



Randonneur

Marathon Cycling

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Madame Prez Says

Danelle Laidlaw

Didn't we just luck out with the weather for the AGM ride again this year? If you weren't there, you missed a great ride and as always, a great lunch. Thanks to Jude Morrison for organizing the event. And thanks to Harold Bridge for recruiting Jude when he decided to extend his rando season in Europe this fall.

Doug Latornell finished off a productive year by orchestrating a smoothly run AGM. After the fun of giving out awards, and certificates, and making presentations, Doug presided over the elections. We are welcoming Ian Stephen to the position of Vice-President. Already he is proving to be a match for the position. Roger Street is staying on as Treasurer, and Larry Wasik will continue to carry out the duties of Club Secretary (yes!). Thanks to Doug and congratulations to Ian, Roger, and Larry.

So, if you think you can rest on your laurels until April, it is going to be tough with all these keeners around. Karen Smith is once again organizing Spin Classes every Friday evening at Cameron Recreation Centre - 7:30 p.m. Call her at 732-0212 to book a bike. Bob Marsh (467-7065) is encouraging everyone to do weekly rides starting from Fort Langley at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The route and distance will vary (he is hoping to use some of these rides as research for his new job - short ride co-ordinator) but the ride goes rain or shine.

The new roster of event organizers has been filled for this year (thanks to all who volunteered), but these organizers will need volunteers to staff controls and to help with registration. If you are able to help, please call the organizer or John Bates at 856-5818 to offer assistance. Watch for some new routes and the return of some of your favourites.

I am going to be organizing the Populaire with Sharon Street. I know it's early yet, but as someone reminded me recently, it is less than 6 months away. If you can help, give me a call (737-0043 or 1-877-606-2453)

Thanks goodness that there are so many good people around who are willing to make this club so great - all I have to do as Prez is sit back and collect pins - right, Wayne? See you on the road.



John Bates & Danelle Laidlaw (Photo B. Marsh)

Newsletter Changes

Susan Allen and Cheryl Lynch

The club has seen a fabulous increase in the number of riders and the number of rides. Our database report has grown and grown. To reduce

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the total number of pages, the long ride and short ride reports will be combined into one. This amalgamation will mean that addresses and phone numbers will not be included except in the year end issue. **KEEP THIS DATABASE REPORT.** It will be your phone list until this time next year.

2001 Schedule

Susan Allen

Here is the 2001 Schedule for the BC Randonneurs. At this time I do not have schedules for the Naniamo and Whitehorse rides.

Note Peace = Fort St. John

- ◆ Pacific Populaire: Apr 8
- ◆ Peace Populaires I: 50 & 25 km: Apr 14
- ◆ Peace Populaires II: 75 & 50 km : Apr 21
- ◆ L. Mainland 200 km : Apr 22
- ◆ Kamloops 200 km : Apr 28
- ◆ Peace Populaires III: 100 & 75 km : Apr 29
- ◆ L. Mainland 300 km : May 5
- ◆ Peace Populaires IV: 160 & 100 km: May 6
- ◆ Kamloops 300 km : May 12
- ◆ Fleche Pacifique : May 19-20
- ◆ Peace 200 km : May 20
- ◆ L. Mainland 400 km : Jun 2
- ◆ Peace 300 km : Jun 2
- ◆ L. Mainland 50, 100 & 150 km: Jun 9
- ◆ Kamloops 400 km : Jun 9
- ◆ L. Mainland 600 km : Jun 16-17
- ◆ Peace 400 & 300 km : Jun 16
- ◆ L. Mainland 1000 km : Jun 23-25
- ◆ Kamloops 600 km: Jun 23-24
- ◆ L. Mainland 134 km : Jul 1

British Columbia Randonneur Marathon Cycling is the hardcopy newsletter of the BC Randonneurs Cycling Club. The BC Randonneurs are a founding member of the Randonneurs Mondiaux (1993). The club is affiliated with Cycling BC and the Canadian Cycling Association.

The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the article authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, club executive, Cycling BC, the CCA, or Randonneurs Mondiaux.

The newsletter is published in hardcopy form approximately every six weeks. Articles and notices are posted to the club webletter at www.randonneurs.bc.ca as received (or a little later if work or riding get in the way) and subsequently edited and formatted into this newsletter. If you are happy with the html or pdf version on the web and do not wish to receive further paper newsletters please send me an email at stoker@telus.net. I email the data reports as pdf.

Editor: Susan Allen

Submissions: Please send articles to me. My preference is plain text files or Word and digital photos in JPEG format to stoker@telus.net. Or mail (preferable a diskette) to Susan Allen, 2356 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6K 1V9

Next publication deadline is January 4, 2001.

- ◆ Peace 600 & 400 km : Jul 1-2
- ◆ L. Mainland 200 km : Jul 8
- ◆ Peace 200 km : Jul 14
- ◆ L. Mainland 300 km : Jul 21
- ◆ Victoria Populaire : Jul 22
- ◆ Peace 300 km : Aug 4
- ◆ L. Mainland 400 km : Aug 11
- ◆ Victoria Off-Road Populaire : Aug 19
- ◆ L. Mainland 600, 400, 300 & 200 : Aug 25
- ◆ L. Mainland 1000 km : Sep 1-3
- ◆ Peace 75, 160 & 200 km : Sep 8
- ◆ L. Mainland 200 km : Sep 9
- ◆ AGM Ride and Brunch : Sep 23

Clothing for Sale

Danelle Laidlaw

Tights (\$50), BC Jerseys (\$65), and gloves (\$18) all in limited sizes are still available - call Danelle (737-0043) for details.

We will be ordering new clothing in the new year. If you have a preference of what we order this year, call (737-0043) and let Danelle know. Our choices are shorts, Canadian jerseys, Canadian jackets, and ??

Pin Designs Requested

Susan Allen

A design for the 2001 pin is needed. If you have any ideas get them down (paper or electronic), phone Karen Smith 732-0212 and arrange how to get your design to her. She can also give you ideas on basic design criteria. New ideas from new members especially welcome.

Year 2000 Awards and Statistics

Cheryl Lynch and Susan Allen

These awards will be presented at the Spring Social.

Randonneur 5000

Completed in 1999

Larry Wasik, Ken Bonner, Deirdre Arscott, Bob LePage, Roger Street, John Bates, Doug Cho, Manfred Kuchenmuller, Real Prefontaine, Dick Nicholls, Danelle Laidlaw

Completed in 2000

Sandy Sandquist, Eric Fergusson, Ron Himschoot, Keith Nichol, Cheryl Lynch

Super Randonneur

Keith Nichol, Eric Fergusson, Manfred Kuchenmuller
Cheryl Lynch, Michel Richard, Ken Bonner, John Bates
Karen Smith, Ron Himschoot, Henry Berkenbos,

Wayne Harrington, Doug Latornell, Susan Allen, Dave Johnson, Danelle Laidlaw, Noboru Yonemitsu, Ray Wagner, Wim Kok, Real Prefontaine, Barry Chase, Peter Stary, Peter Mair, Barb Henniger, Jim Giles

BC Randonneur Super 1000

Ali Holt, Bob Bailey, Bob Bose, Bob Marsh, Bruce Hainer, Chris McPherson, Dan McGuire, David Blanche, Frances Caton, Harold Bridge, Ian Stephen, Ivan Andrews, Jimmy Vallence Keith Fletcher, Keith Fraser, Larry Voth, Mike Poplawski, Neil Jorgensen, Roger Holt, Sandy Sandquist, Sean Williams, Ted Milner, Trevor Stocki, Val White, Wally Enns

BC Randonneur Super 500

Brenda Andrews, Bruce Mol, Chrystal Dalcyce, Daryl Geisheimer, Gord Cook, Jan Westendorp, Joe Turtle, Kang Lee, Kevin Strong, Margaret Moreau, Maureen Mol, Rainy Kent, Stuart Thomas, Susan Barr

BC Randonneur Statistics

	1999	2000
Members	229	208
Fleche Distance	13,542 km	19,080 km
Fleche Riders	34	48
Brevet Total Distance	147,400 km	174,900 km
Total # Brevets	425 by 145 riders	427 by 157 riders
Brevet Average/Rider (no Fleche)	1010 km	1114 km
Brevet Maximum/Rider	7561 km (Real)	7503.7 km (Manfred)
500/1000 Series Total Distance	32,800 km	52,519 km
500/1000 Series Total Rides	380	603
LMPOP Distance	22,250 km	29,425 km
LMPOP Riders	263	389

John Hathaway Memorial Trophy (and Top 25 in Total Brevet Distance)

M. Kuchenmuller: 7504
R. Himschoot: 6100, K. Bonner: 5839,
M. Richard: 5280, K. Nicol: 5200,
D. Johnson: 5083, N. Yonemitsu: 4900,
E. Fergusson: 4739, J. Bates: 4300,
C. Lynch: 3800, H. Berkenbos: 3700,

K. Smith: 3678, D. Nicholls: 3204,
K. Fraser: 3139, S. Sandquist: 2780,
R. Wagner: 2700, D. Laidlaw: 2684,
W. Harrington: 2580, S. Allen: 2378
D. Latornell: 2378, R. Prefontaine: 2104,
G. Berwick: 2000, B. Chase: 1924,
B. Hainer: 1874, D. Blanche: 1868

2K in Y2K Unescorted

Richard Nicholls aka "Dick the kid"

At the 1999 AGM when Real Prefontaine said that he was considering organizing a 2000 km event for the new Millennium, I felt an immediate rush! Wow!" I thought completing PBP was the pinnacle of man's potential, and now a new barrier to conquer! Well to cut a short story long, after much preparation and anticipation, the night before the start of 2K in Y2K the virus struck. At midnight with 4 hours to go before my alarm would start me on my countdown to the start, I woke up drenched in sweat and shivering. How could such cruelty be struck on somebody so keen and ready. That could have been the end of my story except for a nutty UBC professor by the name of Noboru Yonemitsu. Noboru or "Nobo" as he likes to be called also had a big disappointment. His work schedule would not let him complete the 2000. Like me, he was devastated. When he heard about my predicament he came up with an alternative plan to do our own 2K in Y2K on 15th August. Nobo and I share a few common traits. We are both very competitive under our façade, and we are both purists at heart. With these basics we decided that we were not only going to beat the time of the "Pathfinders" but we would do it unsupported, and carry all our own supplies for the whole journey. We submitted our route to the "Godfather" (Real Prefontaine) who approved it and designated all the "Control points".

