

# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



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## American Randonneur Magazine

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**Data Collection:** Lynne Fitzsimmons

**Design:** Mary Humphrey

**Advertising:** Jay Fichiolas

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president@rusa.org • phone: 303.579.5866

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**COVER**— Sunrise at Lake Eldorado, Eustis, FL.

Gabriel Babilonia starting his first ever brevet on the

100th Anniversary 300km from Taveras to Flagler Beach.

PHOTO DAVE BRILLHART

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# President's Message

It's been a blast!

Not quite over as I write this, but I'll be leaving the RUSA Board at the end of 2022. I'm termed out at two 3-year terms and this will be my last President's Message.

As I step back, I also have to acknowledge another "changing of the guard." This is Janice Chernenkoff's last edition as editor. We all owe her a world of thanks. Corinne Warren will succeed her as editor, supported by a well-oiled team.

Being on the Board has been rewarding. I must mention fellow board members, an amazing group of contributors. During my tenure I've had the pleasure of working with:

John Lee Ellis	Tim Sullivan
Susan Otcenas	Pete Dusel
Deb Banks	Dawn Piech
Paul Rozelle	Rob Hawks
Nigel Greene	Dan Driscoll
Lois Springsteen	Charlie Martin
John Ende	Vincent Muoneke
Jake Kassen	

Over my six years we've been through some tumultuous times with insurance issues, the pandemic, and the lawsuit. We've made major changes to many programs and some additions are still rolling out. We introduced Electronic Proof of Passage, a new Permanent Program, Electronic Waivers for Permanents, many new regions, UAF Audax Brevets, Gravel—and more to come! We've also introduced new awards to broaden the appeal.

We've seen many RBAs retire over the six years, with new volunteers stepping up to take their places. We wouldn't have a club if it were not for our dedicated volunteers. Whenever

you have a chance, thank a volunteer ... be a volunteer! It's very rewarding. There are no thankless jobs in RUSA.

What have I enjoyed the most? Working with you. I've exchanged countless emails and talked to so many members over the six years, answering questions, helping with the permanent program rollout, handling issues with the RUSA store, processing award applications, working with our various committees; the list goes on and on.

How are we doing in 2022? Our membership numbers are up, approaching 4,000. Our financials are solid. Many members are planning for PBP in 2023. We are all trying to make up for pandemic lost time, it seems.

We have riders all along the spectrum! The new Rouleur award has galvanized people to crank out shorter than 200km rides in various distances and forms. Not all of our rides have to be heavy duty endurance! At the other end of the spectrum, our RBAs ran seven 1200km events in 2022 across the country. Of various degrees of difficulty, these have introduced many members to multi-day rides. I rode my first 200km brevet in 2007. At that time, the RBA talked about a 1200km event and I thought that was silliness.

1200km? You have to be kidding! Riding two such events in one calendar year seemed impossible.

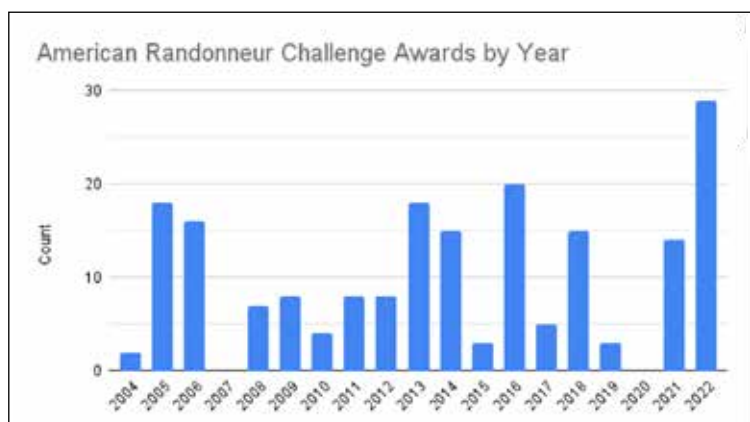
In 1996 Real Prefontaine (Canada) and Jennifer Wise (US) created the CanAm award for someone riding two 1200km's in one year, one in Canada and one in the US. It was a bet between the two of them; what was possible? The CanAm award continues but sometime later RUSA introduced the American Randonneur Challenge for anyone riding two domestic 1200km's. The chart below illustrates how that has taken off.

Our sport is changing. The tent is growing: various types of rides to appeal to more people. We offer longer and shorter distance options, all designed to get us out there individually and in groups, to enjoy our time on the bike and with each other.

Keep moving. Don't stop. Ride shorter distances if you can't ride long distances. Join in the fun as a volunteer. It will enrich your life.

I hope to see you on the road ...

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



# From the Editor

The holiday season arrives as you open this issue of *AR*, and those of us in the northern parts of the country start looking for days not too cold, too wet, or too snowy, or icy for outdoor rides. This issue, with articles about several long randonnees that occurred over the summer and early fall months, already makes me feel a little nostalgic for longer and warmer days. But they will return.

As I worked on this edition, I began wearing wool jerseys and long pants. And as I write today, the fall color is everywhere in the woods around my home. For the next week or so, on rides home from work, the color of the light in the atmosphere will reverberate with the colors of the trees—a truly magical experience.

2022 was a great year for grand randonnees in the U.S. Writers provide reports on several of them, and there are stories by seasoned randonneurs as well as riders attempting this challenge for the first time. Additionally, two of our columnists participated in what turned out to be a super challenging LEL this year. They have a thing or two to say about the new hills in the 2022 edition of LEL.

Randonneurs are also thinking ahead to PBP with thoughts about gear, the value of pacelines in brevets and more. Enjoy these accounts of long rides and big efforts. This makes for good reading in the part of the year with shorter and cooler days...when we begin to dream again of the rides we will attempt next year.

The facial expression does not let on that I'm standing outside of Owowcow Creamery in Easton, PA.

—PHOTO JAYNE BROWN

I'm also thinking ahead to next year, wondering what rides I will attempt and what adventures I'll participate in. Whatever those adventures turn out to be, I'm already looking forward to them. It's going to be a good year.

As I conclude this editorial, I also conclude my work as the editor of *AR*. I thank readers of and writers for *AR* for the years of support and encouragement I've enjoyed as the magazine's editor. I am grateful to the columnists who committed to writing several pieces every year, as well as to the copy editors who gave every piece another read and helped make this magazine more professional than it

would otherwise have been. I have enjoyed working with this talented team as well as with Mary Humphrey, whose design skills and thoughtful approach improved this publication immensely. Finally, I hope you will continue to support the magazine and the new editor, Corinne Warren, who begins her work with the March 2023 issue.

Happy holidays.

Be as safe out there as you can be.

—Janice Chernehoff  
Editor, *American Randonneur*  
editor@rusa.org



# BREST (and back) or BUST—PBP 2023

BY KEN BILLINGSLEY

The experience of a lifetime awaits those who choose to toe the line next August in the Paris suburb of Rambouillet. Whether a first timer or a PBP recidivist, we are all capable of crossing the finish when we plan, train effectively, and put into practice lessons learned along the way. It is hoped that this article will assist plan development to reach your goal at PBP.

Given the sacrifice that comes with such a great investment in time, energy, and finances for you and your support team, it is paramount that you first develop your objective for PBP. That may be to finish on time, establish a personal best time, or strictly bicycle bathe across Brittany. Then share it with your team. An aspiration is more easily reached (and more greatly cherished) by a team rather than by an individual.

A detailed plan is not requisite to finishing within the time limit for those fast enough to complete a 1200km brevet in under 70 hours since strong riding typically overcomes time lost in countless and sometimes unimaginable ways along the course. For the rest of us, a thoughtfully-developed and well-executed approach, that covers the

pre-ride period and the event itself, is critical to receive a finisher's medallion.

Your plan can be as comprehensive or as simple as you would like. But, your strategy, and the activities leading up to the start of PBP, should focus on three main areas: toeing the start

feeling rested, saddling a fully tuned and tested bike, and being in the best physical condition possible.

Many informative articles have been written by RUSA members and have appeared in previous editions of the *American Randonneur* to prepare for grand brevets. Some of those concepts are repeated here because of their irrefutable relevance to any PBP plan.

If possible, arrive in France ahead of time to acclimate and reset your circadian clock following jet lag. For those embarking on a red-eye flight for the first time, this is typically in the range of 4-5 days.

On the day before your PBP start, it is advantageous to be just a short distance from the event start/finish because it lessens time and energy



Drop bag line up – PBP 2019 (outside Hotel Mercure, St Quentin en Yvelines).

—PHOTO KEN BILLINGSLEY

Montana Randonneurs – (L to R)  
Casey Barrows, Jason Karp (RBA), Lane  
Coddington, Ken Billingsley – PBP 2019.

—PHOTO DARCI CODDINGTON

spent attending the bike check and final registration procedures.

On the day of departure, a short commute potentially extends your final hours of rest/sleep. And 84-hr cyclists without vehicle transport really require proximate accommodation as the Metro (train) service does not begin early enough to shuttle participants to the ride start.

One year, a few of us were staying in the Paris suburb of Plaisir. The morning of our 5:00am start, we lost our way in the darkness and wound up in a 45-minute, high-effort time trial arriving at the start in St Quentin en Yvelines winded, stressed, and sweaty. With over 1200 kilometers still to go, who needs last-minute training?

Nothing can be more frustrating, disappointing, and worrying — after



tremendous sacrifice and effort — than to suffer a preventable mechanical during PBP. To avoid this, be sure to complete a full machine tuneup in advance of your flight to France. Apart from a typical drivetrain and brake tuneup and new chain and tires, I recommend replacement of the bottom bracket.

In 2007, with just over 300 km to go, my bottom bracket began to make increasingly grating noise. Though PBP control technicians are highly capable, and stocked with replacement/repair parts, the mechanic at the Fougères control was unable to extract the damaged bracket but provided assurance that it would not compromise finishing.

The consequence of the bracket failure was not only having to listen to mentally grating metal-on-metal grinding for the final 24 hours, but also to effectively be barred from cycling near others (for fear of my bike falling apart). On the bright side, the noises were an easy icebreaker for those who ventured within ear shot.

Mechanicals aside, traveling in good time to France also allows greater opportunity to address damage to, or

delayed delivery of, your bike and gear; both issues are relatively common. I've twice endured delayed bike delivery lasting 24 hours or longer, and I can say that it causes considerable angst if limited time remains following your arrival.

My mechanical problems have ranged from a damaged skewer thread to a broken set of handlebars: the latter suffered in a crash in 2015 during my 'shakedown' ride after arriving in St Quentin en Yvelines. All issues were quickly resolved, however, by a visit to the local bicycle shop (and health care clinic in Versailles for three stitches).

In addition to arriving in France with time to spare, being in peak condition during the second half of August is an important ingredient for success and can be a significant challenge given the extended period following 600km qualifiers leading up to PBP. Depending on brevet scheduling in your region, this interval is a minimum of two months for some, and upwards of four months for others.

Finding adequate time to conduct your most critical training in summer heat is especially difficult for those residing in areas of the country where



Public notice in train station –  
St Quentin en Yvelines, PBP 2019.

—PHOTO KEN BILLINGSLEY

extremely high daytime temperatures can limit available hours for outdoor cycling. Your cycling and cross-training workouts to achieve your fitness target should include a significant amount of time spent elevating your aerobic capacity and endurance through strength and interval training (with your physician's blessing).

These efforts will increase your average speed on the bike, build endurance necessary for the long haul of a 1200, and reduce recovery time from an elevated heart rate after periods of high-energy output. Without question, the greater the intensity and frequency spent training in your discomfort zone in the months prior to PBP, the greater the probability of a successful outcome. An excellent resource for understanding training for endurance events is Joe Friel's book, *Fast After 50*.



Even those randonneurs/randonneuses in prime fitness periodically grouse when faced with bonus miles but may overlook easy opportunities to save time on their brevets. What if they were presented with multiple chances for saving two hours, or even more, on PBP?

Every July, nearly 200 cyclists 'tour' across France, just as thousands of randonneurs do every fourth year across Brittany. They cycle more quickly than we do, and not just because they can have food, water and gels delivered to them, have mechanics tune their bikes on the fly, have a flat replaced in under fifteen seconds, and receive magic-spray medical treatment for their road rash, all at the touch of a call button.

Admittedly, Tour de France cyclists pedal expensive bikes and are younger and fitter. However, these 'tourists' also maintain a faster pace because they cycle almost entirely in pelotons; to some extent, we, too, can exploit the group-riding benefit. Cycling in a large group of ten or more can provide a significant draft and reduce energy expended by upwards of 30-40% when compared to solo riding. If cycling in a peloton or paceline for just 5-6 hours over the course of PBP (and more is certainly possible), a randonneur could save close to two hours which might make the difference between becoming an ancien/ancienne or OTL.

PBP 2019 start – Rambouillet, France.

—PHOTO KEN BILLINGSLEY





Beartooth Highway Summit (Red Lodge, MT) training ride June 2016.

—PHOTO KEN BILLINGSLEY

Simply put, a sound strategy for a finisher's medal is to ride sufficiently fast outbound to put time in the bank, and offset time lost due to late mechanicals and the inevitable second half drop-off from fatigue and sleep-deprived mental mistakes. The stiff headwinds faced by all outbound to Brest in 2019, for example, slowed intermediary times and eliminated time buffers for many, and directly led to the highest DNF rate in the 19 editions of PBP. Pelotons present the perfect antidote to headwinds!

The advantage gained by a peloton is proportional to its speed. The faster the pace of the group, and the closer one sucks the wheel of the rider ahead, the greater the draft, but also the likelihood of touching tires which could bring one's grand experience to a painfully abrupt end.

Riding after dark, especially amongst unfamiliar cyclists, adds even greater risk. Cyclists are forced to increase spacing due to the difficulty in seeing and avoiding problems in the road ahead. For these reasons, the 84-hour starters benefit from more opportunities for safer and faster drafting during the first 14 hours of PBP than the 80- and 90-hour starts in the evening. A good way of lessening the risk of an accident and becoming more comfortable in a peloton is to practice as often as possible during qualifying brevets and club rides.

Despite doing everything right and executing a well-thought-out plan, there still may come a time in the second half of PBP that a DNF crosses your mind. As heavyweight boxing world champion Mike Tyson aptly stated, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

Should these dark moments surface for you in France, summon a



fervent belief (or several) that provides motivation to keep pedaling. For me, I have never forgotten Steve N. from high school who told me I would never match the athleticism of an older brother. His words stayed with me and pushed me further than I would have otherwise pushed myself.

And, as someone close to home once said, "How you feel now isn't necessarily how you will feel an hour from now." So, when doubt creeps in, reflect on what inspires you, get something to eat, and keep moving forward.

Even with all of this "heavyweight planning," numerous obstacles may be encountered before or during PBP

that hinder or even squash your chance to participate in and finish this bucket-list event. These can range from illness to injury, work to family priorities, equipment failures to navigational errors, and severe pain to unbearable fatigue. For the bumps in the road that do arise, planning, coupled with a little luck and a timely tailwind, will hopefully carry you to the finish.

Bon chance, bonne route et bon courage!

And remember, headwinds are just another form of bonus miles but with supplemental cooling. 🚲

# Randonneuring & Pacelines

BY JAN DEMBINSKI

There's something special about a well-organized high-speed paceline. By sharing the work of pushing through the wind, miles fly by at speeds no one in the group could achieve solo. A good paceline epitomizes teamwork and the notion of a group being better than the sum of its parts.

On the other hand, a raggedy paceline is torture. The speed is all over the place, everybody's stressed out and twitchy on the brakes, gaps open up, people get dropped; it's a mess.

— *Chris Carmichael, "7 Tips for Mastering a Cycling Paceline"*

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During an endurance event like a brevet, in which drafting is not prohibited, would you be happy riding in the sort of paceline Carmichael initially describes? How about on a dedicated group ride when the road

permits? Do you avoid or try to join pacelines on randonnées?

RUSA was organized in part to help U.S. riders prepare for Paris-Brest-Paris. At PBP, pacelines are common but mostly led by riders from the other

countries. I believe that the U.S. success rate would improve if there were more familiarity with pacelines among U.S. riders and pacelines were more common on our brevets.

It seems clear, when considering brevets and politics, that working together in a synchronized, collective manner is not a feature of our national character. At PBP, there are few U.S. pacelines, but most of us latch onto them whenever we get a chance.

As it is, I will show up for my next brevet fearful and hopeful, with some kind of plan for success, but steeling myself with the knowledge that I will have only myself for support along the way. That is a sad characterization. We should be able to know we can trust others to ride with us, to help us out of difficulties, to even bolster us with conversation and jokes when the





riding gets long and tiring.

In other words, we should be able to trust that other randonneurs possess graces loosely referred to under the umbrella term “camaraderie.” Such graces are characteristic of good group rides and pacelines.

Am I that way? I aspire to be so. At least, I would like to think that’s how I will ride in the future if I continue to ride brevets. In the past, I have ridden with others to the extent they are of benefit to my goals or if I simply enjoy their company.

Riding with this “me first” attitude rather than a “me and us” attitude has taken its toll, and I have seen the same

attitude reflected in how many others ride brevets, with the exception of a few grand randonnees.

While I have ridden in pacelines on American brevets, I have only once in my 50,000+ RUSA kilometers ridden in a brevet from beginning to end with other riders committed to riding together and within pacelines whenever possible. I have ridden for long stretches with others, of course, but there was never any commitment to making our whole ride a “group ride.”

