

# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR



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Joshua Tree to Vegas – A Desert Randonneuring Redux – STACY KLINE

Something Old, Something New – JIM HOWELL

Gravel + Rando = GRando! – DEB BANKS



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## American Randonneur Magazine

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**COVER**— In Between Brevets with the Blossoms  
on Hains Point in Washington, DC.

PHOTO MARY GERSEMA

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# President's Message

## Randonneuring — Coming To A Trail Near You

Living in a part of the country with busy roads, I'm riding on trails more and more. The ones that I use are paved and maintained and get me off the road and out of the traffic. For the most part, they're not busy, but that's not always the case. Our Central Florida brevet routes use some of these trails; some are deserted and almost hypnotic if you're tired; with others, you'll find yourself working your way around other cyclists, pedestrians, and so on.

Perhaps I'm getting old or maybe it's just that riding in traffic gets old.



Above, a bridge over a swampy area—Florida has made a huge investment in trails.

Top, a trailhead map.

An enterprising local sets up trailside.

—PHOTOS DAVE THOMPSON

On a recent 400km out of Gainesville, FL, there was a 20-mile trail section about half-way through the route.

Even though most of the roads were relatively quiet by Florida standards, the trail was a delightful break.

There's a website to provide a guide: [floridahikes.com/bike-trails](http://floridahikes.com/bike-trails). Zooming in, more and more trails appear. There are places to explore and the adventuresome can put a number of trails together and cover a lot of the state.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I've been reviewing and reactivating routes for the new permanent program. That has been fascinating. We have trails everywhere and our route designers and riders are making use of them. Crista Borrás handles all the new route submissions and she's also seeing more and more trails. With the new program allowing photo controls and forms of electronic proof of passage, trails are much easier to incorporate into these routes. Many routes are all trail with only a couple of cues. Some that parallel roads through cities are much more complicated and you're never sure that the route will



be obvious to someone on the ground. Those are tough to review ... just ask Crista, our Permanista Extraordinaire!

We don't really have a good sense of how many kilometers of trails are incorporated into our routes. For events, we are starting to catalog kilometers of gravel but that doesn't give you a sense of how long you are truly out of the traffic. Perhaps that's something that we should look into. In the meantime, check out your local area for trails, work with your RBA to incorporate some into your brevet routes, design your own permanents and enjoy your time off roading!

—Dave Thompson  
**RUSA President**  
[president@rusa.org](mailto:president@rusa.org)



# From the Editor

Looking through the rough draft pages for this issue of *AR*, I reflect on how popular gravel riding has become... and part of me rebels. My mind takes me back to the gravel roads in Wellington Mills, Western Australia, that I rode and walked on a daily basis in my early teenage years. Slipping and sliding along these pot-holed, washboard-like roads was a necessity to get to school and again on weekends when I was bored, just to get out of the house for a while. I was happy when we moved to a town with paved roads. I do enjoy riding paved roads on randonneur events, but the writers and riders describing gravel riding in this issue offer lots of good reasons to consider giving it a go; and I have to agree with many of their arguments.

Safety, as long as you know how to navigate slippery gravel, is one good reason to ride more on these less-used roads. And safety along with a sense of added adventure, explains why we see more routes also picking up sections of off-road trails. For example, one 100km permanent that I've ridden several times is entirely on the trails that border the PA and NJ sides of the Delaware River. George Swain's review of Jessie Singer's *There Are No Accidents* and Dave Thompson's nod to trail riding emphasize increasing attention to trying to make our randonneuring adventures as safe as we can to ensure finishing rides with plenty of good memories of days spent riding.

As we continue to imagine new ways to enjoy randonneuring adventures, Dawn Piech reports on the third annual

Together We Ride Celebration of International Women's Day. The regional reports incorporated in her article demonstrate the growth of interest and participation in this event, which continues to find additional ways to welcome a broader range of cyclists.

Two of our more experienced randonneurs offer practical reminders and advice about mental preparation and care for equipment, information that becomes more important as you participate in longer events, especially grand randonnées. Vincent Muoneke looks at the mental aspects of riding and managing your time on a long ride.

Bill Bryant, experienced randonneur and bike mechanic, reviews some common bike issues that can occur but, with proper preparation, do not need to become show stoppers.

As this issue arrives in your mailboxes, we will be reaching the time of the season when the longer events are happening across the country. Prepare as well as you can and then enjoy your rides.

Please be safe out there.

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

Near Runaway Rapids  
Water Park, Keansburg, N.J.

—PHOTO CHRIS NEWMAN



# Joshua Tree to Vegas – A Desert Randonneuring Redux

BY STACY KLINE

Riding Willie Hunt's PCH Randonneurs Joshua Tree to Vegas 300km is a singular experience in randonneuring. As I shared in 2016, "I often feel as if I am at sea when I'm in the desert, self-sufficient and free. The vast expanses help me to declutter my mind."

Having ridden this exquisite route five times and sagged it twice since the ride's inception in 2015, Greg Kline and I have experienced the gamut of weather and conditions: rough roads, hot to cold temperatures, high winds to calm, and rain to dry weather and even snow. The desert is never the same from year to year, or even hour to hour, so it behooves riders to be prepared for every condition

in such a remote part of the desert. Although 8500' of climbing is fairly moderate for a 300km, the climbs are challenging due to their length and the remote and dry conditions of the desert route. Starting near Joshua Tree National Park, it follows iconic Route 66 through the heart of Mojave National Park and into the Las Vegas basin. It is one of the most beautiful randonneuring routes in the U.S.

"The route itself has huge expansive views across the Mojave Desert including mountains, sand dunes, Joshua trees, railroad lines, the Ivanpah solar power plant, and even the casino lights of Primm, Jean and Las Vegas. Riders can see for 50+ miles at several vista points. Traffic is generally quite light and often 10 or 15 minutes go by without a car passing. Climbing is reasonable at 8500 feet, but it is concentrated mostly in 2 massive climbs and 2 smaller climbs. Wind is normally blowing toward Vegas, so it's possible to have a tailwind the whole way there!"

**Willie Hunt, designer of the Joshua Tree to Las Vegas 300km and ride leader extraordinaire**

## Brief History

In 2015, the ride was held in mid-March, a particularly beautiful time of year in the high desert. Temperatures are usually relatively moderate and desert wildflowers are in full bloom. There were fourteen riders this year and although the ride was uncharacteristically hot, only one rider abandoned due to the heat. Note that Willie hosts this event early in the season to try to avoid high temperatures.

2016 saw the fewest number of riders so far, just seven, probably due to Paris-Paris-Paris having been held the year before. The Lanterne Rouge





that year, I can affirm that it was a particularly beautiful year weather-wise and my extended time on the route was due in no small part to the gorgeous wildflowers that needed documenting; I enjoyed all 19 hours on the route. Only one rider DNFd this year.

2017 brought new challenges for Greg and me, due in part to Greg's surgery to reattach his ruptured

pectoralis major tendon during the previous summer. This was also a year of high winds, cold temperatures and snow on the final climb before the descent to the Nevada state line. Held in early February, the event saw six riders abandon in part due to the challenging weather.

2018 saw the biggest turnout with 32 riders, but it also had the highest

Sign in Pappy and Harriet's Pioneertown Palace, a roadside BBQ restaurant near Joshua Tree.

—PHOTOS STACY KLINE



Native American intaglio. Some are thought to be 10,000 years old!

Shai Shprung enjoying a long and remote desert climb.



Ride Leader Willie Hunt with  
SAG team Stacy and Greg Kline.

—PHOTOS STACY KLINE



Eric Hannon Ford and Renato Arnoco  
working hard up the 2nd big climb.

DNF rate. This was the most challenging year in terms of weather, and 13 riders abandoned due to extremely strong headwinds. Several riders stopped riding as late into the event as the Nevada state line, with only thirty miles to the finish, because they simply couldn't stay upright on their bikes due to the winds.



In 2019, Joshua Tree to Vegas was again held in February, and although this made for a cold ride, more riders were successful and able to enjoy the exquisite desert scenery and gorgeous climbs. 29 riders joined the ride this year and only five abandoned. Although no ride in the desert is free of headwinds, this year they were in our favor and we enjoyed a tailwind into the Las Vegas basin for the final forty miles.

In 2020 Greg and I decided to take it easy after achieving K-Hound status and earning a PBP finish in 2019, so we jumped at the chance to support the event. It was a delight to be able to pay back the support we had enjoyed over the previous five years. The weather was extraordinary, allowing the riders to concentrate on the route's challenges. Greg and I had time to explore the desert at each control and were able to take some gorgeous photographs. It is amazing what you can find, including ancient Native American intaglios or rock circles that were created hundreds or thousands of years ago as spiritual places.

#### **This Year: 2022**

Although not held in 2021 due to the COVID pandemic, 27 intrepid





souls attempted the eighth running of this epic ride on March 5, 2022. An exquisitely clear morning with temperatures near freezing and a strong westerly wind met riders as they began their journey. Although it was quite cold a good portion of the day, the winds were mostly in the riders' favor, and a screaming tailwind for the final 40 miles assisted riders to the finish. These conditions resulted in only 3 DNFs. Greg and I once again supported the ride, and we truly enjoyed providing our fellow randonneurs with food, water, a bit of chat, and even warm blankets. However, the most rewarding part was encouraging two brand new randonneurs to carry on after they seriously considered abandoning due to the cold. We explained that they were almost up the final climb and ready for the big descent into the Vegas basin. We let them know they could still quit down the road if necessary, but that need did not arise.

#### Next Year: 2023

Greg and I can't wait to ride this route again in 2023 in preparation for Paris-Brest-Paris 2023! 🚲

## 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 articles
- Gear articles
- Training, health, nutrition articles
- Humorous articles
- Collage articles incorporating tweets, facebook quotes and/or short quotes from blog posts
- Reprints of blog posts (occasionally. Material not printed elsewhere is preferred, however, exceptions may be made.)
- Reports on non-rando long-distance/endurance events of interest to randos
- Letters to the editor
- Book reviews
- Cartoons
- Sketches

**Length of articles:** articles of up to 2000 words would be appropriate. There is no minimum length requirement, but please contact the editor if you wish to write more than 2000 words.

**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 Ficholas ([quadmod@gmail.com](mailto:quadmod@gmail.com)) for details.

#### Submission deadlines:

Spring issue — December 25      Fall issue — June 25  
Summer issue — March 25      Winter issue — September 25

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



# The Stories We Tell

BY MARY GERSEMA

I used to think brevets unfolded like good books. Miles passed, my bike and I rolled as one, and bonds formed with fellow riders who then became important characters in my story. Together, we embarked on the ever-important brevet ride quest.

With each cue, the ride's significance expanded, and the whole of the experience melded into a cohesive piece — a theme, a metaphor, or some big life lesson. Rolling into the finish, the tale was complete, ready for publishing and becoming a randonneuring bestseller.

Maybe that was even true in my early days of riding brevets, when each event took me into uncharted territory.

All the faces, routes, and places were fresh. Every distance had some takeaway that could only be revealed through the totality of the ride.

Over time I found this put way too much pressure on a brevet. It was unfair to expect all the miles from zero to the finish to hold a story. Doing so detracted from the ride's ability to flow organically. My attempts to imagine a ride as a real-time story ultimately

diminished the power of the present, while I hoped for some significant plot point to emerge.

