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British Columbia

Randonneur

Marathon Cycling

BC Randonneurs Ride the Gold Rush and LEL

Susan Allen

There is no "Madam Prez Says" this month because she is busy riding LEL!

I would like to extend my congratulations to the following club members who did the big miles:

Gold Rush 1200 km (California)

- ◆ Keith Fraser
- ◆ Ken Bonner
- ◆ Karen Smith
- ◆ Michel Richard

London-Edinburgh-London 1400 km

- ◆ Ken Bonner
- ◆ Danelle Laidlaw
- ◆ John Bates
- ◆ Cheryl Lynch

My apologies to anyone I missed.

The Sweetest Ride

(an account of the 2001 interior 400 , 427 actually!)

Peter Mair

There are few things in life as sweet as a smooth stretch of road and a strong tailwind on your back - such was the case for probably one half of this year's Interior 400.

Bob Boonstra had organized a new route for this year's spring series 400 km. So on June 9 @ 5:00 a.m. with the threat of showers (typical June weather for even the interior), 5 official riders (one unofficial tagged along to Merritt) headed south out of Kamloops on the old highway 5A through the Nicola Valley to Merritt. What a treat Bob had in store! After the initial 6 to 7 km climb past Knutsford the road promptly plummets 250 meters in elevation in 3 km with grades up to 11%. In the back of everybody's mind I'm sure was what a wallow this was going to be on the way back. My friend from Kamloops (the unofficial rider) and I rolled on ahead but by

Stump Lake Allan needed to stop to access his food supply and the tandem of Bob and Richard caught us up. As the next 10 km south was perfect cruising terrain for the tandem we tucked in until the hills got a little long and we drifted away again. By Quilchena Allan sat up and exclaimed he "was baked!" so we bid good-byes and I carried on to Merritt into headwinds and rain showers.

As I was reloading my bike at the Robyn's Donuts control Allan showed up. He was going to call his wife to come pick him up as he turned around and rode back the way we had come. Bob and Richard rolled into the control as I left for the slog up to Aspen Grove. The "initial" Connector route, other than the big climb, went easy as a tailwind pushed me up to the high point brake check. The rolling terrain to the turnoff to Aspen Grove provided some relief. The route south to Princeton began with showers sprinkling down but through beautiful cattle country, groves of patchy aspen and pine, decent pavement and little traffic. There were slight headwinds, which fortunately turned about 20 km north of Princeton. The next 50 km to the purported turnaround at km 208 was a sweet ride on flat terrain with speed well into the 40's in places. At km 210 (on my odometer), I pulled over, perplexed - "where the heck was the control?" Rural housing and barking dogs in the middle of nowhere began to give me an uneasy feeling - especially since my odometer had read right on Bob's route description distance at Merritt. I concluded it must still be ahead. At km 213.7 the Whistle Stop Café was a welcome site. I wasted little time filling water bottles and my back

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bladder. After explaining to the woman and her daughter the insanity of Randonneering and that hopefully all five of us would make the turn-around she exclaimed "good heavens - of course you can use the bathroom. We had expected 40 of you to roll through!" There was a very conspicuous sign as one entered the establishment requesting a \$1.00 charge for non-customer use of the bathroom - apparently due to a temperamental septic system? I dashed in for a pee and promptly saddled back up. Tailwinds into the control where now headwinds out. But it wasn't that bad. The tandem passed me speeding to the control about 17 km out and after I swung through Princeton I stopped and chatted briefly with the sweepers – Randy and Rob a few km's north. They sounded a little flat having suffered a puncture earlier in the day and were looking for incentives. I told them the next 35 km would be great but then they would have to face the headwinds. That raised their spirits a mm or two and we parted company.

I slogged north and began wishing for the tailwinds, which came a little later than expected. They did however materialize and the next 50 km through Aspen Grove to the high point on the Connector before the big hill to Merritt went very quickly. The hill had to be pedaled down - literally. The strong cross winds at the top and a full frontal blast as the highway swung west on a 7% grade reduced gliding speed to under 40 km/hr. As soon as the turn was made north back to the Merritt control though I could hardly contain my excitement as the wind now pushed as strongly from behind.

Never have I looked so forward to a 92 km ride - that was what was left. The Knutsford hill seemed a mere bump 76 km distant. I had a leisurely hot chocolate at Robyn's Donuts and cranked up the blood sugar for the last stretch.

The 92 km was pure sweetness. The wind was like a motor on the bike and all I had to do was keep turning the pedals to keep up. You know those days when you feel like Tiger Woods fist punching the air for the pure joy of it all. I've never ridden that

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far, that fast under any circumstances. The only disconcerting factor was my heart rate failing to go above 134 bpm. In speaking with someone later they commented it was probably "cardiac drift" due to fatigue and as long as it wasn't fluctuating wildly up and down - it wasn't, not to worry. The Knutsford hill went well. The worst part was listening to a rattling bolt that had come loose in my rear fender 14-½ hrs earlier. The final 13 kms were flat or downhill. What a way to finish with speeds in excess of 70 km/hr to the day's starting point. Good route Bob! Bring on the 600 km.

