



## Contacts

<i>President</i>	
Danelle Laidlaw	737-0043
<i>Vice-President</i>	
Ian Stephen	576-4425
<i>Secretary</i>	
Larry Wasik	299-6115
<i>Treasurer</i>	
Roger Street	228-1525
<i>Past President</i>	
Doug Latonnell	734-2504
<i>Pres. Randonneur Mondiale</i>	
Réal Prefontaine	853-9594
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	
Susan Allen	734-2504
<i>Social Coordinator</i>	
open position	
<i>Promotion &amp; Web Guy</i>	
Eric Fergusson	733-6657
<i>VP Randonneurs – Cycling BC</i>	
Bob Bose	531-8869
<i>Awards Coordinator</i>	
Karen Smith	732-0212
<i>Lower Mainland Route Coordinator</i>	
John Bates	528-2549
<i>Vancouver Island Route Coordinator</i>	
Stephen Hinde	250-245-4751
<i>Interior Route Coordinator</i>	
Bob Boonstra	250-828-2869
<i>Peace Region Route Coordinator</i>	
Wim Kok	250-785-4589
<i>500/1000 Series Coordinator</i>	
Bob Marsh	467-7065
<i>Database Manager</i>	
Cheryl Lynch	872-8761
<i>Clothing</i>	
Danelle Laidlaw	734-5025

## British Columbia

# Randonneur

## Marathon Cycling

### Madame Prez says

*Danelle Laidlaw*

The randonneuring season is well and truly underway, in fact, in some regions we are halfway or more through the first series. Geez, at this rate, the summer will be over before we know it! We launched the season with well attended Populaires, 200's, 300's, and 400 (in some cases). It is hard to keep our schedule straight sometimes with all the regions and the great selection of rides that we have.

A selection of new routes have come onto the slate which from all accounts will attract new riders and encourage riders to try rides in other areas. First of all, there are the Peace River Region rides. Wim Kok is diligently attempting to interest cyclists to try a new type of cycling. Wim is doing a great job even though the weather has not been co-operating for him.

Then, in the interior, we have a whole new raft of rides that Ray Wagner and John Bates have put together. If the events that have happened so far are any indication, this series will be an interesting one. Both the Mica Dam 300 and the Merritt 200/300 routes have received kudos. It is true that the temperatures and the winds could have been a little kinder, but that aside, the routes were truly charming and challenging.

The development of new rides keeps riders interested in doing these long rides and gets more people involved in our club. If you have some ideas for rides or have discovered a road which could be incorporated into an existing route to give it a new flavour, then feel free to pass the information along to our Route Co-Ordinator. And for those of you who are into the more techie stuff, if you have done things like make up profiles of the routes, pass them along too.

I am delighted to see so many people out on so many of the rides. I think the season has got off to a great start – keep it up.

### Volunteers Needed for July 1st Ride

*Harold Bridge*

The second Canada Birthday randonnee will

be held on the appropriate date and I shall need some volunteers to get the 134 km event to run smoothly. The start/finish is to be at the Fort Langley Community Hall on the west side of Glover Road a little way north of where 96th Av intersects Glover Road. Same route as last year (and should be good for next year as well).

- ◆ Start: 4 people
- ◆ Straiton Hall: 2 people
- ◆ Sardis; 2 people
- ◆ Huntingdon: 2 people
- ◆ Aldergrove Lake: 2 people
- ◆ Finish: 2 people

Some of these jobs can be doubled up, but many hands make light work. If you can help, please contact Harold Bridge at 941-3448.

### Tandem Pilots Needed

*Gary Steeves*

BC Blind Sports is a provincial organization that provides opportunities for blind/visually impaired persons to take part in physical activities, both recreationally and competitively. We have a tandem cycling program where we loan out tandem bikes to persons who are visually impaired. However, our biggest challenge is often finding pilots for these people and their bikes. The levels of ability will vary from novice to seasoned riders. Time commitment can vary from rides once a week to rides once a month.