I realized a brevet didn't need to read like a book to make it worth doing, and I slow-rolled my imagination. Now I digest the myriad interactions and minutiae of a ride in bite-size pieces, and these sustain me just as well. My body revels in a smooth rolling section on the tandem with my husband. The bright buds and greens of spring saturate the senses. Shared bits of conversation with fellow riders propel me to the next mile. And the weather can always be relied on to offer a talking point tidbit or two.

These pieces may eventually feed into something more. Perhaps one or two become part of a larger story realized sometime in the future. Who knows? In the moment it does not





Group ride on the gravel in Loudoun County.  
—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA

matter. Even if we take the distances seriously and the overall achievement of completing brevets is something more than skin deep, not every mile or conversation needs to contain deep meaning or interconnect.

Relinquishing expectations lightened me and reinvigorated my appetite for randonneuring. There is no misplaced emphasis on any given interaction. Nowadays I don't expect a brevet to carry special significance beyond deep appreciation for being able to spend so much time away from daily affairs just riding a bicycle. I don't know many people who get to spend their days just riding a bicycle like we do.

If I want a good story, I'll go to the library. Now I ride for the bite-size moments, however and whenever they

happen. These are the aspects I savor and that keep me coming back to randonneuring. And whether a ride is a story unto itself or a series of disconnected moments, both remind me how lucky I am to randonneur with all of you. 🚲

Riding into a beautiful day on the Warrenton-Orange 200km.  
—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA



Randonneur lifestyle on a ride with Felkerino, Chuck, Bryan, and Clif.  
—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA

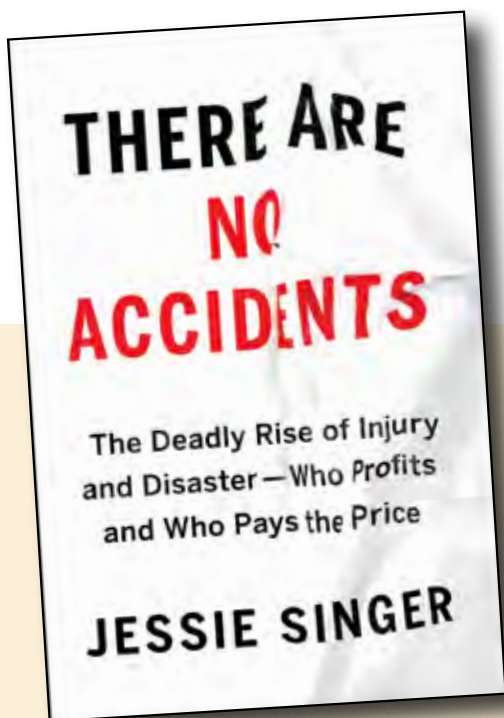
Jessie Singer's new book, *There Are No Accidents*, is not a book about cycling so much as a book about the many ways we think about safety, risk, blame, and agency in our society. Sparked by the death of a dear friend who was killed while cycling in New York City, Singer is on a mission not only to make streets safer but to challenge the entire paradigm that death by collision is predictable yet somehow unavoidable. At the heart of her argument, as the title of her book suggests, is the question that if something is common, predictable, and preventable, can it really be considered an "accident?" She sets out to answer this question in this far-reaching and provocative page-turner.

inevitable, from "dangerous conditions," which are largely fixable. Our mistake, she argues, is that we too often focus on correcting the former rather than the latter in what becomes a largely ineffective game of whack-a-mole. Relying on safety warnings to guide individual behavior is far less effective, Singer demonstrates, than working to change the environment in which people operate to make their inevitable errors less tragic. To do this, she argues, we need to step back to explore the larger patterns at play to have a more profound and lasting impact.

Singer uses a stack of Swiss cheese slices as a metaphor to help us visualize the cumulative impact of risk factors in any given situation. If we see each safety system or precaution as a slice of this cheese with each hole representing a problem or deficiency, we can see how when stacked, the holes rarely line up perfectly. As a result, it's possible for many complex systems that involve countless actions and reactions to function without incident. When the holes do align, however, catastrophe ensues.

Rugged individualism is enshrined in American culture to a high degree, and we do not like our freedoms regulated by the government. However, we readily accept curbs on our behavior when the benefits clearly outweigh the inconveniences. Consider the impact of safety packaging of dangerous narcotic drugs, for instance. Countless individuals are alive today who otherwise would have died ingesting toxic medications as children because we came to realize that teaching infants

"To err is human" as the old saying goes. It's just that erring under some circumstances has consequences that are far more catastrophic than others. To help unpack our assumptions, the author separates the concept of "human error," which is largely



## There Are No Accidents

BY JESSIE SINGER

Simon and Schuster, 2022  
336 pages



Author Jessie Singer.  
—PHOTO ANDREW HINDERAKER

not to place sweet colorful objects into their mouths was a losing proposition. Structurally removing the opportunity, on the other hand, has proven far more effective. This same line of reasoning helps us understand why protected bike lanes in urban areas make streets far safer for cyclists and pedestrians than warning signs or painted lines on the tarmac. People will continue to make mistakes; our job is to lessen the impact.

The modern world is filled with examples of business owners and politicians cutting corners on safety in search of profits and glory. Rather than look deeply at the underlying causes or structural factors that lead to traffic fatalities, for instance, the transportation lobby often falls back on blaming accidents on the “nut behind the wheel,” a strategy that does little to help us learn from dangerous situations and make our environment safer over time. Not all people suffer the outcomes of human error and dangerous conditions equally, of course, with race and poverty serving as leading indicators for unhealthy

and tragic outcomes. Uneven and discriminatory resource allocation can have a devastating impact on both individuals and communities and ultimately leads to unequal death rates across populations.

What is the take-away for randonneurs? Most of us either know someone who’s been hit by a car or have been hit ourselves, and if that’s not the case for you, sadly, it’s just a matter of time. After being mowed down by a distracted driver in 2010, I did not stop riding, but I did come to look at risk, safety, and vulnerability much differently than I did before. There are some roads I just won’t ride on now, for instance, and I plan my rides more carefully, not assuming the best possible outcome but rather considering the worst. Each of us puts tremendous faith in not only ourselves, but also the countless people whose paths we cross whenever we walk out the door, let alone clip in for a long ride.

This is a book all route designers should consider reading. Asking ourselves not what will happen under the best possible circumstances, but rather what could happen under the worst conditions, is something we can do to make our routes safer. Factors such as rain, lack of sleep, traffic congestion, and sun position at certain times of day all contribute to conditions that may be more or less dangerous for riders, like layered slices of Swiss cheese. We can do lots of things from taking safety into our own hands to advocating for public policies and funding to improve infrastructure. While waiting for the latter, it would be wise for us all to focus on the former to help make our own personal path through life a bit safer.

The author confides that she felt a physical shudder each time she used the word “accident” in the book. She also claims that both “love and rage” have motivated her in this work. I suspect that readers will have the same reaction and feel a similar motivation to change things after reading this carefully researched, passionately argued, and compelling new book. 🚲



15th Street Cycletrack in Washington, DC.  
—PHOTO MARY GERSEMA

# New RUSA Members

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| 15125 | Pavlik, Joe R              | Flagstaff              | AR    | 15203 | Do, Patrick               | San Jose       | CA    | 15311 | Lewis, Johnnie          | Avon             | IN    |
| 15123 | Ernst, Dana C              | Flagstaff              | AZ    | 15180 | Gleixner, Robert          | San Jose       | CA    | 15228 | Aukerman, David         | Hillsdale        | IN    |
| 15327 | Vetterlein, Kristen Curtis | Albany                 | CA    | 15182 | Makarewycz, Constantine   | San Jose       | CA    | 15270 | Balser, A               | Indianapolis     | IN    |
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| 15171 | Grant, Nathan              | Berkeley               | CA    | 15215 | Sundaram, Vijayshree      | San Jose       | CA    | 15336 | Kovach, Patty           | Indianapolis     | IN    |
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| 15254 | Rieger, Katie              | Oakland                | CA    | 15319 | Banfield, Mike            | New London     | CT    | 15272 | Doshi, Siddharth        | Framingham       | MA    |
| 15296 | Do, Linh P                 | Orange                 | CA    | 15324 | Lacombe, Brian            | Newington      | CT    | 15149 | Squires, John S         | Great Barrington | MA    |
| 15174 | Arnold, Tom                | Palo Alto              | CA    | 15323 | Moore, Iris               | Newington      | CT    | 15225 | Patterson, Tyler        | Jamaica Plain    | MA    |
| 15130 | Gray, Sybil R              | Pasadena               | CA    | 15391 | Patterson, Geoff          | Washington     | DC    | 15183 | Kercher, Eric           | Maynard          | MA    |
| 15241 | Rubino, Vito               | Pasadena               | CA    | 15212 | Swenson, Dan              | Washington     | DC    | 15271 | Almeida, Vinny          | Milford          | MA    |
| 15199 | Acosta, Raymond            | Pittsburg              | CA    | 15329 | Bajo Flores, David        | Madrid         | ES    | 15274 | Rodvalho, P             | Milford          | MA    |
| 15240 | Faulkner, Nathaniel B      | Rancho Santa Margarita | CA    | 15121 | Charness, Alan J.         | Clearwater     | FL    | 15127 | Allen, Jonathan         | Newburyport      | MA    |
| 15334 | Inderkum, Sabi             | Richmond               | CA    | 15195 | Nossa, Gabriel A          | Gainesville    | FL    | 15141 | Manzella, Michael A     | Newton           | MA    |
| 15268 | Flauta, Dindo Agpalo       | Sacramento             | CA    | 15255 | Lewis, David              | Osprey         | FL    | 15265 | Colburn, Jamieson A     | Northampton      | MA    |
| 15147 | Baer, Margie               | San Anselmo            | CA    | 15239 | Schafer, Jeremy           | Tarpon Springs | FL    | 15321 | Kemper, Amy E           | Northampton      | MA    |
| 15347 | Dewey, John R              | San Anselmo            | CA    | 15201 | Richardson, Karen         | Alpharetta     | GA    | 15382 | Hurley, Michael M       | Quincy           | MA    |
| 15153 | Hulburt, Peter J           | San Diego              | CA    | 15186 | Butler, John              | Bogart         | GA    | 15278 | Santos, Daniel          | Saugus           | MA    |
| 15369 | King, Raymond              | San Diego              | CA    | 15206 | Schleicher, Diane D       | Dahlgonega     | GA    | 15142 | Kelly, Steve            | Somerville       | MA    |
| 15150 | LaCoursiere, Terry P       | San Diego              | CA    | 15350 | Hillhouse, Ingrid         | Kailua-Kona    | HI    | 15281 | Nogueira, Catarina      | Somerville       | MA    |
| 15198 | Dinh, Joseph               | San Francisco          | CA    | 15371 | Ruis, Robert              | Council Bluffs | IA    | 15388 | Parker, Jennifer L      | Somerville       | MA    |