Ossendrecht, The Netherlands 300 km Brevet

E. W. [Wim] Kok

During my spring trip to the Netherlands in May I decided to participate in a couple of Brevets in the Netherlands. The first one took place on Saturday May 19 in Ossendrecht in the SW part of the Netherlands. Traveling by train with a bicycle in the Netherlands is easy. For Hfl 12.50 one gets a bike day pass (this does not include one's own ticket). When the train arrives at the station, look for the car with the bike sign, load the bike, take a seat, and enjoy the scenery until destination. After I got off the train in Bergen op Zoom, I cycled to Ossendrecht in classical Dutch dreary weather: cloudy skies and drizzle. Via a roundabout way -- that's another story -- I finally arrived at the hotel, where the bed and breakfast charge was Hfl 55.00 or C\$ 35.00. Quite decent I might add.

Registration was Saturday morning at 5 am with a scheduled start at six. The start location was in one of the cafe-restaurants, where many riders were already enjoying their early morning coffee. Robert LeDuc, ride organizer and his cohorts were busy doing the paper work. Some 25 riders on fenderless bikes were ready to undertake this event. At 6 am most riders got off into the cool and cloudy morning, with a few starting later. Almost immediately a stiff pace was set, so as not to waste time. The group became stretched like a piece of spaghetti, soon to be broken up in two sections. Realizing that 300 km is a long distance, and that it made no sense to burn myself up in the first 20 km, I put two and two together and decided to drop back to the second group, which rode at a more leisurely (??) pace. Meanwhile the skies cleared and a westerly breeze provided the necessary resistance. After all we are randonneurs and we enjoy all the resistance we can get. To reduce the latter however someone in our group 'organized' us into an echelon or 'waaier,' so that energy could be saved and the pace maintained. Like a serpentine, we snaked through the province of Zeeland. We were alternating between cycling on the dike, then again behind the dike. This gave us different perspectives on the open polders with blooming orchards and fields with leeks and other crops. The morning smells were certainly inspiring.

After a secret control, we continued along the river Schelde from Zuid-Beveland to Walcheren, carefully avoiding the bigger cities like Vlissingen and Middelburg. The route was clearly marked with yellow arrows and the number 3 (300 km brevet), which closely matched our route description. The route took us through small villages, many whose names ended with 'kerke' (church).

Lonneker, The Netherlands:

400 km Brevet

E. W. [Wim] Kok

The second brevet I rode in the Netherlands (actually most of it in Germany) involved a 400 km event on May 26, 2001. It started at Lonneker, near Enschede in the eastern part. On account of the foot-and mouth disease the traditional course through the forested and hilly Veluwe area had to be canceled. John Omlo, organizer of this brevet, had selected an alternate route, which would take the eight riders into Germany to Warstein as the turnaround point. Warstein, at the northern edge of Sauerland, is the place where the famous Warsteiner beer is brewed. Registration of the participants took place between 8 and 9 pm at night at cafe Sprakel, and at 9 pm sharp we were off. This ride as opposed the 300 km brevet a week earlier, did not have any arrows on the pavement, but made extensive use of road signs and an excellent route description.

The route took us very quickly into Germany. Evening fell slowly, as if someone gradually turned down the dimmer switch. After sunset we stopped at our first control in Emsdetten, re-supplied depleted caffeine stores and water bottles. As the skies turned darker, temperatures dropped and Germany went to sleep. The stars came out, as did the moon, guiding us through the countryside. Frequently, we passed through small villages. Somewhere near Kattevenne some members of our group disappeared at great speed after everyone took what later on appeared to be a wrong turn. We ended up on a dark bike path in the forest, then somehow regrouped and collectively clued in that this was not the way to get to the next control. We then argued in a friendly way which direction to take. Mass confusion (that is if you can call eight riders a mass). Upon consulting a map -- yes, they are very useful to have along-- and determining our overall position, we did some backtracking and with an extra 20 km were able to get back on our route. Decision-making at its best!

It was after midnight by now and the darkest part of night surrounded us. We passed through Lienen, a place where I have to go back to, because it struck me as particularly picturesque. Arriving at Bad Iburg, the silhouette of the famous Teutoburgerwald with its spectacular forest became visible. Meanwhile we had split in two groups, one fast and one not so fast.

At 95 km we had the first official control in West Kapelle, where we stopped at a restaurant behind the dunes of the North Sea for some 30 minutes. After this welcome break with coffee for most of the riders, the route turned north along the coast. We rode across the dike of the Veerse Meer to Noord Beveland, and then crossed the big control structure of the Oosterschelde to the island of Schouwen-Duiveland with a very stiff sea breeze greeting us along the way. The pace I must admit was kept high, although some described it as slow. Then someone 'flatted.' While we waited, he changed the tire, and we into shorts. We crossed the Grevelingen, another large distributary of the delta. The third control was in Ouddorp on the island of Goeree-Overflakkee. The pies were excellent!!

