, is in a mountainous area of North Carolina]. I'm not a super light guy, but I am used to riding the hills out here, and I'm scared of nothing.

I took to heart what Mark Thomas put in his training blog for Charly Miller. At the beginning of the year I was just trying to ride as fast as I could on the brevets. I did a normal amount of those rides. When riding in Asheville, I was really attacking every climb, especially the long climbs. That lets you train and still be sociable. You just tell your buddies, “Hey, I'll meet you at the top.” Then you race to the top and wait for them.

As Mark advised, I stopped riding long just before PBP. I had a 1000km planned, but I didn't do it. For eight



Ian on Course.
—MAINDRU PHOTOS

weeks, I picked a 20-mile loop right outside of the house with about 2,000 feet of climbing. I rode my fixie. I would race and just destroy myself. I made sure I waited two whole days without even touching the bike. Then I rode the 20-mile loop again. That's all the training I did.

What kind of gearing do you use on your PBP fixed gear bike?

I ride a big gear. I rode 48/15. The gearing was somewhat my downfall in 2015. In 2015, I rode a 48/15 all summer, and I did really fast rides, like that 23-hour 600 km. But just before PBP, I went overseas early and met a French rider, who had done twelve PBPs. I was riding bikes with him for fun once or twice a week. I got scared into switching my gears to a 48/16. I think that might have messed me up.

What was your riding strategy during PBP 2019?

I had heard from folks who had done it before that there were these big groups of people you could get into. That would let you ride the fastest 600km you've ever ridden without working super hard. But that didn't happen much at all. The big groups just weren't there in 2019. I rode with those groups only to Mortagne. Then I was in a small group, and then I was solo. I probably rode solo for three-quarters of the ride. Also, I rode the fixed gear with no support. I felt like that was possible for a Charly Miller time, and I wanted to be able to say that I did that.

What was your best moment during the ride?

The whole time. I was high the entire time. Every time I travel to Paris

for a PBP, I think: "Maybe it's not as cool as I remember it. And every time I am surprised. It's just as magical as it was the first time. I found out it's a different ride with a lot of pain, but it actually is a lot of fun, and it's kind of magical, too.

Any low points?

For sure. The lowest point that I had, I think, was when I was pulling into Fougères, and I realized that I couldn't lift my head up. I had Shermer's neck with 300km to go. I thought it would really suck if I put all this training effort in, rode 900km without sleeping, and then had to give up. So, it was a struggle. I had to start doing silly things. For instance, I took off an arm warmer and I tied it to the back of my helmet. I'd see bungee cords on the side of the roads, and I kept telling myself: "The next one I see, I'm going to stop and pick it up." Finally, I did pick one up. Then I saw a pharmacy on the side of the road. I ran in and got a neck brace. I had the bungee cord and the neck brace. It was as hot as hell. Having that neck brace on made it even hotter. That was the only bad part, though.

Did you think of your father along the way?

I thought about my dad a lot, and that's one of the things that keeps me going on the bike—or in life. If my dad hadn't been killed by a disease, he would be out here riding. He wouldn't give up. He loved to ride, even toward the end of his days. I learned that you don't stop because something is hard. If Dad had legs, he would have been doing it. He kept pushing and pushing to have fun, even when his body was dying.

Tell us about your finish.

I thought 55:55 would be a cool time, so that is when I planned to finish. But when I got to Dreux on the



Ian with Mark at the finish.

—PHOTO UNKNOWN

return, I said the hell with that plan. I had a lot of time, and I just threw everything on the table and relaxed. I spent almost too much time, over an hour. But I saw I could still do that 55:55 time, so I put my head down and started riding about twenty miles an hour. It's flat on the way in. I thought I could make up time, and I did, but not quite enough. I finished at 56:06. That was the fun part of the finish—really going all out, and I finished at around 1:00am. When I got to the end, my wife Mary and my daughter Adrian were waiting for me. Mary has never been there when I finished PBP at 1:00am,

so that was a really good moment.

In the last quarter of the ride, the older French dudes started telling me, “We think you are the first fixed gear rider on the whole course.” When I gave my bike to the guy at the end who was putting bikes in the corral, he told me I was the premier pinion fixed. I think I cried. I was proud to be the first. I was very proud.

Also, I thought it would be funny to finish twice. I got home about 2:00am. Mary had a hotel room, so I went in and soaked in Epsom salts. Then I took a bath and went to bed. I woke up and had breakfast with

Adrian. I think I drank a bottle of wine by myself and had lunch with Mary. Then I got on a train and rode to this place called Bretonnelles. I got off the train, got on my bike, and rode to Mortagne. I waited there from about 5:00pm until just after midnight, when all my Adrian Hands buddies were coming in. I rode in a second time with those guys.

Sometimes I ask people, “Who do you know who finished PBP twice in one year? This guy, right here.” Everybody waits for years to do PBP, but I got to do it twice in a row in the same year. 🚲



Ian and Cap'n at 2011 PBP.

—PHOTO MIKE DAYTON

Ian with neck brace.

—PHOTO IAN HANDS

The Cycles of Grief

BY BY KEITH GATES

Twenty-Twenty was going to be “the year.” After three years of taking classes as a non-traditional student and watching my friends take part in long brevets while I labored over research papers, 2020 was to be the year when I would again finally take part in a full SR-Series. For me, that was a worthy goal. Father of twins, sometimes working two jobs, and now a full-time student on top: randonneuring, while an essential part of my life, has never been fully realized. Sure, I’ve stacked up a few R-12 runs, but only one 600km and a scant handful of 400km rides make up my “longest” events.