Emily O. once pulled a group together for such a committed ride on a Boston-Portland-Boston ride when they had already ridden together for many miles. All it took was for her to ask, “Hey, do you want to ride the rest of this together as a fleche?”

Recall that when you are riding in an efficient paceline, you are in a jet stream, in a gulf stream of air compacting all riders into one. You are part of a greater mastery of time and space and distance than you could achieve on your own. If you stick together over the course of a whole brevet, through controls and overnights, your own being will be enhanced by your companions’ company.

Pat and Cecile Gaffney, Rob Mann, Iwan Barankay, Julien Erard, Day 3, Coulee Challenge.

Rashid Khan, Jenn Moore, John Mangin, Day 4, Coulee Challenge.

—PHOTOS DEB FORD

Aiming for such group riding, individually and collectively, is a way our sport can improve.

On an early Spring brevet, Eric N. and I had talked about pacelines as being a potential goal for the everyday ethos of randonneuring, and we had agreed for an upcoming Long Island 300km that we would ride together for the whole length, barring mechanical failures, etc., creating pacelines with others when possible.

We met up with another cyclist, new to randonneuring, who was pleased when Eric and I invited him to join us for a committed ride from start to finish. Michael A. had introduced himself as an acquaintance of George S., a rando buddy of both Eric and me. If George sent him our way, then he was welcome to join us.

As it turned out, as a steady trio riding together, we had lots of other riders joining us along the way. Often, I shamelessly pled with a rider to stay with us. “You will miss our company — we rarely slow down like this!”

Or, “Away so soon? How are we to become friends?” Such nonsense has its appeal. And maybe such beseeching helped Andrei S., a novice rando riding on his second brevet and first 300km



Charlie Martin, Luke Heller,  
Aaron Milbank, Misha Heller,  
Paul Danhaus, Day 1,  
Coulee Challenge.

as a warm-up for the Treasure Cove 1200km, decide to dial it back and ride with us. It turned out he led our group most of the way along the course.

That 300km was joyful from beginning to end for me, and the three committed and the fourth with us, Andrei, rolled in at the tail end of a sunset to a smiling and congratulatory Stephen Y., LI's RBA.

In reflection, I realized how much each of us benefitted the others on that ride. We all did what seemed to each of us the right amount of pulling the paceline along. For me, that meant little time on front as everyone seemed stronger than me that day and more eager to take a turn at front. I was just happy we were staying together.

I thanked Andrei, of course, who led us most of the way. He thought we had helped him just as much. He told me that he felt positive and strong the whole time because he knew he could always drift back into the line and make it easier on himself whenever he wanted.

On that ride, I definitely enjoyed having company within talking distance. Even though Eric and I were the only two who knew each other well from multiple brevets and trusted each other's randonneuring strengths, by the last control our small group had a nice and lazy kind of coherence; we were used to watching out for each other on the road and at controls.

We also helped each other out with lighting and reflective gear issues. We saved our lead rider from certain embarrassment, if not disappointment, as he felt his one reflective stripe on his Rapha shirt constituted reflective gear. No, not close, opined the two anciens in the group. He put on the reflective sash he had with him.

Another's rear light malfunctioned



and one of us had an extra light for him to use. Ah, the strength in numbers. Four well-lit, disciplined bicyclists travel a lot more safely on the road in a group than only one riding with a blinky taillight. Encourage others to ride with you, especially at night, even if they are straining to ride into the night alone.

Finally, my computer GPS failed on me for some reason. But I was very pleased that my effort to create a committed paceline-driven 300km so tangibly and immediately bore fruit for me. It gave me hope that I'll be able to keep riding brevets until I am 70 (a long-time goal) — by turning on others to the benefit of pacelines.

Riding alone in the dark with just a cue sheet to navigate through and into the outskirts of New York City would not have been joyful. Instead, I was riding with at least two out of four others who had decently enough working computer units that we had a collective confidence on the roads, and with a lot of traffic streaming down the boulevards, we were entitled to respect from car and truck drivers because we rode as a group.

I learned so much from that one ride on Long Island. It has shone a light on all the other randonnées I cherish in my memory along with all the other riders that have ridden along with me as

we shared stories while pedaling deep into the night. Given how significant to me are the few randonneurs with whom I have ridden from dawn to dusk and until dawn of the next day, I have to ask myself: how can I ever not think of myself as a randonneur?

Many stories seem mostly focused on individual achievement rather than collective, but who achieves anything without the help and inspiration of others? We have to learn from others to progress. Group rides and pacelines are incredible schools of learning for randonneurs.

On the Bethpage 300km, Eric N. and I discussed the pros and cons of group rides and pacelines on randonnées. And there are plenty on both sides of the ledger. Near the end, Eric articulated a truth about pacelines: "Riding solo on a brevet is like playing an instrument by yourself; riding in a group is like playing an instrument in a band."

How can it be put better than that! I told him as much and asked him if I could use that analogy in this article. I reached out to a few other randonneurs to canvass their opinions before I wrote this article. One was Dan Driscoll, RUSA board member and RBA of the Lone Star Randonneurs and organizer of the Texas Stampede.



Dan has over 275,000 RUSA kilometers under his belt. He had so much to say on the benefits of group rides for others and himself. Given how much he has achieved in our sport, it was remarkable and affirming

to hear him say emphatically, “All my achievements on the bike have been group efforts.”

What do you think? Should there be more of a determined emphasis on group riding in our collective RUSA

psyche? Are we too isolated and separated from others in our individual pursuits of randonneuring glory to be concerned about pacelines?

I think this question muddles the overall clarity of the argument; certainly, riding in a paceline in which you do not belong is not a safe option. In general, the thrust of my argument is that disciplined group riding is emphatically safer and healthier for all of us and should be a goal for the future of RUSA. I would love to hear others’ thinking on the subject.

Finally, let me close with Westfield, MA, RBA Don Podolski’s words of encouragement and admonition at the start of brevets he organizes, “Remember! This is not a race! Look after each other out there.” Thank you, Don. And thanks to all who make our sport all that it is and to all that will help it improve. 🚲

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

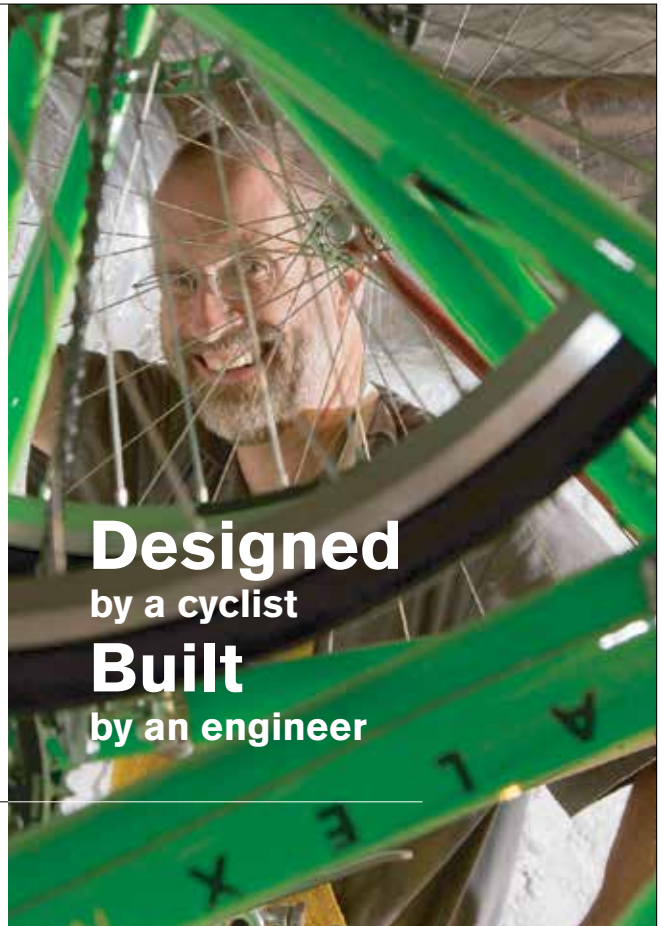
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## Thanks Joe!

I recently calculated that I have been involved with randonneuring for seventeen years. That doesn't really seem possible, but the RUSA results page does not lie!

The years and miles have supplied myriad adventures, steadfast and entertaining friendships and ever-increasing knowledge about long distance cycling.

Life happens and I'm realizing that unless we purposefully reflect on our pasts, we may not fully realize the profound impact events or people have had on our lives.

My randonneuring past was front of mind late this past summer when one of my friends and longtime riding companions, Joe K and his wife, referred to in previous columns as Saint Lucy, were packing up to leave NJ for the warmer climes of South Carolina. JB, another riding buddy and wizard of bad puns (are there good puns?), organized a farewell 100km

event so Joe's NJ and PA friends could share one more Garden State ride.

We agreed upon a flattish, local ride culminating with pizza and stories about how great we were at the finish. While preparing for the day and looking back over photos and results, I was somewhat surprised to realize how big an impact Joe had on me as a rider and randonneur.

The first time I spoke with Joe, I had finished his NJ Transit 200km permanent and was advising him of my successful finish. He had requested that I contact him post ride so he would know I was ok and was not in need of help. At the time, I remember being impressed that a person I had never met would be so concerned for my well-being, although I was sure at that moment that the permanent route had been designed to break me!

My next vivid memory of Joe was the first 100km permanent we rode together in a small group in January, 2011. This was another of Joe's routes, a flat ride to a little strip mall and back. The day was "only dimwits ride in this weather" cold and we huddled in that little mall warming up as best we could. I learned on that ride that adverse weather is no excuse to sit home and that misery shared is preferable to solitary suffering. That ride was the



Joe Kratovil and friends.

— PHOTO NIGEL GREENE

Chris and Janice finish the trail in Jersey Shore, PA.

—PHOTO CHRIS NEWMAN

beginning of a P-12 streak that lasted until the pandemic hit. Thanks for inviting me along, Joe!

In 2011 Joe completed his first K-Hound. We all thought he was crazy to have even attempted this challenge, but he made it seem enjoyable. He finished that first K-Hound challenge with over 13,000km and then set about convincing several of us it was attainable. His enthusiasm for the award was contagious and as he racked up 6 K-Hound awards several of us fell under his spell. In 2014 I pedaled my way to my first K-Hound; it remains one of my proudest randonneuring achievements. He similarly inspired many other local riders including my friends Paul S, who still chases the Hound every year, and Mary F, who last year rode over 24,000km.

Maintaining a steady monthly diet of permanents enabled me to become a stronger and somewhat—everything is relative—faster rider. Thank you, Joe!

Joe was also known for riding a fixie because, you know, this sport isn't challenging enough. My memory is of him initially using the fixie on flat rides and in short order employing it on hilly routes as well. He completed at least one and perhaps several SR series and a 1500km on his beloved Langster.

You can see where this is going, right? I bought my first fixie, sort of an experiment, at a shop where Joe then worked and my second one, my own Langster, from Joe at the shop he had moved to. Riding the fixie challenged me and brought some excitement back to riding (riding a fixie is especially exciting during the initial, learning phase...). I gradually became a stronger, steadier rider and managed to finish a local SR series using only the Langster. I'm not sure I would have



tried out fixed gear cycling without his encouragement. Thanks, Joe!

Joe also served as the New Jersey RBA for many years and he and I have spent innumerable hours in lobbies of slightly sketchy hotels sending riders out into the dark morning or waiting to cheer them at the finish. He established a core group of volunteers and a yearly volunteer meeting to plan the following season. His attention to detail and concern for his fellow riders was evident in every event and a philosophy he instilled in his volunteers and our current RBA, Paul K. Thanks, Joe!

During that farewell 100km, as Joe and I rode along and chatted, he told me of a recent ride he had done with some friends on the Pine Creek Rail Trail in Pennsylvania. He thought I might enjoy it as well and was happy to share pertinent information about logistics and lodging.

As I write this in my hotel room, once again way past deadline, my friend and frequent riding buddy Janice C and I have completed the first

day's section of the trail and are eagerly anticipating an equally lovely ride tomorrow. Thanks, Joe!

Finally, as some of you know, Janice C is the longtime editor of *American Randonneur*. We were on a ride many years ago when she told me she had volunteered for the position. I responded that I would be happy to write a column if that would be helpful. I am not sure she would have accepted my offer if she knew then that I would never submit this column by the deadline or that I would feature her more frequently than she would like. It is a testament to her professionalism that she repeatedly but gently nudged me when I was late and as far as I know has not deleted anything I have written about her. This is Janice's last issue as editor and I will miss her patience, stewardship and devotion to this magazine. *American Randonneur* is a publication of which we can all be very proud. Thanks, Janice! 🚲

# SR600s are Good for You!

BY IWAN BARANKAY

I am thirteen miles from Margaretville. I ran out of water thirty miles ago because the last open store was 81 miles ago—at the start. There was supposed to be a café 24 miles back, but it was shuttered and the brewery next to it was deserted. Now I am at a Mobile Gas station but it is 3:00pm and they closed at 2:30pm, something Google Maps did not know. The proprietor is here but when I ask for water, he replies, “There’s nothing I can do about it.” There is a sign for a library at the next intersection and I stop, but again no one is there.

Sprinkled in between are some private residences but I don’t see anyone outside. It is hot after all, and I am uncertain what reception a disheveled cyclist would receive should I walk up to a house and ask for water. No matter. I keep pedaling. Then I begin to cramp while cycling seated, so I stand up instead, which works. For a while. The next hill starts, but I don’t have much to offer to counter the force of gravity. I may be out of water, but I can walk up hills. Luckily, I put on fresh cleats before the ride for better grip. Walking also allows me to be on whatever side of the road offers more shade. I come

across a small road that turns right and is shaded, so I decide to lie down; just a bit. It feels so good to lie there. No cars. The wind blowing gently. I am so alert that I hear every leaf in the trees rustling in the afternoon breeze. They all tell me to get up; so I do. RWGPS shows me there is one more hill to conquer before Margaretville. Four miles of climbing followed by a nine-mile descent. I have already climbed six hills and 8000 feet of elevation since my start at 8:00am.

Actually, I got up at 4:00am then drove from Philadelphia to the start at New Paltz, NY. This is not my first

attempt at a SR600 this year. It is my third. SR600s are these wonderful mythical creatures. 600km with at least 10,000m of elevation. A creation of the famed *randonneuse* Sophie Matter, an event she proposed to the Audax Club Parisien (ACP) in 2008. They received the project favorably and offered administrative support while putting Sophie in charge. From 2008 until the end of 2022, an SR600 is required for the SR10000 award, but now the “Super Randonnées” are split off from ACP and are run by Provence Randonneurs ([www.superrandonnees.org](http://www.superrandonnees.org)).

The core idea is self-reliance so, unlike regular 600km brevets, no support is permitted at the intermediate controls. The time limit used to be fifty hours but now it is sixty hours to make this style of event accessible to more riders. Unlike regular 600km brevets with their 40-hour limit, the challenge for most riders is less about staying awake and more the question of whether one can prepare enough and pace correctly to make it up all those hills. This event has spread across the globe with close to 4000 completed rides. One never rides these events alone even on a solo attempt like mine in the Catskills, as one is part of this shared camaraderie of other riders. Some SR600s have a few long hills as is the case in Colorado and California. In the northeast, we have shorter hills but they are often steeper compared to the gentle slopes in the western states. The Catskills SR600 has 33 hills. Some are small but steep. Others are

*As I walk the hills, I feel ecstatic. This is what randonneuring is about for me. All that matters is the road, the hills, the climb, and to listen to my body.*





Witching hour at  
Downsville Covered Bridge.

—PHOTOS IWAN BARANKAY

longer ascents but still spicy. Several of the descents are technical as the roads are surfaced with sharp gray crushed stones instead of asphalt. It is essential to have tires and brakes that are in good shape. I am very grateful for my tubeless Continental 5000s paired with Orange Seal: no punctures and no need to pump up my tires during the ride.

I start the climb to Margaretville. The next photo control is the Bellayre Ski Resort sign which, I guess, is meant to be funny as it is 90°F. I see the sign and push myself to ride to it. “At least to the sign. The sign. The sign,” I keep chanting to keep the rhythm. After I reach it, I treat myself to a bit of walking. Time doesn’t matter. That is another credo of Sophie Matter, who instructs local organizers not to publish finish times. Indeed, at her marquee event, the Mille de Sud, a yearly 1000km ride in the South of France, she does not publish finish times; she simply lists the names of finishers and



Nowhere to strap antiques  
in Walton, N.Y.

Start/Finish contrôle  
in New Paltz.

whether they complete the ride within the time limit or *hors délais*. As I walk the hills, I feel ecstatic. This is what randonneuring is about for me. All that matters is the road, the hills, the climb, and to listen to my body. One can do enormous things when in tune with one's body and the surroundings. Our daily lives with all their distractions disconnect us from that harmony, and it is events like the SR600 that reconnect us to our body and mind like few other things can. The challenge is not the hills or the distance but whether one can become absorbed in the ride, to fuse with it.