After a half hour rest we turned east and now enjoyed a tailwind, which made the ride through the open landscape very enjoyable. Just after Hellegatsplein we crossed the Haringvlietbrug (bridge) to arrive on yet another island: the Hoekse Waard, which we left via a tunnel under the Dordtse Kill. Shortly after someone's tire exploded, tearing the sidewall to shreds. The usefulness of having a spare outer was clearly demonstrated. Near the City of Dordrecht we turned south, went across the Hollands Diep via the famous Moerdijkbrug (the one that we learned about in geography in elementary school in the Netherlands) to next make a pit stop at the control in Zevenbergschenhoek in the Province of Noord Brabant.

At this control many of the Dutch riders filled their bidons with a malting barley product, and sampled it as well. The last 50 km took us back in the forested area, finishing at 6:30 pm, some 12.5 hours after we departed. The brevet consisted of 10 hours cycling and 2.5 hours resting. Interesting the lead group had completed the ride in well under ten hours. A great ride. In conversations with some of the cyclists during and after the ride, it became obvious that many of them are kilometre gluttons in the good sense of the word. Some had already collected more than 11,000 km (!!!) of riding so far this year. Their riding style is indeed evidence of this. Low gearing and high spinning rates make it look so effortless. Most riders are passionate about touring and randonneuring. They participate in one event after the other, cycling weekend after weekend thus adding the kilometres to their total.



Coming Events

- Victoria 200 – Aug. 4*
8 am Tim Horton's: Gateway Village (Ravine Way & Blanshard, Saanich)
Mike Poplawski 250-882-1239
- Peace Region 300 – Aug. 4*
Wim Kok 250-785-4589
- L. Mainland 400 – Aug. 11*
6 am Guildford Shop. Mall (Across From McDonalds)
Bob Bose 531-8869
- Seattle 1000 – Aug. 16-19*
10 pm: Bainbridge Island ferry terminal
Terry Zmrhal terryz@microsoft.com
- Island 200+ – Aug. 18*
200 k, 150 k, 100 k and 50 k
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751
- Island 300 – Aug. 19*
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751
- L. Mainland 600+ – Aug. 25*
600 k, 400 k, 300 k, 200 k
6 am: Haney (Highway #7 @ Laity Street)
Harold Bridge 941-3448
- Victoria Off Road – Aug. 26*
Populaire, 9 am: Thetis Lake Park
Mike Poplawski 250-882-1239
- L. Mainland 1000 – Sep. 1-3*
various (inquire)
John Bates 528-2549
- Peace Region Quiche – Sep 8*
200 k, 160 k, 75 k
Wim Kok 250-785-4589
- Seattle 200 – Sep. 8*
Audax Style
Wayne Methner
- Fall Flatlander – Sep. 9*
200 k, 150 k, 100 k, 50 k
7 am: Maple Ridge
Tim Pollock 939-8166
- Interior OffRoad 200 - Sep15*
100 Mile House
Adrian Messner 250-791-5742

Slowly, the night sky began to lose its darkness, as if someone gradually turned the dimmer switch on again. Earlier, aromas of freshly baked bread from bustling bakeries wafted through silent streets of rural villages and tickled our nostrils, tempting, and attempting us to stop for a bite. We resisted, and were not. By the time we were ready to leave the second control near Soest, Germany awoke. Morning sights and sounds greeted us. In the valleys, tatters of ground fog hanging in suspension over pastures. Slight breezes caused it to slowly float away, until it disappeared in the strengthening morning sun.

The landscape became increasingly rolling, taking us from valley bottoms, up hillsides to hill tops. Forests and fields alternating passing us (or, we them), as if someone was playing hide and seek. We rode on, and rose above the valleys, gaining both elevation and views of the wide area around us. Hilltops were littered with large windmills, evidence of a great push toward alternative energy production. As we approached Warstein, one of our riders had to slow down, because he did not feel well. Well enough to cycle on, but not enough to maintain a higher pace, so with three of us we made a morning stop in the brewer's town, visited a Konditorei with freshly baked bread and pastry. We also collected an extra stamp, thus making this an unscheduled and unplanned control at the halfway point of this brevet. The return leg of the ride took us along the same route, the difference being that we could enjoy the scenery in broad daylight now. The scenery was indeed magnificent. Passing through large beech forests whose tall trunks and its closed canopy resembled a large cathedral. The many birds in it sang continuously, thus adding the chimes. Spring was indeed here. It reminded me of the time I spent in Germany's Black Forest more than thirty years ago. Continuing over hollow roads in between fields where hay was cut and dried, adding fragrance to the air, thus offsetting some of the odours that are spread by livestock barns, crops sprayers and chemical industries in the region. As we cycled north back to our starting point we gradually descended into the Lowlands.

After more than 410 kilometers and a total climb of 1750 meters (most of it consisting of bridge ramps etc) we arrived a full 24 hours later at 9 pm the next day. Tired, not really. Sleepy, neither, despite having cycled for 24 hours and after having been awake for more than 36 hours. It was marvelous ride. The weather was excellent, the company was great. The country side was varied, with rolling topography, hills and valleys. Once in a while rock outcrop of sandstone or limestone. Many small villages and towns, each with its own characteristics, but most of them with market squares, churches and Gasthoefe, and above all neatly manicured and rich in Kultur.