At 0515 on Tuesday August 15th 2000 we left Tsawwassen with daylight just making it's first suggestion over the mountains. It was colder than I had expected, with fog patches announcing the nearing of fall, but we were excited, so we just went faster to keep warm. We didn't stop until we got to Yarrow at 0845. Real met us there for breakfast to give us replacement control cards for the two that Canada Post had decided to store for us! Those sausages, eggs and hash browns were just the fuel we needed to arrive at Hope with a 30.1 kph average speed. That would be the end of flat terrain until we returned to Hope 6 days

Coming Events

Web Site Launch – Dec 1

www.randonneurs.bc.ca

Eric Fergusson 733-6657

Spring Social – March

Date and Place next issue

for info: Susan Allen 734-2504

Island Populaire – March

Dates for Island next issue

Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

Seattle Populaire

Check web site

<http://www.geocities.com/>

Pipeline/5293/

Seattle 200 – Mar 31

Check web site (above)

Terry Zrmhal

Pacific Populaire – Apr 8

Riley Park

Danelle Laidlaw 737-0043

Seattle 300 - Apr 14

Check web site (above)

Bill Dussler

Peace Populaires I – Apr 14

50 & 25 km: Fort St. John

Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Peace Populaires II – Apr 21

75 & 50 km: Fort St. John

Wim Kok 250-785-4589

L. Mainland 200 – Apr 22

Dan McGuire 942-3235

Fleche Northwest -Apr 27-29

Finish Semi-ah-moo

See web site (Seattle Randos)

Kamloops 200 – Apr 28

Kamloops

Bob Boonstra 250-828-2869

Peace Populaires III - Apr 29

100 & 75 km: Fort St. John

Wim Kok 250-785-4589

L. Mainland 300 – May 5

Deirdre Arscott 222-3587

Peace Populaires IV - May 6

160 & 100 km: Fort St. John

Wim Kok 250-785-4589

later. We did a quickie "Subway" stop in Hope then the ascent up the "Coquihalla". It's some climb in a car, but when you're looking for a challenge, take your bike up there and give it a try. It's almost 7000 feet of accumulated climbing! At 0130 Wednesday morning we were asleep in the Panorama Motel in Kamloops. We had completed 381 km in under 20 hours including traversing the Coquihalla.

It was 0800 before we were finally headed North out of Kamloops. We were obviously too confident because we should have been trying to keep ahead of schedule to allow for the unforeseen. Heading up the Yellowhead Highway we made a fatal mistake that would accumulate on us for the next 3 days. It was my fault because of my affinity for ice cream and this beautiful blonde woman serving them! When the sign advertised 48 flavours and the temperature was getting around 30 I couldn't resist. Because we were doing so well we dilly dallied for almost an hour before getting going. Then the inevitable: Nobo had a flat and would you believe an hour later another one. Yes you're right, it was a bad patch and we had to stop a couple more times to pump it up again before we put in a new tube. We had planned to sleep at Tete Jaune Cache, but by midnight the temperature was close to freezing and as my shivering got out of control I induced a wheel shimmy that scared me so much that as we arrived in Valemount at 0100 we decided that we might as well sleep there.

4 hours sleep, and by the time we had eaten our English breakfast we had wasted another hour and a half of daylight. The road surface had deteriorated and would not improve again until almost McBride. From Kamloops we had been steadily climbing alongside the North Thompson River but at Tete Jaune Cache we transitioned to following the headwaters of the Fraser River, which of course is all down hill. That would have been fine if the road was in the Fraser! Unfortunately the road builders decided that to make their job more interesting they would design it like a giant roller coaster. They did a great job! It went up and down more times than a bride's night shirt.

About my normal tea time my rear tire decided to evacuate with the help of a small piece of wire. As we were trying to get it fixed a pick-up stopped and asked us if we had seen the young bear 200 meters up the road. We hadn't, so he said he would just wait with us should Mommy bear be near. As we were nearly done we thanked the Alberta gent and prepared to get going. A few minutes later the pick-up was back with news that another young bear was on the other side and he wanted to stay until we were really on our way. Well we only saw one GIANT black bear (I swear its teeth were big enough to make a chess set), but I'm sure there were a lot more watching us, together with the moose that hang out big time around here. We made Prince George by 2300.

As our Prince George Vanderhoof return was our easy day we had time for a relaxed Dennys breakfast and a chance for Nobo to nurse his infected chest which he had been trying to minimize since we left home! We left Prince George at 0800 just after the rain started. As we started the climb towards Vanderhoof the rain got heavier, but thank goodness it was a good climb to keep us warm. By the time we reached our turnaround point 8 km short of Vanderhoof, it was sunny and warm. We decided after this much effort, and in the Rando spirit of full measure, we would go all the

way to Vanderhoof. After a great sit down lunch served by a girl right out of the center of Playboy we were on our way. We were now headed home with 1090 clicks under our belt. Well for a half an hour it was great, then the thunderstorm hit us and followed us all the way to Prince George. 2 1/2 hours of hell. Heavy rain, sleet and gusty winds that threatened to blow us off our bikes, and for me another side gust induced shimmy. The rain was so heavy it was running in my helmet and out my shoes. There was lightning all around us and Nobo was witness to a tree being split in two by lightening less than 500 meters away. We didn't dare stop or we would have died of exposure. To add to the saga Nobo broke a spoke on his back wheel. He had served time in Prince George so he knows all the good bike shops. Don at "McBike Cycle shop" was our saving grace. Not only did they keep the shop open late but Nobo came away with a truer wheel than new! And we managed to raise our body temperature to close to normal. It was Boston Pizza for dinner half naked as our clothes were in the Laundromat.

We slept quick and by 0515 we were up the hill again, but now we were headed South. At McLeese Lake we hit our low of the trip. Nobo's bronchitis was taking its toll. While we were being served by a waitress in competition with the Vanderhoof waitress for centerfold qualifier we had a meeting. Nobo suggested we each go at our own pace otherwise we might both fail! I didn't like that but thank goodness it only lasted a couple of hours before we were reunited and continued as a team. We made it all the way to Lac La Hache (328 kms and a seedy Motel for reward). Next morning we couldn't understand why we were having such a job keeping warm until at our breakfast stop the owner mentioned it was minus 4°C This was the middle of August!

In theory we only needed 226 clicks to make Merritt. So when a sophisticated BMW motor cyclist told us that the road from Spences Bridge to Merritt wasn't that steep, we thought about pushing through to Hope. Right! On a motor cycle maybe! By the time we had climbed that stretch I was tested as to whether I could keep the peddles turning on a 39/27. We were bushed. My Achilles tendon was sending me strong signals about fatigue stress, and Nobo's bronchitis and fever that he had been fighting the whole trip gave us a good reason to take a 6 hour sleep.

At 0500 we were on our way. With nothing open for food, it was Gatorade and Cliff Bars. But that's what got us up the Coquihalla to Hope. From there back to Tsawwassen we were on a mission. For the last hour we averaged 34 kph. We had covered 2035 km in 158 hours 55 mins. And we celebrated with Champagne

Caloric Expenditure When Cycling

E. W. [Wim] Kok, Peace Region Brevet Co-ordinator

In his submission on pace-line riding, Tom Hocking wrote that a substantial amount of energy can be saved when drafting. It may be of interest to look at the following info regarding energy requirements. Richard Rafoth in his 1993 book "*Bicycling Fuel: Nutrition for Bicycle Riders*" [Publisher: San Francisco Bicycle Books. P. 31] included an interesting table about the exponential increase in caloric requirements as speed increases. It is not

difficult then to calculate how much can be saved by using a pace-line.

Riding Speed Calories Expended [per units time and distance]

[Mph]	[Kph]	[Cal/Mile]	[Cal/Km]	[Cal/Hr]	[Cal/Minute]
5	8.0	7.4	4.6	87	1.5
6	9.6	8.3	5.2	100	1.7
7	11.2	9.3	5.8	114	1.9
8	12.8	10.5	6.6	134	2.2
9	14.4	11.9	7.4	157	2.6
10	16.0	13.4	8.4	184	3.1
11	17.6	15.1	9.4	216	3.6
12	19.2	16.9	10.6	253	4.2
13	20.8	18.9	11.8	296	4.9
14	22.4	21.1	13.2	345	5.7
15	24.0	23.4	14.6	401	6.7
16	25.6	25.8	16.2	463	7.7
17	27.2	28.5	17.8	534	8.9
18	28.8	31.3	19.5	613	10.2
19	30.4	34.2	21.4	700	11.7
20	32.0	37.3	23.3	797	13.3
21	33.6	40.6	25.4	903	15.0
22	35.2	44.0	27.5	1019	17.0
23	36.7	47.6	29.8	1146	19.1
24	38.4	51.4	32.1	1283	21.4
25	40.0	55.3	34.6	1433	23.9
26	41.6	59.4	37.1	1594	26.6
27	43.2	63.6	39.8	1767	29.5
28	44.8	68.0	42.5	1954	32.6
29	46.4	72.5	45.3	2154	35.9
30	48.0	77.5	48.2	2365	39.4

Note: Rafoth bases this table on the following assumptions: a 75 kg rider with a 10 kg bicycle, a base metabolism of 50 cal/hr and a 25% efficiency for the human "machine" For estimation purposes these values are sufficiently accurate for all cyclists.