I reach the top and try to clip in. It takes a while as my left leg is rock-hard and I worry about slipping. It takes three attempts. Click! I am in and the descent begins to the Sunoco gas station. There I buy a multitude of things as I don't know what will work for me. Cold Starbucks milky coffee, ice cream, potato chips, V8, Pepsi, and water. I have sandwiches in my bag, but I am unable to get them down. There is a nice bench with a table away from the gas station and the road. I drink the V8 and some Pepsi. The Ice cream does not work for me. Then I think that it would be nice to lie down a bit. I blink once and wake up 45 minutes later, fully rested and hungry for those potato chips.

It is getting much cooler now. That is the thing with these hilly rides which are hot during the day with the climbs and then frigid at night during the descents. The chill feels sublime on my legs and I pedal into the evening and toward my motel in Roscoe. I have stocked up with Styrofoam soup noodles as I know there will be nothing open between here and there or in Roscoe by the time I arrive at 10:00pm.

Some SR600s traverse mountainous areas where the climbs are through forests. The Catskills, however, are



more like rolling hills that offer many views and vistas, creating a continuous feast for the eyes. I stop looking at the elevation profile and instead I just let the hills come to me rather than attacking them. They pick me up and I slide down on the other side. I contemplate pushing to the end and finishing at a projected 3:00am but I think that this does not sound like fun. I call a motel in Delhi, NY (pronounced Dell-Hi) and they have a room available. What awaits me is pure bliss. As I arrive, the proprietor, who is from India, asks about my ride and then he tells me how in 1983 he cycled for

over a year from India to New York. First east across Asia, then he flew to Australia and rode from West to East, and then he flew to San Francisco via Hawaii. In the U.S. he took a southern route but then rode up to Chicago for fund raising and bike repairs before riding to New York. What an amazing ride and to top it off, he gives me the room for free.

I fall asleep at 8:00pm and wake up at 2:00am, fresh as a whistle and set off into the night. The time between 2:00am and 5:00am is particularly magical. The birds are still asleep and everything is quiet. There is no moon

and the stars are twinkling all around me. Not hearing any cars reminds me of what cycling was like when randonneuring started, and I imagine all those cyclists on this stretch of road twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago. It is frigid when I reach the country store in Grand Gorge where they have tables inside and serve warm breakfast sandwiches wrapped in aluminum foil. I open one to take a bite, exhale and the warm air washes all over my face. What a feeling! It is a week day and the local craftsmen meet here for breakfast. A guy arrives, swings the door open and announces to everyone, "\$145 to fill 'er up!"

Riding westward towards the finish one approaches Woodstock, NY, via the famous Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Buddhist Temple with

*Not hearing any cars reminds me of what cycling was like when randonneuring started, and I imagine all those cyclists on this stretch of road twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago.*

prayer flags hanging in the trees leading up to it. After a twisty descent it is a shock to enter busy Woodstock, but it fades quickly into the rearview as there are some long climbs after it. This is the only point where I get angry – at a hill for being a hill. I stop to drink some Pepsi, and the sugar and caffeine lift my spirits for the final stretch to New Paltz.

In the essay "The Myth of Sisyphus," Albert Camus introduces his philosophy

of the absurd stemming from our need to attribute meaning to our life and actions and receiving "unreasonable silence" in response. I feel a kindred spirit with Sisyphus on this SR600 where I keep climbing hill after hill just to roll down them again. Camus' essay concludes, "The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy." 🚲



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**Northern Transcontinental Everett, Washington to Rye Beach, New Hampshire August 7th -September 11th Wait Listed**

**New York State along the St. Lawrence Seaway September 16th-23rd: Open**

**"Over the Andes" October Going to Ghana, Africa December Dates TBD**

## Rando Seat Bag Review

Randonneuring events are long distance affairs and riders need to take along clothing layers and various other items to finish successfully. Carrying these things can be done in one of many ways, and there is no one correct method. The Fall 2022 issue of *American Randonneur* has an excellent overview by Emily O'Brien that all riders will find useful on how to carry your stuff on a randonneuring bicycle. Here is my recent experience with two seat bags.

When I did my first Paris-Brest-Paris, way back in the Middle Pleistocene era, it was fairly easy to tell where the riders came from. Most of the participants were French and usually had a large front handlebar bag to haul their gear, and they often carried a rolled-up rain jacket atop a small rear rack. *All the bikes at PBP were required to have full fenders back then so the jackets stayed pretty clean when not being worn.* Most of the other participants were Anglophones who came from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Canada, and the United States. More often than not, we used a traditional British canvas saddlebag, such as those made by the venerable Carradice firm. There were deviations from this pattern among some riders, but it held true for most.

Arkel seat bag.  
—PHOTOS BILL BRYANT

In the four decades since then many things have changed at PBP, such as thousands more participants coming from 66 countries. These days we also have many more options for carrying our stuff, and it is common to see in-line seat bags as well as the transverse

traditional British saddlebags. I've used the traditional system for years and it works fine, *especially with a Bagman support rack*, but Father Time has not been ignoring me and I've grown older and weaker over the years. In an effort to maximize my meager abilities, I began looking for a lighter way to carry my gear that didn't weigh so much as the old system.

A few years ago I started using a **Ruthworks SF Ultralight Large Wedge** seat bag. It is a fine product that many randonneurs would enjoy using on brevets and permanents. My goal was to find a bag that would hold my clothing layers for a long brevet that could see a 24-hour temperature swing from the high 30s to the mid-90s. It will hold a pair of arm-warmers, leg-warmers, long-fingered gloves, a wool cap or balaclava for nighttime, a cloth cap for



Ruthworks seat bag.

Ruthworks with extra water bottle cages.



daytime, a long-sleeved wool undershirt, a windbreaker, my reflective RUSA vest and ankle bands, and a rain jacket. I'm a big guy and all my clothes are in the XL size range. *The rest of my stuff for a brevet, and some food, usually rides in a front handlebar bag.* The Ruthworks Ultralight Large Wedge will hold everything except my rain jacket, but the bag has some shock cords along the bottom that make carrying the jacket easy, and since my randonneuse has fenders, it stays clean on wet or muddy roads. The Ultralight Large Wedge is a quality product with excellent design features, such as no thigh rub, and it is expertly sewn by Ely Rodriguez, the man behind Ruthworks SF. It can be ordered in a variety of colors to suit the buyer's taste, but he also offers a line of bags in his Storm Series that are bright orange for safety. I highly recommend this option as it makes the cyclist much more visible to motorists in low-light and bright-light conditions. I've seen other randonneurs using the Storm Series bags and can testify how much easier they are seen compared to riders

with the familiar black or gray bags. Coupled with a Storm Series handlebar bag, one is much more visible from all directions, a good thing for any randonneur or randonneuse.

I have only one gripe about the Ruthworks seat bag. It wags a lot when one is pedaling out of the saddle, or even in the saddle. However, I recently found a product that eliminates this problem. The Minoura SBS-250 seat bag stabilizer is a clever little gizmo that attaches to the saddle rails and keeps seat bags from wagging. It does its job perfectly, seems well made, and you can mount a water bottle cage to each side of the rack. This will increase the seat bag's carrying capacity if one uses little containers such as the Specialized "Keg" that holds various small items or energy drink powder. *I'm not sure I would want to put two full water bottles on the Minoura rack. It would probably hold the weight, but I'm not sure I want to experiment with mine, nor do I want to carry that amount of extra weight so high up. I should note that the Minoura instructions don't indicate*

*any weight limit for the rack's bottle mounts, so two full bottles would probably be ok? With the Minoura rack installed, the Ruthworks Ultralight Large Wedge is excellent and has no drawbacks that I can see. And with some extra small items or calories stowed in the auxiliary bottle cages, I think most riders would find this a very useful baggage system for long brevets.*

Before I discovered a way to stabilize my Ruthworks bag, I used a different bag that I like a lot, too. The **Arkel Seatpacker 9** is a real winner. It is similar in size, shape, and function to the Ruthworks bag, but there are also some key differences. First, it comes with its own rack and is rock-solid with vigorous pedaling, and there is no thigh rub. The rack itself uses a quick-release system that makes it easy to take on and off your bike for shorter rides in-between brevets. I found that the Seatpacker 9 carries virtually the same amount of gear as the Ruthworks bag, and like it, the Arkel didn't have enough room to carry my rain jacket inside. There are some small loops atop the bag that I used to lash down the jacket, and for riders with bikes lacking fenders, this might be a better location than the Ruthworks bag? The Seatpacker 9 also has a small, zippered pocket atop the bag that is useful to keep a few small items apart from the main compartment. I use the pocket to carry my wallet, house and/or car keys, lip balm, and a few butt-balm packets; it is easily accessed so long as I don't

have a jacket strapped on top of it.

Which of the two bags would I choose if going to PBP again? I'm not sure. Both are well designed and made; both are a lot lighter than my old British saddlebag and rack; neither has any thigh rub; both have handy roll-top closures that I like better than zippers in wet weather, and they allow one to compress the bag to varying degrees (depending on how many clothing layers one is wearing.) Both will carry enough clothing to see me through a long brevet without allowing me to overload the bike. If I carried some sort of shoulder strap either bag could be easily removed from the bike when going into a control for a sleep stop. But most of all, both bags do not wag and I hardly know they are there (so long as the Ruthworks bag uses the Minoura rack option.)

In terms of weight, the basic Ruthworks is a lot lighter than the Arkel, even with the Minoura rack. When you mount two water bottle cages it still ends up being four ounces

lighter. So, the Arkel is a bit heavier overall, but I suspect it might be a little more waterproof with its double-wall bag construction, and its quick-release rack adds some weight compared to the simple Minoura rack (which stays attached to the saddle rails with nuts and bolts.) Perhaps the Ruthworks might not be as waterproof as the Arkel? But since California has been in severe drought conditions for the past three years, I haven't tested the Ruthworks bag in any heavy rain. On the other hand, RUSA #8 used the Seatpacker 9 bag during an epic 300km brevet in 2019 and said everything stayed dry.

So, with a quick-release for removing the rack and having a regular bike in-between brevets, I find myself drawn to the Arkel...but the bag definitely sits angled upward behind the rider compared to the Ruthworks bag, which sits more level, or at least less angled up. I find getting on and off my bike something of a chore with the Arkel compared to the Ruthworks and

this could be a problem without careful mounting and dismounting. Falling over while dismounting at a control is definitely not a good situation, especially when considering sleepy randonneurs who might not remember to swing their leg extra high. And, I like the extra capacity of the two water bottle cages mounted to the Minoura rack. The Arkel only comes in black, whereas I really appreciate the extra safety from the orange Ruthworks bag. So, I go back and forth between the two and can't make up my mind. Either bag meets my needs and performs exceedingly well. Perhaps cost will be the final factor for others to consider? The Arkel Seatpacker 9 costs about \$240 US, while the Ruthworks Ultralight Large Wedge plus Minoura rack will run approximately \$125 US. *Taxes and shipping not included for either bag's cost, nor are the two water bottle cages and Keg containers for the Ruthworks system.* But cost aside, one won't go wrong choosing either seat bag. Bonne route! 🚲



## American Randonneur — CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Submission deadlines:

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

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

# New RUSA Members

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15645	Davis, Lea A	Bessemer	AL	15730	Turnley, Geoff	Denver	CO	15662	Schmidt, Paul B	Dayton	OH
15664	Marshall, R Brent	Birmingham	AL	15643	Horan, John	Morrison	CO	15636	Shaull, Jeff	Mansfield	OH
15644	Runyan, Betsy L	Montgomery	AL	15668	Milroy, Paul	Thornton	CO	15733	Carpenter, David A	Marysville	OH
15656	Neal, Lee	Trussville	AL	15715	Poppe, Andrew	New Haven	CT	15638	Lai, Edwin	Markham	ON
15650	Moon, Ed	Benicia	CA	15619	Berry, Dave	Washington	DC	15734	Cole, David	Mississauga	ON
15611	Pham, Tommy	Campbell	CA	15617	Sigal, Ivan	Washington	DC	15653	Janusauskas, Vytas	Nepean	ON
15640	Andrews, Bradford Todd	Carmichael	CA	15690	Swartz, Ben	Washington	DC	15618	Marchak, Erin	Toronto	ON
15714	Youngren, Robert	Carmichael	CA	15637	Combs, Dick	Bartow	FL	15718	Schular, Andrew	Eugene	OR
15721	Burnett, Nicholas	Davis	CA	15713	Raskin, Lisa	Jacksonville Beach	FL	15708	Lawn, Thomas M	Portland	OR
15711	Hornedo, Abner M	Los Angeles	CA	15702	Teten, Holly A	Neptune Beach	FL	15672	Wilson, David Jean	Portland	OR
15710	Hornedo, Chermnne G	Los Angeles	CA	15732	Jackson, David Christopher	Decatur	GA	15699	Berenbroick, Gary J	Berwyn	PA
15629	Rehkopf, David H	Menlo Park	CA	15622	DuPree, Dan	Peachtree Corners	GA	15736	Zant, Christopher	Ivyland	PA
15681	Abraham, Arlen	Oakland	CA	15707	Gates, Joe	Winder	GA	15720	Jacobs, Greg	Media	PA
15628	Kind, James A	Oakland	CA	15654	McGinn, Michael	Johnston	IA	15738	Gibson, Anne P	Philadelphia	PA
15612	Lehman, Kenny H	Oakland	CA	15624	Stennett, Wayne	Fairfield	IL	15735	Horio, Kevin	Philadelphia	PA
15701	Millar, Sarah N	Oakland	CA	15692	Oesch, Claren L	Springfield	IL	15696	Mays, Shawn	Philadelphia	PA
15631	Santen, Johannes Oliver	Oakland	CA	15665	Miller, Jeremy E	Cloverdale	IN	15697	Sheehan, Emmet Q	Pittsburgh	PA
15682	Tappon, Sarah	Oakland	CA	15683	Monnett, Russell D	Cloverdale	IN	15717	Markey, Frank	Wallingford	PA
15630	Vidolova, Teodora Sabinova	Oakland	CA	15685	Williamson, Steven W	Cloverdale	IN	15627	Napa, Christopher	Riverside	RI
15633	England, Paul George	Pomona	CA	15623	Johnston, Timothy	Fort Wayne	IN	15642	Wiggins, Barbara	Mount Pleasant	SC
15694	Felten, Royce E	Riverside	CA	15680	Cox, Adrian	Greencastle	IN	15719	Burke, Kevin T	North Augusta	SC
15695	Nerren, Dylan J	Riverside	CA	15615	Goote, Ronald W	Mishawaka	IN	15693	Oesch, Breton R	Allen	TX
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15684	Sauer, Shanna	San Francisco	CA	15669	Stemper, Richard Herbert	Richfield	MN	15614	Nguyen, Tohma	Bothell	WA
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15657	Wang, Pongsheng	San Jose	CA	15723	Dellow, Tyler	Cranford	NJ	15706	Clements, Tom	Seattle	WA
15670	Young, Wayne	San Mateo	CA	15647	Ortiz Jr, Miguel A	Millington	NJ	15661	Harrigan, Cosmo	Seattle	WA
15698	Cullen, Brian Raymond	Santa Monica	CA	15616	Hoffman, Gregory C	Park Ridge	NJ	15660	Olson, Rich	Seattle	WA
15712	Braun, Winston	Ventura	CA	15716	Giaever, Bianca	Brooklyn	NY	15634	Rehkopf, Jon C	Seattle	WA
15709	Penalozza, Alexander	Ventura	CA	15655	Janaro, Nicholas	Brooklyn	NY	15621	Zacek, Andy	Seattle	WA
15677	Doman, Wendell	Walnut Creek	CA	15626	Moote, Michael	Brooklyn	NY	15663	Spada, Piero	Brookfield	WI
15705	Sobczak, Leszek	Woodland Hills	CA	15704	Houghton, Helen	Marlboro	NY	15659	Neuman, Michael	Verona	WI
15726	Bell, Lindsay	Arvada	CO	15703	Houghton, Marcella	Marlboro	NY	15688	Lacroix, Fred	Ancelle	FR France
15727	Weller, Mitchell	Arvada	CO	15725	Tray, Alex	Saratoga Springs	NY	15632	Winchester, Tiffany	Woodend	AU Australia
15658	Sackett, Steve S	Cope	CO	15613	Deboer, Jock	Staten Island	NY				

# Colorado Last Chance – Tough but Rewarding!

BY JOHN LEE ELLIS

The 12th edition of the Colorado Last Chance 1200km offered our traditional expansive journey through Eastern Colorado and Western Kansas. But this year was especially challenging for riders: 100-degree temperatures on the first day, winds the second day, thunderstorms that night, and near-freezing temperatures with fog in the pre-dawn hours of the final day. A severe drought in Western Kansas made the sparse landscape feel even sparser, with less greenery than usual.

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The modest but welcoming It'll Do Motel in Atwood, KS, was once again our first and second overnight spot. This year, the final part of the event was rerouted through areas with more services. Rider feedback was positive. The route clipped a corner of Nebraska, providing another state for American Explorer.

A very special thanks to our field volunteers: Beth Long and Brent Myers, who staffed all three overnights, ferried the drop bags, and kept riders hydrated that first toasty day; and Debbie Bush, who supported the third overnight and spent a lot of time driving to rescue some far-flung riders out on the plains.

Thanks to everyone who rode with us. The terrain and conditions brought out riders' true randonneuring grit, with hopefully some rewarding vistas and pleasant experiences, too.