In terms of the cycling a great way to explore a varied landscape. Similar to the 300 km brevet, the strategy was no different. Fast paced riding between control points. Take a break of about half an hour or so, until someone gets the idea to get moving again.....and moving it is. It is obviously important to find a group riding at one's pace. Cycling at night in a group was certainly challenging, especially where one was confined to bike paths and riding double file (instead of single). Bike paths have many obstacles and curves in them, which requires extreme alertness, especially at night. The rides are very disciplined with continuous signaling and warning about obstacles and traffic

ahead. Overall, a great experience.

Organiser's Report - Canada Birthday Ride - 2001 Or; "Going Bananas"

Harold Bridge

The inaugural Birthday Ride last year attracted 70 riders. I therefore considered 100 to be a possibility and arranged paperwork for 120. The entry finished up being 85, with 10 of those filling in membership applications.

A few changes were made this year, mostly for the good I think. There is an aura about finishing at a pub, which is attractive to most. However, the nature of the event means there are likely to be some under-age people around, if only because Mum has to take a tired Daddy home! To overcome this problem I enquired about using the Fort Langley Community Hall, a little way south on Glover Rd. I learnt from the Business Improvement Society that they have a tent that can be easily erected on the lawn. The side door of the Hall would be open for access to toilets. It seemed to be a functional way to operate. The tent, with no sides, left the paper work vulnerable to the wind. But otherwise it was a good 25 dollars worth.

As the Township of Langley requested that we didn't allow a large group to all start at once I decided to implement a 90 minute "Start Window" Those who started at 08:00 would have the comfort of a 12 kph minimum speed. Anyone starting at 09:30 would still only have to contend with 15 kph.

The original route crossed Highway 11 on Harris Road. But there was the chance that Bell Road would be torn up between Harris and Clayburn. I therefore directed the route south on Riverside Road to cross Highway 11 at Clayburn.

One unpopular change was increasing the entry fee from \$15 to \$20. I must admit I managed last year on \$15 and the food worked out okay. This time there were complaints about the Vedder control running out of food. I bought a gross of muffins & scones. I split them equally between Vedder & Huntingdon. Huntingdon was left with 50% of their allocation unused. Lesson: In future 75 % to Vedder & 25% to Huntingdon.

Then there is the "Banana Saga". On the Friday night I looked in on Costco's bananas and was tempted buy then. But decided it was better to wait until Saturday. A new batch were in, very green. Unthinkingly, I ripped the bunches apart to get a better idea of how many I had (256). Later in the evening I realised there was no change in colour. Danelle suggested they should be in plastic so that the humidity would help ripen them. I put them in plastic bags and there they stayed, still green when the event was over!

We were lucky with the weather. It looked like a grand day to be riding. My favourite part of the route, Sumas Mountain and Straiton, was beautiful, (Bruce Mol reported seeing a bear) and we need to make the most of it before the municipal and real estate interests screw it all up.

Two riders succumbed to mechanical trouble. But other than that

all 83 of the others finished the ride. Times varied from 4:11 to 10:51.

The route as it stands will suffice for next year. At 135.8 km it may well be, in reality, long enough for 2 more years. Some careful measuring will determine that. Then there are options. By putting a control DOWN at Aldergrove Lake we can add at least a kilometre. Dan McGure suggests using Bates Road from Harris Road to Townshipline Road. That has a dog-leg in it that may serve a purpose. It will also be fun turning riders right at the bottom of Harris Road hill!

"Thank you" to: Jennifet Nicol, Lois Brodie, Frances Caton, (& her Mother), Danelle Laidlaw, Sharon Street, Bruce Mol, Réal Prefontaine, David Blanche, Ian Stephen.

A Tale Of A Rookie Rando Who Hit The Wall And Bounced Back

Michael Ball

Just over a year ago, I decided to take my commuter cycling to a different level. I am a competitive person, but I figured I was a little old to start serious Road racing. I read *Bicycling Magazine's* book titled, "Long Distance Cycling." The first chapter was about Randonneuring, the author's account of his participation in the PBP of 1995. After reading this tale of pain, lack of sleep and the elation of completing the ride, I was hooked. I searched for someone who could tell me more about this challenging type of riding.

I finally contacted Stephen Hinde, who gave me more insight into Randonneuring. He gave me the name of Mike Poplawski, who was organizing the first Victoria Populaire. July 19th 2000 I rode my first Rando event, a 100 km ride. I rode my Gary Fisher mountain bike (front shocks and skinny tires). It was a challenging ride and quite a good intro to Randonneuring. I met quite a few interesting people, all riding for different reasons.

I was hooked, but I knew I would need a road bike to ride longer distances. Now to convince my wife!!! This proved to be the most challenging event of the entire Randonneuring season. I started my search for a good used or reasonably priced new bike, as I prepared for the 2001 season. I spoke with Stephen and Carol Hinde, and Mike Poplawski to gain more insight for riding the long distances. The goal for this year was to ride a complete brevet series. This turned out to be quite an adventure on my new bike.