Source: R. Rafoth 1993. *Bicycling Fuel: Nutrition for Bicycle Riders*. San Francisco: Bicycle Books. p. 31

Personal Security

Ian Stephen

As Mel Gibson once said "Personal security is serious business. That's why I pack an Uzi!" The following personal security tip for randonneurs is only for us guys though and may be a little off colour, so women and children please close your eyes.

Now gentlemen, the family nurse assures me that I am the last guy to ever think of this. I think she is just trying to dissuade me from sharing it though. More on that conspiracy theory later. The great majority of times that I go to the men's room, I walk straight to the urinal because that's what I've always done. I am often riding by myself though, so find myself with rack bag in hand and no good place to set it down. The bag usually ends up a little behind me because the floor looks less splashed there. This results in much anxiety as I know that anyone could grab my ...pannier and while we randonneurs are probably fit enough to give chase, the

circumstances give a thief a distinct advantage. Well guys, go to the stall instead! Even if you don't really need to sit! It finally dawned on me recently at a Starbucks. There's even often a hook on the door that a pannier can be hung on. This is not totally safe, but it's a darn sight safer than setting it on the floor. It may take some getting used to, but women have been using the stalls for everything for so long they don't even have urinals in the ladies rooms anymore! I don't know why they didn't share this idea with us, but now the secret is out and we can all be a little more secure for it.

Editor's Note: Do not put your purse or small pannier on the hook on the back of the door in a really "poor" area. The purse/pannier can be easily knocked down by reaching over the top of the door and then quickly scooped up from the ground (while you are otherwise occupied). Airport, etc. washrooms provide (women anyway) with a separate purse shelf that folds down. It is well away from the door.

Flatlander does it again

Danelle Laidlaw

Hey, wasn't that another great day for the Flatlander? We usually have good weather for that ride and this year was no exception. And, there was a good turn-out for it too. And as is usually the case, there were a few new faces. The Flatlander is good for bringing out new people - the name is perfect, the weather is usually good, and it is the end of the season, so people feel they might actually be able to do the distance. And they do!

It was good to see Michel Richard, Val White, and Bob Bailey out again after their respective accidents. Larry Voth is not yet back on the bike but recovering well. You just can't keep good randos down - thank goodness.

I think Tim has almost done it - he has found an almost hill-less route for the Flatlander. And just to keep everyone on their toes, each year he has some little change to make sure everyone is paying attention - and of course, they aren't. But everyone figures it out and gets on the right track eventually.

The crowds hanging out at the Fort Langley pub at the end of the ride were a testament to the fact that everyone had a good time. This ride is a superb wind up to the season and is fast becoming a tradition, if not a challenge - right Dick?

Extreme(ly Embarrassing)

Eric Fergusson

It is the Fall Flatlander, and my 'brevet on mt. Bike' experiment isn't going all that well. This thing has no umph...or is it me? Ken hasn't realized he's dropped me and is becoming a speck on the horizon on 0 Ave. Eventually he realizes I'm gone - he doubles back.

"I'm not in any hurry, let's take our time." Great, he's in baby sitter mode.

We pull into the Aldergrove border crossing - I need water.

And what good is a mt. Bike, I muse quietly, if you can't jump the occasional curb? This will be my first extreme maneuver, and as a bonus it will be witnessed by one of the planet's premier endurance cyclists - I bet he'll be impressed.

I go up, I come down...it is a forward roll in a sort-of layout position. As I hit the pavement, all I can think about is those security cameras - somewhere inside a border guard is laughing.

"What were you trying to do?" Ken asks matter of factly.

A few clicks up the road Ken has a great idea: "Hey, why don't you write this up for the rando newsletter?"

"I don't think so," I respond "...too embarrassing."

Thanks For Helping with The Rocky Mountain 1200, 2000

Danelle Laidlaw

I have seen several accounts now of this year's Rocky Mountain 1200 and it is interesting to read about the event from different perspectives - from the viewpoint of the participant and from the viewpoint of a volunteer. Each is slightly different but adds insight into how the event is viewed.

I had over 30 volunteers and we had 40 registrants. This is a very high ratio and even at that, at the controls where most participants were sleeping, it was a tough and tiring job for the volunteers. Also, although not planned, Bob & Patty Marsh played the role of mobile support and several control volunteers and participants were glad of the assistance. I would like to thank the following people for their contributions:

Control Staff - Harold Bridge, Mac Cooper, Patty & Bob Marsh, Janice & Tom Hocking, Chris & Jay Siggers, Arne Driver, Dan McGuire, June Gallagher, Frances Caton, Michel Richard, Majbrit Kungras, Peter Mair, Cheryl Lynch, Real Prefontaine, Doug Beames, Henry Hulbert, Barb Lepsoe, Maureen & Jocelyn Wagner, Deb Berry, Myna Robinson and Lyle Beaulac.

Photographer and Marshall - Bob Boonstra

Post Ride Party - Richard & Fearon Blair, Barb Boonstra

Route - John Bates

Food - Ted Milner, Karen Smith

Plaques - Ian Faris

And a special thanks to John Bates, and Harold Bridge who put in almost as many hours as I did on this event.

To-date, this event has been run every year, except PBP. It is now time to consider how many resources the club wants to devote to the Rocky Mountain. The Executive has decided that running the Rocky Mountain on even years will perhaps allow us to break even on the event (this year we made about \$1,000) by attracting enough participants and not stretch our limited human resources too far. By running the RM on the even years, we can take advantage of PBP and LEL for promotion to Europeans.

For this year's Rocky Mountain 1200, we introduced a few new things - firstly, we changed the route slightly. Instead of heading out to Banff and back from Lake Louise, we went back to a closer version of the first year's route travelling down into the north Okanagan. From Salmon Arm, we travelled south to Vernon using a combination of backroads and the highway. Then from Vernon we used the Old Kamloops Road and then the highway to return to Kamloops. We added a few kilometres off the highway just east of Sicamous also. These route changes were viewed as positive, for the most part. And secondly, we gave participants the option of two start times (and two different overall times) - 10 p.m. for the 90-hour group and 4 a.m. for the 84-hour group. In theory, this meant that everyone finished closer together and we did have a better turnout at the party. And thirdly, we offered breakfast food as well as pasta. Despite our efforts at variety, this year we had the largest number of complaints about the food. I think this is a symptom of larger numbers of participants and smaller numbers of local participants.

For the next Rocky Mountain, I would like to see these changes remain, and consider putting a participant limit of 50 on the event. Anyone who has any comments/suggestions for the next RM, please contact me - Danelle at 737-0043.

Quiche Populaire [75k] and Quiche Century Ride [160 km]

E. W. [Wim] Kok, Peace Region Brevet Co-ordinator

Three weeks ago, when these rides were originally scheduled, a freak (?) snow storm dumped close to 10 cm on the Peace Region, caused white-out conditions, road closures and flattened most of the grain crops. Cyclists are brainy people, and therefore none of them ventured out on the day after in rainy and near freezing conditions. However cyclists, and specifically randonneurs are a dour bunch. We rescheduled the events for Saturday September 23. The 75 km Quiche Populaire would go from Fort St. John to Dawson Creek's Alaska Café, where indeed Quiche is served. The Quiche Century would cover the same route with a Quiche break and then return to Fort St. John via a 10 km detour to make up the 160 km distance. The re-scheduled event was whispered among the membership in order not to spook the weather gods. Saturday morning however, they smiled on us. A gentle westerly breeze, not a cloud in the sky and 10 °C temperature greeted us. Temperatures would rise to about 17 °C later in the afternoon. Five of us were off at 9:20 for the haul. Two riders: Roger St. Jean and Stephen Ferris reached the Alaska Café in 2 hrs and 40 minutes. Brad Taylor who started a bit later completed the first leg in 3 hours and 10 minutes, while Ed Fornelli and I took 2 hrs and 50 minutes. The Quiche break was extensive, after which Ed and I decided to complete the century by riding back at a more leisurely pace. The other three were ferried back to Fort St. John to meet work commitments. We arrived back in Fort St. John at 17:35, which meant a total time of 8 hours and 15 minutes, including the break. It was Ed's first long distance, never having raced/cycled more than about 80 km. Tired, but very satisfied. Well done!

Note: The Quiche Ride is a Blizzard Bicycling Club tradition going back at least 16 years or so. As many as 14 and as few as two riders have participated in this event over the years. The Blizzard Bicycle club historian, Pat Ferris, tells me that the idea for the ride originated in Vancouver, where at one time a group of Randonneurs (?) held the "Champagne and Quiche Ride." [does anyone have any recollection of this event in Vancouver?] Anyway, being a humorous kind of guy, Jim Peltier, who borrowed the idea introduced it here as the "Baby Duck and Quiche Ride" Baby Duck was dropped later, and the ride became known as the Annual Quiche Ride. This year was the first in its history that the ride had to be canceled and rescheduled. It also marked the first time that two riders completed the return trip. In 1987 the situation was so grim that only two riders started. They made it about half way, and felt very relieved when the driver of a support vehicle suggested to the riders, who by then looked like snowmen, that they could stop. They needed no persuasion to do so.

Make Up 400, 300, 200 - August 26, 2000

Danelle Laidlaw

It didn't really seem like a real randonnee ride - it wasn't pouring rain or threatening to snow - none of that. And I didn't even have to have my own bike there. All I had to do was show up in Haney a little early and help with registration and everything else was taken care of.