With the kids in college and my own school coming to a close, I was looking forward to stretching out to 600km and perhaps beyond for the first time since 2007. I ambitiously



The end of an era? With the new electronic perms program, my old permanent card drop box comes down.

The Highland Schoolhouse east of Paola, KS.

—PHOTO: KEITH GATES

scheduled my spring classes atop one another to ensure my calendar was clear during peak brevet season and began ramping up with extended commutes and weekend training. It was going to be SUCH a good year!

That first early March 100km event that began the Audax KC season feels like it was five years ago. Even recounting it now, it feels more like

fantasy than reality. Gathering at the local coffee shop, shaking hands, sharing stories, unmasked, close together at a table, surrounded by the usual throng of Saturday coffee-goers. We had our faces covered because it was cold outside: that was the only worry any of us had. At that point we had heard about “the virus,” but it was from the typical American perspective: a distant, far-away problem, like SARS before it. It was tragic and concerning, but nothing that would touch our lives. A fleeting speck in passing conversation. None of us knew it would be the last time we’d see one another in person.

Denial

This was just going to blow over, but I decided I’d play ball for now. The stay-at-home orders came down like a dystopian hammer. The ride calendar swept clean. Randonneuring itself in doubt: between the lawsuit, the insurance, the lapse of the permanent program, was this to be the final nail?





I set up the indoor trainer and scoured the internet for toilet paper and other supplies (without much luck) while trying to salvage fitness and sanity. Riding outdoors? Nobody knew all the facts yet, but fear had taken over my mind; as if a wayward sneeze from a passing jogger would write me a ticket to the ICU.

Anger

Sometimes we ride because we want to. I know myself well enough to admit, however, that oftentimes I ride because I have to. March became April, became May. Stuck in the house, kicked out of the office, the leaders of the cycling world began introducing my saviors. Virtual challenges, an easy click or two away; but, importantly, the motivation I needed to overcome fear and air up the tires once more. I mounted extra bottle cages and packed everything I needed for a shaky, reluctant, and nervous personal, not-for-credit 200km attempt.

Acceptance

No more stamps, no more receipts, no “credit,” but the credit, recognition, and personal validation I so desperately needed a decade ago has changed over time. The angst over lost 200km streaks, the lost monthly mileage, the



lost daily commute to and from work (and the mental punctuation those commutes provided), and (sigh) the pounds I have gained.... Being able to let go of what I can't do has helped me gain a better appreciation for that which I can do. Nobody is keeping score. There are no stamps in my book. It has taken the entirety of summer, but I am finally okay with it. I have explored more, pushed myself more, have abandoned the routes, the routine, the pavement,

Top, bikepacking is the new normal; loaded up for adventure on the Rock Island Spur rail-trail, south of Pleasant Hill, MO.

Above, much of the summer's route became scavenger hunts for old schoolhouses and bridges; The Rock Creek schoolhouse, built 1910.

—PHOTOS KEITH GATES



Old barn near Louisburg, KS.

—PHOTO KEITH GATES

and the plans, but I have added hours and hours of training into my “I’ve had worse” file. When traditional randonneuring returns—hah!—it will almost feel easy by comparison.

Hope

Slowly, over these last months, all the bitterness about what I have lost has begun to yield to a better understanding of why I ride in the first place. I may not be able to articulate what I’m truly looking for out there, but I know it when I find it. When I stop for shade under a 100-year-old tree, in the middle of nowhere, a few hundred

yards away from a 100-year-old barn, with only the cows and bugs and birds, there is peace. There is a quieter world, far away from first-world problems, politics, and the virus. The weight of it all is a little lighter when I’m flying a few feet above a dusty, unnamed road, alone with my thoughts and a song. I come home a better person than when I left, a better husband, a better father, a better employee. I start to understand why my grandparents—who endured far worse than I have ever complained about—had such well-adjusted outlooks on life. We do not grow when times are good. We do not get stronger

on the flat, easy roads. We do not learn how to smile when the skies are clear. One cannot possibly appreciate the tailwind, without hours of grinding headlong into the relentless gale.

We will get through this, and on the other side, we will have become the people at whom our grandchildren will marvel. We will have become the cyclist that we each admired when we first tried that hard, hard 100km ride so many years ago—you know the one: who grinned at the prospect of hills, hardship, and headwinds while filled with self-doubt. We will have triumphed. No, I still haven’t quite found what I’m looking for. But 2020, for all of its hardships, has gotten me closer to it. I still have my health, my family, my friends, and my bicycle. What do I possibly have to be angry about? 🚲



Old barn east of Louisburg, KS.

—PHOTO KEITH GATES





A 110-year-old bridge near Cleveland, MO.
—PHOTO KEITH GATES



A 100-year-old highway alignment marker in Garnett, KS.



Steel truss bridge on an abandoned road near Hillsdale Lake, rural Miami County, KS.

—PHOTOS KEITH GATES

It's About the Ride. And the Rewards.

“It’s just like riding a bike,” is a phrase suggesting that once certain skills are learned, it’s easy to repeat them even if you are out of practice. Muscle memory kicks in and you are not more prone to falling off the bike, and it doesn’t matter if it has been two days or two years since you last clipped in.

I had thought that randonneuring would also fall into this skill category, since it is mostly about riding a bike. But it appears there are skills involved that atrophy from lack of use. I was thinking about this a few weekends ago when Janice, Katie and I met in southern New Jersey to participate

in the Tour de Pines, an annual event offering multiple route options through the New Jersey Pine Barrens. This year, the event was being staged virtually: as in, “sign up and show up when it works for you” within a certain period of time. We chose the 45-mile Blueberry Fields Forever route and planned for a

12:00pm start on the last day allowed for the official event.