Please enjoy the accounts of a few of these riders. —John Lee, Rocky Mountain Cycling Club

## The Last Chance 1200km A Ride Through Each Changing Season in Just Four Days

*Gabrielle and Carl Andersen  
(RUSA# 7425 & 6151)  
Woodside, CA*

On paper the Last Chance 1200km looked to be a great route for a tandem so we signed up feeling confident that we could ride the route with success. Completing this brevet would make it the longest ride on our tandem and our first 1200km since PBP 2019.

*"The Last Chance 1200km was way, way harder than the Colorado High Country 1200km," says Charlie Martin, SF Randonneur.*

While the ride may have looked pretty innocent on paper, we learned that starting in September, Colorado and Kansas can experience dramatic weather changes from day to day. After this ride, we noted that the weather experience was a good reminder to always

be prepared for extreme heat, extreme cold, wind and rain, even when weather "predictions" tell a different story. So here is our experience from the tandem with each day a different season.

### Day One—SUMMER: 250 miles from Boulder County, CO, to Atwood, KS

Starting at 4:00am, it was already so warm that we did not require any extra layers. Almost the whole starting group stuck together for the first twenty or so miles until we were all stopped at a train crossing. It did not appear that the train was going to move any time soon so after about ten minutes some riders went south and some north in hopes of finding a "workaround." We proceeded north and ultimately found a way around but this incident broke up the group, and we found ourselves riding solo for most of the remainder of the day. Our goal was to ride strong and steady with stops only for necessary refueling, so this workaround was a little mentally frustrating since we figured it set us back about twenty minutes.

And the day grew hotter and hotter, but the roads were mostly nice and smooth and traffic was very light so we could make good time on the tandem. But the combination of triple digit temperatures and limited services took a toll. Brent and Beth, the sag volunteers, caught up to us just when we needed them the most; we were dying in the heat and they had ice, cold water, ice socks and words of encouragement. They pulled us through





Gabrielle and Carl Andersen.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

leaving plenty of time to recover a bit and have a nice long sleep after a tough three days. I was feeling that we had endured all that there was to endure in terms of weather, and I was hoping that day four would provide a nice gentle ride back to Boulder County. I should have realized that we hadn't yet experienced winter chill....

#### **Day Four—WINTER: 111 miles from Fort Morgan, CO, to Boulder County, CO**

The final stretch of a 1200km comes with the excitement that, no matter what, you can power through the last day. We set out at 4:30am with 111 miles to the finish. However, it was not just cold, it was winter cold. There was no snow, but it was 33 degrees coupled with a thick fog that left us wet and cold as we rode along a quiet river in the pre-dawn darkness. Without the proper cold weather clothing, we were freezing. "I can't feel my feet or my hands," said Carl, "but I can sure feel my butt." Thankfully, at mile 26 there was a refuge, an amazing gas station market equipped with tables and chairs, hot chocolate, and warm food. We were in heaven and did not want to leave. They even had hand/toe warmers that I promptly purchased to ward off the bitter cold. Fortunately, by the time we finished the 1200km in the early afternoon, summer had returned with the temperatures climbing to over 80 degrees, making it an unimaginably more pleasant day than it had been earlier on.

We were happy to finish this tough ride and re-learned the lesson to always

a hard patch and we survived day one. I think everyone on the ride suffered that day, but no one knew that that was just the beginning.

#### **Day Two—FALL: 220 miles from Atwood, KS, out and back to Atwood, KS**

Fall brings the chance of high wind and rain, and the second day provided a fall-like experience. We started out again at 4:00am, hoping to get back to the hotel a little earlier to enjoy additional hours of sleep. I liked the fact that the second day was an out and back so that we spent a second night at the same hotel. I would describe this day's terrain as a series of rollers, not hard but constant. Also constant were unrelenting high winds, as cross winds, so there really was never any relief. Temperatures were at least 40 degrees cooler than on the first day, a welcome change. Carl and I rolled into the hotel

at 10:00pm, just as the rain started. The riders behind us apparently got stuck in torrential rain, thunderstorms and lightning that forced several to seek safety in a hotel, a school bus, or gas station.

#### **Day Three—SPRING: 170 miles from Atwood, KS, to Fort Morgan, CO**

Spring in Colorado can be a mixed bag, sometimes warm, sometimes cold. Day three brought cold and some rain. The temperature never rose above 50 degrees so, while not freezing, the light rain made it seem cooler. I was thankful to reach the third overnight hotel early,

*I think everyone on the ride suffered that day, but no one knew that that was just the beginning.*

be prepared for any type of weather, regardless of what the weather person may say.

### The Last Chance 1200km Delivers!

Bryson Strauss (RUSA# 1228)  
St. Petersburg, FL

The story of *The Last Chance* easily follows the dramatic arc of a good adventure film; think *The Martian* or *Castaway*. In the beginning, the protagonists don't know what they're capable of, but as they face extreme adversity, they come to know themselves. Through that knowledge, they are empowered to persevere and overcome.

At 3:50am outside a Louisville, CO, hotel, 14 riders mingled at the starting line. Tension and energy filled the space and yet there was a quietness about the moment, as folks chatted in hushed tones. I ran through a checklist in my head: sunblock, nutrition, hydration, tools, supplies, foul weather gear, tire pressure, arm covers. I was anxious to move but uncertain as to what lay ahead. I tried to imagine it: great expanses of Eastern Colorado and Western Kansas, corn fields, endless rolling hills. A mantra looped in my mind, "Take it slow. Play the long game."

### Day 1—249 Miles

John Lee Ellis waved the virtual starting flag at 4:00am sharp, darkness still resisting a twilight sky. We rolled off with a casual pedal downhill with Kensington, KS, in our far sights. The morning was crisp and the riding was easy, deceptively easy. We traveled quietly as a small swarm through the streets of Louisville, Lafayette, and Todd Creek en route to the first control at Strasburg. We moved at a good clip considering the road we had yet to cover. Rounding the corner at Strasburg,

a burning orange sun broke the horizon over the plains. Control 1 marked the end of the group ride for me. The pack split up. The rest was an epic solo ride, with only fleeting moments of contact with other riders.

From Strasburg, the sun rose fast. Within four hours, it was 96 degrees with 15 to 20 mph crosswinds. By noon, it was an inferno, creeping up on 100 degrees in a barren desolate landscape, slowly baking me and pushing me to a creep. Soon, unforgiving elements joined forces with an endless rolling terrain. Conserving energy became my primary obsession for ten hours. The control at Idalia, 177.2 miles out, broke my heart. I had dreamt of the air-conditioned convenience store, that 10-minute reprieve from riding on

the surface of the sun. When I arrived, however, everything was closed. Downcast, I pushed on in slow motion, muttering obscenities under my breath for entertainment. I arrived at the first "overnight," Atwood, KS, in 17 hours 55 minutes, at 9:55pm. Another pedal seemed impossible.

### Day 2—218 Miles

Day two made day one feel like a prologue. I left Atwood at 2:46am, hoping to capitalize on cooler temperatures. That worked until 4:16am, when a cold front hit. The temperature dropped 20 degrees and the headwinds kicked up to 15-20 mph. Then the elevation gain began to unfold, one roller after another for 100 miles, then another 100 back. I am fairly well



Bryson Strauss and Rancher.  
—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

Debbie Bush and Roger Peskett.

—PHOTO JOHN LEE ELLIS

conditioned to endure physical and mental discomfort. This was, however, at the next level. By afternoon, it was hot again. My butt was burning and my knees and quads were dead from standing to try to save my butt.

Exhaustion set in and I began to doubt myself. By 3:00pm, my internal dialogue was, “This is impossible!”

But then I paused and thought, “No, it is not impossible. It’s just unfamiliar.”

I did a check: “Am I injured?” Clearly, I was not. I was just out on a limb, riding in unknown territory. That’s when I accepted the fact that, “This is what it takes to do ultra-endurance under these conditions.” Realizing that it was “normal” empowered me to own it and turned my uncertainty into determination. At that moment, the notion of DNFing left my mind and I became 100% certain that I would finish.

Soon after, the wind shifted behind me and instead of seeing a hot, barren, brown plain in the distance, I saw rolling hills with tall green and yellow corn. Fluffy white clouds floated against a serene blue sky. The landscape that had previously been inhospitable, was suddenly bucolic. With the wind in my favor, I hammered down, catching descents at 25 mph and landing back in Atwood in 18 hours, 18 minutes, at 9:04pm.

### Day 3—168 Miles

Out at 3:05am, stage three was a recovery session. No epiphanies, just enjoyable riding, mixed in with a dose of lingering pain. The weather was perfect, between 42 and 53 degrees on mostly flat roads with mild rollers, a tailwind, and cloud cover. During this stage, I practiced the art of riding and drinking coffee. Returning to Colorado was a great relief, as farms gave way



to ranches. Despite five flats, I hit Fort Morgan in 14 hours, 36 minutes, at 5:41pm.

### Day 4—115 Miles

Wheels were rolling at 12:30am. It was to be an easy century on moderate terrain with a light breeze. The temperatures were predicted to be in the 30s so I was bundled. The first two hours were a dream, crisp in the low 40s with heavy fog. I couldn’t see 20 feet in front of me, but it was calm and quiet. I put on some tunes and thought about the mango lassi I was going to have back in Louisville.

Two hours in, things changed. The temperature dropped to the low 30s. With the windchill, it was below freezing. Soon, my fingers were gone. My toes were gone. I was convulsing with cold. Finally, my body said “Ix-nay on the iding-ray.” I pulled over, wrapped myself in a space blanket and curled up on the ground. It was 45 minutes before I stopped spasming and pushed off again. But soon the sun started to rise and as the red-orange light broke

over the fields, the temperatures moved back into the high 30s. The stars shone bright in a cloudless blue-black sky. I found coffee and thought, “Coffee’s for closers!”

From then on, it was riding as I love riding. The Rockies rose in the distance against a deep blue sky. Sunflowers lined the highway and a bright crispness enveloped the moment. I forgot about the miles. Soon, fields turned to neighborhoods, and neighborhoods to towns. At 10 hours, 56 minutes, I texted John Lee Ellis: “Hey John, 11:26am, lock it in.” Total time: 79 hours, 26 minutes.

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### A Field Report from the Last Chance 1200km

by Steve Polyak (RUSA# 13438)  
Coralville, IA, USA

### Becoming a Randonneur

The Colorado Last Chance 1200km capped off a rigorous year and was the most challenging cycling experience of my 20-plus years on the bike. This,



RUSA Web Team.

—PHOTO BY PASSERBY

the third oldest US Grand Randonnée, took riders through a gamut of climates, weather, and riding condition challenges. Riders were faced with temperatures ranging from the 90s to the 30s, sustained heavy head winds, pre-dawn and late-night riding, hill climbing, blazing sun, and pounding rain. Plus a few unforeseen challenges along the way.

I am a regular bike-to-work commuter and weekend long distance rider and developed an interest in randonneuring in 2019. My first official 200km brevet was supposed to be with the Iowa Randonneurs in 2020. Unfortunately, COVID-19 wiped out that year's schedule of rides. It wasn't until April 10, 2021, that I had an opportunity to complete my first 200km: the Brushy Trestle 200km through central Iowa. My confidence bolstered by this first experience, I planned an attempt of a full super randonneur series in 2022. After again completing the Brushy Trestle 200km, I rode the Three Rivers 300km and Ames to Audubon 400km, all in central Iowa. For the 600km ride, I went up north to another Three Rivers ride with the Minnesota Randonneurs. Having

survived the 600km, I was motivated to take my "last chance" of 2022. I took a deep breath and clicked "send" on my registration for the Colorado Last Chance 1200km.

#### **Crisis at Mile 9**

On Thursday, September 8, 2022, after much training and preparation, the morning finally arrived. At 4:00am, a group of riders pushed off from Louisville, CO, to begin the 1200km journey. A quick word of encouragement from John Lee sent us off into the morning darkness. We travelled in a fast, close bunch through the Louisville streets, quickly heading out of town. The first few miles flew by as we rode along several wide shoulders.

Suddenly, at mile 9, the rear bike light of the rider in front of me whipped down and then up again as the crunching noise of a bike tire striking a pothole rang in my ears. In my headlight, I was able to see a dislodged water bottle spinning towards my tire. With too little time to react, my bike also slammed into the same pothole, also jarring my rear water bottle out of its cage. Thankfully no riders went down but I slowed to a

stop as nearly all the rest of the pack continued ahead. I started to go back for my water bottle when I noticed a strange tapping on my wrist and an odd hissing sound.

My Apple Watch believed that I had indeed fallen and was asking me if I needed assistance. I let it know I was ok, but my rear tire was not. The force of the strike pinch-flatted my rear tube and I had to change my tube in a ditch, in complete darkness. Man-Fai rode by with an offer of assistance, but I had supplies and was able to get going again after consuming one of the three spare tubes I had brought with me.

#### **Tribulus Terrestris**

Travel can teach you many things, but I didn't expect a botany lesson from the Last Chance Grand Randonnée. Where I come from, "grass" means bluegrass, ryegrass, or fescue: blades that are soft and pleasant to nap on during a late summer afternoon. In Colorado there is "devil's weed," *Tribulus terrestris*, also known as puncture vine or goat's head due to the shape of the thumbtack-like burrs this plant produces.

The afternoon of day one, I rolled into the appropriately named town of "Cope," completely parched from the blazing sun and temperatures in the mid 90's. Water bottles nearly empty, I was grateful to spy the water pump at the back of the park indicated on my cue sheet. Riding cyclocross through the park, I refilled my water bottles and had a moment's rest. Upon exiting the park, though, I realized that my rear, typically puncture-proof Gatorskin tire had gone flat again. After changing that one and preparing to leave I discovered that my front Gatorskin tire had suffered the same fate. There on the curb where I exited the park was a small pile of "goat's head" burrs. These small but treacherous demons

consumed the last two spare tubes I had, and future flats on this journey would have to rely on the Park Tool sticker patch kits. Thankfully, I got all my flats out of the way on the first day and completed the ride with the tubes I had. I carefully zig-zagged around anything “green and plant-like” that I spied in the road crevices for the rest of the ride. But there were some bigger challenges in store on day two.

### Oh Shift!

Snap! “Oh, no,” I thought as my right hand reverberated with an unexpected crunch-like feeling from my Campagnolo ergo lever as I attempted to shift into a climbing gear ahead of another hill, mid-way through this windy day two. Hopping off the bike, I knew what I was going to find before I saw the rear derailleur. The cable had snapped down by the cage and the chain had dropped down onto the smallest cog on my cassette. This was my 11-tooth cog on my 11/23 cassette. My setup had two chain rings, a 53/39. My bike had reduced to a two-speeder now with a choice between 127.52 or 93.92 gear inches, with over 100 miles to go, a strong headwind and over 5,000 feet of climb yet for that day.

I hadn’t packed a spare cable and so I resigned myself to get back on the bike and push on to the return to Atwood, KS. Years of single-speed bike commuting gave me some confidence that this was possible. When I finally did arrive at 11:20pm, I was too tired to deal with the cable, and slept, not sure what day three would bring.

The following morning, I checked in with the ride staff and shared my bad news cable story with Osvaldo, Man-Fai, and Brent. I was intent on trying to complete the remaining two days “as is.” But the community of riders came to my aid. Man-Fai and I had the same unique “shmergo” configuration with Campy ergo levers paired with Shimano components. He offered to pull his own cable as he was already on “DNF” status for the ride.

Osvaldo, however, found a Shimano cable and produced a cable cutter from his supply bag as well. With assistance from Brent, Osvaldo, and Man-Fai we were able to replace the Campy cable with the Shimano, but a last challenge remained as the cable head was too large to fit into the Campy housing. We tried several filing/sanding solutions before locating a tool to do the job, and the cable head slid into place. Truly a randonneuring MacGyver moment, and I was grateful for the kind support and skills of fellow riders.

### The Promise of Pickles

One of the unique challenges of the Last Chance 1200km is the sparseness of stores and services. Even in towns that do have a small convenience or grocery store, the hours of operation are limited, and when we rolled into town after 5:00pm or 6:00pm the stores were usually closed. I relied heavily on my own food and water supply, more so than on other brevets. One town had a small grocery store where I purchased a small bag of sliced pickles that I slipped into my jersey back pocket. During that long day, just the knowledge of that bag of pickles kept me going. I was reassured that this little snack could be my final food option once I had exhausted my other supplies. At the end of that day, after rolling into the hotel parking lot and on the edge of bonking, I reached back to my jersey pocket to eat that final item only to discover that the pickles had fallen out somewhere along the way, so the last several miles had been managed solely on the promise of pickles.

### In the End

I went into this experience not knowing whether I would be able to meet the challenge and I am pleased with the outcome. I am thankful for the assistance of the Rocky Mountain Cycling Club members and my fellow riders. I am starting to think that Paris-Brest-Paris might be a possible event for me next year. 🚲

## 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.

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# How a 1200km DNF Can Be An Accomplishment

BY JARED SKOLNICK

In 2019 when the NJ Randonneurs announced the first staging of the NY-Montreal-NY 1200km for 2020, I jumped on the registration. While many Randonneurs dream of PBP, I get more excited when similar challenges are available in my own backyard. Further, my time with the NJ Randonneurs has reinforced in me the knowledge that any event they host is going to be top notch; this group really pours their hearts into everything they do. The final push for me was that my 2019 fitness was top notch, and I already had a solid training program planned for the winter. NY-M-NY became my “racing target” event for 2020.