8 people registered for the 200, 4 for the 300, and 4 for the 400. The routes followed the same course through Mission and down Highway 9 until Sedro Woolley where the 200's turned around, the 300's turned around at Concrete with the 400's continuing out to Arlington, Mount Vernon and around Lake Samish before heading back to Haney. The weather was great for everyone and there were no casualties.

And personally, my ride was spectacular. This was my tandem debut (yes - another tandem slut in the making). John Bates and I had borrowed a tandem from a friend of his, John did some work on it and made some adjustments, we had a trial run out to Horseshoe Bay and up Cypress (about 40 km) and figured we were ready for the 400 - why not? We needed to do a 400 anyway after staying overnight in Whistler on the D'Arcy ride, what the heck? - let's try it. I figured we would either do fine or not be speaking to each other by the end of the ride.

Well, it turned out great. We started later than everyone by about 45 mins because we were doing the registration. John seems to like doing that anyway. I think it is because he then gets to talk to everyone as he motors on. And that is exactly what we did, gradually catching up with everyone, chatting to them and at the same time, getting used to the tandem. John had never captained a tandem before and I had very limited experience as a stoker. But we got the hang of it quite quickly and also started to realize why people like it so much - it's fun.

We were lucky that our route did not include the Chuckanut as the 600's did - that construction might have provided us with a challenge - but otherwise, the route was straight-forward and

things went really well. We jockeyed back and forth with Barb Henninger and Keith Fletcher between Sedro and Mt. Vernon, but in the dark we had the advantage and ended up finishing ahead of them.

That 400 was definitely my favourite ride of the season and I am looking forward to doing "not a single ride" in 2001.

See you on the road!

Where was everyone? Cariboo 200

Danelle Laidlaw

Where was everyone on September 9 & 10? Where you should have been was in 100 Mile House to enjoy the superb hospitality and organizational skills of Adrian Messner. Every year Adrian and his wife host the Cariboo on/off-road 200. Adrian and his sons are all cyclists and really enjoy showing people the wonderful countryside of the Cariboo region. And 100 Mile House gets behind this event with articles in the local newspaper and a photographer on the course!

The ride starts and finishes at The Hills Resort where Adrian's son works as a chef. From there we head just a little north and do a loop around the lake (the first bit of off-road). John Bates and I were on tandem (a regular road tandem - Santana Visa - outfitted with bigger tires) and this was a tandem first for the ride and for us. There were a few spots of sand that had me clipping out and John shouting - stay on board - but otherwise, it was very do-able. And that stretch was only a little over 9 km anyway. Adrian positioned himself at every point where he thought we might go wrong, so we hardly even needed a route sheet.

The next section was south through 100 Mile and over to the Little Fort turn-off. Adrian also staffed all the controls and was waiting for us at Lone Butte. When we pointed out that the times he had put down for the controls were a little off, he just sat down and fixed them - how's that for service! On the next little section south towards Green Lake, we had a moose crash across the road in front of us and other than about 3 other cars and one other tandem!, that was all the traffic we encountered the entire day. The tandem was a Dutch couple on holiday and they were going in the opposite direction so we didn't really have a chance to speak to them.

After doing the gravel road section around Green Lake we stopped for lunch with Adrian at the 140 km (approx.) mark. We had had a little bit of rain, but nothing too terrible. Just enough to make the gravel road muddy and a little slippery - good practice on the tandem. From the lunch stop, the route continues north to rejoin the road to Lone Butte and then it is the reverse of the first bit of the route. It was at this point we noticed this guy taking pictures on the side of the road - the local press was out. By this time the sun was also out and we were having a great time flying down the hill into 100 Mile and stopping to collect our bathing suits before finishing the ride as Adrian had invited us back to his place to enjoy the hot tub.

One more loop around the lake to finish off the ride and back to the Hills - for our final interview and photographs - we felt like celebrities!

And boy, were we lucky with the weather. By the time we got back to Adrian's house, met the dogs (Adrian's hobby is dog sledding and he has a complete team), and got ready for the hot tub, the heavens had opened and it poured rain all night.

Adrian has suggested that we look into having a bunch of people come up on the train, do the ride and go back on the train for next year - what a great idea! If anyone is interested - give me a call, and I will look into it - Danelle 737-0043.

Old Roads And New

Harold Bridge

It was a mixed month, not too much of any one thing. The timing of my vacation was planned around two occasions; participating in the Reims trip with the North Road Cycling Club (I joined in 1944) & helping my house bound Cousin Dorothy celebrate her 89th birthday on Oct 15.

I arrived at Gatwick, complete with boxed bike, Sept 16 in the middle of the fuel crisis. A purist would have put his bike together & ridden to North London. But as a car would be needed for Dorothy, one that could be dropped off at Natonal's depot in N. London made sense. No hatchback available, so I lugged the box & bags onto the London bound train. Thirty quid for a taxi after throwing away my \$10 box got me to Pollard Road in comfortable time for the first of numerous "cuppateas".

With a demand from Reims trip organiser Alan Kennedy to be in Hertford, about 15 miles north of London, at 06:00 on the morning of Friday 22nd I knew I would need to find a bed in the vicinity. It wouldn't be practical to leave Dorothy's early enough to ride to there. A few attempts to find a bed failed so I decided on Tuesday to ride over & see what I could find. After calling upon the North Road Captain & his wife, the Editor I had a wet ride on familiar old roads through Potters Bar, up Kentish Lane, via Cucumber Lane to Epping Green. That had me hailing North Roaders rich, fast veteran Gordon Dennis as he flashed past in the opposite direction just after turning onto the Bayford road. It occurred to me that lunch time was upon me & the sign advertising Food at the Baker Arms appeared right on cue. Just after sitting down a couple came in the back door & asked if I'd seen Fred (or someone). It turned out that John & Maisie Wright were expecting to meet the "40+" Cycling Club there for lunch. But as no one else showed we lunched together. I was telling them the reason for my trip when the waiter intervened & said they have rooms there. Problem solved, just 8 km, mainly downhill, to Hertford.

Thursday was wet, of course. I loaded up the bike with panniers & a rack bag. The more space you have the more stuff you find to put in it. I stopped under the railway bridge in East Barnet to don my rain gear & started off again with a flat front tyre. Found a covered entry way around the corner where I was able to change tyre & tube. The tyre was slashed & I only had one spare with me. Lesson number one: For a year or more I have been using a track pump. Since pumping my tyres up properly I haven't suffered any punctures. As a result the frame pump hasn't been used & was badly in need of lubrication & it proved difficult to pump the tyre up. Check your pump!

Nice room with a fire exit out the back. Set my alarm for 05:00 & was away at 05:15. The Union generator & 10 cm headlamp illuminated Brickendon Lane beautifully, it was like riding down a tunnel. At the appointed place by 05:38 & wondered where everyone was & if I was at the right place. About 05:59 the others turned up. Consternation that someone would actually turn up with mudguards on, but nonetheless the bikes went in the back of the bus anyway.

After saying farewell to the cooperative spouses we set off a few minutes after six. Apart from Neil missing a turn somewhere in Kent enroute for the ferry terminal at Dover & doing an extra 100 km when Ken left his jacket at an auto route rest stop somewhere near Arras it was an uneventful journey to Reims CREPS, a sport complex with hostel type accommodation. The jacket was rather important, it contained the tickets & his passport!

As we milled around in the foyer Club Treasurer Dave Gudgeon appeared having ridden down, leaving the treasury on Wednesday morning & having overnights in Calais & Perrone. The reception said something about the start of the event being moved, at least that is what I thought was going on. The more immediate concern was finding beds, 4 flights up, & getting ready for the morrow.

I had heard tales of the delightful lunch stop at Maizy that is a regular feature of the Reims weekend. The 40 km ride north west of Reims was pleasant with decent roads, light amounts of traffic & late summer weather at its best. A month or six weeks earlier & I imagine it could be unbearably hot. As a tourist riding with poseurs on stripped racing bikes I was at a bit of a disadvantage. But the biggest disadvantage was, as usual, that the bike is a bit unpowered. But it only showed on the adverse gradients, of which there were a few. I had the opportunity to learn something about triple-ring psychology during this ride.

Some 10 or so km before reaching Maizy Ken & I were confronted by a wall of a hill that is the site of a big vineyard. The road swept round to the left & ascended the side of the hill & disappeared over the top. The others were long gone. Ken, 65 & not fit but still very strong, grunted his over sized bottom gear away & was soon a speck near the top. I was plodding along & had Ergo-powered my chain onto the 26 bottom sprocket while still on the 39 middle ring, a 39 inch gear. It was beginning to feel a bit heavy & I decided I needed to do a cross over by pressing both buttons. I didn't look to see where the chain finished up at the back, but it felt decidedly better & I continued on to crest the hill. At the top I looked down to see what cog I had finished up on, it was the 18. 26x18= 38 inch gear, one inch off!

I found the others patiently waiting at a crossroads & it was but a short ride along the D22 to Maizy. I had dropped off the back but being a rouler I had powered along a flat stretch to re-join just as a little hill presented the guys with the opportunity of a sprint. I was off the back again, & by the time I arrived at "La Rivage" the others were sprawled all over the patio supping beer. I soon joined them. We were given a table to ourselves & were served about 5 courses that lived up to the French reputation for cuisine . The wine bottle seemed bottomless & we were very relaxed as we headed back to the more austere CREPS. I even rode with the others for a while. We went back a different way, allegedly flatter.

But it proved to be slightly shorter too according to my computer. 40 km to Maizy & 78.9km on the clock when back at CREPS.