WORRY NUMBER 1: Re-adjusting to Post-pandemic or Normal Randonneuring

My first concern about randonneuring when life returns to normal concerns the usual randonneuring award for a completed brevet: the simple satisfaction of a mission accomplished and a long drive home. However, this may just pale in comparison to how we have rewarded our pandemic cycling pursuits.

Janice, Katie and I have built our routes around the prizes we receive upon completion of rides. We spent the summer pedaling along gorgeous, sparsely-traveled roads in eastern PA, each route starting and finishing at an Ow Wow Cow Creamery. This local business sponsors a “Tour de Cow” which requires that you patronize each of their five locations. We were given the official “Tour de Cow” bingo card where we affixed the sticker we were awarded at each store. On several occasions, we bravely sampled their flavor of the month, which in one instance involved corn muffin/blueberry swirl. At the finish of our last, triumphant ride, we were treated to free ice cream sundaes and presented with a microscopic bumper sticker that says, “I conquered The Cow.”

Tour de Pines finish... and reward.

—PHOTOS CHRIS NEWMAN





Rewards from the alternative cycling summer.
—PHOTOS CHRIS NEWMAN

WORRY NUMBER 2: Failure to Read Information Signs

As we sat in the rain savoring our success, we started dreaming of our next adventures. Fall seemed like the perfect time to sample brew pubs and wineries, which is how we found ourselves at the White Horse Winery, the start and end point for the Tour de Pines, on a perfect fall weekend where Katie had made 4:00pm reservations for a post-ride wine tasting.

I arrived early and was quite shocked to see a parking lot overflowing with cars. This event could be ridden any time during a two-month window—how strange that so many cyclists had chosen the last day. Not only that, but there was a registration desk and music and t-shirts! I was impressed at the support for a “virtual” event and was excited about the colorful t-shirt I hadn’t been expecting to receive but now, having seen it, had to have. Of course, the volunteer couldn’t find my name on the rider list. No worries, I am a randonneur and I am prepared.

I triumphantly handed her my receipt, and she was able to figure out the issue immediately: I was registered for the Tour de Pines, not the Giro de Vino. No t-shirt, pizza or swag bag for me.

WORRY NUMBER 3: Loss of Basic Navigation Skills

Katie and Janice arrived at the winery, and we pedaled right out of the lot. I had been unable to load the route into my computer and my printer was broken so no cue sheet but no worries; I had downloaded the route to my phone and I knew Janice would have a printed copy and that both of my friends would have the route on their computers. Before we had gone a mile, I realized that the route had not actually downloaded to my phone and Janice could not open the route on her computer. Katie had spent a lot of time downloading what seemed like a bad file and it was now telling her we were not on route. Janice consulted the paper route and it seemed like we were on course. We had crossed railroad

tracks and the road name seemed correct. We decided to pedal on a bit more but at the three-mile mark the computer was no happier and our miles to completion were increasing, not decreasing. We studied the cue sheet carefully and finally realized our error: we should have turned left out of the parking lot. We had made the queen mother of navigation errors. Oh well. We retraced our steps, three miles wiser and we comforted ourselves with the knowledge that there was no time limit and we had corrected course relatively quickly.

The course was flat and lovely and numerous times it felt as though we were visiting old friends as our NJ brevet series incorporates many of the same roads. We eventually reached a state park where the cue sheet instructed us to ride a mile-or-so loop through the park. It was hot and getting a bit late and the start of the loop involved a hill, and this was not a brevet, so we voted to skip the loop and the hill. And, we reasoned, we had already ridden three extra miles, so we were ahead of the game.

WORRY NUMBER 4: On-the-fly Route Changes are Actively Discouraged in Randonneuring.

We completed the course a few minutes ahead of our happy hour reservation, and we discovered that we had somehow lopped off significant miles from the route. Our 45-mile jaunt had become a 42-miler, three miles of which were not actually part of the official course.

There was no brevet card to stamp—lucky for us—so we ordered our wine, a cheese platter, and pizza, and truly enjoyed what felt like a mostly normal afternoon with friends. Our randonneuring skills may be slipping, but we have mastered the arrivée celebration! 🚲

Discovering South Dakota During the Pandemic

BY RODNEY GEISERT

The pandemic certainly changed riding RUSA sanctioned events in the US and, for that matter, across the world. Almost all of us have felt the loss of regional brevets and plans for great 1200km's in 2020. Many of us decided to just ride for the pure joy of riding, without counting RUSA miles.

Spencer Klaassen proposed an idea to several of us to ride with him in South Dakota to scout out potential routes for a possible 1000km or multiple 200km rides in the scenic region of the Badlands and Black Hills in South Dakota. The low number of COVID-19 cases in the region, in addition to our commitment to take appropriate precautions, made the invitation seem

reasonable to Joe Edwards, Bill Giffin, and me. Since we would have no SAG, there was a great deal of thought and planning in carrying extra clothes, food, and especially water along long stretches where we had no knowledge of what was available.

We arrived in Rapid City in the early afternoon and traveled downtown for dinner. With the pandemic, the

number of tourists was low, so it was easy to get a table and have a nice pre-ride meal for the early start in the morning. On day one our route took us through the Badlands toward a scheduled overnight in Hot Springs. The morning air was cool, and we followed a frontage road that paralleled Interstate 90 to Wall. The wind was light, and we enjoyed the ride along the green, rolling hills of the plains. Most roads had a wide enough shoulder to keep us clear of traffic. In some places we needed to ride on Interstate 90. There, not only was the surface really good for riding, but the vehicle and truck traffic was especially careful to move over when passing. We arrived in Wall for lunch, which was the last place we knew that services would be available



Scenic view of the Badlands National Park.