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| 15375 | Kovalenko, Sergei       | Stoneham            | MA    | 15261 | Anderson, George       | Maplewood            | NJ    | 15178 | Spagnolo, Daniel M       | Pittsburgh     | PA    |
| 15160 | Rose, Kim               | Waltham             | MA    | 15314 | Davis, Stephen J       | Mendham              | NJ    | 15295 | Jennes, Kuba             | Throop         | PA    |
| 15303 | Iscan, Cuneyt           | Westborough         | MA    | 15184 | Sharpe, Tim            | Mendham              | NJ    | 15373 | Hance, Allen             | Providence     | RI    |
| 15248 | Ross, Steve             | Annapolis           | MD    | 15192 | Guinand, Luis          | Newark               | NJ    | 15374 | Traber, Heather          | Providence     | RI    |
| 15338 | Barzal, Matthew C       | Arnold              | MD    | 15162 | Carson, Thomas M       | Old Bridge           | NJ    | 15289 | Ward, Eva                | Providence     | RI    |
| 15230 | Kruckel, Allen          | Arnold              | MD    | 15166 | Yuen, Raymond          | Princeton Jct        | NJ    | 15232 | Leonhardt, Tami Victoria | Columbia       | SC    |
| 15397 | Puga nieto, Juan        | Baltimore           | MD    | 15213 | Dalby, Stephen         | Springfield Township | NJ    | 15234 | Summers, Kristie I       | York           | SC    |
| 15325 | Andreaus, Larkin Hale   | Fredrick            | MD    | 15159 | Bayley, Will           | Stratford            | NJ    | 15299 | Hale, Cory               | Knoxville      | TN    |
| 15256 | Wicks, Joan R           | Middletown          | MD    | 15181 | Coates, Phyllis Irene  | Westville            | NJ    | 15300 | Hale, K Kyle             | Knoxville      | TN    |
| 15223 | Boakye, Yasmin          | Mitchellville       | MD    | 15399 | Hawrylak, John P       | Woodstown            | NJ    | 15285 | Sklow, Kenan             | Dallas         | TX    |
| 15146 | Bunn III, Allen E       | Pasadena            | MD    | 15161 | Sheldon, Janice        | Woolwich Twp         | NJ    | 15187 | Betelu, Santiago         | Denton         | TX    |
| 15136 | Desmet, Bart            | Silver Spring       | MD    | 15286 | Martin, Jafer          | Ranchos de Taos      | NM    | 15276 | Kowalski, Mark           | London         | UK    |
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| 15275 | Glant, Jessica          | Bangor              | ME    | 15235 | MacDonald, Ryan        | Astoria              | NY    | 15376 | Tenhagen, Billy          | Eagle Mountain | UT    |
| 15291 | Gagne, Rick             | Lebanon             | ME    | 15396 | Shoop, Adam            | Bronx                | NY    | 15145 | Antoloci, Tyler          | Logan          | UT    |
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| 15220 | Beddow, Blake           | Ferndale            | MI    | 15246 | Lippe, Max             | Brooklyn             | NY    | 15216 | Rotter, Michael C        | Provo          | UT    |
| 15387 | Beddow, Brett H         | Grosse Pointe Park  | MI    | 15135 | Selberg, Chad M        | Brooklyn             | NY    | 15217 | Silva, Chelsea A         | Provo          | UT    |
| 15362 | Hubbell, Bruce          | Grosse Pointe park  | MI    | 15221 | Szydelko, Aleksandra   | Brooklyn             | NY    | 15134 | Kouraiem, Ahmad          | Arlington      | VA    |
| 15339 | Horwitz, Eric           | Grosse Pointe Woods | MI    | 15366 | Lambert, Matt J        | East Amherst         | NY    | 15292 | Anderson, Krister K      | Fairfax        | VA    |
| 15354 | Pacini, Marie           | Grosse Pointe Woods | MI    | 15243 | Willet, Matthew        | Glen Cove            | NY    | 15351 | Dworetzky, Sam A         | Richmond       | VA    |
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| 15344 | Kerstein, Alexander Max | Royal Oak           | MI    | 15356 | Lee, Drew              | New York             | NY    | 15211 | Hose, David J            | Kirkland       | WA    |
| 15305 | Glantzberg II, Hughes J | Sterling Heights    | MI    | 15360 | Ritter, Christian      | Oakdale              | NY    | 15126 | Ostrovsky, Jan S         | Mercer Island  | WA    |
| 15247 | Shoales, Timothy M      | Troy                | MI    | 15361 | Ibalio, England        | Ridgewood            | NY    | 15313 | Pratt, Clayton Nebeker   | Olympia        | WA    |
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| 15148 | Heine, Sinclair Jay     | Chanhassen          | MN    | 15353 | Nguyen, William        | Staten Island        | NY    | 15144 | Bodding-Long, Tristan A  | Seattle        | WA    |
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| 15398 | O'Laughlin, Matt        | Minneapolis         | MN    | 15284 | Stutes, Judy           | Springboro           | OH    | 15385 | Hale, Zach               | Seattle        | WA    |
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| 15301 | Russell, Kyle A         | Blue Springs        | MO    | 15332 | Noonan, Daniel P       | Eugene               | OR    | 15269 | Nikic, Dejan             | Seattle        | WA    |
| 15309 | Boehm, Kevin P          | Kansas City         | MO    | 15310 | Renshaw, John H        | Milwaukie            | OR    | 15331 | Oliveira, Nigini         | Seattle        | WA    |
| 15357 | Sutter, Kiley           | Kansas City         | MO    | 15258 | Thiessen, Bruce        | Akron                | PA    | 15330 | Schauland, Ben           | Seattle        | WA    |
| 15263 | Curry, Brian P          | Winston Salem       | NC    | 15152 | Wilson, Mark D         | Aldan                | PA    | 15277 | Watts, Richard           | Seattle        | WA    |
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| 15229 | Dunbar, David A         | Bernardsville       | NJ    | 15218 | Thornton, Gary         | New Hope             | PA    | 15293 | Burican, Ryan            | Mukwonago      | WI    |
| 15251 | DiTana, A               | Chatham             | NJ    | 15273 | Berry, Travis          | Philadelphia         | PA    | 15259 | Guerin III, John W       | Laramie        | WY    |
| 15244 | Shaposhnikov, Dmitry    | Cranford            | NJ    | 15264 | Bidwell, Matthew       | Philadelphia         | PA    |       |                          |                |       |
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| 15191 | Copp, Benjamin          | Fair Lawn           | NJ    | 15304 | Harding, Michael       | Philadelphia         | PA    |       |                          |                |       |
| 15245 | Alvarez, Maurice X      | Florham Park        | NJ    | 15358 | Wildflower, Benjamin   | Philadelphia         | PA    |       |                          |                |       |

## The Overnight Control

The journey of 1200km starts with the first step. We can break up a daunting task in our mind and focus on the next goal that we are somewhat comfortable with. As a well-known ultra-distance rider told me, 99 percent of it is mental and the other 1 percent, “well, that’s mental, too.” We focus on a mental horizon such as making the next control point. Sometimes it is the crest of a hill, the summit of a mountain pass, finally finding the sea, or — a particularly poignant one for me — turning out of a headwind. As we achieve these intermediate goals, our confidence is augmented, leaving us with the next goal.

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On rides of 600km or longer, the overnight control is the ultimate goal of the day for some. Others may not sleep at all at this control and choose to ride through. Frequently, ride organizers designate a place for the overnight, but sometimes they do not, allowing riders to choose their own sleep spots as long as they make the official control on time. On a 1200km ride, planning for your sleep can be very critical unless you do not sleep at all. Know that you will be more rested on your first day, and you can shoot for 400km or more with diminishing mileage on subsequent days. Know that you may have to modify your original plan, depending on the availability of facilities that suit your needs. If you are a “ditch napper,” you can find a spot almost anywhere, but I do not find that I get restful sleep that way.

The overnight spot presents an unparalleled opportunity to absorb a large

amount of calories and re-glycogenate your muscles, especially if you sleep. You might also plan to meet with your drop bags to refresh, resupply, and get a clean kit. You can tweak your bicycle if you have any nagging mechanical problems, and if this is designated as an official control, you can get any support you need without breaking rules. Know that though you have ridden many miles and may be totally physically exhausted, you may still be too wired to sleep. If you are a light sleeper, activity at the control may also interfere with restful sleep.

Management of the overnight spot can be crucial. It is an intermediate goal and not the finish, so you have to start thinking beyond it before even reaching it. It is the cornerstone of your next day of riding. Think of your time of arrival and calculate how much sleep time you can afford and a wake up time that optimizes the next day’s goals.

Less sleep may lead to poor performance, and too much sleep will leave you in a hole. If you need a sleep aid, remember it usually has a latent period, so consider taking the aid at a planned time before reaching the overnight spot. If you are riding with buddies, confer with them and make joint decisions if you plan to ride together the next day.

On arriving, focus on efficiency. Complete any paperwork and connect quickly with your drop bag if you have one. Figure out the sleeping arrangements, and make a solid plan for a wake-up call or alarm. If you need a sleep aid and have not administered one already, do this early because they all have latency, and a full stomach increases this latency by slowing absorption. Make sure it’s short-acting unless you have enough time in the bank to sleep it off. Some riders may use a glass of wine or a beer to call on Sandman; in that case I suggest eating first to prevent upsetting an empty stomach. For the same reason, if you are riding through and administer a stimulant such as caffeine, do it after food. Shower, then eat, and go straight to bed. There could be many distractions at this overnight. Avoid them. Gasbagging with riders and officials, contacting friends and family, taking phone calls, reading and responding to email, having interactions on social media, and unnecessary fiddling with drop bags and equipment waste precious rest time. Start a mental process for what you will do when you wake up. Four hours of sleep on a full stomach will do amazing things





for your head and legs if you are fast enough to get that much sleep. A good breakfast in the morning will have you set for the day. Dress and depart after a quick navigational review of the day.

Napoleon Bonaparte quipped that everyone has a plan until they get hit. Have another plan for when you get hit, or at least remember that your main plan is not written in stone. On my first 1200km I arrived at the first overnight, and after three hours in the control and no sleep, I changed plans and just

Ditch Nap at Dismal Nitch WA.

Below, the overnight control on a 1200km.

—PHOTOS VINCENT MUONEKE

kept riding. I should have made that decision at least two hours earlier. Every rider has to figure out what works for them. We have progressively longer rides on our calendar, so take every opportunity to try, test, and modify your plans before the big day. 🚲



## Attention Members

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

**Update your address online at:**

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

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Memberships run from January through December.

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# Something Old, Something New

BY JIM HOWELL, RUSA 11847

The announcement on January 25, 2022, by RUSA about changes to permanent rules to allow ride starts and completions at a location other than a checkpoint generated quite a stir of excitement amongst Colorado randonneurs because it opened up more opportunities for members to join a route closer to home, possibly without the need to pack up the bike and drive to a checkpoint. During a solo permanent shortly after the announcement, my thoughts wandered to thinking about what additional routes might now be possible to start from close to home. I further wondered if any of the older routes were more accessible.

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After that ride I did some digging and found that the oldest active route in Colorado, the James Canyon Jaunt 200km (#101), passed very close to home. Hence was born the idea to ride the oldest Colorado permanent route per the *newest* permanent rule: something old, and something new.

The James Canyon Jaunt is a loop-spur-lollipop route that normally starts in Louisville and mostly follows roads along the foothills around

Boulder and Loveland. It includes a spur up Lefthand Canyon into the mountains northwest of Boulder to the old mining town of Jamestown, as well as a lollipop loop whose apex at the northernmost point is the small community of Masonville.