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Until, of course, COVID changed everything.

When I signed up for this event, I had an FTP of 250w. I was controlling my weight nicely and my successful brevets in 2019 put me squarely in the “middle of the pack” in terms of total time to complete each event.

In addition to these objective indications that I could take on bigger challenges, here’s what I consider the most important factor in any ultra-endurance event: “mind over body.” Most randonneurs are quite familiar with this concept. By way of example, on a 400km ride, my day would go roughly like this:

- 300km: pain is completely ignored, but my pace has slowed a bit due to fatigue.
- 400km: I roll into the finish strong with an increased pace for the final segments and a smile on my face.
- The next day I deal with the real discomfort.

Endurance athletes need to really be in tune with their bodies. “Mind over body” is key to completing these challenges, but it is also important to know which messages cannot be ignored. A simple example for me is that if I feel sleepy during a long ride, I will absolutely stop and take a “dirt nap,” or I will likely have decreased situational awareness that can result in truly dangerous situations. But when my legs start screaming on a climb, I channel my inner Jens Voigt and scream back, “Shut up legs!”

- 100km: discomfort sets in and my body sends messages to stop torturing it.
- 200km: my body starts to realize that I will not listen to its messages of discomfort, so it gets quiet.

Taking in the beautiful scenery on the course.

—PHOTO JARED SKOLNICK



Honoring a teammate's college town along the way.

— PHOTO JARED SKOLNICK

### After the COVID delays, 2022 arrives and NY-Montreal-NY is ON!

When it was finally looking like this event would happen in 2022 and the season began, I was ready to commit to training and weight loss. Happily, I had managed to lose some weight during the pandemic, but I had also lost fitness with my FTP down near 200w. I initially told myself that would still be plenty of power output for the 1200km. I'd just be slower and no longer in the middle of the pack. But I wanted to try to get back to "fighting strength."

Well, this was not in the cards, and in February I compressed a nerve in my lower back leading to weakness and numbness in my left leg. After the injury, my FTP was about 125w and my power balance was 40/60. I knew I needed to get my balance back to parity while also building back my FTP.

Through physical therapy, I was able to achieve power balance parity, but my overall power was still low and some of reaching parity was atrophy in my right leg. By now the brevet season was in full swing and I finished all my qualifying events, but my times were alarmingly slow. I figured this would still be okay for the 1200km, but I soon learned a valuable lesson.

### The Importance of Sleep

By July, I'd done lots of brevets, but no overnight events until my training partner Nik and I attempted a 600km on our own. We ultimately rode on two of the hottest days of a heat wave and



then I suffered a broken shifter cable that forced us to abandon about 75% through the ride. We clearly could have finished after the nearly three hours to find a part and do the repair, but we would have been riding through Yonkers and The Bronx after midnight. Even with limited sleep, I felt pretty good and likely would have finished if not for the mechanical.

What I would soon learn on the 1200km is how quickly sleep deficits pile on. While I could get away with limited sleep one night, by day three, I was a wreck. This is ultimately what thwarted my 1200km attempt. However, it was a combination of small things that added up to this result.

### Death by a Thousand Cuts

Here's my take on the "thousand cuts" that resulted in my DNF:

- Pandemic decrease in overall fitness.

- Post-injury decrease in sustained power.
- Increase in weight after the injury.
- Decreased pace.
- Lack of climbing strength.
- Minor crash on the first day leading to discomfort.
- Inability to get adequate sleep.

While I could finish each day, I was too slow to finish in time for enough quality sleep, and the sleep deficit quickly added up. On the third morning, I awoke feeling drunk and made the wise decision not to continue. That fog only cleared about four or five hours later, so I had made the right decision.

### Despite My DNF, I Loved This Event!

The most important thing to me going in was to take on an epic challenge and have fun doing it. In this regard, it was a complete success! The

course was well plotted, sleep stops incredibly well supported, and “surprise” volunteers showed up at many unsupported controls. Plus, the often-cited camaraderie of randonneurs helped make this event absolutely perfect.

My personal accomplishments were as follows:

- **Longest Event:** 725km (450 miles) in two days
- **Most Elevation:** ~21k feet (nearly the summit of Everest)
- **Longest Day:** 22 hours and 5 minutes on the road for day two (over 228 miles)
- **Knowing When To Stop** (versus when to simply push through)

I’m incredibly humbled to have participated in this event with such

incredible riders and incredible humans. The goodwill between riders was truly spectacular and meeting great people is what makes these difficult challenges that much more enjoyable. Despite not completing this challenge, I’m proud to be a randonneur!

### Despite a DNF, a Lot of Things Went Really Well

There are so many great memories from this event, and I want to highlight a few of them.

**Preparation.** I was well prepared in every way (aside from fitness). My DNF was an acknowledgment that my body wasn’t where it needed to be, but I was prepared for this event. My on-bike bags had all the needed gear, tools, and nutrition. My overnight bags had everything I needed to hit the bed

quickly and get onto the bike quickly the next day. Perhaps most importantly, all the little things I did for my bike (new cables, brakes, tires, chain) all assured that I wasn’t stuck out on the side of the road with a mechanical.

**Enjoyment.** While most randonneurs like to make jokes about how we clearly have a screw loose, there’s no one that would ride like this if they didn’t enjoy it. Even in the most uncomfortable moments, I can appreciate the joy of riding. I love all the new and beautiful scenery, and meeting people, whether riders or locals, along the way. I made new riding friends on the road during NY-M-NY and had some fun conversations with locals at the controls. And on the course there were many incredibly scenic vistas to enjoy!

**Challenge.** Another common trait among randonneurs is a need for challenge. I think we can all agree that even the most successful randonneur doesn’t think most brevets are ordinary rides. These are individual challenges on many levels. For me, just attempting a 1200km was a notable challenge. Would I have wanted to finish? Of course! But as noted in the accomplishments above, I still managed to challenge myself, set several new personal bests, and now there’s a new bar for future seasons.

The biggest takeaway of all from this experience is that I think everyone should take on their *next big challenge* on the randonneur calendar, whether they think they can do it or not. In most cases, you will find a way to push through and surprise yourself with a finish. And in others, you can still appreciate the event, and the adventure, for what it was: another epic memory that won’t soon be forgotten! 🚲



A proper dirt nap, sans dirt.

— PHOTO LEN ZAWODNIAK



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## No One Steps in the Same River Twice: LEL, Then and Now

They say you can't go home again, and I've long wondered if this is true. Do you ever worry that you might corrupt your memory of something by repeating the encounter when your initial experience was so positive? In 2009, during my third summer of randonneuring, I set my sights on completing my first grand randonnéé at the fabled London-Edinburgh-London (LEL). Like so many others, I had fallen hard for this sport that was unlocking previously unknown corners of my ability, and LEL became a capstone event.

I won't say I loved every minute of it. In fact, I have a strong memory of drafting a Craig's List ad for my bicycle while riding through yet another hour of heavy rain on a dark road somewhere unfamiliar. However, LEL introduced me to multi-day brevets, air travel with a bicycle, the paradoxical reincarnation that comes with proper fueling and rest, and riding with a global peloton on European roads. It also became my greatest athletic accomplishment.

In the intervening years, a whole lot of water has passed under my personal bridge. My kids are living on their own, I've ridden other grand randonnéés, I suffered a terrible crash in which I broke dozens of bones, had a total hip replacement, and I've grown thirteen years older. Was it time to return to LEL, I wondered? How would the 2022

edition compare to the one that had become enshrined in my memory with almost mythical status? What follows is an attempt to make some sense of my two experiences in the form of a review.

My planning for LEL 2022 was significantly different than it was in 2009. This year, I partnered with friends Nigel and Chris with whom I've ridden multiple long-distance events, including PBP 2019. All three of us entered and won the LEL registration lottery in the fall of 2019 not long after returning home from Paris-Brest-Paris. We pieced together a strategy based in part on previous experiences, along with help from the organizers and a robust Facebook community. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which was limiting our exposure to COVID-19, the three of us decided to reserve hotels along the route rather than sleep at

the controls themselves. Our strategy proved to be comfortable yet time-consuming and would ultimately add somewhat to our challenges.

In 2009, I had planned and arrived in London completely on my own with some planning help from a wonderful online forum known as YACF (Yet Another Cycling Forum), where members of Audax UK and others swapped stories and planning recommendations in the months before the ride. Within a few hours of my solo start, I fell into riding with a Briton named Robin with whom I would ride the entire event. Aside from one spontaneous B&B stop on the way back from Scotland, we slept at the various controls in spaces that ranged from a locker room in a rugby hall to cafeterias and gymnasia, which increasingly resembled refugee camps as the ride progressed.





Although some riders selected the optional London start in 2022, most began their journey in the town of Debden in the north London suburbs not far from Lee Valley where the 2009 event commenced. The turn-around control was located just north of central Edinburgh. This made for the longest LEL to date at over 1500 kilometers compared to the 1400 kilometers of past editions. In between, the route was largely an out-and-back that swung considerably east of the 2009 edition to take in some of the more bucolic roads of Yorkshire as it wound its way up to the moors along the Scottish border.

In addition, organizers were forced at the last minute to create a detour to avoid the installation of new cattle grates on the epic Yad Moss climb just south of the Scottish border. Riders were thus required to complete two

sharp climbs rather than one gentle rise. Of course, this would need to be done twice, in both northerly and southerly directions. To compensate for the change, organizers added three hours to the maximum time allowance. I overheard many local riders complain about the added elevation in both Yorkshire and this unexpected detour, but the beauty of both captured my attention and ultimately seemed to be worth the effort. The terrain along this route is remarkably varied for so small a country, adding to the sense of adventure and novelty.

The thirteen controls on this edition of LEL were (more or less) standardized in terms of the food and services they provided. Schools comprised the backbone of this event and some unique qualities and variables due to location and economic profile

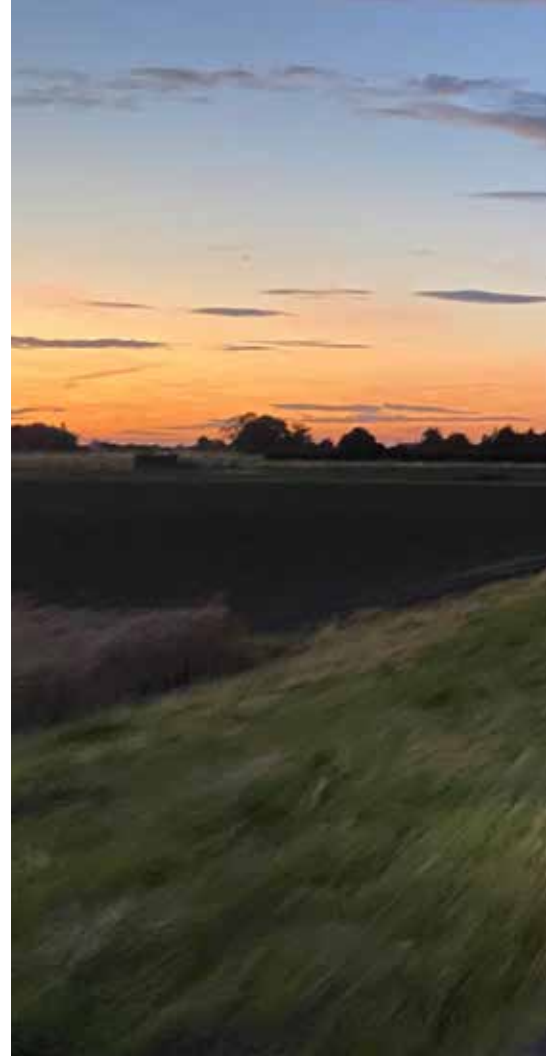
Nigel and Chris crossing the Pennines.

—PHOTOS GEORGE SWAIN

of the host communities were evident. Barnard Castle, widely considered the Rolls Royce of controls, was based in a storied private school with photographs of alumni award recipients hanging prominently on the wooden walls of the dining hall. The food at Barnie Castle, as the locals affectionately refer to it, was both sumptuous and plentiful. In general, though, riders were treated to standard British fare with both meat and vegetarian options.

In 2009, on the other hand, the controls presented a greater variety of offerings and had the feeling of local potlucks rather than a centrally organized plan. Food is notoriously

Chris, Colin, and the author (r to l) enjoy some gelato in Cambridge.



difficult to review and personal tastes are highly variable especially on endurance rides, but I felt very well taken care of during both editions with the food both plentiful and appropriate.

The weather on the event this year was truly spectacular. Coming off a severe heatwave in July, by the time we arrived the weather was dry and generally cool, especially in the evenings. While some locals complained of high temperatures, I did not find the weather to be remotely unpleasant. Most remarkably, there was not a drop of rain the entire time we were riding. Chris and I attribute this to the enormously expensive Gore-Tex rain jackets we purchased before we arrived. That and the aluminum fenders I schlepped to the UK surely had some impact. This was a contrast to 2009,

during which we rode through almost steady rain for several days and nights.

The sun started to set on our second day of riding, and it became clear to us that completing the full 1500 kilometers within the designated 128-hour time limit was going to be a serious challenge. Doing the math, I realized that such an effort on my part would include a few sleepless nights in addition to sheer luck. Unwilling to make such a bargain, Chris and I decided the best course of action was to turn around at Brampton and continue the route back to Debden, omitting the 300km Scottish bits. This would allow us to stick to our sleep plan while creating a bit of a time buffer that would ensure four or five hours of sleep per night and increase the likelihood that we would be able to return to the

start under our own steam. Nigel, on the other hand, was committed to making it to Edinburgh and so rolled the dice and pushed on. We wished one another well with a commitment to regroup at the end.

All told, these five days riding through Britain felt like a tremendous success even though none of us finished the entire route within the required maximum time allotment. The calculus that would have made this time goal possible after falling so far behind the clock in the first few days would have surely created a situation of misery as well as danger. Reading my ride report from 2009 seems like peeking into a time capsule—so young, so fresh, so exhilarated. Before the really bad stuff happened, it seemed like riding on fumes was a part of the adventure to be celebrated and embraced. Now I'm not so sure. I've also come to realize, at this point in my cycling career, that experiences hold more value to me than accomplishments.



Chris and Nigel push into the night at sunset.

The author's brevet cards.

Taking extreme risks to accomplish abstract goals no longer seems worth it.

I firmly believe that London-Edinburgh-London is an event all randonneurs should consider. The course takes in extraordinarily beautiful stretches of road, is largely devoid of cars, and riding a grand randonné in another country provides a remarkable way to experience the world. Was it a mistake to ride this event a second time, especially as my performance led to a DNF? Absolutely not. As Heraclitus wrote, "No man [sic] ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man [sic]." This event made me realize that we aren't the same people when we clip in to ride future events and those events themselves aren't the same either. The route, the weather, the companions, the food, our fitness are a few of the many variables that affect our experiences. As a result, I have every intention of giving it another go in 2025. Who knows what that experience will be like? 🚲



# The R80/R70/R60 Challenge — Performance Oriented Randonneuring

BY DAVE BRILLHART

Did you know that the first randonneuring events had a strong emphasis on performance? These days, many cyclists ride randonneuring brevets as group social events at a relatively casual pace, a fantastic way to enjoy long rides and each other. The lenient cutoffs allow for a leisurely pace with tourist-like stops at cafes and scenic vistas.

However, there are some who still like to set performance goals. Not against other riders, but against the clock. To challenge the mind and body, to push a little harder. Some of us find that to be “fun,” too. I’m one of those.

It turns out that there is a group, the **Cyclos Montagnards**, that promotes the original spirit of randonneuring with an emphasis on performance. They have even established an “honor list” associated with their R80/R70/R60 Challenge. If you like to pursue RUSA and ACP awards for achieving certain accomplishments (like the Super Randonneur, R-12, or RUSA Cup), this challenge just might whet your whistle and add some spice to some of your upcoming ACP brevet rides.

Over the last several years, I have focused on non-drafting, ultra-endurance RAAM (Race Across America) Qualifier races, such as the HooDoo 500 in Utah, the Tejas 500 in Texas, and the Sebring 24-hr race. I even won the Natchez Trace 444 race in 2019 with just 14 total minutes of stop time. But to be honest, at 61

years old, these are less fun. And the logistics of organizing a crew is a pain (and expensive). More recently, I’ve fallen in love with the ethos and community around long distance, self-supported, low-cost, group brevets that explore a variety of great routes.

When I heard about the “R%” challenge, it seemed like the perfect way to satisfy my desire for a challenge while also participating in the randonneuring format.

My very first brevet was 200km. I started two minutes late according to

my Strava record, and it was actually a 209km ride. I had a blast riding with friends on my fixed gear bike in Florida. You never forget your first. My brevet card shows I finished in 8:07. In hindsight, I missed an R60 time by one minute! Oh well. Every brevet I’ve done since has come in under the R60 criteria. But I’m relatively new to this genre of cycling and haven’t done a 600km yet. As you’ll read, that is the biggest challenge.

My most recent brevet was the 300km 100th Anniversary brevet in Central Florida. I rode with two friends (Jim Perry #15527 and Gabe Babilonia #15514), and we completed it in 10 hours 54 minutes. The ACP max allowable time for a 300km is 20 hours. We needed to finish in 12 hours or less to satisfy an R60, so we beat the R60 time by over an hour.