The first ride of the season was the Nanaimo Populaire. There were 17 riders who rode and completed the 100 km event. It was a good ride, and an introduction to riding hills. The second ride was a 200 km brevet that started in Chemainus. It was a challenging ride. I had company in the beginning, which helped pass the first 50 km's quickly. I met Ken Bonner for the first time during this ride. We passed Ken who was fixing a flat on the side of the road. Fifteen minutes later he passed by, like we were standing still! I finished this ride in 9 hrs and 50 minutes. It is a good thing that I enjoy my own company. It is something that I became accustomed to this season.

The next ride was the 300 km brevet which started in Oak Bay, Victoria. It was Ken Bonner, Mike Poplawski and myself. Ken was gracious and rode with us for the first 5 km or so; sharing

his different experiences and tips for training and riding. He then pulled away from us. I looked at the speed on my computer. It read 27 kph and I thought I was doing fairly well. I was not discouraged though, because I knew at this point I had a good distance to ride, and the plan was to finish the ride on my terms within the time limit. Mike and I rode together for most of the first 100 km. He then pulled away as we climbed the Malahat. Mike had a flat as he crested one of the many hills. I offered my help, but he said to go on.

Duncan was the next control and the turn around point. Time to refill water bottles and refuel with a short rest. Now it was off to climb more hills. The weather had been great, then the change. It began to rain a little then it started hail. The pounding of the pellets stung as I climbed the hills past Shawnigan Lake. When I made it back to the main Highway, it was sunny and dry once more. I headed downhill (talk about wash and wear clothing). I was dry again. Only to be greeted with more climbing and a headwind on the down hills. Through Sooke, the weather cleared and the end seemed near. I caught my second wind, maybe my third, okay my fourth wind as I pedalled towards Victoria. It became dark as I neared the end of the ride. One more pit stop, then only 30 km left. It was during this pit stop that Mike passed me. The last stretch of the ride I felt like I was flying along the waterfront to the last control. Actually it was the help of a tailwind, and the illusion of speed while riding in the dark. Finally the end; Mike was still at the last control having a snack and hot chocolate, trying to warm up. He and I congratulated each other on our accomplishments of the day. He shared a few of the highlights and down turns of his day then headed for home. I continued to try and warm up with a tea and a sub sandwich from the Payless gas station, while waiting for my wife to pick me up. What a day... 300 km in 15 hrs and 35 minutes.

The Four Hundred; it was only Ken Bonner and myself riding out of Victoria this day. A 3 am start and a climb over the Malahat in the dark. It was a good day, dry and cool to start. Ken rode with me for the first two kilometres. He then sped away in the dark. As I climbed the hill past Thetis Lake, I could see Ken's rear flashing light. That was the last I saw of him until later that afternoon. I felt good and I was a little cocky, (not having much adversity in my first few rides, other than the normal aches and pains). This day would be different. There was a slight head wind all day as I headed north. My first sign that things might not go my way was a flat tire, as I raced down the hill approaching Ladysmith. It was good that I was slowing down because of a red light. A puncture at high speed could mean the end of the season. Sitting on the cement girder at the edge of the road fixing my flat, my tire lever popped off the rim and bounced into the highway traffic. After the traffic cleared, I picked up the tire lever and continued the repair. A gulp of water, a power bar and I was on my way again, with renewed vigour.

Everything was going well and I was ahead of my estimated time. Ken passed me heading south. He was about three to four hours ahead of me now. At Union Bay (the turn around and control point) I had a bite of lunch and I was away. As I headed south I met the riders who started out of Duncan. They cheered me on as I passed. I felt good. Then the heartburn started, saddle sores and numb feet. My paced slowed slightly, but I was still making good time. I arrived in Duncan at 7:30 pm. Just over 50 km's to go, but I

was done, I'd hit the wall. I had been unable to eat anything since 2 pm. The previous 50 km I struggled to keep water down. My vision became blurry and I felt very unstable on my bike. I phoned my wife to pick me up. She encouraged me to rest and then continue, but I felt so sick, cold and tired. About an hour later I loaded my bike onto the van and we drove home. The next day I felt much better, with my stomach accepting food again. I was mad at myself for not being tougher and sticking it out. I now know what it is like to suffer. Next time I vowed that I would be mentally tougher.

Stephen Hinde encouraged me and he said not to be too disappointed. I had accomplished a lot so far this season. He gave me some tips to avoid stomach problems. I spoke with Ken Bonner as well later that day. He was also a great encouragement and explained that he had suffered a bit as well. Ken suggested that I should ride a brevet on the mainland in the summer and make up the four hundred.

My work required me to travel to Nova Scotia for a week. It was a good break from the bike. I had time to reflect on my ride and what I could do to improve. When I returned home, I phoned Stephen and asked if I could ride the 400 again on June 9th. He looked into it and made the arrangements.