Consternation ruled when we arrived. It seemed that the message we should have assimilated the previous evening was that the Prefecture of Police had cancelled the Randonnee! An irate anglophonic Belgian said to me he had come all the way from Belgium. I told him I had come all the way from Vancouver. He knew where that was & shut up! It rather knocked the wind out of our sails. We wondered what the 2 other members would say when they drove in Saturday evening. They took it very calmly I thought. But it was decided we would ride without benefit of Brevet card.

While the other 7 set out on Sunday morning to do the full 154 km figure of 8 route, Ken & I decided to see some of the route in a more gentle manner. It was a beautiful day & we stopped for coffee at Nanteuil la Foret & lunch on an elevated patio in Hautevillers. In all a very civilised 70 km by the time we returned to CREPS. Civilised, that is, if you include groveling up what seemed to be 45 degree slopes through the vineyards.

In, I think, Ville Dommange, I witnessed one of the reasons for the cancellation. The grape harvest (Vendage?) was in full swing, big tractors out on the narrow winding roads while pulling monstrous containers on trailers. A steep winding descent into the village & a bunch of poseurs dreaming of closed roads in "le Tour" came whistling down the hill with no regard for potential obstacles. But, the problem has existed for years, why was the Prefecture's letter dated Sept 18, 6 days before the event? He has yet to hear from me!

Monday morning came & it was time to bid adieu. The treasurer took my place in the bus & they all fled northwards. I planned to visit the bike shop with the idea of buying new tyres & then have a look at the City. The bike shop was closed, I turned round & set out westward. I had gone a good 10 or 15 km before I remembered I had intended to look at Reims. Another time maybe.

Perhaps you will be subjected to the rest of the story another time.



Chris Sterzinger, Populaire 2000 (Photo: J. Porter)

Of Bears and Bikers: Personal Memories of Rocky Mountain 1200 in July 2000

Hubertus Hohl

Prologue

ROCKY MOUNTAIN 1200 is a relatively young randonneur event in West Canada, which first started in 1996. It was held the fourth time this year from July 26-30th under the rules of "Randonneurs Mondiaux", a worldwide organization promoting long-distance cycling. Having participated at Paris-Brest-Paris in 1999, I got attentive to this long-distance ride, because corresponding invitations were displayed there. Since I looked for a similar challenge this year again, I was quickly determined to concentrate on riding Rocky Mountain 1200 this season. The announcement sounded very promising: many climbs and five major mountain passes up to 2000 m altitude, spectacular landscapes and wildlife, besides deer, elk and moose also bears were mentioned. Hindsight, it's safe to say, these characterizations became true. But RM1200 also turned out to be a unique experience for several other reasons: meeting and riding with other randonneurs, getting excellent support on the route as well as mastering unforeseen imponderableness, which are typical for such an event.

The Route

Start and finish are set in Kamloops, the largest, but not very attractive city in the hot and dry interior of British Columbia, situated 365 km north and east of Vancouver. In a large triangular loop, the route of 1210 km runs through the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia and Alberta which offer breath-taking mountain scenery and wildlife to the riders. The first 300 km of the route head valley upwards. The final 300 km mainly traverse hilly farm country. The middle section of the route first passes through the heart of the Canadian Rockies, the glacier world of the well-known Icefields Parkway. Then, the route traverses Yoho National Park, Glacier National Park and touches Mount Revelstoke National Park; lonely wild-life reserves with evergreen forests, cyan gleaming mountain lakes and snow-covered peaks, which offer fascinating contrasts to the densely populated and often overcrowded European Alps.

Certainly, the two most challenging parts of the route are the long climbs to Columbia Icefield (2035 m), an enormous glacier area 120km south of Jasper, as well as to Bow Pass (2065 m), the highest point along the route. With 7865 m total elevation gain the route appears relatively harmless at first sight - compared to PBP with more than 9000 m, but the distribution of the elevation gain means that RM1200 is definitely not easier to ride from a physical point of view. While thousands of rolling hills are typical for PBP, RM1200 features some very long, but rarely steep climbs which cover large distances in elevation and which are interspersed with lots of descents and flat stretches. For European bikers touring the Alps this is a very new experience: While typical passes in the Alps usually master 1000 m elevation gain with an average gradient of 8% or more in the course of 10 km, the same elevation gain on a typical RM1200 climb requires a distance up to 100 km

long, but usually no more than 5-7% steep in the ascending slopes. Also, due to the downhill on this distance, up to 500 m elevation loss are mastered additionally. Comparing the descents, similar considerations apply.

Before the Start

In the afternoon of July 26 registration and bike check take place in a recreation building in Kamloops. I meet a colored mixed field of participants with some well-known faces. 39 riders from 6 nations, 2 women and 37 men, present themselves: 12 Canadians, 17 Americans, 2 British, one Dane, one Australian and 2 Germans. I have met the other German rider, Andy Wimmer, at the 600 k qualification brevet in Vienna. Andy is a young rookie who never did a 1200 k event before. He is nonetheless in good shape and appears not at all excited. Stig Lundgaard, a young Dane, already participated in the Scandinavia 2000 k this year and intends to also ride Boston-Montreal-Boston in August; in truth an extraordinary performance. 10 riders are "repetition culprits" who have already completed the tour up to 4 times.

Old Jack (Jack Eason) is here, too. At 73 years he is the oldest rider, an Englishman on an ancient, frog-green painted steel horse with a big fanfare horn. Old Jack is an old stager in the randonneur scene. He has already completed over two dozen 1200 km events. With his age, his experience and his staying power, he surely is a model for many younger riders. Another Englishman enters the ride in classical British style with a rigid rear wheel hub. Most other riders are conventionally equipped, many are using aero-handlebars which are permitted. For this route, aero-handlebars provide a very meaningful relief on long descents and flat sections.

Bike inspection and registration run without problems. Danelle Laidlaw, who organized this tour with great devotion, hands over my control card and the route sheet. I decide to start next morning at 4.00am, so do 17 other riders. I also deposit 3 supply bags, which are transported by the organizers to three freely selectable checkpoints along the route. Contrary to PBP, RM1200 is a "full board" event: showers and sleeping accommodations as well as refreshments and warm meals at the control points, bag drop service, the traditional post-ride party and commemorative plaques and medals for the finishers are all included in the registration fee (Can\$ 250-300).

I can recognize by the labelled bags that most riders deposit their bags at three indicated checkpoints which offer adequate sleeping accommodations: at Jasper (km 455), Golden (km 783) and Salmon Arm (km 1035). Therefore, Danelle is surprised when she notices that my first bag is already intended for Tete Jaune Cache (km 338). Anxiously, she suggests that sleeping just after 300 km would be too early to complete the event in time. Of course, she is quite right, but I plan to master the route according to the following personal strategy: Based predominantly on completely balanced liquid nutrition, mineral drinks with lots of carbohydrates, supplemented by additional meals at some checkpoints, I intend to cut the route into 4 sections of equal length (approximately 300 km) and to deposit my bags at the corresponding controls: at Tete Jaune Cache (km 338), Columbia Icefields (km 571), and Revelstoke (km 933).

After the race, Danelle told me groaningly, how she knew

immediately that she had one of my bags in her hands: these were definitely the heaviest ones! Well, that's not astonishing, because I have put the complete ration for the next 300 km section in each bag: 1.5 liter of mineral water and 2-4 bags of powder for mixing mineral drinks, 11 cans of EnsurePlus (a liquid nutrition with 355 calories per 235 ml), 5 PowerBars, 3 cans of Coke, honey cake (for me, not for the bears), various clothing to change and for cold and rainy conditions in the mountains. I knew that I would hardly need the whole food and beverages, but you never can tell... My bike is loaded with a frame bag containing 4 cans of liquid nutrition, some bags with mineral powder and PowerBars, with a water bottle filled with three more cans of liquid nutrition, with a second bottle containing mineral drink, with a large saddle bag containing extra clothes, and with a handlebar bag stuffed with various other things, such as a Petzl headlight, a reflective vest, a rain jacket, etc.

I plan to take the first sleep break after two sections at Columbia Icefields. Furthermore, the maxim applies: adequate sleep each night (approx. 3 hours), no hurry at the checkpoints, sufficient time to talk with other riders and with the volunteers who care for us. Being in the Canadian Rockies for the first time, I want to enjoy this ride and the breath-taking landscape as much as possible.

Reasonably almost all riders come without a support crew. Only two or three riders completely rely on a crew, among them Ken Bonner, the later winner, who wants to beat the current record time. Surely, you can ride faster with the help of a crew by minimizing the load on your bike and the rest breaks. Nonetheless, I think that support vehicles are generally unnecessary for this event in the presence of the complete service at the checkpoints and the bag drop possibilities.

While Andy and the other 10.00 pm riders prepare for their start, I am trying to find some sleep in my pickup camper. Getting up at 3.00 am, an amazingly warm western wind blows with 20 °C, so that I don't need to put on my arm and leg warmers. After a short briefing into the route and some advice on dealing with wildlife, especially bears, we punctually start at 4.00 o'clock. We are still joking about the bears, although we all probably feel a bit ticklish to encounter one of this species, particularly at night. In principle, bears are very shy animals which avoid human beings. I didn't encounter a single bear the week before, when I toured some national parks with my camper and my bicycle. But soon, this should change...