If you think you'd be interested in getting more information please contact either Mike Longigan, Program Coordinator, at (604) 325-8638 (email: [mike@bcblindsports.bc.ca](mailto:mike@bcblindsports.bc.ca)) or Gary Steeves, Vice President (and rider) at (604) 874-9159 (email: [spinking@telus.net](mailto:spinking@telus.net))

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## A Memory of World War Two:

**10 May 1940, Gironcart Farm, Harcigny, Department of Aisne, France**

*André Milaire*

From the time that I was a small child, I had heard many stories about World War One. I had also spent a good deal of time listening to the radio as the wars of the 1930s were described. It was on the 10 May 1940, however, that I ceased to be a passive listener and became an active participant in the events that were destroying Europe and that brought an end to my youth.

From 1935 to 1939, the Japanese bombarded China and occupied the north of the country. The Italian dictator Mussolini captured Ethiopia and thus completed the era of colonial conquest. General Franco, with the help of Mussolini and Adolph Hitler, overthrew the democratically elected government in Spain, an action that resulted in the Spanish Civil War, which itself became a testing ground for new German armaments. Then Hitler invaded in quick succession Austria, Czechoslovakia,

Poland, Denmark, and Norway. Finally, in May 1940, it was the turn of Holland, Belgium and France. In the spring of 1940, on our farm in the north of France, we were waiting from day to day for the attack of the German army. Anxiety reigned; the faces of the adults reflected the seriousness of the moment. We were grouped around the radio, which informed us every hour of the dramatic situation that was evolving so quickly on the fateful day that was the 10 May 1940.

The great German offensive, the event that was to turn our lives upside down, had begun. The aerial combats that were taking place on this first day in the skies over our farm only confirmed for us the reality of the coming calamity.

The advance of the German troops across the forests of the Ardennes in Belgium and in France was rapid, and on the 15 May, the radio told us of the imminent arrival of the enemy forces

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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](mailto:stoker@telus.net). Or mail (preferable a diskette) to Susan Allen, 2356 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vancouver, BC V6K 1V9

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in our district, which was 20 km from the Belgian frontier. About a week earlier, my parents had sent my youngest brother, who was eight at the time, and my recently married sister to stay with her mother-in-law, who lived near Moulins in the centre of France

On the night of the fifteenth, my parents decided that we too-my two brothers, aged seventeen and nineteen, and myself, aged fourteen, had to leave at dawn. As for my parents, who considered themselves old at this time, even though they were only forty-eight and fifty-one, they would stay at the farm and face whatever consequences awaited them.

They had spent all of World War One behind the German lines within hearing distance of the cannon and the other sounds of battle. For them, then, there was never any question of leaving the farm and thus abandoning their patrimony and starting over. They said, "We have already lived with and endured the 'Boches' for four years; we are not afraid of them!" In World War One the farm of my maternal grandparents was almost totally destroyed at the beginning of 1914; the only building that remained was the henhouse, and there they lived with their fourteen children for four years until the war ended in 1918. If my mother and father had realized at the time the cruelty of Nazism, however, they might well have acted otherwise.

On 16 May 1940, then, my mother woke us up, gave us breakfast, and bade us farewell. We were all in tears from the sadness and the anguish of our parting. About 5:30am, we left on our bicycles for Moulins. Each of us carried a small bundle of clothes, some money, and a little food. At 10:30 that morning, the Germans arrived at the farm. That same day, in spite of the chaos that we found on the roads, we managed to pass a column, almost a hundred kilometers long, of French and Belgian refugees. Part of the great exodus ("L'Exode"), they were huddled in all sorts of horse-drawn wagons, tractors, cars, wheelbarrows, baby carriages, and bicycles. They carried with them as many of their household goods as they could. As their escort, courtesy of Adolph Hitler, they had German planes that took pleasure in gunning them down from time to time. Luckily, we did not have to undergo this treatment.

On the evening of 16 May, after having cycled about 160 kilometers, we arrived at Montmirail, and on the outskirts of this small town, we found on the right a farm where we were able to sleep for the night on some straw in the barn. Having been on the road for almost fifteen hours, our exhaustion obviously showed in our haggard looks. I shall always remember the farmer's wife, who must have been about the same age as my mother, as she greeted us with tears in her eyes as we arrived. I still cannot think of this scene, even less describe and talk about it, without becoming very emotional.