Okay, I admit that I have an advantage living and riding in Central Florida. Our roads are generally flat

Dave Brillhart at Funnel Top Overlook.

— PHOTO BY BYSTANDERS  
ALSO ENJOYING THE VIEW



and close to sea level, we have miles of country roads with few intersections, and the weather is generally great. Achieving an R60 is much harder in the mountains, with many intersections, or with challenging weather. Remember that R70s and R80s are also options.

The rest of this article provides some information on this challenge, with some tips on how to plan your ride.

### The Rules

The concept is simple. Within a two-calendar-year span, ride a complete ACP-sanctioned brevet series (200km, 300km, 400km, and 600km) in less than or equal to 60%, 70% or 80% of the maximum time allowed.

A 400km, for example, has a maximum time limit of 27 hours. To qualify as an R60 ride, you need to complete it in less than or equal to 16 hours and 12 minutes ( $27 \times 0.6 = 16.2$ ).

Naturally, the clock starts at the official start time. And no extra time is granted if the brevet is longer (e.g., 409km).

Here is a little chart to help you visualize the R80/R70/R60 time limits:

Time Limit	13:30	20:00	27:00	40:00
R%	200 KM	300 KM	400 KM	600 KM
R60	8:06	12:00	16:12	24:00
R70	9:27	14:00	18:54	28:00
R80	10:48	16:00	21:36	32:00

### The Honor List

Ok, so you've embraced this performance challenge. You've ridden an entire ACP series within a two-year span in one of the three R% categories. Pretty impressive! You can submit your results to the Montagnards and get your name added to the honor list. A link is provided at the end with more information about this group and the honor list.

Also, you can retroactively submit your times back to 2009 to qualify!

And, say you rode a 200/300/400 in an R70 time and a 600km in an R80 time. You can apply for the R80 honor

list. Within those two years, if you ride another 600 in R70, you can reapply for the R70 recognition.

### Keys to Success

Here are a few tips to nail those faster times. Spoiler alert: it isn't so much about riding fast.

**KEY #1:** Learn and ride your all-day top sustainable pace. Don't burn your matches too quickly. These are long rides and surging and bonking is a rookie mistake.

**KEY #2:** Limit your stop times. Get in and out of controls within maybe five minutes at most. Make meal stops less than 15-20 minutes.

**KEY #3:** Recruit a few friends to ride with you. Get them excited about the challenge. Share the work in front, giving others a recovery draft. Work as a team. Take an extra-long pull at a slower pace to help someone get their legs back if they start to feel fatigued.

### The 600km Strategy

I recommend you save the 600km for your last R% ride. It is, by far, the most challenging. Use your 200, 300 and 400 to work out the ride strategy to achieve these higher performance brevets.

Pick your goal. Do you want to complete the 600km (373 miles) in 24, 28, or 32 hours? Then do the math. It becomes a balance between your expected average moving time and your allowable total stop time.

For example, say you want to achieve an R60 time. In my case, I'll estimate I can average 16.5mph moving speed on my nice Florida roads. This translates into about 22.5 hours of pedal time and gives me just under 1.5 hours of total stop time for controls, intersections, meals, and mechanicals. No sleep for the weary.

R%	Distance (km)	Elapsed Time (HH:MM)	Avg Speed (mph)	Moving Time (HH:MM)	Total Stop (HH:MM)
R60	600	24:00	16.50	22:34	1:25
R70	600	28:00	15.00	24:50	3:09
R80	600	32:00	14.50	25:41	6:18

### Paris-Brest-Paris 2023: Charly Miller

I'm likely going to give Paris-Brest-Paris a try in 2023. This is a 90-hour, 1200km brevet (actually closer to 1230km or 760 miles). I'll go for a Charly Miller time of 56 hours 40 minutes. While this brevet doesn't qualify for the R% challenge, it is interesting to see how a Charly Miller time compares. Charly Miller requires PBP to be ridden in 63% of the maximum time allowed. But it is more than twice the length of a 600km, has relentless rolling hills, and can have congested controls. Most can't ride that long without sleep, so sneaking in a couple hours of sleep cuts into your time budget.

My calculations say if I average 15mph riding, that'll take me 50 hours 40 mins of pedaling, and allows for a TOTAL stop time of just 6 hours. I imagine sometime on the 2nd night I'll need to pull over to sleep on a park bench or ditch somewhere. If I can grab 2 hours of sleep that only gives me 4 hours for everything else, like getting my card stamped and grabbing a plate of hot food at the controls, possible mechanicals, "nature" breaks, and if I'm lucky, maybe a few quick stops for bottle refills and food from kind spectators. It won't be easy.

### Cyclos Montagnards

You can read more about this interesting group and their challenge here: [www.cyclosmontagnards.org](http://www.cyclosmontagnards.org)

As always, make this challenge FUN. Ride with friends, try to finish together, and then go find a restaurant to share a meal and a beverage and regale each other with stories of your awesome ride.

Ride safe and have fun! And when the mood strikes.... Ride strong. 🚲

## I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends: LEL Adventures

At 4:10am under a surreal sky on what we'll generously call the fourth day of our London-Edinburgh-London adventure, entropy has overtaken our ride. One of our group is lost, one of us is fixing a flat tire, and one of us is fighting off sleep.

I'm wondering what happened to my grand plan for a nice, relaxed LEL. Our plan to spend the night in a motel room near Hessele was now a hope for a midmorning nap after an unplanned but desperately necessary sleep pause at the previous control in Malton.



Treacle spongy pudding with cream on top!  
—PHOTO MARK THOMAS

Mark Thomas with his brevet card.  
—PHOTO CHRIS KAMM

This was not at all my intention. On a grand brevet longer than 1300 kilometers, the required pace to make the controls and to finish in time is 12 kilometers per hour. We planned to use most of the time allowance, get generous sleep in beds five times, and just enjoy ourselves through the rolling countryside of England and Scotland.

It all seemed reasonable. At the previous LEL in 2017, I took the 100-hour start and finished comfortably in 96 hours with three five-hour overnight stops. The 2022 route was 100 kilometers longer, but the time limit was 30 hours more than my previous finish time. Earlier in the summer, teammate Bob Brudvik and I had completed a ride of similar length: the Uppsala-Trondheim-Uppsala in Sweden and Norway. We averaged eight hours off the bike each night and ate well each day. Bob had used his headlight only once — for a tunnel.

The first issue was probably the new routing to Barnard Castle. Multiple





Group outside of Just One More bike shop and cafe in Horncastle.

—PHOTO CHRIS KAMM

double-digit grade hills had me gulping water from a gentlewoman gardener's hose and pondering adjustments to the planned schedule.

Further setbacks came from the replacement of the relatively benign Yad Moss climb with a pair of monster climbs — Chapel Fell and Killhope Cross — in both directions. Prayers at the chapel did little to diminish the killing of hope. On the other hand, seeing the legendary rider Drew Buck atop one of the hills was a great pleasure.

The third day of riding, with new routing through Edinburgh, yielded to a cold, foggy Scotland night and an abbreviated morning snooze for our third “night” of sleep.

Despite the setbacks, one thing had gone extraordinarily well. I was riding with an incredible team: Annette Kamm from Asheville, N.C., Jason Ham from Incheon, Korea, and frequent SIR riding buddy Bob Brudvik. We were looking out for each other, and they were patiently waiting for me (the slowest rider) as needed.

And under the noctilucent clouds, things started coming back together. The flat tire was fixed, the wayward rider found the rest of us, and we made it to our motel beds.

The next day we stopped at the Just One More bike shop and cafe in Horncastle for a repeat engagement with the treacle spongy pudding (plus cream!).

A lovely night's sleep in a hotel room in Saint Ives, complete with bathrobe and yellow rubber ducky (photos have been destroyed . . . I think) set us up nicely for a spirited last day finish. A big thanks to my companions and to organizer Danial Web and his veritable army of volunteers. 🚲



Inspirational noctilucent clouds in the pre-dawn.

—PHOTO MARK THOMAS

# Getting to the Start was the Hard Part— NY-Montreal-NY 2022

BY IAN MANGION

*We had two bags of grass, seventy-five pellets of mescaline, five sheets of high-powered blotter acid, a salt shaker half full of cocaine, and a whole galaxy of multi-colored uppers, downers, screamers, laughers...not that we needed all that for the trip, but once you get locked into a serious drug collection, the tendency is to push it as far as you can.*

—Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*

Somehow I had these words on my mind as I loaded up my top tube bag with all the pain relievers, vitamins, and salt tablets I thought I could need on my first 1200km, NY-Montreal-NY (which has the delightful distinction of neither starting in New York nor entering Montreal). Would this be enough? It was hard to know! Before 2022 I had never completed more than two brevets in a year, and nothing longer than a 400km (and, for the record, my sole 400km was on one of the flattest courses you could create in New Jersey conducted under inordinately favorable weather conditions). However, I was on a three-year mission to get to Canada from my backdoor in New Jersey...but let's back the story up.

In August 2019 while on a ride with NJ Randonneurs, I learn that in 2020 they will be running the inaugural

edition of the NY-Montreal-NY 1200k. Nothing was clearer to me at that moment than that it was something I had to try. I had read about grand randonnées in my trusty copies of

*American Randonneur*, but the allure was cooled by the challenge of finding time for faraway events due to family and work obligations. But here was one near to home – what an opportunity!

Planning for training began in 2020, and....you know what happened next. Events were cancelled, and NY-Montreal-NY was moved to 2021. And then, to 2022. However, during the pandemic, cycling for me became a much-needed antidote to the new stresses we were facing, not least the subtle joys of parenting a young child when there aren't any schools and you're still working. So, the mileage went up and up as I used the early hours to ride distances I never would have done with a commute. There are a



Milking every last moment  
of rest at a control.

—PHOTO IAN MANGION

My training mantra during the pandemic (rarely followed).

— PHOTO IAN MANGION

lot of challenging memories from that time, but I was continually recharged by the energy cycling gave me and the new sights I saw around our state. All the while, I also kept acquiring bits of gear I thought I might need for NY-Montreal-NY.

That said, my performance going into the 2022 New Jersey series was discouraging. I had DNF'd a 300km in Pennsylvania in 2021, the first time I had ever seen fit to quit. I subsequently DNF'd the first 200km of 2022, as variable chances of rain turned into a steady downpour, and I discovered that my "water resistant" clothes had given up their resistance, followed by my feet turning numb and ending with convulsive shivering. This was not a good start. The next 200km was in the friendly flat lands of South Jersey on a course I had successfully completed once. However, after foolishly following an inhumanly strong group for 65 miles, I was unable to keep up the pace and turned into the headwind that would define the next 60 miles solo. Thoughts of quitting occurred again. But I reminded myself of advice from the New Jersey Randonneurs: if you're feeling bad, stop, eat something, and rest for fifteen minutes. The break may change your perspective!

There was no quitting that day, nor on the 300km which brought back our favorite guest of endless rain, and not even on the 400km which nearly wilted me with its infernal heat; though I will admit I kept going at the halfway point only after imagining sitting in a very expensive ride back to the start with three hours to contemplate my failings. Also, this event was distinguished by home-baked cookies from AR editor Janice Chernenkoff at one of the last controls. Then on to the



600km, and my confidence was rising and thankfully temperatures were cooling. Riding with the idiosyncratic veteran randonneur Patrick Chin-Hong, I was duly intimidated. Introducing myself as a newbie and asking how many 600kms he had completed (thinking three or four would be a lot), Patrick responded, "Uh...I don't know." The voice of repeated experience! After a day and a half of being dragged

around by powerful riders, however, it was in the books. On to NY-Montreal-NY!

But other things weighed on my mind during this time. My mother had recently passed away after a long bout with melanoma, which became aggressive in the last six months of her life. For someone who had been so physically strong, it was disheartening to see how the disease took away pieces

*During the pandemic, cycling for me became a much-needed antidote to the new stresses we were facing, not least the subtle joys of parenting a young child when there aren't any schools and you're still working.*

of things she enjoyed. I also developed a surprising number of moles, even with a darker skin tone than my mother had – an inherited trait. I would see a dermatologist randomly, but I started to forget about such things during the pandemic. However, on the advice of a friend who goes to their dermatologist religiously, I made an appointment. There was something about the way the doctor paused when looking at a mole on my ear that I had never noticed that put me into a cold sweat. “Do you see this? Did you know this was here?” I felt shaky and nauseous, which the doctor could see and then told me, “You will live.” In retelling that story it’s not clear to me that everyone finds it comforting, but strangely I needed to hear that. Two weeks later, I was given a diagnosis of Stage 0 melanoma, which luckily is

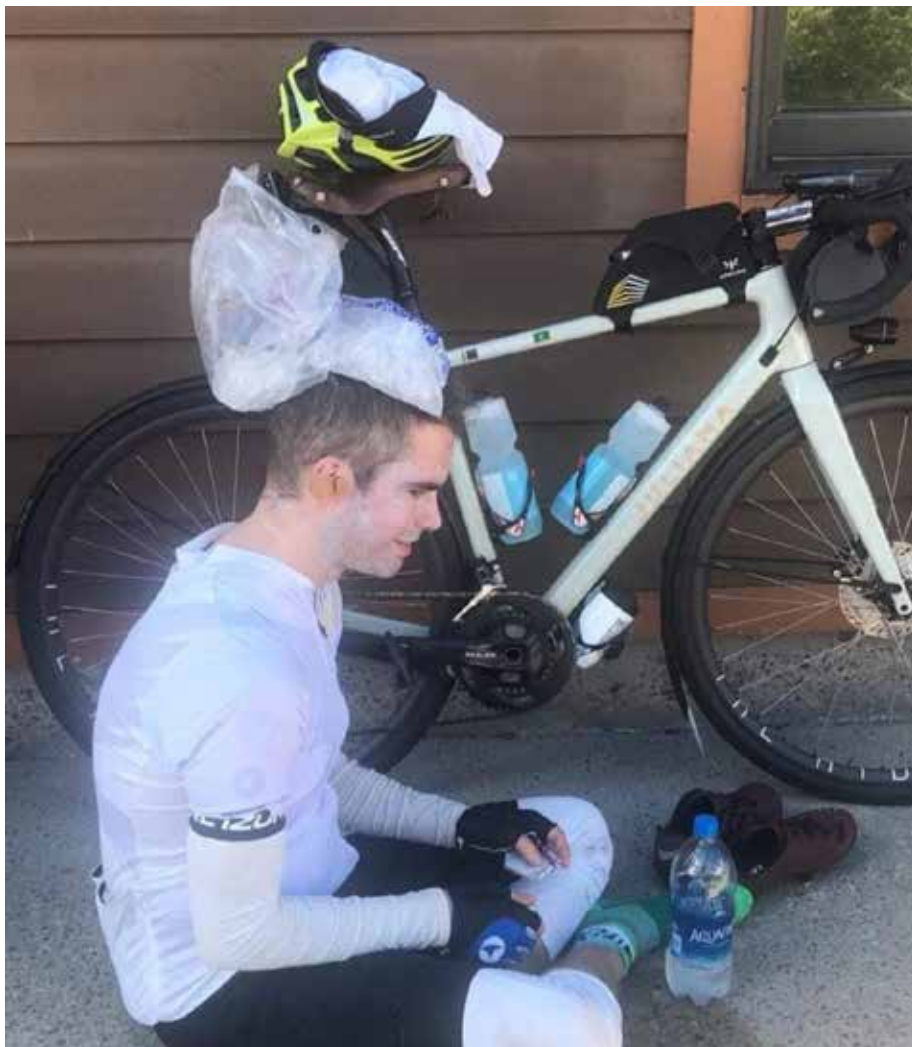
*The run-up to the event made me better appreciate the phenomenal volunteers who make this all work.*

usually solved with relatively minor surgery. A few weeks later they took a chunk of skin out of my ear, and any bike rides were done with a labyrinthine layer of bandages. If you see me riding in peak sunshine, I look like Casper crossed with Lawrence of Arabia given the sunscreen and UV clothing coverage. I thought about mortality in a much different light during this time, and I thought about things I would do if I realized my life would be cut short. Most of them had nothing to do with cycling, but NY-Montreal-NY was still on the list.

The run-up to the event made me better appreciate the phenomenal volunteers who make this all work. For a trivial price, participants are provided with hotel stops, a SPOT tracker, controls that were often staffed with volunteers giving out free water and sometimes food... on a route that drew almost a straight line from New Jersey to the Canadian border, meaning volunteers would be operating far from home, with riders showing up over a long window of time. Words fail to express how inspiring they are. Though that didn’t stop a few ‘special requests’ being sent to our sainted organizer!

Day one started with provident weather, on a route that led us on quiet streets out of the suburbs of New Jersey on to stunning vistas of the Hudson River, highlighted by a picturesque and slightly foggy view from Bear Mountain Bridge. Following the Hudson north, spirits were high and groups of riders formed at their own speeds, and we wound around side roads and mixed use paths that gave us an intimate view of the surrounding landscapes. As usual, I followed in the wake of stronger riders, including Sean Connelly (a strong but also generous riding companion) and Gavin Biebyuck (gregarious rando ultra-veteran), and we sailed through 208 miles of a straight arrow north into the first sleepover with enough daylight to appreciate panoramic Lake George.

Waking early for the next day, we rode 228 miles to our northernmost



Struggling to stay cool during Day 2 in the Adirondacks.