It was a 6 am start. The roads were still wet from a heavy overnight rainfall. The wind was gusting strongly out of the west. As I started the ride, I could barely maintain 13 kph because of the head wind. I was thinking what have I got myself into this time? As I started to climb the Malahat I was sheltered from the wind. My spirits were raised but I was much slower than last time. It took me 40 minutes to ride 10 km, due to the strong headwind. I fought the wind all the way up island. I encountered Larry Voth and Wayne Harrington just south of Bowser. They were riding the 600. I made it to Union Bay again! I refuelled and filled my water bottles. I was hoping to catch a tailwind for the ride south. During my short break, I watched as the wind shifted and I now had a head wind again. With a pack of Tums and fresh water, I continued my steady pace south. I stopped a lot more during this ride, taking breaks and visiting every Tim Horton's for a bagel or scone. It became very cool as I rode into Parksville. I had to stop to put on my fleece jersey and my windbreaker. I was feeling not too bad at this point. I made it to the next control in Nanaimo and I knew that I could finish this ride. As I pedalled through Nanaimo, Ken Bonner passed me heading north. He was riding the 600 this weekend.

It was now becoming dark and I was getting very hungry. I stopped in Ladysmith and had a dreaded McDonald's cheeseburger and iced tea. Big mistake! The ice tea, air conditioning and my damp jersey were not a good combination. I was shaking so violently, I couldn't get the burger close to my mouth. I was quite entertaining for the staff. They brought me a hot tea and once I stopped shaking, I paid them. A forty-minute stop and I was off, it was 10:30 pm. The highway was much quieter now. Again I was climbing hills in the dark. Since I couldn't see the top of the hill, I didn't get discouraged. I just kept pedalling until it got easier. Then I knew I was over the top. Riding past Shawnigan Lake was interesting. No street lights and lots of wild life (cars heading home from the bars), animals too. The clicking of my rear derailleur started a chorus of croaking from the local frog population. A couple of deer, at least I hope they were deer, ran near the

roadside. I gave a shrill whistle and they ran off. I finished the ride with a great downhill run and a short climb to the last control. 400km 20hrs and 33 minutes, it was 2:33 am.

I spoke with Stephen again, inquiring about riding the 600. He said he would get back to me. A day later he called, and said there would be no problem for me to ride the 600 on the 22nd and 23rd of June. I purchased a camelbak, knowing that I could easily get low on water during this ride. My route started in Langford. North to Mill Bay, then down into Cowichan Bay. North to Duncan and I continued North to Parksville. Through Coombs, around Cameron Lake, then the climb up and over Alberni Pass into Port Alberni. It was a gruelling climb. As I approached each curve in the road it looked as though the hill would end, but it didn't. I crested the summit finally, after 40 minutes or more of climbing. The roller coaster ride down to Port Alberni was terrific. I had a chance to cool down. Checked into the control and quickly out. I stopped at Tim Horton's for a snack before the climb out of town. Heading back up to the Alberni summit was not as hard on this side. The hill would level out in spots for about 100 to 200 meters. It gave my legs a slight reprieve. This descent was a little more dangerous, with a lot of cracked pavement and hard to see potholes. Especially when riding at 65 kph.

Going past Cameron Lake, I had a tailwind. I kept my pace up to 35 kph for about 45 minutes. I encountered an older gentleman riding along the lake on the wrong side of the road. He then decided to turn around. Which was all right, but he nearly drove into me. I guess he didn't see me until I yelled at him, because he had a patch over his right eye. I made it back to Parksville safely, 227 km under my belt and it was 4:00 pm. I continued on to Qualicum Beach where I had supper. After an hour off the bike I was away again. It was now 5:30 pm. I made it to Courtenay by 8 pm. There my wife, children and in-laws came down to cheer me on as I rode through town. Next stop was just past Campbell River. Now, I was in unfamiliar territory, and it was starting to get dark. I made it to the turn around outside of Campbell River at 11 pm. I was heading south again. I couldn't wait to get back through Courtenay. We had booked a room at the Kingfisher Inn, which was on the route back. I arrived a 1:40 am. My wife was quite worried thinking the worst had happened to me, as she had heard sirens racing past the hotel. A hot bath and a comfortable bed awaited me. Another stop at Tim Horton's just south of Nanaimo and I refilled my camelbak. It was now 2:30 pm and I had 100 km to ride. Re-energized after my snack and short rest, I quickly resumed my smooth efficient pedal stroke. I zoomed down the road (well not really). I resumed my steady methodical pace as I plodded southbound along the highway towards Victoria. As I passed by the Cassidy Inn, I encountered a Hell's Angels event. For the next hour or so hundreds of Harley's roared past me. Sometimes it felt like they rumbled through me. Finally I arrived at the second to last control in Duncan. It was 5 pm and only 50 km to go. As I left Duncan and headed to Cowichan Bay the rain started again. I survived a fifteen-minute downpour, the skies cleared. It became warm as I started my climb towards Mill Bay.

Through Mill Bay I became giddy as I am near the end. Just a long slow climb over the Malahat 30 km to go. I just kept turning my pedals as I crept inch by inch over the unrelenting hills. I saw the summit. I am revitalized as I crested the last hill. I poured down the hill with reckless abandon, careening around corners!! I

arrived at the final control in Langford. It was 7:05 pm. I have done it!!! It took me 38 hrs and 5 minutes. I calculated that I had been off the bike for 10 hrs. So it took a total 28 hrs and 5 minutes of actual riding to complete the route of 607 km. These rides would not have been possible without the understanding and support of my family. I am very grateful for my wife Marilyn and daughters Meredith and Meaghan who rejoiced in my achievements. They were also encouraging and sympathetic when I did not finish. I would also like to thank Stephen and Carol Hinde, Mike Poplawski and Ken Bonner for their encouragement, insight and tips for completing these challenging rides. I look forward to next season and the Rocky Mountain 1200.