The next day we cycled approximately another 160 kilometers to near the city of Auxerre, and the day after we did about 180 kilometers to arrive at Moulins on 18 May 1940.

During the rest of the war, I had many other adventures; in September 1940, for example, I left the 'Free Zone,' where I had taken refuge, and crossed clandestinely the 'Occupied Zone' in order to return to my parents' farm in the 'Forbidden Zone.' The memory of these three days in May 1940, however, has always remained very clear for me, and for many years I have dreamed of doing this trip again and of covering the same ground in the same three days. Since my retirement I have cycled between five and

six thousand kilometers a year. So finally I have decided, sixty-one years later, to repeat this voyage of my youth, before the weight of old age obliges me to give up my favorite pastime.

In this tour, which will take place between 16 and 19 May 2001, I shall be accompanied by Dr. Glen Smith, an excellent cyclist and a former Olympic athlete-he won a silver medal in rowing at the Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, in 1956-and Dan McGuire, who successfully completed the Paris-Brest-Paris bicycle marathon in 1979, 1983, and 1987, and who continues to cycle a good deal in France.

## Time Limits

*Harold Bridge*

Both Danelle and Eric claim that the fast end of PBP has no limit. And yet controls for all 3 groups have both opening times and closing times. I know that in 1983 the fast group were cooling their heels at Beleme (the first control then) awaiting the control to open.

In 1991 and as far as I know there has been no change to the format, the 80 hour group's fast limit was 40 hours 47 minutes. The only person to beat that was the last "Winner", Marcel Diot, who won the last race in 1951 with 38:55. Maybe when the lead rider or group gets down under 41 hours they will consider opening up earlier.

I scanned through Eric's query about doing away with the current time scale we work to. It seems he doesn't recognise that the BC Randonneurs are only one part of an international organisation. If we wish to have our efforts recognised we have to work within the existing international rules. Maybe there is good reason to question the rules, but to go off half cocked and use different standards for ourselves removes us from the system and we set up a new, made in BC, system.

There isn't much point in comparing marathon running with randonneuring. A marathon is a race and as such it would be counter-productive to put limits on the front end. A randonné is not a race, although there has to be an element of competition if there are time limits.

Due to the politics of European cycling the ACP had to be very careful they didn't get in conflict with the UCI and thus the fast limits were necessary to ensure they were not accused of running unsanctioned races. North America doesn't suffer so much from this aspect, but nonetheless the same caution applies.

Even if we stick, more or less, to the existing time limits I think they should be

rationalised at the fast end, 5:53 could be 6, or 5:45. 12:08 for the 400 could be 12 hours and so forth.

What I think we do need is the authority to pro-rata the closing limit for the actual distance. As so many of our routes involve crossing rivers it can be very difficult to come up with the nominal distance +1 or 2%. When ACP decided to stop that practise about 1984 many of us didn't have computers. With GPS and accurate computers we know pretty well what the true distance of a route is and I can't see anything wrong in applying the 15 kph (up to 600 km) to the actual distance.

But good things can happen when a discontent starts asking questions. In UK in 1893 the police prohibited road racing. The races were handicapped with groups starting at intervals, fastest last. The riders also had pacers. You can imagine the scene at the finish. Just one collision with a pony and trap and the police acted. The National Cyclists' Union didn't protest they went along with it. The North Road Club was offended and seceded from the NCU and carried on organising road races under a new format. The handicapping was on an individual basis with the fastest rider starting first.

Thus was the TIME TRIAL born in 1895, on October 5th.

## How to Treat a Volunteer

*Cheryl Lynch*

Very carefully, obviously. As one of the people who helps to make the club work, I would like to remind everyone that the rides would not happen without the hard work of people just like yourself. I also want to point out that many of the people who run the club have been doing so for years, on top of their often already busy lives.

So... when something does not happen quite the way you would like it to, rest assured that the volunteer responsible is doing their best and remember that they really don't have to do anything for you. They want to and they enjoy doing so (most of the time).

## What a Great Day!

*Ian Stephen*

For me this year's Pacific Populaire was a day of firsts. The first Populaire organized by Danelle and Sharon, the first Populaire I volunteered at...