The first section: Kamloops - Tete Jaune Cache (km 338)

The first 338 km of the route follow the North Thompson River up-stream on Highway #5. This mighty river forces its way through a lonely valley with evergreen forest. No building, no sign of civilization within many kilometers. Just endlessly long freight trains drafted by the powerful redbrown diesel engines of the "Canadian Pacific Railroad" which runs parallel to the highway, drown the rustling river. After a few kilometers, a group of four riders constitutes to make a fast pace towards Clearwater, the first checkpoint (km 122). Periodically, we are changing lead position, so time goes by quickly. Suddenly, 6 kilometers before Clearwater I discover a sneaking flat in my rear tire. It is of no use going on, so I let go the other riders who want to help me and start replacing the tube. Fortunately, the cause of the puncture is quickly found: a

piece of wire from a damaged truck tire has pierced the tire tread. Unfortunately, such remains are encountered frequently on the shoulders of Canadian highways. Since I carried only two spare tubes, I now decide to buy another one as soon as possible.

My stop at the first checkpoint in Clearwater (the parking lot of a closed gas station) is very short: mixing a Gatorade drink, filling up a water bottle, and I am back on the road again. After a few kilometers the first raindrops touch my skin. I am riding straight into a threateningly black rain front spreading the whole valley. Although it's raining it remains relatively warm (18 °C) and calm, so I can make a fast pace - mostly alone or chatting with some riders who I pass. The second checkpoint, a motel room in Blue River (km 228), not only offers refreshments (bananas, cookies, juice, water) but also pasta out of the microwave. Short of the third checkpoint in Tete Jaune Cache (km 338), it stops raining. The rest of the day it should remain dry with temperatures around 20 °C. Now, the North Thompson valley broadens and uncovers an impressing view of snow-capped mountain ranges standing up to both sides of the valley. The route running straight towards Tete Jaune Cache for the last kilometers has reached its most northern point here. It now turns south-east on Highway #16 entering the Rockies over Yellowhead Pass towards Jasper.

As I enter the checkpoint at 3.00 pm, Ken Bonner who is on his way towards Jasper goes by with a wave. Ray Wagner, another rider of our initial group is already sitting in the motel room. I am looking forward to my first bag that is dropped here. The smiling volunteer who maintains the control is awfully curious about the contents of my bag which is so heavy. While packing my bike with a new load of liquid food and PowerBars, I explain my personal nutrition strategy. Nevertheless, he seems to be a bit disappointed that I prefer my liquid nutrition to his warm plate of pasta.

The second section: Tete Jaune Cache - Columbia Icefields (km 571)

The climb over Yellowhead Pass towards Jasper promises to be more strenuous but also more varied than so far. As I climb the first ascending slope out of Tete Jaune Cache, a stormy wind is blowing down the valley. The road is stepwise winding up the valley. Gradual ascents are interrupted again and again by flat stretches of road along the young Fraser River. Then, the route enters Mount Robson Provincial Park. The entrance to the park is marked by the well-known stone monument with the white mountain goat pointing to Mount Robson, the highest peak of the Canadian Rockies (3954 m). Unfortunately, as so often, Mount Robson doesn't show itself. Only the huge lower part of the clouded giant whose peak is covered with glaciers is visible. Yet this view is very impressive. I feel rather tiny on my bike in view of the giant standing up into the clouds.

Somewhere at Moose Lake I pass Old Jack who is slowly but steadily struggling for the summit. I encourage him and start catching other 10 o'clock riders who are appearing now and then ahead of me on the long straight stretches of the highway. Meanwhile, the sun is setting and only few vehicles are on the way. Suddenly, one hundred meters ahead of me a huge dog with bright pitch black coat appears trying to cross the road. Queer, I think, Canadian dogs seem to be much bigger than European ones.

I have never seen such a big dog in my whole life. Like a blow, I realize that the dog in fact is a grown-up black bear. I slow down and stop, thinking of the rules that were told us in case we should encounter a bear: stay calm, talk to the animal, back away slowly, but don't run. The bear is observing me but doesn't dare to cross the road. Maybe he is just figuring out whether the species "skinny German cyclist" rather belongs to the "eatable" or "uneatable" category of food. But it seems the bear is more afraid of me than I am afraid of him. However, I just don't feel like passing by this muscle-packed animal, turning round is maybe the better choice. Still undecided what to do, a noisy car rushes by, the bear quickly turns and in big leaps races into the near wood. Alleviated, but also euphoric, I pedal as fast as I can. Wow, my first real bear in the wild! This is precisely what makes Rocky Mountain 1200 such a thrill. Some hundred meters further along the road, I can see a family calmly picknicking on a parking lot at the roadside. If they knew...

The Yellowhead Pass itself (1130 m) is undistinguishedly embedded into a broad wooded valley with deepgreen mountain lakes. Just a sign marking the continental divide between Atlantic and Pacific ocean indirectly points to the summit. The Yellowhead Pass marks the border between British Columbia and Alberta. Also, the time zone is changing now to "Mountain Time", one hour ahead. However, since all time specifications on the tour are generally based on "Pacific Time", I don't need to put on my clock. Shortly after the summit, I am passing the entrance into Jasper National Park. There is a Can\$5 per day charge for entry into the park, even for cyclists. The following descent down to Jasper is rather unproductive. The summit is only about 100 meter elevation above Jasper.

Located a few kilometers east of Jasper, a log-house made available by the park wardens is used as a checkpoint. Andy is totally surprised when I arrive at 7.25 pm. "You are really a beast!" he is shouting, shaking his head as I confess having maintained a pace of nearly 32 kilometers per hour for the first 455 kilometers. Andy, having arrived one and a half hour ago intends to sleep in the lodge till 2.30 am. So do the other 10 o'clock starters.

Likewise, they declare me crazy as I intend to climb Columbia Icefield just after a short break. But I am used to being considered crazy, so I don't care much. My PBP experience last year showed me that after 15 hours riding time I am still too chirpy to sleep well to some extent. I suppose, Danelle would have preferred me taking a sleep break at Jasper, too. So now, she must drive to the Icefield just to deposit my bag there. As I come to know later, Brian Leier, Ken Carter and Arvid Loewen who arrive at the lodge shortly before my departure, are also determined to ride up to the Icefield at night.

In the meantime Ken Bonner leaves the control. He assumes that I will be heading out soon, but I want to make a longer break to relax, talk with other riders, fill up my glycogen stores, mount my headlight, and put on arm and leg warmers. It should be the last time on the tour that I catch sight of Ken. I eat a warm plate of lasagne and mix an obligatory drink with Gatorade powder which is available at all checkpoints. One and a half hours later, I'm ready to start. Bob who accompanies the riders with his heavy motor-cycle informs me about the weather conditions on the way up to

the icefield. Meanwhile, dark clouds have gathered threateningly over the mountains in the twilight. But Bob thinks that it won't rain at night. And I should not be afraid of bears, he laughs, unless they are lying in wait for me in the bushes. And so I'm heading out on the 120 km climb into the rising darkness.

Bob should be right. Except for some faint-hearted raindrops it remains dry. The bears too all seem to have gone to bed meanwhile. It should be a silent night ride up to the glacier. Shortly after Jasper, I am virtually alone on the highway. Hardly encountering cars that might dazzle me, I soon find a steady rhythm to climb the gradients along the Athabasca River. The night ride becomes varied because of the many signs marking attractions along the parkway. In the light of my headlamp, I can read signs pointing to Athabasca Falls, Sunwapta Falls, and Stanley Falls. Hearing the rustling water, I try to picture the corresponding scene to myself. So, time is passing quickly. At some time or other, Bob appears on his motor-cycle stating that I would still be doing very well. But, for some time I'm experiencing problems with my left knee. While extending my leg strain occurs in the outer tendon at the knee, especially when going out of the saddle. By increasing cadence and applying less force to the left pedal, I try to relieve my knee. However, although endurable, the pain remains. Anxiously, I wonder whether I have ridden the first 500 kilometers too powerful, but I never ever experienced strain like this before. I hope that the problem goes away of itself when taking a sleeping break at Icefield.

At midnight, half-way to Icefield, I pass a luxury and brightly illuminated lodge at Sunwapta Falls. Obviously, this lodge is the only inhabited place between Jasper and Icefield. I dispose of my empty cans of liquid nutrition and pedal on. Now, the parkway is stepwise winding up the valley. At some exposed places an astonishingly warm wind is blowing down the mountains. Suddenly, a short 10% grade appears blasted into the rock and the road sweepingly turns into a stony and windy high-lying valley hosting Icefield Centre (1985 m), a huge building with restaurants and shops that serves as a starting point for guided tours onto the glacier. Unfortunately, it's so dark that neither Columbia Icefield itself nor its large tongue stretching out the basin of the valley are visible. Now, the planned sleeping break comes in handy, so I can cast a glance at the glacier by daybreak.

Riding through the huge but empty upper parking lot for buses at 2.40 am, Danelle and her volunteers already await me with a warm plate of pasta inside the warm lobby. At this time of day, the lobby is empty except for some scrub women. As Andy tells me after the tour, the situation is totally different at 9.30 in the morning when he arrives at Icefield Centre. The parking lot is fully occupied and the lobby is crowded with Japanese tourists who are waiting for a bus trip on the glacier.

Wrapped up in a blanket, I lie down on a wooden bench inside the lobby. Fortunately, I have put some spare clothes and some foam pads (intended to be wrapped around the saddle in case of saddle sores) into my "Icefield" bag, so I can stuff the hard bench a bit. After 571 kilometers and exactly 20 hours riding time, I fall into a broken sleep...

The third section: Columbia Icefields - Revelstoke (km 933)

My body clock wakes me up shortly before 6.00 am. I slobber a warm plate of oatmeal porridge offered by the volunteers and prepare myself for the second half of the tour. It is drizzling outside. Low clouds are covering the glacier's front which has taken on a dirty gray hue. I'm a bit disappointed because I have expected a more impressive view of the icefield. However, the huge and magnificent snow-white glacier can not be seen from the Centre even at good sight. You have to make a trip on the glacier with one of the special buses. All the well-known picture postcard motifs of the glacier are taken from a higher point of view, too.