— PHOTOS JOE EDWARDS

Hitting the gravel around the Badlands as an alternative to the highway.

—PHOTOS SPENCER KLASSEN

for some distance. Wall is apparently famous for Wall Drug, which was advertised along the interstate for over 200 miles driving to Rapid City. We did not ride to Wall Drug, but I assume it is sort of a tourist trap. Instead, we obtained lunch by riding through a drive through at a fast-food restaurant.

After lunch we headed south to the entrance to the Badlands National Park, where we were greeted by a herd of bison along the entrance to the park. The overlook of the Badlands was quite stunning, and although the others had seen this area, it was new to me. There were two possible routes around the Badlands: one followed a paved road to the south, which most tourists take, while the second was a gravel road that followed the rim of the canyon to the west. We determined that we would not be allowed to ride through the highway check points entering the Sioux Nation lands. Therefore, the gravel road was a better option but meant riding about 25 miles of gravel. I had 28-mm road tires, but the gravel on the road was light and actually very rideable. However, I recommend riding at least 30-mm tires on this road. This route was absolutely wonderful and scenic, and because there were very few cars, it felt like we had the road to ourselves. We rode out of the Badlands and returned to the pavement, where the little town of Scenic was a possible service stop. Scenic was almost abandoned, but luckily the small post office had a functional water hydrant. From here, we decided to ride back to Rapid City and drive to Hot Springs.

Devils Tower following hot temperatures and headwinds.

—PHOTOS JOE EDWARDS



The temperature was getting unexpectedly hot, so it was good that we had a tail wind to finish the ride.

The route on the second day traveled through the Black Hills. One possible option had us riding the highway with over 11,000 feet of climbing and afternoon temperatures above 90. The alternative route was a mix of a little highway early followed by the scenic Mickelson Trail to Deadwood. This meant riding on gravel but with much less climbing. The trail would



The new normal for lunch.

—PHOTOS JOE EDWARDS



One of four train tunnels on the trail.

—PHOTOS RODNEY GEISERT

Badass Randos Joe Edwards and Bill Giffin prepare to hit the Badlands.

—PHOTOS RODNEY GEISERT



also be more scenic and provide shade throughout the ride. We were treated to big rolling hills with bison and huge prairie dog colonies lining the paved roads for the first twenty miles of the route before we jumped on the trail at Pringle. It was a stunning to ride along Wind Cave National Park.

We entered the Mickelson Trail at the Pringle Trail Head and discovered that each trail head had cold water that

really helped us stay cool. At the start the gravel was quite heavy, but this occurred only in brief sections; again, I would recommend riding on at least 30-mm tires. Coming from Hot Springs riding to the north, we would be on a steady climb to Hill City. The trail is built on the old railroad line, so you never exceed a 4% grade. Most of the climbing was 1 to 2% with our highest elevation being just over 6,000 feet.

The ride on the trail was not fast but beautiful. We passed by Crazy Horse National Monument, which has been under construction since 1948. We reached Hill City for lunch and ate in a saloon that dates to the early

1900s. As we continued to Deadwood, we were treated to riding through four railroad tunnels as well as having to pass through a number of cattle gates. The Mickelson Trail ends at Deadwood, so we the rode on the highway to our finish in Spearfish.

On day three we were up early and headed to Wyoming to see Devils Tower National Monument. We had a strong headwind and knew there would be few chances for water and food for at least fifty miles. There was a bit of climbing in the middle as we rode along, but it was again scenic, and the climbs were not steep. We stopped in Hulett for lunch as the wind, climbing, and now the warm temperatures were taking a toll on us. After lunch we rode the final miles to Devils Tower. Along the way we saw ranchers driving cattle along the road. There were at least twenty horseback riders preventing the cattle from crossing onto the road—an amazing sight.

As we were riding from Hulett, we could see the top of Devils Tower in the



Another amazing view in Badlands National Park.

—PHOTOS JOE EDWARDS

Town that once thought it could be a tourist spot. Not so Scenic.

—PHOTOS RODNEY GEISERT

Beautiful rock formations.
—PHOTOS SPENCER KLAASSEN

distance. The winds had picked up, and riding into the headwind just stood you up. The closer we got, the stronger the headwind became. It was a struggle to finish the last mile to the park opening. We stopped for ice cream, rest, and the appropriate pictures. It is an amazing formation to behold. The return to our overnight in Belle Fourche provided a strong tailwind, so we cruised over the climbs although the temperature was over 90.

The final day of riding was designed to be a short ride back to Rapid City. The early morning was cool, and we still had a strong tailwind. Terrain was mostly rolling hills and plains, but I was looking forward to riding into Sturgis. I always wondered what the attraction was for all the motorcyclists. We decided to ride on Interstate 90 to finish our tour back to Rapid City.



Spencer's goal for this tour was to determine the best routes, roads, sites, and food options for either a 1000km or a series of 200km rides in the future. This would be an outstanding region to ride and should be of interest to many randonneurs across the country. 🚲



Attention Members

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

Update your address online at:

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

...and to renew your RUSA membership!

Memberships run from January through December.

Renew online at:

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



Free Bridge 200

BY CHRIS NADOVICH

At last, free to ride our bikes in official RUSA events, Pennsylvania Randonneurs began the “after-times” of randonneuring with a challenging 200km, a totally new route that visited many familiar Eastern Pennsylvania places through unfamiliar roads. Although the Corona virus pandemic continued to raise concerns, a brave group of 29 randonneurs clipped in for the first running of the Free Bridge 200km brevet.