—PHOTO BY A VOLUNTEER

point and the start of our return through Vermont. We were warned there would be considerably more climbing in the opening hours, and thereafter no cover from the sun. In the cool pre-dawn this seemed a distant concern, but after a few hours of constant rolling hills I lost some of my initial optimism. Having grown up in the Northeast I couldn't envision 100-mile stretches of road without shade from trees, but on the wide roads we followed, the trees were cut back further from the sides of the roads, so as the temperature kept rising, my UV protective clothing began to feel like very warm towels wrapped around my body. However, we were rewarded with the lakes and mountains of the Adirondacks, and a little past the halfway point it really was 'all downhill from here' to our destination. I did have to stop to stuff ice into any part of my kit that would accept it, but in the waning hours of the afternoon we were again treated to cooler weather and a tailwind. Reaching our northernmost roads in Rouses Point, NY, I got a text message welcoming me to Canada and informing me of health protocols (so close we were!), but our trail would take us across and around Lake Champlain in a stunning part of northern Vermont, safely to our sleepover stop near Burlington.

Day three, well. We had been warned on day one to expect a headwind as our arrow turned straight south for 170 hilly miles, but this was summer and how reliable are those forecasts two days in advance? Quite accurate, it seems. I need a thesaurus to research words to describe the soul-crushing winds, particularly as my body woke up to my plans and went on strike. Knowing my brother lived a mere twenty-minute drive from a point in the route tempted me with thoughts of abandoning for a hot shower and a train ride home, but no, not today. Refreshed by scenic views of rural towns and farms and occasional quiet dirt roads, we endured the punchy



climbs. Realizing I could make it, I relaxed and enjoyed more picturesque moments, as we entered Massachusetts and passed around the base of iconic Mount Greylock.

On the final day I rode solo, my trusted companions wanting a longer breakfast and me being unwilling to respond to anyone else's cadence. A cool morning promised to turn into a roasting afternoon as we clipped corners of Connecticut and New York back to New Jersey, so I resolved to be as efficient as possible. I was passed in the early hours by Paige Omweller leading a fast train of riders, in what was becoming a daily tradition. I didn't know Paige, but I guessed she started at least an hour after me and arrived comfortably before me. I later saw her name in *VeloNews* for having finished second in Gravel Worlds – high class riders were everywhere here! We crossed the Hudson for the last time, and I began rationing the drops of water left in my bottles, trying to

Setting out into the night at the NJ 600k.

—PHOTO IAN MANGION

avoid any additional stops to finish before traffic grew in the denser regions near the finish. I pushed through common sense brain signals as the heat drained me, but then the destination came into sight, and after checking in with our outstanding RBA Paul Kramer I shamelessly stood in the lobby of the hotel drinking ice water from the thimble size plastic cups until I remembered who and where I was. Success, at long last, after three years of planning and training!

A stellar event, worth the wait. Thanks especially to all the volunteers and fellow riders who gave me a tailwind or a draft at a time that I needed it, and to my family for supporting me even without always understanding why I wanted to do it. 🚲

# Central NY Randonneurs: Waterfalls 1200km

BY DAVE THOMPSON AND JACOB LAYER

Accounts of the Waterfalls 1200 that took place in early September are provided by Dave Thompson and Jacob Layer. Dave Thompson's account provides good information about the logistics of the route, while Jacob Layer allows us to see this adventure through the eyes of a first-time 1200km finisher.

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## Dave Thompson

Pete had a fascinating setup with his 1200km, making maximum use of a very small group of volunteers that included his wife and daughter.

There is a cluster of hotels about 18km from his house, and the ride started at a park near the hotels. The route was in the shape of a cloverleaf, with each day's segment starting and ending at Pete's house. That sounds simple but the key was that the route passed by the hotels late in each segment, with an information control near the hotels. As a result, you ended each day's riding before you finished the segment. You would stop, eat dinner, sleep, and then finish the segment the next morning at "registration central"

in Pete's huge garage where he also provided breakfast. Then you hit the road again, starting the next segment. My first day's ride wasn't the segment length of 407km but rather 389km. Day 2 finished off the Day 1 segment and then ended back at the hotels... and so on.

Not rocket science but I considered it ingenious. Otherwise, there would

have been extra hotel costs borne by the ride, more difficulty providing breakfast and so on. And at the finish, no one was frowning at us having a celebratory beer. To top it all off, Pete and his main volunteer Marcia shuttled us to our hotels at the end of the 4th day.

In preparation, on the day before the event, I visited a grocery store and stocked my hotel fridge with dinners and breakfast snacks as the main breakfast was at Pete's place.

The route was interesting as well. I saw parts of Niagara Falls from the U.S. perspective that I had not seen from the Canadian side. Other waterfalls within the Finger Lakes region provided wonderful scenery (one of the falls is higher than Niagara but,

Marcia Swan, and her brother Mike Seager, staffing the Lockport control as riders stop to fill water bottles and enjoy a snack from the support vehicles.

—PHOTO PETE DUSEL





of course, has a lot less water flow). I found out that according to local lore, Seneca Falls (the town), or at least the bridge, provided inspiration for “It’s A Wonderful Life.” I expected hills and the area delivered—not extreme but the third day had some real punch to it with short steep hills.

Last but not least, Pete ordered up a brisk tailwind for the last 100km north bound. This is as good as it gets.



### Jacob Layer

After finishing my first super randonneur series in 2016, I knew that I wanted to pursue Grand Randonnees. I missed the 2017 Gold Rush Randonnee due to illness, the 2018 Blue Ridge to the Bay 1200km due to a bike accident, and others due to COVID and completing graduate school. However, I knew that 2022 would finally be my year to complete a 1200km. I had several options but ultimately decided on the WNY Waterfalls 1200km, a four-loop cloverleaf in Webster, NY, with each loop passing by motels and finishing at Pete Dusel’s house. A prior ride report in *American Randonneur* was glowing, it was only a six-hour drive from Boston, and my girlfriend’s family happened to live on the route! The day before the event, I arrived at Pete’s house for the pre-ride check-in. Pete explained some of the tricky parts of navigating around Niagara Falls and described a detour that could give riders twenty bonus miles if they missed it.

That night I didn’t get much sleep, although I never get much sleep before long brevets. I woke up at 3:00am and rode 30 minutes to the start. The temperature was cool and

With Canada in the background, Michael Misner and Chuck Judy near the crest of Niagara Falls. The look on riders’ faces the first time they visit Niagara Falls, is worth the effort of running the event!

—PHOTO PETE DUSEL



Pete Dusel awarding Dave Thompson his Waterfalls 1,200km finisher’s medal, and congratulating him on completing his 50th 1,200km.

—PHOTO LYTA DUSEL

At 757,500 gallons per second, Niagara Falls always amazes! Two riders enjoying the sights at the Niagara Falls control, almost in reach of the crest of the Falls.

—PHOTO PETE DUSEL

most of the riders had arrived already. Altogether, 29 riders had registered for the 1200km along with riders for the 400km, 600km, and 1000km. After check-in and obtaining our brevet cards, the group departed at 4:00am for the first of four loops: Webster to Niagara Falls and back.

Initially, I rode out with a small pack but quickly realized I was in over my head and backed off. Shortly after, I was caught by a group of chasers that included Simon Muil, a frequent participant in brevets hosted by the New England Randonneurs out of Boston. Together, Simon and I rode into the first control in Farmington, NY, got our cards signed and headed back onto the course.

The weather turned to drizzle as Simon and I pushed on through the rolling farmland and into the second control in Oakfield. After a quick breakfast at 7-Eleven, we then headed out for the third control in Lockport, NY. On the way, we rode through the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. While we didn't spot any bald eagles, deer and hawks were plentiful. We also noticed that the roads on this section of the route were particularly smooth and made for quick riding. Following the control in Lockport, the drizzle turned to rain as we rode into Niagara Falls. The ride into the city was a long stretch west on a busy highway under construction. Fortunately, Simon and I were only on the road for 30 or 40 minutes before we were greeted by an empty bike path along the Niagara River. The scenery was really beautiful so we were shocked that more runners were not using this stretch of trail. We followed that trail to the American Falls bridge, stopped for pictures of the Niagara River rapids and proceeded on



to Goat Island for some photos with Niagara Falls.

Simon and I were hungry so we headed back out onto the course and made a quick stop at Burger King to refuel and dry off. We departed just as the rain ended and headed north towards Lewiston and Youngstown. Soon we were greeted by the western side of Lake Ontario. From there the route heads due east for...hours. The absence of turns was boring us a bit...so much so that we nearly missed the control in Olcott.

Later that afternoon we reached a turn-off for the Lake Ontario State Parkway, a semi-abandoned divided freeway complete with exits and multiple lanes. Simon and I were shocked by the total lack of traffic even with the views of Lake Ontario. After taking the exit towards Morton, NY, we met volunteers at a cemetery next to the parkway. We were pretty hungry and binged on peanut M&Ms and donut holes while discussing the ride with the volunteers.

It was nearly 4:00pm when we left the cemetery and rejoined the parkway for the trip to Charlotte. As we rode down the highway with the sun to our backs, Simon noted that the parkway must be eerie to ride at night with so little traffic. We arrived in the Rochester suburbs shortly before sunset to a dramatic full moon over the bays of Lake Ontario. We stopped and

had dinner at a Mexican restaurant, fueling up on burritos and fresh salsa. For a Wednesday night in Rochester, the traffic was light during the last 20 miles to Webster. Simon and I made good time on the way to Motel Row. We both agreed to meet the following morning at Pete's place to begin Day 2.

At 5:00am, after breakfast, Simon and I set out on loop two, a circumnavigation of Lake Seneca. Within fifteen minutes Simon flatted, not a good omen for the day. The route headed south through rolling hills





Under a nearly full moon, Paul Donaldson heads back east along the lake Ontario shore toward the Ontario control after leaving Niagara Falls.

—PHOTO MICHAEL MOOTE

and eventually arrived in Geneva. We were greeted with a stunning view of the lake and an open highway that helped us make up some time. Our ride to Taughannock Falls was wet but we were rewarded with a breathtaking view of the falls at the information control. Just after leaving the area, the rain picked up and the first big climb began. Simon was finding his rhythm, but after reaching the apex of the climb I flatted. Still, we made good time through the information control at Hector falls on the way to Watkins Glen, NY. We were both starving by this time, so we sat down for Italian food. With real food in our bellies and the rain gone, we pressed on to the waterfall control just south of the city and then backtracked to Watkins Glen for the six-mile climb. The initial inclines were about 6-8% but leveled off after the first mile. After reaching the



top of the climb, we grabbed snacks at a secret control and headed north along Lake Seneca. There were views of the surrounding farmland and an occasional Amish cyclist, including one using tri-bars. Just before we arrived at the control in Canandaigua, I attempted to shift my rear derailleur and discovered that the ratchet mechanism inside my shifter was broken. I now only

had access to my front gears and a single cog in the back. We arrived at Canandaigua just before sundown and headed back to Webster via a straight and fast highway as the moon rose. We arrived back in Webster around 11:00pm for a well-deserved rest.

With only two gears, I was nervous about the third day's elevation profile. It looked flat but there were some rollers. Starting out, I was already dead tired from yesterday's effort, and Simon flattening five miles outside of the first control didn't help my mental fatigue. After the first control, the hills became a bigger factor. While taller and steeper on this segment, the hills were not quite as bad as the hills on the NER White Mountain 600km. As we approached Oswego, the road opened up to a beautiful view of Lake Ontario for a half mile. After lunch, we began climbing through residential forested areas with views of the Oswego River.

Pete Dusel and Sean Keasler, ready to help, look on as Chuck Judy replaces a broken derailleur cable. Working on the side of the road, you can't be too visible! Pete showing off the latest in high fashion reflective kilt wear.

—PHOTO MICHAEL MOOTE



Things are casual at the central/finish control in Ontario. Marcia Swan looks on as Paul Donaldson, Cristian Jordan and Michael Misner enjoy a well-deserved bite and a cold one after finishing their 1,200km Grand Randonnée.

—PHOTO PETE DUSEL



The climbs were gentler than in prior sections, something we were grateful for given the heat we were now riding through. Once we reached the next control in Phoenix, I noted the next control was 41 miles away and stocked up on as much water as I could carry before heading toward Alton.

This section featured long and steep hills with lots of exposure. Simon and I ran out of water near Victory and found no services in town. Fortunately, we found Pete and company waiting for us. Pete also mentioned that he could have routed us on flatter terrain but that wouldn't have been any fun. With 20 miles to the next control we slowly climbed toward Alton. When we arrived, Simon and I spent a bit of

time in the beer cooler to recover and then had dinner. On the way back to Webster, my Achilles tendon became quite painful, but Simon was patient with me as I gently pedaled, trying to alleviate the pain. We got back to our sleep stop earlier than the previous nights, allowing us to get a bit more sleep and prepare for the final 200km.

After icing my Achilles all night and getting some breakfast I felt like new. I met Simon at 5:30am and we began the last 200km. The morning

passed quickly with a beautiful sunrise on the way to the first control. We resupplied and headed for Seneca Falls, the home of the women's rights movement. Most of the route to this point was flat and there was very little wind. After grabbing lunch in Seneca Falls, we headed back to the start to complete the 1200km. The route was along a nature preserve and Pete provided a wonderful tailwind that pushed us all the way to the next control. The last thirty miles were along stretches of one or two flat roads, making navigation easy and allowing us to recover as we headed back to Webster. Simon and I rode into the finish at 3:25pm making our total time about 83:25.

As a first-time 1200km finisher, I was ecstatic! Overall, I'd recommend this route to anyone considering a 1200km for the first time. Pete runs a tight ship and provided excellent support for those that needed it. I'd also recommend finding a buddy to ride with. I really appreciated have Simon nearby to talk with and share the highs and lows of the ride. Plus, sharing the experience with someone deepens the camaraderie I love about randonneuring. 🚲

Old friends John Peltier, Pete Dusel and Olga Huber at the crest of Niagara Falls. John and Olga are celebrating several years of togetherness at what better place than Niagara Falls?

—PHOTO MARCIA SWAN



# Coulee Challenge 2022

BY ROB WELSH, PHOTOS ON THE ROAD BY DEB FORD

The 2022 Coulee Challenge was a very satisfying success, particularly for the camaraderie and support the riders gave each other along with the great support teams on the route.

We utilized the Slack work management tool to help our support teams stay in contact with each other and give riders an easy way to communicate questions, problems and pictures. It turned out this created the opportunity for many riders to post their pictures to a shared folder for all the other riders to see. By the end of the event over 200 pictures were posted, each with a unique view of the ride. We posted many of these on our Facebook site so friends, relatives and many other randonneurs could follow along too. Combined with Deb Ford's professional quality work, we have a great, visual story of how a 1200k randonneur event happens.

We had three days of good weather then waves of thunderstorms that soaked everyone on Day four. This was

not an easy ride so it was wonderful to see the number of riders that finished then hung around in the lobby to welcome and show respect for the late finishers. 🚲

Linh Nguyen, the Lanterne Rouge, finishes with 15 minutes to spare. Rob Mann, who finished 4 hours earlier, is there to pay his rando respect.

—PHOTO ROB WELSH



Bob Bacin on day 1.



Pat and Cecile Gaffney and Tom Altemus in Red Wing, MN.



Rashid Khan and Jenn Moore ride through Mindoro Cut, LaCrosse County.

# RUSA Awards

## 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.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
William A Beck [9]	Woodbine, MD	8/9/22
Betsy Brittle (F) [7]	Sunnyvale, CA	7/24/22
Kelly DeBoer [12]	Avery, TX	9/27/22
Russell Dorobek [3]	Austin, TX	9/4/22
Steve Erickson	White Salmon, WA	7/25/22
Malcolm R Fraser [5]	Boulder, CO	7/30/22
Kitty Goursolle (F) [6]	San Ramon, CA	8/3/22
Matt Kreger [3]	Woodinville, WA	9/26/22
Grant McAlister [4]	Morro Bay, CA	8/8/22
Thomas McHenry	Pasadena, CA	7/30/22
Mark Mullen	Arlington, VA	9/12/22
W Thomas Reeder [9]	Alexandria, VA	8/7/22
Ron Selby [2]	Zionsville, IN	9/21/22
Aaron M.M. Suko	Tallahassee, FL	7/30/22
James C Taylor [2]	Cottage Grove, OR	8/15/22
James Vajda [2]	Oxford, OH	9/18/22
Corinne Downs Warren (F)	Monument, CO	10/6/22

## Ultra R-12 Award

Whereas the R-12 award recognizes the completion of a 200km (or longer) randonneuring event in each of 12 consecutive months, the Ultra R-12 Award recognizes the completion of ten (10) R-12s. There is no time limit; there may be gaps between any of the 12-month sequences that define each R-12.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Wallace J Bigler	Houston, TX	8/6/22

## RUSA Cup Recipients

The RUSA Cup is earned by completing at least one of each type of RUSA calendared event, comprising 5000km in total, within a two-year period.