Dozing on a wooden bench next to me, Bob is astonished to see me yet. He thinks that I'm already off and away because Brian and Arvid who arrived some time after me, have already left the control without any longer sleep break. Telling Bob, that I absolutely wanted to see the icefield at daylight, he spontaneously takes a picture of me in front of the glacier scenery.

After riding some hundred meters the already forgotten pain in my knee becomes perceptible again. I'm rather frustrated. While passing Sunwapta summit (2035 m) I ponder over the possible cause of the pain. Suddenly, I remember having glued a 2 mm thin tape onto the inner part of the sole of my left cycling shoe two weeks ago. The tape should keep the insole in a fixed position. Immediately, I stop and remove the tape. And behold! The pain disappears like a blow. Apparently, the tape caused my left foot to tilt a little bit outwards. So the outer tendon of my left leg has been overstretched, causing strain after 500 kilometers. It is astonishing again and again how painful effects can be caused by minor modifications to shoes, saddle position, etc.

Relieved I start descending into a huge canyon. The road is winding down the rocky walls into the broad valley ground of the Saskatchewan River. After 50 kilometers at Saskatchewan River Crossing the river breaks eastwards through the mountain chain into the extensive plains of Alberta. Time and again I meet small groups of rider on their way going by with a wave. I assume, they belong to one of the organized Parkway bike tours offered by some local promoters.

At Saskatchewan River Crossing, the road is ascending southwards towards Bow Pass (2065 m), the highest point along the route. This 36 km long climb is particularly insidious. From a distance the summit seems to be located on a wooded pass apparently near at hand. However, approaching the presumed location I do not gain any considerable elevation. My altimeter oscillates at 1600 m. The climb is dragging on and I am desperately looking for the summit which must be 400 m higher. Finally, a few kilometers before the pass, the road is steeply winding up to its highest point, a sparsely wooded top. On this section I pass Arvid who seems to live through similar experience. Apparently, he is not in a good shape. He hopes to regenerate on the following 43 km long descent down to Lake Louise Village (1535 m). Arriving at the top, the magnificent view of picturesque Bow Lake and Bow Glacier compensates for the trouble. In wide curves the road is going down to Bow Lake, following Bow River down-stream along the main range peaks, passing the huge Crowfoot glacier, touching lonely

turquoise lakes hidden in the evergreen forest and idyllically situated campgrounds with characteristic names, such as "Mosquito Creek". Shortly before the village, the majestic mountain chain surrounding Lake Louise, one of the most visited places in the Rockies, comes into view. Now, after 700 km, the route turns westwards onto the Trans-Canada Highway.

Having rested for half an hour at the checkpoint inside a recreation center, I suddenly remember that I wanted to buy a second spare tube after my flat. The Trans-Canada Highway with a lot of commercial traffic especially seems to be susceptible to flats. To be on the safe side, I decide to buy a spare in a nearby bike shop. I am just entering the shop when one of the volunteers of the control who followed me hands over a spare tube. Arvid, who shortly arrived after me, carried one in his bag for Lake Louise. An obvious idea that I have overlooked entirely when preparing my bags.

Meanwhile it has become noon. The sun is burning big holes into the cloudy sky. Temperatures are pleasant around 19 °C. The next section to Golden (km 785) promises to be easy. A short and harmless climb to Kicking Horse Pass (1645 m) is followed by a fast descent into the heavily wooded Yoho River Valley leading to Golden. However, traffic has increased noticeably. Many heavy trucks are passing by with a pace of 100 km/h and more. Fortunately, there's a very wide and smooth shoulder I can ride on, so I feel quite safe. Compared to the busy and fast paced Trans-Canada Highway, the Icefields Parkway represented an oasis of silence in the midst of cars and motorhomes pleasantly chugging along.

The steep descending slope of Kicking Horse Pass is announced by a "brake check zone". Heavy trucks exceeding a certain total weight must check their brake systems here before crawling down long and steep slopes with the warning flasher turned on. The Canadian Pacific Railroad which runs parallel to the highway spectacularly surmounts the difference in elevation by means of two spiral tunnels. The long freight trains can be observed leaving the tunnel at one side while the other end still enters the tunnel one hundred meters below in the opposite direction.

Some kilometers before Golden one more sign pointing to a brake check zone appears. The road is descending into a narrow canyon with vertical rocky walls. Deeply down below the railroad is twisting through tunnels and bridges along the valley floor. After traversing two bridges at the valley floor the highway is rising again. Unfortunately, there is no shoulder on this narrow stretch of road. I am forced to climb in the lane drafting a long queue of vehicles. Fortunately I am prepared for this sinewy situation since I travelled this section with my bike the week before the ride. Shortly afterwards a great view of Golden and the Columbia River opens up. I can easily find the checkpoint in Golden following the big yellow "Tour BC" signs that have been set up by the organizers around all controls.

As I enter the recreation center in Golden, nobody seems to be present at first sight. Then the nice and drowsy volunteer who had a bit of shut-eye in her sleeping-bag appears serving me a warm plate of pasta. It is evident that this event demands a great deal of energy and lack of sleep not only from the riders but also from the

volunteers. Sometimes there are 24 hours difference between the first and the last rider at a control. So many volunteers will not get a wink of sleep all night.

She informs me, that the first and second rider, Ken and Brian, are three and a half hours and one hour ahead, respectively. Meanwhile, the temperature is much warmer around 25 °C, but the weather in the Columbia mountain range which must be traversed in the next section doesn't look well at all. A huge black rain front and a strong squally headwind point at heavy rain in the mountains. Nevertheless, I decide to tackle the 150 km section over Rogers Pass (1330 m) to Revelstoke and to set my mind on a rainy night ride. My traveler's guide states that the area around Rogers Pass in the Glacier National Park is noted for heavy rain even in summer. Statistically, it's raining or snowing 3 out of 5 days all the year round. Unfortunately, I seem to have caught exactly one of these rainy days. But staying in Golden is not a good alternative. It is not after 4.00 pm and my next bag is waiting for me in Revelstoke. So I set out quickly.

A few kilometers after Golden it starts raining steadily. I make a break to put on my rain gear. At least, the tailwind abates now. After a short time I'm dripping with water and dirt squirted by passing trucks on the busy Trans-Canada Highway. After 30 km a series of four long grades leads the Highway over a wooded mountain-ridge into the Glacier National Park which is on Pacific Time again. Because of deep clouds and continuous rain I can not see much of the scenery. Then a sign and an open avalanche gate point to the final climb to Rogers Pass. This is a 6 km long slope of 8-9% gradient without any noticeable curves. Some tunnels protect the road which is susceptible to avalanches in winter. Fortunately, the wide shoulder continues inside the tunnels, so they can be easily traversed even though the infernal noise of passing trucks is rather sinewy. Moreover, the second tunnel is bent in a smooth s-shape curve so I'm totally surrounded with darkness for a short time.

When reaching the Visitor Center at the pass around 8.15 pm, it is not too cold with temperatures of 12 °C. The area is like a ghost town. The center is already closed. Even the Columbian Ground Squirrels which usually pose on the grass in front of the center during the day have disappeared. Mounting my headlamp I set out for the 70 km long descent into Revelstoke. Actually, the first 20 kilometers form a high speed descent into a deeply cut high-lying valley crowned by beautiful glaciers. But after some meters it is obvious to me that this descent will become very difficult today. It has become dark and the still strong oncoming traffic dazzles me, so I cannot see the road in front of me in the pouring rain. Actually I'm blind flying, because the light of the cars is reflected and broken by the raindrops on my glasses. For a moment, I strongly consider riding back on the pass to stay in the Best Western Lodge overnight. But then I decide to crawl down carefully. Fortunately, the oncoming traffic weakens more and more and it stops raining with time. Suddenly, I notice a very loud, clicking noise emerging from the real wheel hub or bottom bracket with every revolution of the crank. Great, I think, an irreparable fault in this god-forsaken region - it only wanted that! I must remember the 600 km Vienna brevet in June, where I had to carry out the second 300 km with just one sprocket available (17 or 19) because of a broken spring in

my right-hand Campa Ergopower lever. But I made it amazingly well at that time, thus I decide to simply ignore the noise and its possible causes. Courageously, I keep stepping into the pedals, clack, clack clack... Actually, it helps: after a sinewy hour the noise is gone all of a sudden. I reach Revelstoke without further problems briefly before 11 pm.

In the Canyon Motor Inn Motel I see Brian's bike standing on the thick filled carpet in front of room #24. I place my dripping bike near it. Peter and Mejbritt, the Danish girlfriend of Stig Lundgaard, are waiting for me inside the room. Brian is already sleeping in one of the beds. After having a great hot shower, I am very glad to slip into new and dry cycling clothes out of my bag. After having a warm plate of Lasagne, I decide to sleep for 3 hours. Peter communicates to me that Brian will already set out at 0.30 am. Dozing off, I can hear Arvid arriving. Because of a wrong turnoff, he spent a lot of time trying to find the motel wandering around the deserted village. Besides me, Arvid is the only rider who dared to descend from Rogers Pass at night. Another rider abandoned the descent after some kilometers and turned around to Rogers Pass to stay in the Best Western Lodge overnight. As I get to know after the ride, all other riders stayed in Golden overnight. As Andy tells me later, the night was not very comfortable because the mats were extremely hard. He even thinks that he was absolutely shattered in the morning and much more exhausted than before. To compensate for the uncomfy night he could enjoy traversing Rogers Pass the next day without any rain in bright sunshine.

Shortly before 3.00 am, I wake up. Arvid already prepares for setting out. We are served an excellent breakfast. In the meantime, Peter has covered the floor under our bikes with plastic foils to preserve the carpet. As I notice but now, Peter and Mejbritt have spent the night on the floor, since we had occupied the beds...