It was a few weeks before the weather and road conditions cooperated enough to allow safe riding, but in early March there was a brief reprieve from the cold weather; temperatures climbed

to the high sixties, effectively melting and drying the residual snow and ice from the mountain roads—time to roll!

Starting the ride at mile 104 in Niwot, the route heads southeast through rolling ranchland towards the ‘first’ control in the small town of Erie (an old coal mining town turned suburban bedroom community), then heads southwest towards Louisville, which is the normal starting point for the route but the ‘second’ control per my altered starting point. Louisville was a heartbreaking part of the ride due to the utter devastation caused by the December 2021 Marshall fire that

Masonville mercantile at the Masonville control.

—PHOTO JIM HOWELL



Folk art at outdoor museum  
in Masonville.

—PHOTO JIM HOWELL

decimated over a thousand homes in the area with flames fanned by one hundred mile per hour winds. It looked like a giant blowtorch had been used to completely obliterate entire neighborhoods—only foundations and the occasional fireplace or skeleton of a barbecue, air conditioner, or clothes washer was left. A true tragedy for hundreds of families.

After the Louisville control, the route heads towards the entrance of Lefthand Canyon to start the tolerable but still challenging trek of 8.5 miles and 1350 feet of climbing to the next checkpoint in Jamestown. Much of the climb parallels Left Hand Creek and then James Creek, making for an enjoyable climb flanked by rugged alpine slopes on both sides and accentuated by the sound of the rushing creek as it



**Much of the climb parallels Left Hand Creek and then James Creek, making for an enjoyable climb flanked by rugged alpine slopes on both sides and accentuated by the sound of the rushing creek as it descends through the canyon.**



descends through the canyon. At the top of the climb is Jamestown, born shortly after gold ore was discovered in the area around 1865. Today it is a small, eclectic town of just over 200 people that still retains some of the historical charm of its early years, most notably the Jamestown Mercantile (or 'the Merc', as locals call it), a classic 2½ story, false front, wood frame structure built some time after 1896. Today it serves as the town gathering spot and a favorite stop for hordes of cyclists that ride up from the flatlands. Across the street from the Merc is a simple but lovely park that fronts James Creek and is a popular spot for visitors and locals to relax in the warmer months.

The spirited descent back down the canyon provides a respite to the legs and an opportunity to savor the beautiful mountain scenery and rugged rock formations before again reaching the mouth of the canyon. Grand views of the expansive eastern plains are an enjoyable distraction as the route then

Jamestown Mercantile at the Jamestown control.

— PHOTO JIM HOWELL

Red sandstone escarpments along route to Masonville.

— PHOTO JIM HOWELL



heads towards the small town of Hygiene and the opportunity for a brief break at the Mountain Fountain, a delightful country store that is another popular stopover for cyclists throughout the year.

After refueling at Mountain Fountain, the route continues along quiet country roads through rolling farmland towards the 'fourth' control in Masonville. This leg of the ride includes views of some quintessential Colorado scenery, including classic red rock sandstone escarpments, and sometimes during the winter months herds of elk that have come down from the high country can be seen grazing in the fields along the road. It is also not unusual to see small groups of mule deer and the occasional flock of wild turkeys.

Another optimistic gold rush-era speculation town, Masonville is now a small unincorporated community of a few residents, a church, post office, and mercantile. It is an interesting dichotomy of a simpler life that is

literally minutes away from the bustling and modern communities of Loveland and Fort Collins. It is also a fun spot to visit on a bike. Of particular note is the Masonville Mercantile, which says on the storefront sign that it was built in 1896 (and looks to be of that era). It is a combination of roadside attraction and general store offering cold drinks, snacks, postcards, knickknacks and vintage clothing. Intertwined amongst the items for sale is a collection of historical items spanning a century of American life, including a vintage

50's era indoor telephone booth, and a fortune-telling prospector amusement park machine, a la Zoltar from the movie 'Big' with Tom Hanks. Walking through the store will no doubt rewind the clock for some and perhaps elicit a laugh from others (I'm sure *everyone* is thankful we don't have phone booths anymore—except maybe superman...).

Tree carving of Eagle Catcher and Holy Man in Niwot Sculpture Park.

—PHOTO JIM HOWELL





The exterior also provides a plethora of quirky memorabilia, including 70's era gas pumps and an actual cell from the Loveland Jail, circa 1940's, while across the road is an outdoor museum that contains vintage horse-drawn wagons and farm equipment, folk-art sculptures, a scale replica boardwalk, and even a cemetery on 'Boot Hill.' It's a fun place to get off the bike for a few minutes, grab a cold drink, and take in everything.

After the Masonville control, the route completes the loop of the lollipop and retraces the path back to Hygiene. From there the route continues to Niwot, which has a small art sculpture park that includes a beautiful carving made from the large trunk of a dead tree featuring prominent beings from the Arapaho and Cheyenne clans. It's worth taking a few moments to stop

and admire the detail in these carvings. After this, another mile along the route marks the finish of the ride.

The James Canyon Jaunt is a regular standard on the Rocky Mountain Cycling Club's annual brevet schedule, but having the option to start anywhere along the route has now added it to my list of permanents that can be ridden without having to pile everything in the car and drive to the start (or even a control). Kudos and thanks to RUSA for adding this great enhancement for permanents! Not only

Early morning start looking across tilled fields towards the mountains, anticipating the climb to Jamestown.

—PHOTO JIM HOWELL

is this new option environmentally friendly, but it also encourages more spontaneous riding (Nice day today? Let's do a 200k!). And who doesn't like more riding? 🚲

**Kudos and thanks to RUSA for adding this great enhancement for permanents!**

# RANDONNEURING ESSENTIALS



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## Random Reminiscing

This past weekend, New Jersey Randonneurs held the first brevet of the 2022 season, the 20th Anniversary 200km, named in honor of the first brevet offered by our group twenty years ago. I didn't clip in for that first iteration and family obligations prevented my participation yesterday, but the anniversary started me thinking about my personal history with randonneuring:

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This May it will be 17 years since I completed my first RUSA season, which consisted of starting and finishing a single 200km brevet. In 2006 I completed a 200km and a hot, hilly 300km which left my right hand numb for a week. In 2007 I earned my first Super Randonneur award, which, while sufficient to qualify me for Paris, was insufficient training for actually completing PBP.

Thinking back on the past decade-and-a-half of participating in this quirky sport and seeing all the new members who are listed in each issue of this magazine, I thought it might be fun to share some random observations and lessons learned.

While much is made of self-reliance in this sport as well as the sometimes-solitary nature of cycling in general, the greatest gift randonneuring has given me is the people I have met and the friendships I have formed. It stands to reason that folks who are willing to leave their beds before sunrise, don cycling gear, head out into a dark morning and into any type of weather, including but not limited to rain, snow, hale, extreme heat, extreme cold and

extreme wind, might just be worth meeting. They will either have great senses of humor and positive outlooks or they will be crazy people. Either way, it will be interesting!

Riding with friends always makes the miles slip by faster, the hills seem not quite as intimidating and the long

and cold nights a bit warmer. Sitting on the sidewalk of the local Wawa or Quick Check or Sheetz and sharing a meal is so much better than eating alone. And the stories we tell often start en route and only improve as the miles click by. I have so many fabulous memories of middle-of-the-night flat repairs, middle-of-the-night power naps on church steps and park benches, and midnight sing-alongs in deserted streets. Riding with friends is the absolute best part of randonneuring. *(Being a captive audience for their puns, however, is the absolute worst...)*

Randonneuring has also taken me to places I would never would have ventured and has challenged me to attempt routes I would have thought







Flèche friends.

—PHOTO JAYNE BROWN

way beyond my capacity. I think I have ridden in 29 different states, and I have completed PBP three times. This summer I am heading to London for LEL. The pages of *American Randonneur* are filled with tales of folks who have literally traveled around the world to ride their bikes in Grand Randonnees. I feel I can immerse myself in my surroundings and the local culture when I am traveling by bike in a way that car travel does not permit.

This sport allows us to challenge ourselves as much or as little as we want. I couldn't imagine riding 300km when I rode my first 200km – it seemed superhuman. But gradually I convinced

myself I could at least try to expand the distance and that first 300km was a bit of a disaster which also meant it was a valuable learning experience. I flatted in the first mile and the slice in my tire was about two inches long. I employed a dollar bill as a patch, so it was no surprise when I flatted again around mile 180...which should have been very close to the end but wasn't because I added twenty bonus miles when I missed a turn while chatting with a fellow rider. Not far from the finish I rode in circles for what seemed like forever because I could not decide where to turn in the pitch-black rural night. For a few panicked minutes I had absolutely no idea how I was going to get myself back to civilization. But I did and I finished within the time limit and my first 300km was also my first double century! My hand was so numb I couldn't hold my car keys the next day, so I decided I was done with this craziness. But randonesia is real and the next year I completed a Super Randonneur series. Stretching to reach new goals whether they be the number of miles ridden or mountains climbed, or places visited just never gets old for me. There is always something more I can accomplish.

And sometimes that something more is just finishing a 100km. In this sport, the voice inside your head

Nevada permanent.

—PHOTO CHRIS NEWMAN

can make or break you. Years ago, I volunteered on the Endless Mountains 1200km. The weather was cold, rainy and miserable and many riders dropped out. One of these riders, a guy who was probably in his twenties, told the story of how he had gotten out of bed and gotten on his bike and pedaled out into the cold, wet morning. His brain convinced him to turn around and get back in bed, which is what he did. I have no doubt that physically he could have ridden the entire route, but his brain had other ideas. I love that a positive attitude can get you where massive quads may not!

And finally, a few lessons I have learned through the years.

I start every ride with a plan to stay as safe as possible, have fun and learn a thing or two. I have usually been successful with all three aspirations but sometimes the fun is type 2.

It's a good idea to invest in wool jerseys, gloves, socks, etc. Wool keeps you warm, insulates even when wet and doesn't retain odors like synthetic fabrics do. During PBP 2011 we were caught in a massive downpour in the middle of the night. I reached the control and put on every piece of wool clothing I had with me. I wasn't toasty warm or completely comfortable but looking at the shivering riders wearing their nylon jerseys made me very grateful for my sartorial selection.

It's important to bring back up gear for your back-up gear.

And it's also important to bring lights and back up lights. You may be speedy, but you may also have a mechanical that puts you behind schedule.

Learn to fix a flat.

And my all-time favorite lesson, shared with cyclists and anyone else who ventures outside:

there is no such thing as bad weather, just poor clothing choices. (Thanks, Laurent!) 🚲





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# Gravel Randonneuring – Rock On!

BY BETTY JEAN JORDAN

You probably have noticed that much of U.S. cycling has shifted toward gravel in recent years. Road racing has declined while gravel racing has exploded. Additionally, many recreational cyclists are choosing gravel, preferring the greater safety of unpaved roads relative to paved roads. Gravel is also a fun hybrid between road and mountain biking. I like the challenge of unpaved surfaces without the technical aspects of mountain biking.

I started out riding and racing on paved roads but thoroughly enjoy gravel as well. I live in rural Middle Georgia, which has an abundance of dirt roads that I have ridden for years. During the short days of fall and

winter, I can ride safely on dirt roads in the dark after work with lights and reflective gear, a la randonneuring. I also enjoy long weekend rides in my local gravel grinding paradise. Sometimes I even participate in gravel races.

Therefore, I was excited to learn that RUSA is joining the gravel scene.