The morning weather on April 8 promised enough to entice nearly 400 hearty souls out to

## Coming Events

*June 2 – L. Mainland 400 km*  
6am-Burnaby Lake Sports C.  
Sean William 253-6966

*June 2 – Peace Region 300 k*  
Le petit tour de Peace  
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

*June 9 – L. Mainland Shorts*  
50, 100 or 150 km  
9 am-Fort Langley  
Bob Marsh 467-7065

*June 9-10 – Island 600 km*  
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

*June 9 – South Interior 400 k*  
Kamloops  
Bob Boonstra 250-828-2869

*June 16-17 -L. Mainland 600*  
7 am- Pitt Meadows  
Ted Milner 291-3499

*June 16 – Peace Region 400k*  
also 300 km  
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

*June 22-24 – 1000 km*  
Various Routes (inquire)  
John Bates 528-2549

*June 23-24 – Interior 600 km*  
Vernon  
Ray Wagner 250-545-7165

*June 23-24 – Seattle 600 km*  
5:30am -Arlington Motor-Inn  
Mark Thomas mark.thomas@lightmail.com

*July 1 – Canada Day 134 km*  
8-9:30 am : Fort Langley  
Harold Bridge 941-3448

*July 1 – Peace Region 600 k*  
also 400 km  
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

*July 8 – L. Mainland 200 km*  
7 am – Port Coquitlam  
Roger Street 228-1525

*July 8 – L. Mainland Shorts*  
50, 100, 150 km  
7 am – Port Coquitlam  
Bob Marsh 467-7065

*July 14 – Peace Region 200 k*  
Ironman Challenge  
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

the event. There were some fairly tough winds out on the course, but for the most part the weather came through on its promise. I overheard talk of a rain-dance (anti-rain-dance?) being responsible for the favourable weather. I didn't hear the whole story though, so can't relay that part. The bit I did overhear sounded pagan enough that had I heard more I think I might be too shy to tell the tale!

Danelle and Sharon did a flawless job of organizing the event. Some changes made in anticipation of the large numbers paid off and the start, I am told, went more smoothly than last year. I was working a registration table myself, but couldn't say how things went, as I was head down, focused on not messing up my assigned task. Sharon won my heart for all time by bringing me coffee, as if she wasn't busy enough without catering to me! I hadn't volunteered at a Populaire before and must admit I had no idea how much work goes into making the event a success. My helmet is off to everyone involved in this event and past ones. Good job all!

The routes this year were somewhat different from years past, partly to take advantage of city bike routes. Judging by the comments I heard at the finish, the routes were a success. I rode the 50 km myself and thoroughly enjoyed it. My only concern was that it was tough to leave the Woodward Landing control, there was so much good food!

The highlight of my day had to be staffing the finish. It was interesting to see the really fast people come in. Their times left me as amazed as ever, but less envious than has been the case in the past. How they ride is a different world from how I ride. My approach is a much more 'smell the flowers' approach and having listened to the conversations at the finish I think I like my way just fine. (Never mind that I could never be that fast anyway!)

The thing that really made me feel good about the day though was not seeing those who finished first, but seeing those who did their first finish. Those people who came out and for the first time ever rode 25 km or 50 km or 100 km. I'd like to thank those people for sharing their firsts with us at the tables as they received their finisher's pins. It was exciting to hear how hard it was and how good it felt to succeed. Hearing their stories brought back the feelings of the first that sticks in my mind, my first 50 km ride. It was in the grip of the exhausted glow of that 50 km that I decided I would ride PBP one day! Dangerous things those exhausted glows ... yet I can't get enough of them! At this year's Populaire I learned that sharing those glows can be as good as having them. Thanks all you new riders. Hope to see you next year!