Despite this anxious context and difficult course, maybe 27 or 28 of the 29 starters finished under the time limit for a 97% completion rate (see rider comments). Congratulations and well done to all, especially our first time 200km riders Ellen Houle and Ello Shertzer. *Welcome to PA Randonneuring!* Also, we welcomed two-time PBP ancien Rene Mortara from nearby New Jersey, who for some reason was

finally getting around to riding a PA brevet, his first ever.

The Free Bridge course is just one of several new PA Rando brevet routes developed during the shutdown. We will be riding these new routes in the upcoming months as we return to regular operation. It's nice to be back in business.

Almost a picture-perfect day to ride a bike, it started out moderately cool

at dawn for the “free start” format near the Free Bridge that connects Easton, PA, to Phillipsburg, NJ. To facilitate social distancing with the large group, instead of the usual mass start, we organized free starts, like at PBP 2011. This worked very well, keeping the riders spread out yet not taking any longer than the usual start. The instructions we gave riders were as follows:

1. Park your car in the designated lot. Don't gather in groups.
2. Because it might technically still be night when we start, have reflective gear on.
3. Sometime between 6:00am and 7:00am, walk by yourself across the bridge with your bike and your signed event waiver. The idea is that people should come over gradually, in onezie-twozies, not in a bunch. We'll be waiting with your brevet card on the PA side by a statue in a small park off to the right after you cross into PA.
4. Drop your signed waiver in the bag we'll have next to us on the ground. If you forget your waiver, you'll need to do the walk of shame back over the bridge to fill out a blank one. We'll have some under the windshield wiper of a car along with a box of pencils.
5. After you drop your waiver, we will give you your brevet card. Hold it up with your name facing the camera. We'll take a picture of you and record the current time as your official start time on the roster.
6. Ride your bike! And don't go faster than your guardian angel!

Watch for Geezers Joe Ray and Greg Keenan.

—PHOTO RON ANDERSON





Patrick and Cecilie Gaffney tandem powerhouse.

Vadim Gritsus performing a delicate operation.

—PHOTOS CHRIS NADOVICH



The riders followed these simple instructions to a tee. Nobody called the cops, worrying about the weird looking crowd of cycling masqueraders gathering around the Columbus statue in the park. People did not bunch up. They looked like a scattered bunch of happy, friendly bike riders who were thrilled to be riding a real, honest brevet after six months of lockdown.

As the day developed, despite the copious sunshine, it stayed in the 70s and never became overly warm. A steady breeze provided some challenge at points in the course, but overall, the weather was about as good as we could ask for this time of year.

The start of the course is a relatively easy spin up to Wind Gap on paved rail trail. The relaxing ease of this warm-up was marred by a mishap that befell Robert Dye as he approached the Wind Gap control. It seems that as Dye was messing with his GPS, a telephone pole tried to cross the road in front of him. Fortunately, he looked up in time to avoid the pole with the bike; unfortunately, he bashed the pole with his shoulder, breaking his left collarbone. After calling in to report the incident and assure the organizer that he was OK-ish, Bob mounted his bike and soldiered back to Easton via the slightly downhill rail trail. Not having any duct tape to fasten the hand of his bad arm to the handlebars, Bob had to ride one handed home. Occasionally, he would go no-handed to ring his bell on the

opposite bar, warning walkers on the trail of his approach. Tough bike rider!

After following the southern edge of Mt. Minsi for a while, the route turns into a gravel road and then a steep gravel descent. This was the first of several gravel sections in the course. There were a few reports of flat tires, it seemed mostly from the go-fast folks that run the lightweight, narrow rubber. The rest of us that ride wider, heavier tread had an enjoyable time graveling along.

The control at Point of Gap has a beautiful view of Mt. Tammany across the Delaware River from Mt. Minsi, the pair forming the iconic Delaware Water Gap. So many times we have zoomed past this spot without looking over our shoulders at the amazing mountains cleaved by the mighty river. This time, because it was a turnaround info control, there was a moment to stop and appreciate the grandeur of the location.

Another amazing sight at that location was Tom Rosenbauer, RBA emeritus, volunteering to staff the Point of Gap control. When PBP ancien Tom completed the pre-ride for this event, it was the first brevet he had completed in the last five years. Health problems had kept him away from the bike, but now it seems he's climbed back on. Randonesia? Chapeau Tom. Bon courage!

Many riders commented that the new routing back to Easton was an appreciated improvement, avoiding at

least a couple of the "little !*&^%\$!!" climbs on River Road.

After a halfway replenishment stop at the outdoor window of Jimmy's Doggies Stand and/or their parked cars nearby, riders attacked the signature climb of the route, the one-two punch of Ciphers and Shire Roads. About half the field conquered this obscenity of a hill on foot. Quite impressive was the tandem team of Cecilie and Patrick Gaffney, who unhesitatingly pedaled up the nearly 20% grade with no visible strain.

Yet another amazing sight was at the Quakertown PA Weisel Hostel "Watch for Geezers" control (home of many EM1240 starts). None other than the COVID-bearded (and PBP ancien) Ron Anderson volunteered to staff that nostalgic location. Thank you, Ron!

Many complimented the new, kinder, gentler routing from the hostel to Easton, but the bumpy covered bridge just north of the hostel unsettled a few GPS-only riders who missed the explicit warnings on the cue sheet.



Free Bridge 200K riders of the pandemic.

—PHOTO CHRIS NADOVICH

Randonneurs event of 200km or more (COVID shutdown months ruled nonexistent). Consequently, Paul has earned the "coveted" Pennsylvania R12 Award, admitting him into the exclusive club of only sixteen people in the history of PA Randonneurs to earn this award. Also earning the PA R12 this year was Greg Keenan. Congratulations Paul and Greg!

Iwan Barankay writes...