The Audax Atlanta chapter of RUSA held its first gravel event in February of this year. My good rando buddy Brian Burke designed a 100-km course in the mountains of North Georgia. With 75% of the route unpaved and over 7,000 feet of climbing, we definitely didn't just stick a toe into the waters of gravel randonneuring; we jumped in with both feet! Our RBA Wayne King dubbed this Populaire, "Brian's Gravel Monster." The official name has since been changed to Cooper Creek Loop, but Wayne's original name for it is more accurate!

The ride started from a public parking area near Dahlonega, GA. The parking lot was nearly full when I arrived. The Georgia mountains are popular with Atlanta-area cyclists, and many had driven north for a day of riding. We fifteen RUSA members joined the throng for our inaugural gravel event. It was good to see old friends as well as new ones from out of state or new to RUSA.

One notable aspect of this randonné is that it was not conducive to socializing! The group split apart early, and I rode most of the day by



(L-R) Ian Flitcroft, Josh Ibbs, and Julie Gazmararian at the ranger station at the top of the first big climb.

—PHOTO BRIAN BURKE

Another WMA along the route. North Georgia lies on the southern end of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

—PHOTO BRIAN BURKE

myself. I wouldn't have been a good conversationalist anyway, as much of the time I was grinding up a steep climb or focusing on descending.

The first big climb was about thirty minutes into the ride. It had an average slope of about 6% for four miles and got as steep as 11% in some places. Brian and his partner Lisa greeted us at the ranger station at the top of the climb and took pictures of everyone. We all looked happy to be finished with that climb.



**I highly encourage you to ride a RUSA gravel event. RUSA's gravel rules allow additional time based on the route's percentage of gravel.**

Trout stream.

—PHOTO BETTY JEAN JORDAN



One of many picturesque waterfalls in the North Georgia mountains.

—PHOTO BRIAN BURKE

The route had only a couple of stores along the way. As I have become even more self-sufficient because of the pandemic, I passed up the first one in Suches because I still had plenty of food and water. I also hoped to catch up with a rider or two in front of me.

The paved road we took from Suches climbs to the top of Wolfpen Gap, but our route turned off before the steep part. Instead, we turned onto a dirt road, Cooper Creek Road, the namesake of the route. This is a fun dirt road with plenty of hills but without the constant uphill slogs or scary descents.

After a short, paved section it was back onto dirt through Cooper's Creek

Wildlife Management Area (WMA), the prettiest part of the route. It started out, though, with a tough little climb for about a mile with grades sometimes approaching 20%.

Happily, the road through the WMA got easier. I was now a little more than halfway, and I was hungry. I pulled over at a picnic table by a beautiful

trout stream to eat my sandwich. There was also a spigot, but, unfortunately, it wasn't working. I was still OK on water, but I would need to stop at the next opportunity. Just as I was getting ready to roll, along came Jennifer and Ming. It was nice to have company again.

Soon we got to the Coopers Creek Store. They have a restroom that is accessible from the outside, a convenient place to refill water. Ming went inside the store for a sandwich, but Jennifer and I pedaled on.

We passed a fish hatchery. I'd love to go back when I have time for a tour as I'm kind of fascinated with fish hatcheries, especially since this was the third one I had passed in a month during rides in various parts of the state. Trout in Georgia live only in the cold waters to the north, so this must have been a trout hatchery.

After the fish hatchery came the denouement of the ride: Winding Staircase. The climb itself was

Fish hatchery for trout. Trout live in many of the cold waters of North Georgia, which have the higher dissolved oxygen content they need.

—PHOTO BRIAN BURKE





significant at 3% average grade for about eight miles with sections near 10%. The most formidable part, however, was the descent. Large rocks were everywhere, but Brian said the road was in the best shape he had ever seen it. I'd hate to see its usual condition! I managed on my cyclocross bike, but a mountain bike would have been the best option for this section. Brian had strongly cautioned everyone to take the Winding Staircase descent slowly. I certainly did, but my heart was pounding. I was grateful I had encountered similarly difficult rocky roads in North Georgia during a gravel race the previous fall, which at least made Winding Staircase a little less surprising.

Finally through the most difficult part, I only had about five miles to go.

Then I saw a couple of cycling friends from near Dahlonega riding in the opposite direction. We stopped to chat for a few moments. Jennifer caught up just as I was continuing, so she and I got to finish together.

It had been only a 100-km ride, but conditions were tough enough to cause randonesia. I wasn't enamored of the mountains right after the ride, but I did appreciate the challenge and would be willing to do this ride again. Also, I'd love to do some more relaxing gravel randonneuring in other parts of Georgia.

I highly encourage you to ride a RUSA gravel event. RUSA's gravel rules allow additional time based on the route's percentage of gravel. A regular, paved 100-km populaire has a time limit of 6 hours, 40 minutes. All the

Coopers Creek WMA, namesake of this gravel populaire.

—PHOTO BRIAN BURKE

finishers at this event were within the regular time limit even without the extra time allowed for gravel. And few RUSA gravel events would be as challenging as Brian's Gravel Monster! You likely already have a bicycle that would suffice for a gravel randonné. Yes, a gravel or cyclocross bike is best, but you may also be able to put wider, knobbier tires on your road bike if your brakes and front fork have enough clearance.

Ride on, and rock on! 🚲

## Avoiding a Show-Stopper

With a plethora of grand randonnées happening around the world this summer, and Paris-Brest-Paris looming on the horizon next year, many riders' thoughts turn to riding a long event after they have completed their regional brevet series. With good training and mental preparation, most will succeed at their chosen event and earn their finisher's medal—but it never comes easy.

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Randonneurs' biggest challenges during a grand randonnée include having to worry about the distance, consuming enough calories but not suffering from indigestion, staying awake, not going off-course, and so on. Just like with a shorter brevet, it is usually the rider who presents the biggest question mark at the start of a multi-day randonneuring event. Sometimes, however, it is what the rider takes on the ride that might create a potential problem. Or more accurately, what they *fail* to bring along. I have been riding, organizing, and volunteering at brevets and grand randonnées since 1979 and I've noticed some of the ways riders encounter a show-stopper that might end their ride. Success with brevets but especially with grand randonnées, depends quite a bit on riders' attention to their gear and maintenance of their machine.

### Equipment for the Rider

Many contemporary randonneurs pack too lightly for rough weather. Part of the problem is that many ride racing bikes that are pressed into service for randonneuring events. The light weight of a racing bike is indeed a good asset for the long distances in randonneuring, but too often it is difficult to find places to mount the lights, fenders, and luggage that allow the self-reliant randonneur to ride much farther than any racer would consider. In the case of clothing, going too lightly might turn out to be a show-stopper. Eschewing racks and a larger bag, they could be packing too little clothing for periods of wet and cold weather—their racing bike's luggage simply isn't big enough to carry enough if the temperatures go down into the low-40s or mid-30s. As survivors of the legendary 2007 Paris-Brest-Paris know well, one can ride a rainy 1200km grand

randonnée despite being wet for days on end, but when one is cold and wet, finishing becomes much more difficult. Simply put, our bodies can withstand many hours of being wet, but not many hours of being cold. Year after year it is common to see that having too few or the wrong clothing layers greatly limits one's chances of success. And it doesn't need to be rainy for the weather to create DNFs. The cold, windy nights at the 2019 PBP caused hundreds of riders to quit, but when one saw how few warm clothes many of them brought along, it wasn't such a big surprise. Or, like on any regional 400km or 600km brevet, riders can go into the night hours damp from perspiration or daytime rain, but then wind chill can make them feel colder than the weather forecast predicted. In all of these cases, wool clothing can be very effective at keeping the determined randonneur moving forward—but not if it was left at home because it didn't pack small enough to fit into today's small saddlebags.

### Equipment for and Maintenance of the Bike

Sometimes there are other things to worry about besides the rider or their clothing, namely the bicycle itself. Riders obviously don't want to have a mechanical situation turn into a show-stopper. To start, post-travel problems to big events happen fairly often. It isn't too unusual for there to be some minor damage from the airlines, the TSA inspection, or ground





Seat post collar.

Below, traditional seat binder.

—PHOTOS BILL BRYANT

transportation, that shows up during the event. Sometimes the damage, such as a bent rim or fork, is evident once the bike is assembled, and the rider must scramble to find a bike shop to make repairs or fix it themselves before the start. Harder to see, and more common in recent years, are bent rear derailleur hangers. A minor bump can affect the rear derailleur shifting. Be sure to thoroughly test your bike's shifting before the event when you travel. A badly bent hanger can even put your derailleur into the rear wheel's spokes! I've known some riders at 1200km events who tested a few gears in the post-flight test-ride, but not the bottom gear. Guess what happened when they got to the first steep hill during the event? Ugh.

There are some preventative measures you can take. First, be sure to always remove the rear derailleur from the hanger when you are boxing up the bike to travel. That will eliminate most of the potential for trouble. Yes, it means a little more assembly on the other end, but nothing will help prevent a bent hanger as much as

removing the derailleur before travel. In the past, most derailleur hangers were made of steel and could be gently bent back into the alignment in a motel room with a large adjustable wrench hastily bought at a local hardware store. These days, though, most derailleur hangers are replaceable and made of aluminum to reduce their weight (and make manufacturing easier.) This, alas, makes them "one and done" and re-bending them back into alignment in order to fix the rear shifting simply hastens their failure since aluminum is not malleable like steel. Alas, there are many hundreds of different hanger designs today and it is normal that most bike shops won't have yours and will need to order it; SO smart randonneurs will travel with a spare of the exact one their bike requires. And, since bikes will sometimes get knocked over by sleepy riders at a busy control's bike parking area, the spare hanger should be carried along during the event, too. It won't take up much space in the bottom of a saddlebag and only weighs an ounce, and it can save your ride.



Another bike problem seen on some grand randonnées is a broken or stripped seat post collar or bolt. This is the little gizmo that sits atop your frame's seat tube and grasps the seat post and controls the adjustment of saddle height. On older bikes it was integral to the frame, but most modern bikes have a removable version. What happens—usually during bike assembly at the rider's destination, or worse, during the ride itself, is that

a rider might feel raising or lowering the seat post is needed, perhaps to help a nagging knee or back injury that develops during the randonné. If over-tightened, the clamping bolt will snap, leaving an unrideable bicycle. On bikes with a replaceable collar, simply installing a new one will have the rider back on the road quickly, or for the older type with a replaceable two-piece seat post bolt, taking out the two broken halves and putting in a new one is a similarly fast repair. The size and weight of either type is minimal, and like a spare replaceable derailleur hanger, it is recommended that riders carry a spare during their brevets. (If one has a frame with a single socket-head seat post clamping bolt that threads into the frame itself, stripping or breaking that can be much more difficult to repair. It can be done, but not easily with simple hand tools in a motel room or on the roadside.)

Another mechanical problem seen on randonneuring events is also related to derailleur shifting. A broken gear cable isn't usually a show-stopper—unless the rider forgot to pack a spare cable. With a replacement at hand, most shift cables can be replaced quickly on the roadside with just a 5mm Allen wrench. (The repair will be easier if the cable is cut to length and the cut end soldered beforehand.) One should note, however, that this type of repair can be avoided entirely if worn-out shift cables are replaced *before* they break. Some periodic maintenance will go a long way toward helping the randonneur keep moving forward without this delay. It is recommended that riders replace their shift cables a few weeks before their springtime 600km brevet; the cables will be fine during a summer grand randonné. In particular, if the cables have been in use for a year or more, change them as soon as possible.