Recommendation: Travel Book for France

Barry Bogart

I will be cycling around France in a few weeks. I will ride Paris-Lille-Dieppe to Loudeac along the coast, then Brest on the PBP route, and then I will follow the canal to Nantes and return to Paris through the Loire Valley.

Anyway I found an excellent new book - Lonely Planet 'Cycling France'. It is about half the size of the regular LP France book and appears to contain everything a cyclist would need on such a trip - about 100 pages on general cycling info and over 400 more on specific tours and places to stay and things to see. It has such details such as which hostels allow bicycles, French words for bike parts, how to read a train timetable.... It even has seven pages on the TdF and NINE on randonnering including some descriptions of the 'permanent brevets'. This is the ONE book I will take with me. More details when I get back.

Conspiracy

Harold Bridge

I have been the victim of a conspiracy. Once I was confident enough in my skeletal repairs to mount a bike again I rode the bike for utility rides. Gently, saddle down, no toe clips etc. But what about the helmet?

It had saved me from head injuries or worse but was split and with windscreen glass embedded in it. I have some very strong cellotape with fibre molded in it. Two wraps of that didn't make for a legal helmet but would keep the police off my back (if they should have a bout of helmet consciousness). I wanted to go buy a new lid but the right hip was still weak and I couldn't safely drive as I wasn't able to lift my foot off the gas pedal onto the brake.

Once that problem was solved with the help of physiotherapy I drove into town and looked in MEC before going across the road to La Bicicletta. With Paul's help I found a helmet almost identical to the used one I had bought in UK last year, about the same price too.

Once I had decided on the model I wanted, Paul let me into a secret. My friends in the Club were buying it for me! If he had spoken up earlier I might have looked for a more expensive model!

With Madam Editor charging around the Mediterranean Boot it might be a while before this gets to the Conspirators. But nonetheless, a heart felt "THANKYOU" to those responsible.

Madam Editor apologizes for the delay.

The TMGGC (Terrible Mountain, Goddamn Gross Challenge), June 10, 2001

Danelle Laidlaw

Well, there we were.....all suited up in our finery, eagerly anticipating the start of the "Second Annual, Triple Mountain Grouse Grind Challenge" the annual event benefiting the Lung Association. Jan Westendorp, who is riding across Canada and raising funds for the cause was to be this year's "honorary" recipient of each rider's \$15 fee.

Unlike last year's ride, which took place on the hottest day of the year, this year's ride promised to take place on the coldest/wettest day of the year. 8 intrepid riders (Joe Turtle, Rainy Kent, Sarah Galazin, John Little, Jan Westendorp, Roger Holt, Bob Marsh, and Danelle Laidlaw) excitedly started off at the Grouse Mountain parking lot in not exactly pouring rain, but a steady drizzle. Noburo was present to officially send off this hearty lot. He had ridden up with Lai - the "blind woman" he would be leading on the 600 to Cache Creek.

Our route sheets (carefully wrapped in a plastic baggy) had a suggested route. We immediately felt the route could be left up to creative interpretation so when we approached the steep part of 29th, we light heartedly skirted around the edge of it. If you think that was cheating just a bit, it wasn't because we were being creative. This hearty group of riders forged on!

John Little's two flat tires, Bob's flat and Joe's broken chain didn't dampen anyone's spirits (probably because everyone's spirits were already soaked....) so on we climbed, into the rain, the fog and was that snow?? To the top we went...on Dancer, on Prancer....woops.....wrong story!

Well, we all know....what goes up.....must come down!!! Here we were...wet, wetter and wettest having just completed our climb to the top of Seymour Mountain...we are a hearty lot!! We are warm! Too bad that feeling couldn't last. Hypothermia set in on the way down...and by the time the group straggled into the Lazy Bay Café at the bottom of the hill, our hands had to be pried from our brake hoods. Rainy's teeth were chattering so hard she thought she might accidentally bite her tongue off! Holding onto our hot drinks, we were shaking so bad the precious liquid was spilling onto our numb hands. We were so visibly in distress that other patrons in the restaurant were offering us their jackets! We offered them our bikes in return for their generosity. There were nottakers! We spent an hour trying to warm up and think of a different name for our event that would not only portray our grueling experience but would also allow us to finish the ride right then and there. Can you think of another word for triple?? Despite Rainy's constant plea that it seemed to be brightening and the rain seemed to be "letting up", we all agreed that a taxi back to Grouse Parking Lot (\$4 each) would be well worth the money.