What a great route and what a wonderful set of people to ride it with! We are so lucky and privileged to have this sport!

That one hill really gutted me, though! It took me an hour to recover from that one alone and I still am. So sorry for calling [the organizer] names there but it came from a place of sheer desperation!

Joe Ray writes...

Thanks for putting on a terrific brevet and for arranging such great weather!

Highlights—Gravel! My phone fell from my front bag at the top of National Park descent without me noticing for a mile or two; huge thanks (and a six-pack reward) to Greg Keenan for observing it and picking it up. Cypher-whatever did not disappoint; Jimmy's hot dog and milkshake worked as described (promised?) in course notes. Geezers! It was great to see people I have missed riding with for months, including goatee-disguised Tom, and beard-disguised Ron. On the other hand, Chris's COVID beard was not fooling anyone.

Pat and Cece write...

Thanks for a lovely return to randonneuring on Saturday. The course was great! We particularly like the detour around the River Road

(Read the cues!) Everyone liked going down Stony Garden and the Gallows Hill rollers.

Almost everyone loved the rather downhill Coon Hollow gravel road—everyone but Scotty Steingart, that is. Scotty, it seems, lost his brevet card while fixing a flat (his third of the day) on that gravel road. There was never any doubt that he completed the route as required, what with his GPS live-track and photos by the staff at several controls. There is even a picture of Scotty with his card at the penultimate control. At the time of this writing, the RBA and other supreme randonneuring authorities are in conference, reviewing the evidence and determining the fate of Scotty's brevet result. I hope they cut you a break, buddy. It was an impressive ride, averaging about 18 mph over hilly terrain and gravel, despite three flats.

After Coon Hollow (thank George Retseck for suggesting that fun shortcut, BTW), the new climb up Cider Press was universally praised as better than

the double hump of Lower Saucon.

At the finish, riders spread out over the grass and picnic tables in front of Jimmy's, pulling off their masks occasionally for the eating of hot dogs and slurping of ice cream. The sunshine and mild temperatures were perfect for unwinding after a tough brevet. All riders stayed very socially distant from the "mini Sturgis" motorcycle rider gathering across the street at the Sand Bar. But we were all close enough for the entertainment of it, which included a live band playing "classical music," like covers of "Hey, Hey We're the Monkeys" and the theme song to the Beverly Hillbillies. Ahh, the wonderful ad hoc pleasures enjoyed by randonneurs.

Thanks again to Andrew, Tom, Ron, Bill, and others that helped with organizing this successful return to the sport we love.

With a finish in the Free Bridge 200km event this month, this was the 12th consecutive month that Paul Weaver completed a Pennsylvania



George Retseck sports a PA Rando colored mask.

—PHOTO CHRIS NADOVICH

bridge construction and the routing from Belvidere to Phillipsburg. The climb up Shire was a good smack to the face, but it wouldn't be a PA Rando event without a serious climb. With the exception of losing our 14-tooth cog around the 50km mark it was a pretty perfect day. Thanks again. Hope to see everyone again in Philly next month!

Vadim Gritsus writes...

Despite a long hiatus and COVID anxiety, I was pleased to see that PA Randonneurs came back as good as ever on a newly minted Free Bridge 200km. The ride was as smooth and challenging as one could expect from a PA brevet. Gravel sections were splendid, like a roller coaster ride in a theme park, scary enough to be entertaining but one never felt in any real danger. New info control routine was a welcomed addition and made the ride even more smooth. Even mechanical issues happened at the right time, giving us much needed rest before a what seemed to be 40-percent grade climb! Another treat was watching Mario Claussnitzer doing the whole ride effortlessly on his newly acquired Specialized Epic mountain rig. To summarize, if one could compare PA

Rando to a master brewer, this ride would be a triple IPA!

Steve Schoenfelder writes...

Thanks to Chris Nadovich, volunteers, and pre-riders of the Free Bridge 200km! Truly an epic restart to the PA Rando season, the route was

scenic, included three covered bridges, rolled over gravel, dirt, and paved roads, and introduced us to a fun new climb up Cyphers Road.

I felt the ride was particularly well organized and provided safety to the riders with the free start format and the ability to re-supply at our vehicles near the half-way point.

Just let me know how much it will cost to prevent publication of the “walk of shame” photo you took of me near the Cyphers Road summit. 🚲

Editor's Note: it has been determined that Scotty Steingart will earn credit for this 200km due to a number of factors including all of those acknowledged in the article.

Rando first timer Ellen Houle conquers Shire.

—PHOTO CHRIS NADOVICH



The Art of Randonneuring

BY MATT STRASSBERG

Is it plausible that randonneuring and major western art movements have something in common? Please excuse any inaccuracies. I was not an art history major, and I know a lot more about randonneuring than I do about art. It occurred to me, however, that some of the major movements in western art could be used to depict the fun/suffering ratio of randonneuring with corresponding states of mind and body.

I love randonneuring because, theoretically, I control the fun/suffering ratio, and ideally it should tip decidedly towards fun. That doesn't mean I don't enjoy the rewarding feeling of pushing myself until I have nothing left to give, but ultimately, as the founders of my favorite post-ride indulgence (Ben and Jerry's) say, "If it's not fun, why do it?" In total honesty, after every 1200km event that I've done, I've said, "Well, that was fun and rewarding, but I'll never do that again." Fortunately, randonesia inevitably creeps in, and

within a few weeks I am planning my next long ride.