Also, please note that some of the latest cable shifting mechanisms inside brake lever handles make it much harder to change snapped cables.

In this case, it is easier to replace cables annually to avoid having a cable end failure. In recent years, some randonneurs have been caught out by the inability of these newer models to accept a new cable without a lot of work in a bike shop to get the old cable end out of the lever. (Older shifting/braking levers from a few years ago were much easier to work on by comparison.)

Users of modern electronic shifting obviously won't have to worry about broken shift cables and their components should work fine during any long ride. Experience has shown things don't always go so smoothly, however, and some grand randonné veterans still choose mechanical shifting for best reliability on "mission critical" big events. One problem I've seen is that a perfectly working electronic shifting seems to not work after being disassembled and reassembled for travel to an event. Another problem in recent years is that in a crowded control parking lot, especially for events like LEL or PBB, another rider might innocently lean their bike's saddle against someone's electronic shifting paddle/brake lever for a few hours of sleep at night and this discharges the other bike's shifting battery. *Zut!* What a mess. Things can be untangled, but only if the affected rider brought along the necessary charging cable (and voltage converter if on an international trip) and has enough time in hand to allow some recharging before the control's closing time. In any case, all users of electronic shifting must be fairly proficient at trouble-shooting their derailleurs after any potential shifting-related hiccups. Obviously with electronic shifting—like battery-powered head- and taillamps—one must remember to start the big event with all batteries fully charged. You might be surprised to know that more than one jet-lagged randonneur has forgotten to do this.

Finally, a broken spoke can happen during a brevet or grand randonné. It seems to be less common than in

the past, thankfully, but it still occurs. Normally with a traditional 32- or 36-spoke wheel, the other spokes can be quickly adjusted on the roadside with a simple spoke wrench so that the wheel becomes rideable, if not perfectly so. But with more riders going for low-spoke-count wheels for improved aerodynamics, the loss of one spoke greatly warps the wheel and usually has to be repaired on the spot before the ride can be resumed. But with many of today's deep-dish rims, sometimes the necessary spoke wrench is rather specialized and not readily carried on the bicycle. Doing this type of repair in the dark is also very difficult. More often than not, the rider must somehow get to a town with a bike shop to make their bike usable again, and during a brevet or grand randonné, this might not be possible. So, traditional wheels are still recommended for best reliability, unless the rider is willing to gamble their aero wheels will go the distance. Remember, bike racers are usually followed by a team car loaded with spare wheels and a mechanic, so for them a broken spoke is not the end of their event. They can also get service anywhere during the race, while randonneurs are on their own between controls. One tip is to not use the aero wheels in training and save them just for events. That will lessen the hard weekly usage that is the main contributor to broken spokes.

All in all, the randonneurs need to train effectively and ride a reliable bicycle if they want to earn a finisher's medal at a grand randonné. It will be worth all the effort and expense, and the satisfaction will last a lifetime. And, with some thoughtful packing of clothing layers and a few spare bike parts and tools, they will increase their chances of success. *Bonne Route!* 🚲

Replaceable derailleur hanger  
(from internet)

<https://biketart.com/products/wheels-manufacturing-replaceable-derailleur-hanger-dropout-145>



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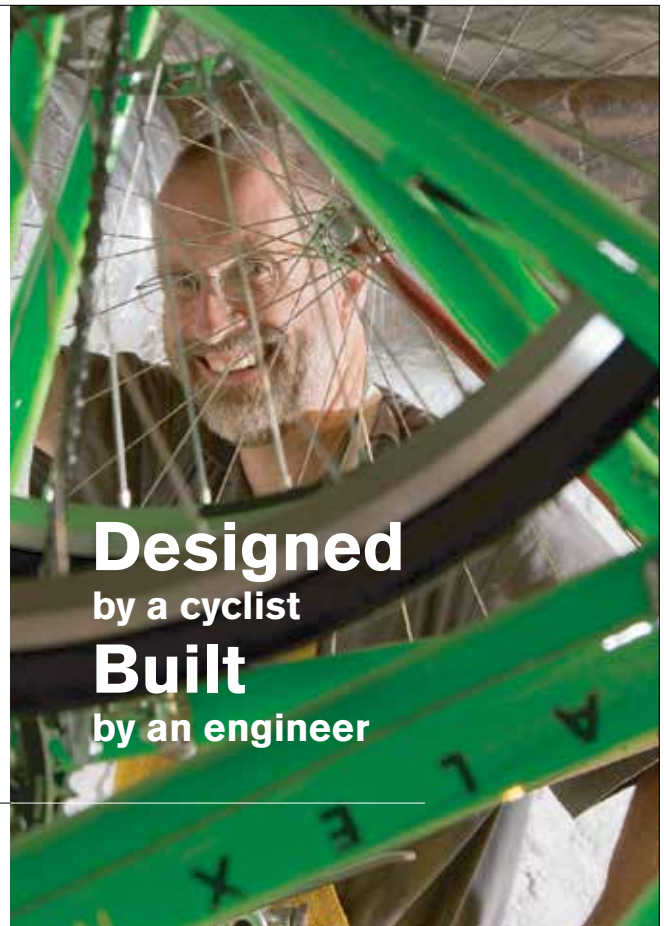
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# Kansas' Signal Hill Mixed Surface 100km (Brevet #2184) Delivers Fun and History

BY JOHN MATHIAS, OLATHE, KS (RUSA #9411)

The Signal Hill 100km mixed surface route has deep roots in American history. It traverses both a range of terrain and a multitude of historical stories.

The course is a mix of about 50/50 gravel and paved roads with a little grass and dirt thrown in to make it interesting. On this March day, we had cool, crisp weather and sunny skies.

The route begins at Olathe Community Center, across the street from the Santa Fe Trail and Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm Historic Site. Between 1821 and 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was primarily a commercial highway connecting Missouri and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop is the only working stagecoach stop left on the Santa Fe Trail, showcasing life on the Kansas frontier, 1860s farming, and stagecoach travel.

Kansas weather can be fickle at this time of year. In the previous week or so we had enjoyed both sunny 70's and chilly 30's with heavy snow. This day's ride started in the 30's and the temperatures climbed nicely into the 50's. For three out of the last four days it had rained, well over 3" in all, so we expected some soft gravel, maybe even mud.

A group of experienced gravel riders set out on roads alternating between sections of pavement and gravel. After 13 miles, we rolled by the old Sunflower Ordnance Works, more recently known as the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant. Established in 1941 on 10,500+ acres, it was the world's largest smokeless powder plant. During World War II it produced more than 200 million pounds of

propellants and employed as many as 12,000 people.

Next we rode through a long gravel section. I had anticipated it would be soft and muddy, but it was surprisingly firm and hardpacked.

Halfway through the ride, we climbed the ride's namesake, "Signal Hill," a long, narrow, twisting gravel climb with several false summits. Some believe the Civil War started not far from here.

Summitting this hill, you come to the famous Signal Oak tree. In the 1860s, residents would hang lanterns from the stately white oak, alerting settlers in Lawrence, KS, of approaching dangers during "Bleeding Kansas" that



The Signal Oak sign, and the route's namesake.

—PHOTOS JOHN MATHIAS

Keith Gates (#1445) and Spencer Klaassen (#1989) climb out of Baldwin City on the 2nd leg of the adventure.

included historical conflicts such as Quantrill's Raid in 1863 and the Battle of Black Jack in 1856.

Shortly after leaving Signal Oak we rolled into Baldwin, KS, for the second control. A highlight of the ride was enjoying some delicious Casey's General Store pizza, a Midwest classic. Well-fed and refueled, we hit the road again, only to realize we weren't as fast as we thought we were. We had ridden out with a sweet tail wind.

Shortly after leaving town the course takes an off-road twist. Riders must cross the Douglas Lake Dam. It's



Crossing the dam at Douglas County Lake, where we used the term "road" loosely. From left to right, Drew Evans (#11934) on the front, Reuben Cozmyer (#15287), our RBA Spencer Klaassen (#1989), and Keith Gates (#1445).



A well-earned control, at Gardner, KS.

—PHOTOS JOHN MATHIAS

Drew and Reuben climbing the long, dirt grades leading out of Douglas County Lake.



normally an easy ride across the grass-topped dam, but the rain meant it was extra soft on this day. Our tires sank in a bit, but we made it across, and the course changed back to gravel and pavement.

Before returning to Olathe, we rode around the old Naval Air Station Olathe which opened in 1942. Yes, there was a World War II Navy training station in Kansas, about as far from the ocean as you can get. Future astronaut John Glenn was in the first class to be trained at the base and he made his first solo flight in a military plane from the base.

As we rolled back into Olathe we



rode by Lone Elm Park. This park is built on land that was once known as the Lone Elm Campground. For several decades, starting in 1821, this site served as a campground and rendezvous point for travelers along the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California Trails.

It's amazing the things you can see and learn on a gravel ride. We passed by historical placards and old buildings, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn something fascinating about the history of our area and those who lived here before us.

Riding gravel takes you back to being a kid again. Unlike the paved roads in your area that you've been on countless times, gravel roads take you somewhere new, on an adventure. And better yet, no two gravel rides are ever the same. The elements affect the road so much that each ride is different, providing never-ending variety.

Gravel also teaches you things. It reminds you to let go of control. It reminds you to be humble. Learning to read gravel is critical to gravel riding success and enjoyment, not to mention speed. Moving even inches one way or the other on the gravel can greatly affect the ride, control, speed, etc. It's best to relax and let it guide you and

show you the right path. Especially at speed, it's better to provide gentle inputs. When you do a road ride, the elements have been tamed, the road flattened out, the brush cleared. On gravel, you are part of the outdoors. The road follows the terrain, even if that means a 10% or steeper grade and burning legs and lungs.

One of the things I find most enjoyable with riding gravel is the lack of traffic. During long, uninterrupted wonderful miles on a rural gravel road, we sometimes start to think it is ours and ours alone. Never forget: we are riding with two-way traffic.

With that comes the number one rule of riding gravel: NEVER climb a hill, crest a hill, or enter a blind turn anywhere other than the right shoulder! Ride as far right as possible and in single file if riding in a group. Odds are if you are going to meet a truck barreling towards you, it's going to be cresting a steep, blind hill. I don't care how deep or rutted the gravel is, how difficult it is, climb single file on the far-right side. And, don't let anyone else do anything less. Good riders watch out for other riders. Make it clear to all climbing, being far right could save your life.

Newer RUSA member Reuben Cozmyer (RUSA 15287) pauses for a rest and a photo after climbing the dreaded "Signal Hill."

Cycling is so special to all of us and if you haven't had a chance to do a gravel ride yet, I encourage you to try it. Dig out your widest tires, lower the pressure and go for a ride. You may just find you love it. Word of caution: you may become hooked and find yourself looking for one of the many gravel-specific bikes now on the market. My first was a Salsa Ti Fargo, which I rode on this event. On days I want to pick up the pace I take out the Warbird.