The final section: Revelstoke - Kamloops (km 1210)

When crossing the large steel bridge over the dammed up Columbia River, the road is still wet. The next section on the Trans-Canada Highway is mainly rolling hills interspersed with two larger ascents towards Salmon Arm (km 1035), a small town at the Shuswap lakes. The road is not much frequented at this time. I keep a quick pace that Arvid does not want to follow. So, soon again I am alone on the way. The route leads by a wooded valley along the transcontinental railroad connecting Atlantic and Pacific. Aside from two strange and kitschy attractions at the roadside, a ghost town at Three Valley Gap and a fairy tale garden called "The Enchanted Forest", the area appears unaffected and lonely. Suddenly, 60 km after Revelstoke, the route leaves the highway, turning right over an open crossing onto a small by-road with rough surface. Now, the route idyllically runs along some nice properties in the valley. I am wondering about this bypass particularly since the route sheet shows that this road will join the highway again 12 kilometers farther at Sicamous. Actually, the only reason seems to be a secret control somewhere along the by-road. But this control does not show up. As Danelle ensures me afterwards, she indeed planned a secret control here, but it had to be cut out because of a lack of volunteers.

Leaving Sicamous, the view opens onto Shuswap Lake and Mara Lake, which is bridged by the highway in its narrowest place. In

the morning-grey, a multicolored variety of boats are resting in the harbour. Water sport activities seem to be very active in this region. The highway now runs in the forest above the lakeshore up to the bay of Salmon Arm. A two kilometer long section of road is freshly surfaced with asphalt and therefore must be passed on a graveled surface. Arriving in the bay of Salmon Arm I fancy that the next control is very near. However, the town is located at the other end of the bay, without a direct connection. Turning landward, the highway is endlessly running dead-straight uphill. Finally, a sharp bend and the hilltop is passed opening a great view on the town and bay of Salmon Arm. Shortly before 7.30 am, I arrive at the control in the recreation center. Filling up my water bottles and inquiring about the weather in Germany (the volunteer had visited Berlin the week before the tour), I soon set out again.

The sky is cloudy and temperatures are around 15 °C as I head towards the last control in Vernon (km 1093). On a small bypass road through the outlying districts of Salmon Arm, I have to master some heavy roller coasters reminding me of the streets of San Francisco (especially the very steep climb to the fire station). Finally, the route is descending on Highway #97b down into the upper parts of the Okanagan Valley, a long valley spoiled by sun which forms the fruit and wine garden of British Columbia due to the warm southern winds from the gulf of Mexico.

In the meantime it has become very warm and sunny with temperatures around 25 °C. Except for a short bypass, the flat route is following Highway #97a towards Vernon. The last kilometers are travelled on a quiet side-road that leads to the control inside a youth hostel. Since I can not find the control much as I'd like to, I turn an additional two kilometer long lap of honour around it. That's because of the fact, that I am fully fixated on the yellow Tour-BC signposts. Unfortunately, they seem to have run short of signs right here. The last reference to the control has been placed on a sheet of paper attached to the motor hood of a car standing in front of the youth hostel. Too bad that the sheet of paper has flipped over, so I could not recognize the red lettering "Rocky Mountain 1200". So finally, I am rather desperately dependent on a passer-by who shows me the right building which I have passed already three times. I am glad to discover traces of bike wheels in the gravel of the entrance leading me to the back of the building.

I am completely surprised to meet Brian there who is just leaving. Since he had left Revelstoke almost three hours prior to me, I fancied him already off and away. While Brian drives off, I make myself ready for the last 117 kilometers. Meanwhile, it is so sunny that I decide to apply some more sun lotion. After 20 minutes break, I also tackle the last section of the tour.

The route follows Highway #97c on a less frequented side-road over a hilly terrain down into the valley of the South Thompson River. Meanwhile, my hunting fever is aroused. I figure out to close up to Brian on the last 100 kilometers if he maintains his pace. Although the hilly farm land is very beautiful, I'm troubled by the extremely rough surface of the road which shakes my brain out of my head and lets my legs shake like jelly. Additionally, I can not ride on the shoulder which is covered with loose gravel. So I'm forced to balance on the white lane marking. After some time I discover that the road is less rough approximately one meter to the left of the marking. Here, a smooth trace has been formed by the

car tires. From now on I keep riding in this trace. The result is a wild honking concert of the overhauling car drivers. They don't get that the shoulder is not passable by bikers. Cursing the honking drivers I fly along on my aero-bars supported by a light tail wind.

Reaching Falkland, the first larger settlement, I see Brian's silvercolored bike out of the corner of my eyes standing at a Petrogas station. He must be very exhausted to have another break so close to the finish. I'm decided to go on without further breaks keeping my rhythm. Shortly after Falkland, the road climbs up to Monte Lake, a beautiful lake that is nicely embedded into a poor wooded high-lying valley. Here, the speeding abruptly ends. Entering the valley, a strong head wind blows into my face. I struggle to maintain a 22 km/h pace on the road along the right lakeshore. Ardently, I'm awaiting the descent down to Monte Creek in the South Thompson Valley. But I have to wait some more time for this descent. Eventually, after many smaller ups and downs a fast downhill leads me to Highway #1, a four-lane motorway that I follow westward towards Kamloops. Dry heat awaits me at the valley floor. I'm glad that I didn't fill up my second bottle with liquid nutrition as usually but with mineral drink. Because of the heat I have to fall back upon this bottle now. Fortunately, it is very calm and hardly anyone uses the highway around midday. The finish could almost be touched but I still have to ride 25 flat kilometers on the wide shoulder of the highway. Keeping a fast pace of 35-40 km/h, the close finish sets free some extra energy. But the more I approach the finish the more I'm alarmed for the condition of the shoulder which is scattered by remains of damaged truck tires. Apparently, nobody ever clears away these scraps of tire. To avoid a flat on the last kilometers, I am weaving between the malicious obstacles.

Finally, after 1214 kilometers I reach the center of Kamloops at 2.20 pm. Suddenly, all strain has completely disappeared. Turning onto the parking lot at the recreation center, Danelle welcomes me with her camera. She is surprised because she expected Brian to finish second. Whacked, but very happy I sink into a chair. Hastily, I take off my shoes which have pinched heavily on the last 100 kilometers. About 20 minutes later, Brian arrives. He is likewise surprised to see me already here. He didn't realize that I passed him at the gas station in Falkland. A good hour later, Arvid shuffles in, also whacked but happy. After exchanging our personal experiences and impressions during the last two days, we open ourselves up for the cold shower much longed for and the well-earned sleep.

Epilogue

Ken Bonner succeeded in setting up a new course record with 55:37 hours. Actually, he rode the tour nearly without any sleep breaks (except 40 minutes in a ditch at Monte Lake, where Danelle had to wake him up). This is a very impressive performance for someone who is approaching the 60ths. I finish second in 58:20 hours, including 44:30 hours riding, 6 hours sleep breaks and nearly 8 hours of other rest stops.

Andy finished his first brevet of 1200 km courageously within 74 hours. He also gained his own special experience, had to deal with problems with his back and a hard mat, however, after all he was as enthusiastic as I and enjoyed the tour. Old Jack who participated

the first time in RM1200 completed the ride in 86 hours. Only 4 out of 39 participants didn't finish, all others completed within the official time limit of 90 hours. And Danelle will be going to ride the tour next time too - she has had enough of driving around the route.

After the ride I was often asked how RM1200 compares to PBP. Tougher or easier? Thinking of the big climbs and potentially extreme weather and road conditions, my spontaneous answer always was "Tougher!". Well, actually a more general answer could be: "Very different, but just as unique as PBP!". PBP is a social event of thousands of riders from all over the world, accompanied by enthusiasm and applause of spectators along the route, but also characterized by anonymous service at the checkpoints with partially dubious boarding. As opposed to PBP, RM1200 is a great adventure in a wild and breath-taking scenery, familiarly and well organized, no spectators along the lonely route except bears and other wild animals, and weather and driving conditions can always be severe. Therefore, careful preparation and planning is necessary: Contrary to PBP, I would not advise anybody to sleep in the open except for any unforeseen emergency. This year, the tour was favoured by good weather on the whole, in 1998 continuous heat prevailed, in 1997 it rained for 3 days and they had cold and snowy weather in the mountains.

My food supply strategy was successful, although especially the liquid food was too abundant. I used only 5-7 cans on each section out of 11 cans per bag (plus one can consumed immediately at each control). Thus and because of the warm meals at the controls, I could completely do without the PowerBars I carried along.

The traditional after-ride party given by the Blairs, a local randonneur couple, perfectly closed the event. In their elegant estate in the mountains overlooking Kamloops we could talk about the ride and exchange personal experience. The pictures Bob had taken on the tour were available as personal souvenirs. Every finisher was handed over a medal or pin by Réal Préfontaine, the President of Randonneur Mondiaux.

Finally, I hope my personal report encourages more European randonneurs to also participate in RM1200 sometime. For me, it was an unforgettable event embedded into a great vacation trip travelling Western Canada by motorhome.

Credits

First of all, many thanks to Danelle and all the volunteers who assisted us at the checkpoints and on the road. You did a wonderful job that made my ride very easy and relaxing! I hope there is no weight restriction for the bags next time because of me.

Congratulations to all the riders who finished RM1200 and - I hope so - also enjoyed it.

Special thanks to the brevet organizers Karl Weimann in Northern Franconia, Jürgen Amann in Munich, and Klaus Bäumel in Vienna, and to all the participants of these rides. I enjoyed their brevet series which helped me prepare optimally for RM1200.

Last but not least grumpy thanks to my bear at the Yellowhead Pass who helped this story to get its title.

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