On a normal day of cycling, I admire my natural surroundings for what they are: winding rivers, a covered bridge, fields full of hay bales. On a long-distance randonneuring ride, however, that clarity starts to blur as the miles add up. Whether due to exhaustion and/or sleep deprivation, my thinking and vision may be compromised at times. I would not suggest riding in a semi-delirious state, but there are times during long events

when we all may transition from lucid to semi-lucid to an out-of-body state. That slow metamorphosis along the continuum from lucid to delirious parallels the progression of some of the major art movements over the past couple of hundred years.

Beginning of the Ride: Realist Movement

At the beginning of a long event, you feel fresh and your focus is sharp. You have a long ride in front of you, and at a moderate and sensible pace, you can see and appreciate all the details in the landscape. The outlines of the trees are precise, and the buildings are symmetrical. Like the realist painters of the mid nineteenth century who attempted to depict scenery accurately, you see and appreciate the beauty of nature as it actually appears.

Mid-ride Sweet Spot: Impressionist Movement

As the ride continues and the endorphins kick in, you may feel



BEGINNING



SWEET SPOT

a mild sense of euphoria. This is the sweet spot for randonneuring. Your pace is sustainable, and your legs are warmed up but not yet tired. As you are zooming down the road feeling like you are in cruise control, you see a slightly enhanced landscape as the miles tick by.

You feel good and forget about the stress of work and focus on appreciating nature's own eye candy. A field of wildflowers looks like a slightly blurred mosaic bursting with color. As day turns into night, you marvel at the twinkling sparkles from fireflies that almost illuminate an otherwise pitch-dark meadow. As the first morning light appears, the low angle of the sun makes everything look even more magical. You think to yourself how fortunate you are to be out riding your bike immersed in such natural beauty.

You are in the mid-ride sweet spot or the impressionist zone, where the beauty of nature appears enhanced. Think of Monet's and Cezanne's broad impressionist brush strokes that emphasize the beauty of the landscape without showing precise and accurate details. As you ride, the leaves of the trees may appear to blend together, but you still clearly know you are looking at trees.

Riding in the Red Zone: Cubist Movement

Often when riding in a paceline that's a little too fast for you, eventually you visit the red zone. It happens to all of us. You notice your heart rate is higher than you can sustain for a long period of time, but you convince yourself for reasons that make more sense at the time that you should stay with this group. If you stay in the red zone too long, your thinking and perspective can change. The landscape becomes distorted, and it's not due to the sweat in your eyes.

If trees begin to appear like fragmented shards in the reflection of a broken mirror and buildings are towers



of asymmetrical stacked cubes, you have entered the Cubist movement. Cubist painters rejected the notion that art should copy nature and instead fragmented objects from multiple perspectives. If your view looks like a Picasso cubist painting, descending at high speeds is strongly discouraged.

Rest or Crash: Surrealism Movement

Sometimes in randonneuring you feel like you have hit a metaphorical wall. It may be a bonk due to a lack of fuel or it might just be sheer exhaustion. Randonneurs must be mentally as well as physically strong. Giving up can't enter your mind, even if your legs feel like overcooked spaghetti. You may feel like you've entered a surreal, dream-like space,

but you push on and continue to pedal, even when common sense and logic dictate otherwise. Now you've entered the surrealism movement.

The surrealism movement defied reason and the rational mind, too. If you start seeing a stretched and altered reality like landscapes out of a Salvador Dali painting, it's well past time to get off the bike and take a rest or for your friends to do an intervention.

While movements in art evolved over time, randonneuring has remained a relative constant. We ride, we eat, and we rest when necessary. The art of randonneuring is to stay in the realist and impressionist zones for as much of the ride as possible, and to keep the fun/suffering ratio tipping decidedly towards the fun. 🚲

The FAsT Monkeys Tackle the 2020 Race Across Oregon

BY JIM THURBER

George Thomas, the creator and long time organizer of the *Race Across Oregon (RAO)*, determined that it might be possible to run the event safely in 2020 despite the cancellation of nearly all long distance cycling events. With careful planning and staggered start times, he thought the threat of COVID-19 could be minimized.

The *Race Across Oregon* was founded in 1998 when the cancellation of Alaska's Midnight Sun 600km left a gap in George's racing calendar. He challenged a 5-rider relay team to race him from Idaho to the coast. And thus the RAO was born.



Today the RAO consists of a loop run out of The Dalles in Oregon, located along the beautiful Columbia River. However, every four or five years the race becomes a true cross-Oregon event, from Ontario, on the Idaho border, to Newport, on the Pacific Ocean.

The race is nonstop, ridden continuously until the finish line is reached or the rider(s) drop out. The majority of participants operate as teams but solo riders are most welcome although every team or solo rider must have the full support of a follow vehicle.

Because the RAO is a *Race Across America (RAAM)* qualifying event, the main route is 1,000 kilometers. This year "short" 260- and 450-mile alternatives were available for those who didn't need to or want to qualify for RAAM. All three RAO routes are extraordinarily scenic, featuring lightly traveled roads passing through central and eastern Oregon. Riders tackle

The Grass Valley Climb — seven miles of pure misery.

— PHOTO BEN MAURER

multiple canyons, and passes, ride along major rivers, and pass through Oregon's ancient fossil region. Very occasionally they're routed through Eastern Oregon's small towns.

A dozen years ago my son, Jason, organized *The FAsT Monkeys*. Known simply as *The Monkeys* they have participated in the RAO numerous times. This year *The Monkeys* put together a mixed team—two men and two women—lovingly referred to as *The Beauties and the Beasts*. This year's riders included Ben Maurer, Amanda Tatum, Andrew Thurber and his wife, Becky. The support crew included me and Flynn, Andrew and Becky's seven-year old son. Since the team had two brand new riders, the 450-mile route was chosen, and the *B&Bs* hoped to make short work of Oregon's remote eastern regions.