If you're in the Midwest and would like to check out the Signal Hill 100km, it's also a permanent (# 2998) waiting to be discovered anytime. Here's to enjoying gravel! Ride safe and I hope to see you on a ride soon. 🚲



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# Together We Ride: A Ride for Equality, Inclusion and Empowerment

BY DAWN PIECH, WITH THERESA FURNARI, LYDIA TROTT, DEB BANKS, SARAH BERGSTROM, WAYNE KING AND DAVE PENEGAR

Francis E. Willard, a nineteenth century leader of the women's reform movement, describes how, at fifty-three, she learned to ride a bicycle in her book *A Wheel Within a Wheel: How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle, With Some Reflections by the Way*. She writes, "A reform often advances most rapidly by indirection."

Her popular "Do Everything!" slogan, for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, was meant to encourage women to lobby, petition, preach, educate, or generally do whatever it takes to change the world. Suffragettes like her, Susan B. Anthony and Kitty Knox recognized that the bicycle could give a woman a taste of freedom. For the first time, she could get farther than walking distance without needing

a man to drive or chaperone her. Willard writes, "I also wanted to help women to a wider world, for I hold that the more interests women and men can have in common, in thought, word and deed, the happier it will be for the home." She realized that it's about cultivating a sense of independence and freedom. It's a feeling of going places in life. It's about getting up after you fall, doing things that scare you, and always

*"She who succeeds in gaining the mastery of the bicycle will gain the mastery of life."*

Francis E. Willard

finding a new ride to challenge you. It sounds like she had randonneuring in her bones.

Every March 8 is International Women's Day (IWD). The first IWD was celebrated in 1911, eight years before the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in the United States. IWD began to campaign for women's rights around the world and has evolved into a day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It is a rally for worldwide gender equality, and acts as a reminder of the struggle for gender equality. The theme of our event this year was Break the Bias, and this was the 111th anniversary of IWD.

In 2020, the inaugural International Women's Day Together We Ride took place. This year marked the third annual bike pilgrimage towards more

Alison Bock and Char Bock (87 years young) getting suited up for their tandem equality bike ride in the greater Chicagoland region.

— PHOTO DAWN PIECH







Meet the 2022 Together We Ride Persistence Badge of Honor, designed by Umbrella Works and produced by Falls Creek Outfitters.

Adina Crawford.  
—PHOTO AHMAR HAMDANI



equity for women and girls all over the US and the world. The event has grown to include a new website ([www.inspyrdmovement.org](http://www.inspyrdmovement.org)), 501c3 status, Instagram and Twitter pages and two “Together We Meditate” sessions for all participants and anyone interested in joining. Adina Crawford, fellow cyclist, yoga instructor and ambassador for Trek Bicycles and Black Girls Run, donated her time to lead the two meditation/yoga sessions, which had a total of twenty-two participants from all over the United States. Additionally, we had a local artist and participant in the greater Chicagoland region donate two paintings to raffle off to all of those in attendance at the meditation sessions.

In 2022, there were twenty-six calendared events via Randonneurs USA from sixteen regions during the time frame for the Third Annual International Women’s Day Together We Ride on Saturday, March 5th through Tuesday, March 8th. While not all events were specifically for Together We Ride, seeing all of the events on the calendar was heartwarming considering the challenges we have all faced, and continue to face, over the past few

years. Preliminary results show that 288 members started an event during this time frame. And from some reports received, there were many new riders at events. Sarah Bergstrom, Boston Randonneurs, reported that they had four new members at their first event of the season, “despite the chilly morning at the start.”

The following are reports/photos I received from the regions:

**DC Randonneurs — Theresa A. Furnari**

March 5, 2020, was a glorious day for D C Randonneurs 2nd Annual International Women’s Day populaire. The morning temperature was brisk but by 9:00am it turned into a perfect day for riding, an early spring day under a sunny sky. Of the twenty-nine riders, more than one-third were women, and our new randonneurs were Yasmin B, Ahmad K, and Dan S. Emily R picked up some new togs to dress like a

DC rando riders Theresa and Emily.  
—PHOTO GARDNER DUVALL





suffragette, many of whom were strong advocates for cycling. With the lovely sun, many riders lingered at the end to chat, have lunch, and cheer on finishers rolling in. A big thanks to the DC Randonneur board who waived the registration fee.

**Davis Randonneurs — Deb Banks**

We had a great couple of days celebrating women and International Women’s Day. On Saturday Davis hosted

a 130km brevet, so people chasing their Rouleur award could enjoy a good ride while celebrating women! Twenty-four participants started the day, a few with single or low double digit RUSA numbers. We also had a number of riders with very recent RUSA numbers, so all in all, it was a great crew. California is at its greenest now with fields of lupine, poppies and daffodils popping up all over the course. Add in sunshine and moderate temperatures, and it was a

DC Randonneurs ready to ride.  
— PHOTO LESLIE TIERSTEIN

fine day for a ride. Afterwards, most riders gathered at a local watering spot to “rehydrate” with hoppy refreshments. Everyone got home safely and reported having had a fine day.

On Sunday SABA hosted a social ride and 35 people showed up for a 10-mile casual ride on gravel in and around the Capitol and West Sacramento. And finally on Tuesday another smaller group of riders gathered for a 15-miler taking in murals around our River City.

**Indiana Randonneurs — Lydia Trott**

Together We Ride was our season opener 100km! Riders from IN, OH, and IL left from Teays River Brewery and Public House and quickly found themselves on quiet county roads riding through small towns and farm-lands. It was a blustery day with wind gusts well over 20 mph but the sun and rare temperature of 73 degrees for early March made up for it. At mile 50 riders had an optional control stop to take llama selfies and feed the llamas some snacks. After the ride, riders shared tales over food and beer. Teays River brewed us a special beer just for the



Lois Springsteen, Deb Banks, Susan Gishi and Kelly Ann Macy at the Davis 130km Populaire.

— PHOTOS KELLY ANN MACY, LOIS SPRINGSTEEN

event, IX II V (9 2 5) a special lactose Mocha Brown Ale which features the perfect combination of coffee, chocolate, and vanilla flavors.

**Tennessee Randonneurs — Dave Pengar**

The Tennessee Randonneurs/Harpeth Bike Club held our first International Women's Day Together We Ride event over the March 5th weekend on The Natchez Trace Parkway! We offered three distances—200km, 300km, and 400km—and had a total of seven riders participate with all seven finishing their respective distances. A cool start gave way to warm temperatures with brisk headwinds later in the morning which thankfully quieted down that evening. Although it was a small contingent, we helped spread the message of the 111th International Women's Day Ride when asked at convenience store controls why we were riding! (Next year we could bring cards with URL/event information to pass out to interested people.) Interest about the event spread further afterwards to co-workers and family members! Plans are in the works for next year's ride; we will add a 100km option to help grow participation in our region.

**Concluding Comments**

Together We Ride 2022 was four days of unity across the US and world as we all rode together in support of gender parity and equality. The event is a symbol of hope and solidarity with no boundaries and the bike as a medium or connection. The Together We Ride community welcomes additional regions next year. As Regional Brevet



Llamas show support for International Women's Day!

Below, Indiana Randonneurs striking the official Break the Bias pose.

—PHOTO LYDIA TROTT



Administrators are planning schedule submissions this fall, I welcome you to think about hosting an event or multiple events in 2023 for International Women's Day, either on the day or after, to include March 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th. My hope is that this annual ride will work to move the needle on gender equity while also recognizing the hard work that still needs to be done.

Join us next year as we continue to grow our community of positivity during the Fourth Annual International Women's Day Together We Ride.

If you have comments, suggestions, or feedback, contact me at [iwdbike@gmail.com](mailto:iwdbike@gmail.com) and/or check out the website at [www.inspyrdmovement.org](http://www.inspyrdmovement.org) for more about this empowerment peloton.

Pedal Forward. Ride Inspyrd. 🚲



Dawn Piech celebrating with cyclists and local advocates Kim Messina and Kelli Morgan in Elmhurst, IL.

—PHOTO DAWN PIECH



Audax Atlanta getting ready for their celebratory ride.

—PHOTO WAYNE KING

# Gravel + Rando = GRando!

BY DEB BANKS

RUSA has launched a new gravel program and we are hoping that many of you will want to participate. Riding gravel is the fastest growing sector in the bicycle industry (109% growth in bicycle sales last year alone), and it is perfect for our sport: it packs adventure, endurance, quieter roads, beautiful scenery, and self-sufficiency all into one.

Why dirt? First and foremost, because it is safer than riding on the road. National traffic and collision data show an uptick in bicycle v. car collisions across all 50 states, and there are fewer people who want to risk riding on the road. There are more than 1 million miles of unpaved roads in the United States and, in many parts of the nation, there is endless opportunity to piece together routes.

Plus, riding gravel has brought the greatest number of people, men and women, to endurance cycling in the last five years.

Last year, RUSA formed a gravel committee, and the group quickly got to work. We surveyed randonneurs through our newsletter *Between Controls*, researched other randonneuring

groups who have embraced gravel, and spent months hatching a program that the RUSA Board has agreed to implement. Thinking through a new program for randonneuring is not an easy task. Besides the parameters of the program itself, considering how it fits into the larger set of RUSA's offerings took time, and I will tell you that it is still a work in progress. To that end, please know that while we believe that the basics have been hammered out, there's room to grow and evolve.

## Here's the Dirt on the Program!

**1** — The program begins with events hosted by RBA's—gravel events are not a part of the permanent program. The committee felt strongly that any new program under the RUSA



umbrella should first and foremost be implemented by RBAs in their regions. As we work to grow randonneuring in the USA, we want more people to come into the sport. Events run by RBAs provide both a great supported entry into randonneuring, and RBAs can help inform changes to the program as it evolves.

**2** — Participation is optional as with all RUSA offerings. Of course, if dirt isn't your thing, you don't need to ride. Gravel events hosted by RBA's will never replace riding pavement. The intent of the gravel program is to add new and different offerings to an existing set of routes and events. Depending on your region and its topography, it may not lend itself to

**There are more than 1 million miles of unpaved roads in the United States and, in many parts of the nation, there is endless opportunity to piece together routes.**



gravel events, thereby limiting the number of new routes that can be created and events that can be run. The Gravel Committee is encouraging RBA's to submit routes for the gravel program but we hope that it will start small and grow, as we gauge the interest level of riders and continue to refine the program.

**3** — Gravel can be incorporated into any length of route. Many regions have dirt roads that are ripe for new routes. The Gravel Committee has collected tips and created guidance for submitting gravel routes for events. If you have a route that you think would be a fine addition to your region's set of routes, reach out to your RBA and see if they will work with you to get

the route submitted to the Routes Committee so that it can be run as a gravel event. Think of the gravel program as a "grassroots effort." RBA's often have quite a lot on their plate with a variety of offerings each year and taking on another program could stretch them thin (remember, we are all volunteers!). Help them out by volunteering to work on a route for submission.

**4** — Extra time can be given for kilometers of gravel in a route EXCEPT for ACP and RM events. For any gravel event, RBA's will submit a route and will identify the total number of kilometers with gravel. If the RBA wants to run the event as a RUSAB (RUSA Brevet) or RUSAP (RUSA Populaire) event, the

Pavement ends, fun begins.

—PHOTO DEBRA BANKS

number of kilometers of gravel will run through Jake Kassen's "Gravelator" (a time calculator for gravel) and will offer extra time based on the number of kilometers and a lower average speed. That extra time is added to the regular time limit providing the rider with extra minutes depending on the total amount of gravel. More gravel = more time. Note: for any route that is hosted as an ACP event, there will be no extra time calculated.