### **Riders must complete, within two years of the first counting event:**

- a 200k, 300k, 400k, 600k, and 1000k brevet
- a 1200k or longer Grand Randonnée
- a RUSA team event (Dart, Dart Populaire, Arrow, or Flèches-USA)
- a Populaire
- any other calendared events—including Populaires—to achieve the required 5000 km.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Mark Brogan	San Jose, CA	8/5/22
Patrick Chin-Hong [2]	Amherst, MA	9/26/22
Dan Driscoll [13]	Arlington, TX	8/8/22
John Lee Ellis [4]	Lafayette, CO	10/5/22
Ken Lanteigne [2]	Gresham, OR	9/15/22
Michael Gerald Turek	Longmont, CO	7/26/22
Kevin J Williams	Carmichael, CA	9/6/22

## ACP Randonneur 10000

Complete at least 10000km of brevets including a Paris-Brest-Paris, another 1200k, two full ACP series of 200, 300, 400, 600, and 1000 km brevets, a Flèche team event, and a Super Randonnee 600 within a six-year period.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Iwan Barankay	Philadelphia, PA	9/26/22
Sourav Das	Campbell, CA	9/15/22
Ken Lanteigne	Gresham, OR	10/11/22
Bradford D Tanner	Concord, NH	9/19/22
Michael Gerald Turek	Longmont, CO	7/31/22

## RUSA American Explorer Award

By definition, a randonné is a long ramble in the countryside. 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. The maximum achievable number of states and territories will depend on the availability of routes and the member's desire to explore. Once a rider has credit for all 50 states (territories and DC are 'extra credit'), they can start again.

NAME	CITY, STATE	TOTAL STATES	APPROVED
Randy T Anderson	Peoria, IL	19	8/14/22
Jon Batek	Batavia, IL	18	8/17/22
Brian P Burke	Dawsonville, GA	26	8/6/22
Dan Driscoll	Arlington, TX	43	9/9/22
Millison D Fambles	Olympia, WA	27	10/9/22
Malcolm R Fraser	Boulder, CO	23	10/1/22
Mark A Harrison	Naperville, IL	13	9/13/22
Charlie A Martin	Sunnyvale, CA	23	9/15/22
Craig Mathews	The Woodlands, TX	33	8/3/22
Doug McLerran	Aurora, IL	39	8/23/22
Mark Mullen	Arlington, VA	15	8/4/22
L D Perry	Saint Joseph, MO	18	10/3/22
Eric Peterson	Naperville, IL	21	9/18/22
Gregory H Smith	Richland Center, WI	26	9/8/22
Bradford D Tanner	Concord, NH	16	9/2/22
Joseph H Todd	Decatur, GA	25	8/28/22

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**GEAR**  
**AWARDS**  
**MEDALS**

# RUSA Awards

## RUSA American Randonneur Challenge

The American Randonneur Challenge (ARC) is a special award given by Randonneurs USA to any RUSA member who successfully completes in the same season two or more Randonneur Mondiaux 1200-kilometer or longer grand randonnées held in the United States. The ARC award can be earned only by riding the event as a 1200k; riders entered to do it as a 1000k + 200k may not claim the award.

RUSA congratulates the riders who earned and applied for the ARC award.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Andrew Steven Adere</b> Treasure Cove Cascade	Reston, VA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Hamid Akbarian [2]</b> Treasure Cove New York - Montreal - New York	Lanham, MD
8/14/22 EVENTS	<b>Randy T Anderson</b> Cascade New York - Montreal - New York	Peoria, IL
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Renato B Arnoco</b> Gold Rush Randonnee Cascade	Fremont, CA
8/17/22 EVENTS	<b>Jon Batek</b> Mason-Dixon New York - Montreal - New York	Batavia, IL
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Jose A Blanco</b> Treasure Cove Cascade	Owings, MD
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>J Andrew Clayton</b> Treasure Cove New York - Montreal - New York	Powell, OH
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Nicolas H DeHaan</b> Treasure Cove New York - Montreal - New York	Grand Rapids, MI

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Mimo DeMarco [2]</b> Mason-Dixon New York - Montreal - New York	Arlington, VA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Paul H Donaldson [2]</b> Mason-Dixon Western NY Waterfalls	Richmond, VA
9/26/22 EVENTS	<b>Misha Marin Heller (F) [2]</b> Treasure Cove Mason-Dixon Cascade Coulee Challenge	Alexandria, VA
9/26/22 EVENTS	<b>Matt Kreger</b> Cascade Coulee Challenge	Woodinville, WA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Eric O Larsen</b> Cascade New York - Montreal - New York	Fairfax, CA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Francis Lim</b> Mason-Dixon Cascade	Sydney, AUSTRALIA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Charlie A Martin [3]</b> Treasure Cove Gold Rush Randonnee Mason-Dixon Cascade New York - Montreal - New York Coulee Challenge Last Chance	Sunnyvale, CA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>John Mazur</b> Mason-Dixon Coulee Challenge	Arlington, VA
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Michael Misner</b> Treasure Cove Western NY Waterfalls	Dallas, TX
10/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Robert C. Newcomer</b> Treasure Cove Last Chance	Atlanta, GA

## Can-Am Challenge

The Can-Am Challenge is an award earned by finishing both a Canadian and a US 1200km or longer Randonneurs Mondiaux sanctioned Grand Randonnée in a single calendar year.

RUSA congratulates the riders who earned and applied for the Can-Am Challenge award.

APPROVED	NAME	COUNTRY
2022	<b>Charlie Martin</b>	USA
US EVENTS	VA: Treasure Cove CA: Gold Rush Randonnée MD: Mason Dixon NY: New York - Montreal - New York MN: Coulee Challenge CO: Last Chance WA: Cascade	
CANADA EVENT	ON: Granite Anvil	
2022	<b>Fred Perman</b>	Canada
US EVENT	VA: Treasure Cove	
CANADA EVENT	ON: Granite Anvil	
2022	<b>Vernon Smith</b>	USA
US EVENT	VA: Treasure Cove	
CANADA EVENT	ON: Granite Anvil	
2022	<b>Mike Sturgill</b>	USA
US EVENTS	VA: Treasure Cove CA: Gold Rush Randonnée NY: New York - Montreal - New York MN: Coulee Challenge NY: Waterfalls	
CANADA EVENT	ON: Granite Anvil	
2022	<b>Dave Thompson</b>	USA
US EVENTS	VA: Treasure Cove NY: Waterfalls	
CANADA EVENT	ON: Granite Anvil	
2021	<b>Dave Thompson</b>	USA
US EVENT	VA: Northern Virginian Clover	
CANADA EVENT	ON: Manatoulin	

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
9/15/22	<b>John D Nguyen [2]</b>	Seattle, WA
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Cascade	
9/27/22	<b>Thai Nguyen [3]</b>	Bothell, WA
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Cascade New York - Montreal - New York	
10/7/22	<b>Dmitry Opolinsky</b>	Manchester, ME
EVENTS	Coulee Challenge Western NY Waterfalls	
10/7/22	<b>Frederic Perman</b>	Pierrefonds, QC, CANADA
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Cascade	
10/7/22	<b>Giovanni Proserpi</b>	Broadview Heights, OH
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Western NY Waterfalls	
10/7/22	<b>Vernon M Smith [3]</b>	Monument, CO
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Cascade	
9/28/22	<b>Michael R Sturgill [7]</b>	Phoenix, AZ
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Gold Rush Randonnée New York - Montreal - New York Coulee Challenge Western NY Waterfalls	
9/2/22	<b>Bradford D Tanner</b>	Concord, NH
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Mason-Dixon	
8/27/22	<b>Joseph H Todd</b>	Decatur, GA
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Coulee Challenge	
10/7/22	<b>W David Thompson [6]</b>	New Smyrna Beach, FL
EVENTS	Treasure Cove Western NY Waterfalls	
9/6/22	<b>Kevin J Williams</b>	Carmichael, CA
EVENTS	Gold Rush Randonnée Coulee Challenge	

# RUSA Awards

## Mondial Award

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

Mondial: 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 is achieved by a member for the completion of every 40,000 km in RUSA rides. (That is, after achieving 40,000 km, 80,000 km, and so forth.)

It is automatically recognized upon completion of the required distance.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
David P Baxter	Austin, TX	9/21/22
Audunn Ludviksson [2]	Seattle, WA	9/5/22
Hoang Q Nguyen	Orange, CA	9/27/22
Richard Stum [2]	Mount Pleasant, UT	9/7/22

## 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.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Nigel Greene	Elkins Park, PA	9/8/22
Bradford D Tanner	Concord, NH	9/2/22

## 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.

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
William A Beck [16]	Woodbine, MD	8/13/22
Greg Cardell [2]	Valencia, CA	9/5/22
Joe Edwards [7]	Glenwood, IA	9/26/22
Gregory K Goebel [3]	Cypress, CA	9/4/22
Kitty Goursolle (F) [9]	San Ramon, CA	8/22/22
Greg Keenan [8]	Camp Hill, PA	7/31/22
Dave Milsom	San Diego, CA	8/10/22
Kathy Mullet (F) [6]	Corvallis, OR	8/11/22
Ron Mullet [6]	Corvallis, OR	8/11/22
Rodney J Noda	Corte Madera, CA	9/8/22
Eric Peterson [5]	Naperville, IL	8/30/22
Nancy Russell (F) [5]	San Rafael, CA	8/2/22
Kevin J Smith [2]	Seattle, WA	8/19/22
Paul K Smith [8]	Cooper City, FL	8/22/22
James C Taylor [5]	Cottage Grove, OR	8/15/22
Joseph H Todd [9]	Decatur, GA	9/16/22
Robert F Tulloh [7]	Austin, TX	9/18/22
Corinne Downs Warren (F) [5]	Monument, CO	8/6/22

Coulee Challenge riders Aaron Milbank, John Mazur, Misha Heller, Luke Heller, Brian Lewis-Jones, Vince Sikorski, Charlie Martin and Randy Mourii enjoying scenic views and rando camaraderie.

— PHOTO DEB FORD



## RUSA Coast-to-Coast Award

The Coast-to-Coast 1200km award is earned by RUSA members who have successfully completed four different Randonneurs Mondiaux 1200km-or-longer randonnées held in the United States.

A member may earn multiple Coast-to-Coast awards. No event or different editions of the same event may be used more than once among multiple awards. For example, if Boston-Montreal-Boston 2002 is used in a member's Coast-to-Coast award, BMB'06 (or other edition) may not be used to claim another award.

The four events needed to qualify can be completed at any time and over any number of years.

RUSA congratulates the riders who earned and applied for the Coast to Coast 1200km Award.

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
8/17/2022 EVENTS	<b>Jon Batek</b> 2018 Great Lakes Mac 'n Cheese 2021 Colorado High Country 1200 2022 Mason Dixon 2022 New York - Montreal - New York	Batavia, IL
9/23/22 EVENTS	<b>Brian P Burke</b> 2014 Colorado High Country 1200 2016 Cracker Swamp 1200 2018 Coulee Challenge 2022 Treasure Cove	Dawsonville, GA

APPROVED	NAME	CITY, STATE
8/7/22 EVENTS	<b>Charlie A Martin [3]</b> 2022 Gold Rush Randonnee 2022 Mason-Dixon 2022 Cascade 2022 New York - Montreal - New York"	Sunnyvale, CA
8/14/22 EVENTS	<b>Lawrence A Midura [3]</b> 2014 Natchez Trace 1500 2018 Great Lakes Mac 'n Cheese 2019 Florida Sunshine 1200 2021 Western NY Waterfalls"	East Syracuse, NY
9/28/22 EVENTS	<b>Michael R Sturgill [4]</b> 2021 Northern Virginia Clover 2022 Treasure Cove 2022 New York - Montreal - New York 2022 Western NY Waterfalls	Phoenix, AZ
9/2/22 EVENTS	<b>Bradford D Tanner</b> 2002 Boston-Montreal-Boston 2008 Cascade 2018 Blue Ridge to Bay 2018 Coulee Challenge"	Concord, NH
8/29/22 EVENTS	<b>Cynthia F Van Der Wiele (F)</b> 2000 Boston-Montreal-Boston 2001 Gold Rush Randonnee 2018 Great Lakes Mac 'n Cheese 2022 Mason-Dixon	Atlanta, GA



# RUSA Awards

## RUSA Rouler

The RUSA Rouleur award is earned by completing at least one event within each type and distance range of event listed below.

RUSA Rouleur recipients must complete, in the same calendar year:

- 100-124 km populaire
- 125-149 km populaire
- 150-199 km populaire
- 200-220 km brevet
- and an 8-hour Dart populaire team randonnée of 120 km or longer. At least three team members must finish the ride together for this event to count for the award.

The recipient must be a current member of Randonneurs USA during each of the qualifying rides.

Each counting ride must be an event on the Randonneurs USA calendar. Permanents and foreign events cannot be used to earn this award.

The award can only be earned once per calendar year per member.

Longer events cannot be substituted for shorter events (e. g., a 130 km populaire cannot be used for the 100-124 km counting event requirement; a 13.5-hour Dart team randonnée cannot be used for the 8-hour Dart team populaire.).

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Jan Acuff (F)	Seattle, WA	7/30/22
Robert Brudvik	Edmonds, WA	9/24/22
Matthew D Close	Woodinville, WA	9/24/22
David G Conger	Port Orchard, WA	7/30/22
Gregory Cox	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Rose Cox (F)	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Sharan L Daniel (F)	Seattle, WA	7/30/22
Norman Ehrentreich	Shoreview, MN	9/17/22
D E Franklund	Bloomington, MN	9/17/22
Jason L Hansen	Seattle, WA	7/30/22

NAME	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
David Harper	Seattle, WA	7/30/22
Kevin W Humphreys	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Mitch Ishihara	Issaquah, WA	7/30/22
Shaun Ivory	Woodinville, WA	7/30/22
Jim Joy	Minneapolis, MN	8/27/22
Hugh Kimball	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Matt Kreger	Woodinville, WA	7/30/22
Keith J Larson	Minneapolis, MN	10/1/22
Ronald Long	Woodinville, WA	9/24/22
Jeff Loomis	Seattle, WA	7/30/22
Audunn Ludviksson	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Charlie A Martin [2]	Sunnyvale, CA	10/1/22
Doug McLerran	Aurora, IL	9/25/22
Keith Moore	Woodinville, WA	7/30/22
Paul Murray	Redmond, WA	7/30/22
John D Nguyen	Seattle, WA	7/30/22
Thai Nguyen	Bothell, WA	9/24/22
Raymond Ogilvie	North Plains, OR	7/30/22
Daniel Park	Kirkland, WA	9/24/22
Gary Prince	Seattle, WA	10/8/22
Owen Richards	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Ron Saluski	Wauconda, IL	9/17/22
Ian Shopland	Olympia, WA	7/30/22
Kevin J Smith	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Sarah Stolz (F)	Seattle, WA	9/24/22
Mark Thomas	Kirkland, WA	9/24/22
Rob Welsh	Apple Valley, MN	9/17/22
Ray Whitlock	Seattle, WA	7/30/22
Howard S Young	Kirkland, WA	9/24/22

## Rando Scout Awards

Created to encourage exploring new routes, the Rando Scout recognizes RUSA members who have ridden at least 25 distinct routes in brevet, populaire, or grand randonnée (1200km and longer) RUSA events. (Permanents do not count.) The route must be in the RUSA Brevet Routes database and be linked to the event ridden by the member. There is no time limit to accumulate routes.

NAME (25-49 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Argo, Charles Christopher	Lake View, AL	10/3/22
Barankay, Iwan	Philadelphia, PA	9/26/22
Brenner, Andy	Basking Ridge, NJ	9/12/22
Clamp, Jonathan	Erwinna, PA	7/28/22
Coleman, Juliayn Clancy (F)	Oakland, CA	7/29/22
Hicks, Craig Pinder	Berkeley, CA	9/30/22
Joy, Jim	Minneapolis, MN	9/3/22
Khan, Rashid	Boulder, CO	8/27/22
Lentz, Rick	Vineland, NJ	8/31/22
Nadeau, Jay (F)	Altadena, CA	7/22/22

NAME (50-74 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Alsop Jr, William L	Beaverton, OR	8/7/22
Clayton, J Andrew	Powell, OH	8/4/22
Jurczynski, Ann Benoit (F)	Box Elder, SD	10/3/22
Larsen, Eric O	Fairfax, CA	8/4/22
Logan, Jim	Pittsburgh, PA	7/26/22
McLerran, Doug	Aurora, IL	9/26/22
Sun, Wei P	San Diego, CA	9/14/22

NAME (75-99 unique routes)	CITY, STATE	APPROVED
Nguyen, Thai	Bothell, WA	9/20/22

## 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
Iwan Barankay	Philadelphia, PA	6/14/22
Brian P Burke [2]	Dawsonville, GA	6/25/22
Wayne Dunlap	Austin, TX	4/17/22
Ray Holzworth, Jr [3]	San Jose, CA	9/14/22
Greg Keenan	Camp Hill, PA	7/31/22
Ken Lanteigne [2]	Gresham, OR	2/24/22
Pascal Ledru	Denver, CO	6/3/22
Thai Nguyen [3]	Bothell, WA	7/18/22
Mateo P Ramos	Longmont, CO	5/15/22
Joseph Ray	Bernardsville, NJ	9/13/22
Kevin J Smith	Seattle, WA	7/31/22
Bradford D Tanner	Concord, NH	9/2/22
Ray Whitlock	Seattle, WA	6/14/22

# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR

Randonneurs USA  
P.O. Box 168  
Lyon Station, PA 19536

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US POSTAGE

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