## That Dam 300 k

*Ray Wagner*

It was a cool 5 degrees when 5 devoted Radonneurs met at the base of the Revelstoke hydro dam to begin the inaugural Dam to Dam 300. A measure of the ride to come was the, from the get go, 2.5 km climb. From then on, the paved shouldered road led the cyclists on a roller coaster ride of climbs and descents northward towards their destination the Mica Hydro Dam. A standout of this 12 to 16 hour journey was the very, very, very few vehicles encountered. We seemed to own the road. On route were encountered, as one rider termed "better than any zoo", frequent sightings of deer, moose, caribou, black bear, eagles and

river otter. At the first control at the Downie Resort the older lady, at the sparsely supplied store, needed help reading the clock for the time. She seemed to look at us quite strangely when we indicated our purpose. At the town of Mica Creek, a few kilometers from the turn around point, the tandem team of Bob and Richard spotted two bikes at the cafeteria. As the story was told to me, Bob thought he caught Peter and I taking a little too long of a break, and they proceeded ahead anticipating reaching the turn around first. After climbing the 3 km to the top of the Mica Dam, Bob was somewhat disappointed to find the hole punch already there. The hole punch was a twist to an unmanned control point whereby we had the fastest rider carry the punch to the turn around and the last rider bring it back. Each rider punched his or her card at the control. Meanwhile the Mica cafeteria served up some delicious soup and sandwich for only \$3. Peter and I didn't have too firm a completion time, but with 75 km to go we thought we might be able to make it in less than 12 hours. We were making great time for the next 25 km and slowed a bit the 25 km after that. Just when it seemed possible a head wind began and there were more climbs than we remembered. We knew the last 2.5 km were all downhill so we kept pushing the pace. Our ride ended with two happy smiles as we clocked 11:58. As the day progressed we were reduced to jersey and shorts, however our following randonneurs experienced some thundershowers. That Dam 300 will be ridden again!

## Serpents on the Lower Mainland 200

*Ian Stephen*

Happy thanks to Dan McGuire and all who helped with the April 22 200 km through Ferndale. It was a beautiful and interesting route that showed me some great parts of Washington State. The route also taught me that Ferndale is not somewhere near Mission!

Crossing the border always causes me worry. Not that I have any reason to worry. I think it's just due to an overactive imagination that is always going 'what if...'. My border crossing strategy is to smile lots and look extra harmless. It seemed to work and I was sent on my way with a minimum of questions. I had a moment's panic when Bob Bailey good naturally berated a border guard about the lack of bike racks. Fortunately it was a friendly border guard and nobody was strip searched or shot.

I had good company on the ride and it was quite an adventure what with the torrential rain and so many flats that one rider dubbed our group 'Team Flat-out'. The worst damaged was Gerry Nichol's, unfortunately a 27" tyre. A couple of riders had spare tyres, but all 700C. I commented that having 27" tyres was akin to owning a Macintosh computer. Well, guess what kind of computer Gerry has! After valiant attempts to make his tyre work, we finally left him in the middle of nowhere. I refrained from bringing up the movie Deliverance as we parted and Bob Bose was kind enough to drive down and pick Gerry up before any further ill came his way.

The rest of our little group finished the ride, in spite of a frightening spill by Simon Goland at that tight turn in the gully bottom on 56 Ave. We finished wet, cold and tired with about 7 minutes to spare. Why isn't there an award for closest to the limit without going over?

The most significant lesson I took from this ride was about flats. One of the many flats we had was my front tyre. It went flat quite abruptly and as I examined the tube I found what looked like the twin punctures of a serpent's bite! 'Another sign of the current US administration' I thought, but then some unromantic sort ruined the moment by suggesting it was a pinch-flat. 'Hmmm, strange...' I thought, having noticed no cause for a pinch-flat. I should have clued in, as whenever I think 'Hmmm, strange...' it is a sure sign that further thinking is in order. However, I missed the clue and hastened to patch the tyre and get under way. Sure enough, when I pumped up the tyre I heard that telltale 'hiss' (and it wasn't the serpent). More time was lost while I took the tube out again to patch the original puncture which had dropped the rim onto the tyre and caused the 'serpent's bite' that I had patched the first time.

Next time, if I don't actually see the serpent in the road I'll know to look for the triple puncture the devil's fork.