**5** — In addition to having more time allotted for riding unpaved

sections, intermediate control times will be lifted, so there will be no penalties for riders missing an intermediate control time. However, intermediate control times remain a useful tool for riders to gauge their forward progress on an event and should be used as such.

**6** — Gravel events count for current RUSA awards (except ACP awards) and new awards are underway for gravel specific events. Gravel specific awards will first be based on a points system similar to the annual RUSA distance awards. Stay tuned to learn more about these when they come on-line at the RUSA store.

**7** — Given that the gravel program began on January 1, 2022, any rider that has earned gravel kilometers will see those GK's earned on their results

page. The webteam is working quickly to create all the necessary web changes so that gravel routes, events, and results can all be working for both RBAs and riders. This is a big process and progress is being made, so be patient grasshoppers! Look for more

information on when these changes will come online in Between Controls.

**8** — We start fresh in January 2022. There is no grandfathering in of gravel events prior to January 1, 2022. While there have been years of gravel events hosted in a few regions like the SFR Adventure Series created by Max Polleto, the national RUSA Gravel Program launched this past January. RUSA gravel awards earned will have a hard start date from January.

### Final Thoughts

you do not need a new gravel-specific bicycle for these new offerings. While N+1 is something that many randonneurs enjoy, the intent of the program is not to exclude riders by requiring a specific bicycle. However, a machine that can take wider tires will increase your riding enjoyment.

It is our hope that within a few years most regions will have some gravel events in their quiver for riders. Please contact the Gravel Committee with ideas you have: [gravel@rusa.org](mailto:gravel@rusa.org). The RUSA Board and the Gravel Committee are excited to see this program grow and evolve. It's clear that gravel is here to stay, so let's embrace the dirt. 🚲

### GRAVEL COMMITTEE:

**Deb Banks — Davis Bike Club Randonneurs**

**Greg Smith — Driftless Randonneurs**

**John Lee Ellis — Rocky Mountain Cycling Club**

**Dawn Piech — Driftless Randonneurs**

**Bryan Kilgore — San Francisco Randonneurs**

**Rob Welsh — Minnesota Randonneurs**

**Jake Kassen — New England Randonneurs**



# RUSA Awards

## RUSA American Explorer Award

By definition, a randonnée 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 |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------|
| Birdsell, Carl L.     | St Joseph, MO     | 12           | 12/31/21 |
| Brenner, Andy         | Basking Ridge, NJ | 14           | 2/2/22   |
| Chin-Hong, Patrick    | Amherst, MA       | 31           | 3/13/22  |
| Fraser, Malcolm R     | Boulder, CO       | 21           | 3/9/22   |
| Hreha, A Sarah (F)    | New York, NY      | 11           | 3/29/22  |
| Piech, Dawn Marie (F) | Lombard, IL       | 14           | 3/2/22   |
| Snyder, Keith         | Bethel, CT        | 10           | 4/3/22   |
| Speier, Andy          | Olympia, WA       | 16           | 2/3/22   |
| Swain, George         | West Park, NY     | 12           | 4/3/22   |

## Galaxy Award

The Galaxy Award is for RUSA members who have successfully completed at least 100,000 km in RUSA events.

| NAME              | CITY, STATE   | APPROVED |
|-------------------|---------------|----------|
| Martin, Charlie A | Sunnyvale, CA | 4/10/22  |

## 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 |
|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Russell, Amy L (F) [4] | Waco, TX    | 3/28/22  |

# RUSA Awards

## 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   |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| 3/25/2022 | Uz, Metin | Palo Alto, CA |

| EVENTS                          |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 2017 Gold Rush Randonnee        |  |
| 2017 Taste of Carolina          |  |
| 2018 Cascade 1200               |  |
| 2021 Colorado High Country 1200 |  |

## 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 |
|--------------------|-------------|----------|
| Lanteigne, Ken [2] | Gresham, OR | 2/24/22  |

# VISIT THE RUSA STORE

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## 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 |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Cannon, Jeffrey S [3]      | Los Angeles, CA   | 2/7/22   |
| Counts, Robert [2]         | Bethesda, MD      | 2/20/22  |
| Dawe, Nick D [4]           | Austin, TX        | 2/28/22  |
| DelNero, Gary M [6]        | Leawood, KS       | 2/10/22  |
| Ellis, John Lee [15]       | Lafayette, CO     | 3/3/22   |
| Foley, Mary (F) [6]        | New Egypt, NJ     | 4/11/22  |
| Foley, Paul A [8]          | Golden, CO        | 3/14/22  |
| Gomon, Robert              | Idlewydle, MD     | 4/7/22   |
| Haas, Stephen D [7]        | Alameda, CA       | 3/30/22  |
| Haggerty, Tom [10]         | San Francisco, CA | 4/3/22   |
| Howell, Jim [3]            | Niwot, CO         | 3/2/22   |
| Jordan, Betty Jean (F) [8] | Monticello, GA    | 3/23/22  |
| Kanaby, Gary [7]           | Salado, TX        | 4/10/22  |
| Klaassen, Spencer [16]     | Saint Joseph, MO  | 4/4/22   |
| Kreger, Matt [2]           | Woodinville, WA   | 2/14/22  |
| Rodgers, D W [2]           | Becket, MA        | 4/1/22   |
| Senter, Eric [10]          | Davis, CA         | 4/3/22   |
| Sexton, Robert B [6]       | San Jose, CA      | 2/27/22  |
| Theriault, Michael [4]     | San Francisco, CA | 3/8/22   |
| Uz, Metin [8]              | Palo Alto, CA     | 3/25/22  |
| Walsh, Mick [4]            | Seattle, WA       | 2/13/22  |

## 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 |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Behning, Mark C           | Sacramento, CA       | 3/27/22  |
| Cox, Gregory              | Seattle, WA          | 2/21/22  |
| Feinberg, Brian K         | Cupertino, CA        | 2/4/22   |
| King, Wayne A             | Flowery Branch, GA   | 3/3/22   |
| Lentz, Rick               | Vineland, NJ         | 3/19/22  |
| Maglieri, Christopher [2] | Weatogue, CT         | 4/11/22  |
| Salyer, Kevin D           | Lafayette, CA        | 4/9/22   |
| Singer, Ian Ryan          | Weston, FL           | 3/28/22  |
| Thompson, W David [3]     | New Smyrna Beach, FL | 3/18/22  |

## Ultra P-12 Award

The Ultra P-12 award recognizes the accomplishment of ten P-12 Awards over any number of years.

| NAME             | CITY, STATE        | APPROVED |
|------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Myers, Mike      | Baxter Springs, KS | 4/6/22   |
| Myers, Nancy (F) | Baxter Springs, KS | 4/6/22   |

# 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 |
|----------------------|----------------|----------|
| Driscoll, Dan        | Arlington, TX  | 3/27/22  |
| Gottlieb, Gary P     | Aledo, TX      | 3/27/22  |
| Pacino, Dana A (F)   | Aledo, TX      | 3/27/22  |
| Shields, Susan M (F) | Fort Worth, TX | 3/27/22  |
| Stevens, Sharon (F)  | Richardson, TX | 3/27/22  |
| Wright, Pamela (F)   | Fort Worth, TX | 3/27/22  |

## 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 |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|
| Haggerty, Tom | San Francisco, CA | 3/16/22  |
| Senter, Eric  | Davis, CA         | 4/3/22   |

## 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 |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Cardell, Greg           | Valencia, CA       | 2/24/22  |
| Driscoll, Dan [13]      | Arlington, TX      | 2/2/22   |
| Ellis, John Lee [9]     | Lafayette, CO      | 3/9/22   |
| Foley, Mary (F) [6]     | New Egypt, NJ      | 3/2/22   |
| Howell, Jim             | Niwot, CO          | 2/5/22   |
| Lakwete, Angela (F) [6] | Auburn, AL         | 4/11/22  |
| Maglieri, Christopher   | Weatogue, CT       | 3/12/22  |
| Myers, Mike [10]        | Baxter Springs, KS | 4/5/22   |
| Myers, Nancy (F) [10]   | Baxter Springs, KS | 4/5/22   |
| Olszyk, Anita (F) [7]   | Lacey, WA          | 2/27/22  |
| Perera, Shan [11]       | Seattle, WA        | 4/10/22  |
| Povman, Michael D       | Sleepy Hollow, NY  | 3/19/22  |
| Tamas, Tibor [6]        | Fort Worth, TX     | 2/15/22  |
| Walker, David           | Fremont, CA        | 3/13/22  |

## 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.

| NAME (25-49 unique routes) | CITY, STATE          | APPROVED |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Anderson, Rorie (F)        | Palm Bay, FL         | 2/1/22   |
| Bishop, Eddie              | Lacey, WA            | 3/30/22  |
| Cardell, Greg              | Valencia, CA         | 4/5/22   |
| Clark, Rebecca (F)         | Albany, NY           | 3/13/22  |
| Dionisio, Arnel            | Castro Valley, CA    | 2/1/22   |
| Dobberteen, Dean           | Bonita, CA           | 2/23/22  |
| Fichialos, Benjamin David  | Pleasant Grove, UT   | 2/24/22  |
| Flanagan, Tara M (F)       | Alameda, CA          | 2/3/22   |
| Frederick-Rothwell, Ian    | Austin, TX           | 4/13/22  |
| Haskins, Steven D          | Hartselle, AL        | 3/27/22  |
| Hastings, Geoff            | San Francisco, CA    | 2/3/22   |
| Healy, Mike                | Santa Rosa Beach, FL | 3/27/22  |
| Moore, Jennifer (F)        | Boulder, CO          | 4/6/22   |
| Parsons, Gary Allen        | Nevada City, CA      | 2/22/22  |
| Smith, Kevin J             | Seattle, WA          | 3/30/22  |
| Volkoff, Brian             | Rocklin, CA          | 3/26/22  |

(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 (50-74 unique routes)   | CITY, STATE      | APPROVED |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Buschman, Robert W           | Portland, OR     | 4/4/22   |
| Ehlman II, Thomas N          | Broomfield, CO   | 3/17/22  |
| Flitcroft, Ian D             | Williamson, GA   | 2/25/22  |
| Franzen, J Scott             | Wernersville, PA | 3/29/22  |
| Heller, Luke                 | Asheville, NC    | 3/2/22   |
| Lagasca, Robert L            | Shoreline, WA    | 3/7/22   |
| Lanteigne, Ken               | Gresham, OR      | 3/8/22   |
| McAlister, Grant             | Morro Bay, CA    | 3/4/22   |
| Newcomer, Robert C.          | Atlanta, GA      | 2/25/22  |
| Peterson, Eric               | Naperville, IL   | 4/6/22   |
| Whitlock, Ray                | Seattle, WA      | 1/30/22  |
| NAME (75-99 unique routes)   | CITY, STATE      | APPROVED |
| Harper, David                | Seattle, WA      | 2/6/22   |
| NAME (100-124 unique routes) | CITY, STATE      | APPROVED |
| Huber, Kerin (F)             | Pasadena, CA     | 2/15/22  |
| Ludviksson, Audunn           | Seattle, WA      | 1/30/22  |
| Winczewski, Peg (F)          | Tacoma, WA       | 3/30/22  |

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**Tell us about:**

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# AMERICAN RANDONNEUR

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