The women formed a rescue team and headed back (in a taxi) to collect the cars while the men stayed and had lunch. Back at the café, Joe handed out the "pins" and Jan collected his money. Of course, as luck would have it - the rain had stopped by the time we got back to Grouse Mountain to collect our cars, but by that time, we were all so stiff and sore from shivering that the thought of even doing the Grind was "goddamn gross"!

This is not going to alter next year's plans for the TMGGC, but let's hope it lives up to its original name this time, although like everything about this event...it's up to creative interpretation.

Supporting ...On The Edge

Eric Fergusson and Chris Siggers

Eric writes:

Chris Siggers and his son Jay provided great support on the South Okanagan/North Cascades 1000 km in late June. But in randonneuring, even riding support, you can't count on everything running to plan. Sometimes riding support can be an adventure of its own. Here is an e-mail Chris sent before he knew the full story of his riders' safe return.

Chris wrote:

I trust you both (John and Danelle) completed the 1000 km brevet this past weekend without too many regrets? Sorry about the screws that got loose in Bellingham. We hammered our way into Bellingham arriving at the service station on the Southwest corner of 12th and Donovan (aka Old Fairhaven Parkway) around 16:00(?) No sign of Eric, so left a message and plunged on to locate the Royal Fork Buffet, etc. as agreed. Unfortunately, the Royal Fork in Bellingham is only a distant memory; it closed about five years ago, presumably since this form of culinary entertainment is going out of style. We hustled back to the service station but the attendant had no news and didn't know of any suitable dining alternatives. An elderly gentleman who overheard our conversation volunteered that there was a buffet diner on Coast Meridian, just south of the Costco Wholesale which we might consider, so we rushed off a second time to investigate. It took sometime to locate it but we did find it and it looked quite suitable so we rushed back a second time and waited patiently until about 18:15, but no sign of anyone! Finally, we decided to retrace our route to Sedro Wooley, which eliminated the possibility that you had become stranded and simply returned to the final control and left your vehicle, etc. Unfortunately, the K&D closes at midnight Sundays, so I drove back after 23:00 and verified that your vehicle had been picked up, etc. so I assume that everything worked out in the end. I suspect that in all our scrambling around to locate a suitable joint for supper we probably missed John and Danelle as well as Eric(?) Similar problems were encountered on the Cross Canada Tour, but that's another story that I will share with you later if you're interested.

The B.C.Randonneurs' Most Popular Event- Be There!

Harold Bridge

It is a sad fact that the summer's end is in sight when it is time to advertise the Annual General Meeting again. There are not too many organisations where the AGM is attended by more members than any of the other events held during the season. But that is what happens to us.

The venue, Fort Langley's Bedford House, is the same. The price is the same, \$13.95 plus 6% GST & 15% gratuity. That adds up to \$17.01. Our generous treasurer, Roger Street, is happy to subsidize to the tune of \$2.01 a head. Therefore have \$15.00 ready

for each person you are paying for when you turn up. Children 12 and under are to be charged \$10.

The undersigned will need to know how many will be attending. Sometime around September 17/20 he will be 'phoning those who don't voluntarily contact him.

For those who haven't been before the routine is:

Sunday Sept 23:

09:30 Meet in Marina Park, north end of Church Street and immediately east of the Bedford House. Park in Marina Park, not B.H. parking lot.

10:00 With route map provided set out on a ride that will see you back by 13:00 (Routes for all tastes, 19 km to about 70 km).

13:15 Enter the B.H. and pay your \$15.00 at the door. Enjoy the buffet type meal.

15:00 A Brief business meeting where we welcome the new executive and/or plead for someone to volunteer for a job (Usually, it is all pre-arranged).

16:00 Go home

Come and enjoy the season's wrap up. Harold Bridge, (604)-941-3448 or, harold_bridge@telus.net

Randonneur Calendar of Events for Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta (2001)

E. W. [Wim] Kok

Following are the scheduled brevets for the other western provinces for the remainder of the season. This information is based on a calendar so kindly provided by Real Prefontaine earlier this year.

Location	300 km	400 km	600 km	1000 km	Contact:
Saskatoon	--	--	07-08/7	10-12/8	Grant McLeod, 350-10th Ave NE, Swift Current, Sask.
Winnipeg	--	--	07-08/7	17-19/8	Brian Leier, 56 Evesham, Winnipeg, Man.
Calgary	15/9	--	28-29/7	04-07/8	Gary Sikora, Ph: 1-403-203-1138
Edmonton	--	07-08/7	18-19/8	--	Bill van der Meer, Ph: 1-780-434-2314
Mountain	14/7	--	25-26/8	--	Arne Carlson, Ph: 1-780-672-0367
Red Deer	--	21-22/7	21-22/7	--	Arne Carlson, Ph: 1-780-672-0367
Golden Triangle	--	11-12/8	--	--	Arne Carlson, Ph: 1-780-672-0367

Note: The 300 km in Calgary on 15/9 takes off from Cochrane - Seebe-through Kananaskis Park, Highwood Pass (2206 m), Longview back to Cochrane. Stunning scenery!!

There is also a 200 km in Red Deer on 21/7 [Contact: Arne Carlson]; and in Medicine Hat on 12/8 [Contact: Dave Oliphant Ph: 1-403-526-2181]