## Using a GPS to Navigate a Brevet

*Barry Bogart*

I just wanted to give you a quick rundown on how the GPS thing worked for the Mainland 200 k. The short answer is – pretty well. The coordinates were pretty well bang on. The important factor, and what I wanted to test - was if the GPS could warn about turns in time. The answer is, yes and no. It seemed to turn on the 'turn ahead' indication about 50 m before the turn (although I have a feeling it could depend on the current travelling speed). Then, a second of two later the arrow showed the direction of the turn. Now at a 30 kph pace, you do that 50 m in six seconds, and that isn't a lot of time to get into the correct lane and set up the correct 'line'. It is especially frustrating because you have to start watching the display as it counts down from about 100 m, and then wait for the turn indication and then the arrow itself - when you should be watching the road and other vehicles. Incidentally that arrow is always a faithful indication of your direction - for example entering Loomis Trail which is about a 11 o'clock turn. Ideally you would have an audible indication - one tone at 100 m away and two different tones for left and right shortly after that. (The GPS does show the 6-char waypoint name - something like 'Fraser' or '88thav' or 'peacep', but I didn't pay much attention to that - or even the street name.) Of course if you have a stoker - that might make it easier but then I would REALLY want lots of notice about turns.

However consider the lack of a GPS. Then you have to scan a route list, probably after checking the computer trip odometer. I always have trouble picking the right line off the page. Then you have to read the direction indication and street name off that line - all probably without looking up. Then you have to start looking for street signs. I believe that all takes even more time than with a GPS. And it is a real problem in the dark!

One of the best features of the GPS approach is that it presents you with one item at a time - the next turn. That enables you to concentrate on riding until you approach the turn, and then concentrate on the next. Other ways of doing that would also be as effective - I have seen someone with the route on rollers like a scroll with a yellow cursor (if you know who this person is, let me know). It also makes me think that Bikebrain may actually be worthwhile (it is a Palm Pilot app that presents each turn of a route, one by one).

But the GPS has other advantages - It counts down both the distance and time to the next turn so you know exactly when you will get to each control and the finish (I liked knowing exactly when I would get to the top of Kickerville). It shows you the current altitude, which is kind of interesting (low point is Birch Bay and there were several places tied for the max about 60 m). (Are these things smart enough to calibrate on mean sea level?). The screen is backlight so you could theoretically run as fast at night - although that would take some strong faith in technology. But I was going through two sets of batteries on the 200 (which could be stretched to a 300, I think). With a backlight I assume it would be much less. Of course you don't need it to be on all the time (like mine was) - If you are riding out to Manning or up to Darcy or Cache Creek, turning it on every 30 minutes or so would be good enough! I found it could fix a location from startup in about 15 seconds - and update your progress along the route (unless you have gone more than 100 km while it was sleeping - then it gets momentarily confused).

One problem was the number of data points available. The eTrex will store 500 waypoints, which is really a lot. But a single 'route' can only have 50 points, and this 200 had about 85. So I actually ran out of 'route' around Everson. I could have constructed the balance of the route by clearing the old one and building a new one with the 37 remaining waypoints, but that would have taken about 15 minutes at least and would require recognizing the cryptic 6-character names corresponding to the route list. At least 15 minutes, stopped. But very few routes are as convoluted as this 200. Of course I am talking about the cheapest GPS on the market - the Garmin eTrex. Other models might well have more waypoints per route or multiple routes, built-in maps and maybe even audible turn warnings. But they won't cost \$200 like mine.

Of course the most difficult problem, is getting the data - finding the coordinates for every turn in the first place and then getting them entered in the GPS. It took me many hours and two programs (MS S&T and Topo!USA). I think in the future I would just enter the official controls and some strategic major turns and perhaps areas which are complicated or unfamiliar. And perhaps the locations of some service stations, ATMs and maybe some restaurants! But I would never travel without a GPS - just knowing where the finish is and when I will get there makes it worth \$200. If anyone wants my route sheet with the coordinates, I can email it any time.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Ann. Triple Mountain Challenge

*Danelle Laidlaw*

After a very successful first year, we are incorporating the TMGGC as an informal part of our calendar. And because it was so good last year, we are not making any changes to it for this year.

When – June 10th, 8 a.m.

Where – Grouse Mountain parking lot

Come with your bike, and your hiking boots. The route is start at the Grouse Mountain parking lot, cycle to Seymour, cycle to Cypress, cycle to the start and then don the hiking boots and hike the Grind. Enjoy some refreshment and celebration at the top.

The entry fee of \$15 will be donated to Jan Westendorp who is cycling across Canada with the BC Lung Association.

See you there.