After testing negative for COVID-19, the individual team members arrived in The Dalles and readied for an early morning start. At precisely 6:30am on Saturday, July 18th our first rider, Becky Thurber, departed, pedaling down 10th Street to join Highway 197 heading into Oregon's spectacular central region. *The Monkeys* changed riders every twenty to thirty minutes to deal with the climbs, which were frequent and steep.

The weather was forecast to be windy and very hot but fortunately Saturday dawned cool with mild winds. *The Monkeys* passed through Dufur, Grass Valley, Condon and Heppner. The sun was setting as Ben rocketed down The Heppner Highway towards Highway 395, flushing a large herd of elk.



The FAsT Monkeys getting ready to launch on the 2020 Race Across Oregon.
—PHOTO JAMES THURBER

A New Monkey, Becky Thurber, is riding her first long distance event.
—PHOTO ANDREW THURBER



The Monkeys and crew continued into the night and, just west of Long Creek, Becky surprised a huge owl. Carrying what appeared to be a rat, it missed her head by inches. I'm not sure who was more surprised. Fortunately they both survived, but the rat, most likely, did not.

In the pitch-black stillness of the Oregon night the *Neowise Comet* was clearly visible in a sky filled with stars. The crew was tiring as we snacked on homemade rice cakes and other dishes provided by Andrew and Becky. However, the cool night temperatures permitted riders to travel for longer periods, sometimes several hours, giving the rest of the team a chance to sleep.

The sun rose as riders and crew entered the John Day Fossil Beds and *The Monkeys* gradually awakened, drinking lots of coffee. As the day

warmed the riders rode through Fossil, Antelope, Shaniko and Maupin. The Bakeoven Road was in great shape and the steep, twisty descent into Maupin, normally treacherous, was smooth and gravel free.

The final nine-mile hill was tackled in 100-degree heat with riders changing every ten minutes. As we approached The Dalles we unloaded all bikes and *The FAsT Monkeys* rode as a team to the finish line.

George Thomas was waiting for us, awarding finishing medals to the entire

team via a long fishing pole. George was taking no chances, even wearing a mask. Normally there would be an awards breakfast but because of the pandemic George had canceled it.

After a clean up, a hearty supper and a good night's rest, we bid farewell and headed home. It was a great event and three cheers to George Thomas for pulling it off. Will *The FAsT Monkeys* be back next year? Absolutely. 🚲

A rider with Mt. Hood in the background.
—PHOTO GEORGE THOMAS



RUSA Awards

ACP Randonneur 5000

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

To qualify, the randonneur must complete:

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

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

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

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Foley, Paul A [3]	Golden, CO	9/20/20
Ishihara, Mitch	Issaquah, WA	10/3/20
McLerran, Doug [2]	Aurora, IL	9/30/20
Muoneke, Vincent [3]	Federal Way, WA	7/30/20
Nguyen, John D	Seattle, WA	10/2/20

Mondial Award

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

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

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

The qualifying distance for this award is based on all events on RUSA’s calendar (ACP brevets and Flèches, RUSA brevets, populaires, arrows and darts), RUSA permanents, and 1200km events held in the United States after 1999. Foreign events (including PBP) are not counted.

RUSA congratulates the riders who have earned this prestigious award.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Cutler, Mel	Los Angeles, CA	9/19/20
Nygard VI, Jonas M	Minneapolis, MN	9/12/20

Ultra Randonneur Award

The Ultra Randonneur Award is for RUSA members who have ridden ten (10) Super Randonneur series. The Super Randonneur (SR) series of brevets (200 K, 300 K, 400 K and 600 K in a calendar year) that are used to qualify for the Ultra Randonneur Award need not be in consecutive years, nor is there a time limit on how long it takes to accumulate the ten SR series. Note that it is possible to earn more than one SR series per year, making it possible to earn this award in fewer than ten seasons. Non-US ACP and RM brevets can be used provided that these non-US events account for no more than 50% of the rides counted towards this award.

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

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Foley, Paul A [2]	Golden, CO	9/20/20
Russell, Amy L (F)	Waco, TX	9/30/20

SPECIAL CALL

Special call for the Spring 2021 issue of AR

Tell us about your cycling goals for 2021.

Send either a brief note or 1- to 2-page article to editor@rusa.org by January 10.

Happy New Year!

R-12 Award Recipients

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

Events that count toward the R-12 Award are:

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

RUSA congratulates the latest honorees, listed below.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Allen, Robert D [7]	Reynoldsburg, OH	9/8/20
Tulloh, Robert F [5]	Austin, TX	8/25/20

P-12 Recipients

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

Events that count toward the P-12 Award are:

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

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Argo, Charles Christopher	Lake View, AL	8/4/20
Kanaby, Gary [4]	Salado, TX	8/24/20
Thomas, Mark [7]	Kirkland, WA	9/23/20

RUSA American Explorer Award

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

This is an ongoing achievement program that recognizes continued exploration of additional states and territories.

Award criteria:

- Rides must be of the following types:
 - ACP brevets and flèches;
 - RUSA brevets, populaires, arrows and darts;
 - RUSA permanents and permanent populaires;

- RUSA sanctioned Super Randonnée permanents;
- 1200km events held in the United States after 1998.
- Routes must pass through or be contained within any of the 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, ...). Multiple states/territories can be achieved on a single ride.
- There is no time limit to earn this award.

Recognition

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

NAME	CITY, STATE	STATES ADDED	TOTAL STATES	APPROVED
Kanaby, Gary	Salado, TX	2	15	10/5/20
Stevens, William	Marlborough, MA	1	18	10/8/20
Taylor, Scott A	Austin, TX	4	23	8/28/20

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