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British Columbia

Randonneur

Marathon Cycling

Editorial

Susan Allen

As many of you know I have been riding Rando's for a long time (since 1993) but I have never been to PBP and only completed my first 1000 last year. I believe I know better what is in store than those venturing out on their first season (some advice from Ron Himschoot below). However, the anticipation is exhilarating. Lights, light set-up, food, tires are all typical conversations at home. As I write this I still have the ache in my legs from Saturday's 300 km Island ride (see article by Stephen Hinde). Lots of climbing in that brevet! I hope for PBP to do the first 300 k in 14 hours and so a 16-hour time was disappointing. Stephen assures me that there is a little less climbing per km in PBP.

In this issue you will find a tribute to Roger Street who passed away in February. He was an important member of our club inspirationally, organizationally, and plain miles in the saddle. We miss him.

Having completed the 300 km on the Island I am 5 rides into a 7-weekend event string (100 km Island, 200 km Island, 100 km Mainland, 200 km Mainland, 300 km Island and to come 300 km Mainland, 400 km Island). I would like to thank all the ride organizers and volunteers who make it possible.

And lastly a plea... more ride stories please!

"Eating an Elephant": A Rookie's Guide to PBP

Ron Himschoot

Preamble by Eric Fergusson:

There was a message on the BC rando list serve from Tina in Penticton: "It is my goal to do the PBP this year. Having never done a randonneur event before, I realize that I am in a little over my head and will have to have a steep learning curve... If you have any advice for novices, I would greatly appreciate it." ...A familiar refrain every 4th spring.

There were a number of helpful responses. One of them was from Ron Himschoot. Sometimes what's intended as a casual e-mail message can be much more. To my mind Ron's message says it all. It's required reading for everyone, not just PBP 'neophytes'. (Don't blame Ron for the groovy title. It's mine - added later.)

- ~ -

I have a couple of pieces of advice. My first piece of advice is to announce publicly, repeatedly and without qualification to all your friends and the world in general (but not, however, to your mother) that you intend to complete PBP. That means you can't quit because you will never live it down. You said "It is my goal to do the PBP this year". Good start. That's much harder to get out of than "I want to do the PBP this year". Now you can't get out of it by saying "Yeah, I WANTED to do it, but ...". We all WANT to ride PBP. Don't be deterred by lack of experience. Every ancien was once a novice. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, just try not to repeat them. And don't be deterred when your friends say "Yeah. Right". Once you've made a commitment to do it, you will find a way. The hardest control to get to is the first control on your first 200K.

My second piece of advice is that the will to finish PBP is not as important as the will to PREPARE to finish PBP. You've got to do what it takes to get ready. Preparations include your body, your bike, and, on a practical level, travel arrangements. You need to log a lot of kilometers to get your body ready for PBP. Long slow distance is more important than interval training. You've probably already figured that out. You

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also need to figure out how to keep yourself hydrated and nourished. You need know what kinds of food you can and can't tolerate (then throw that out because the only foods you recognize at the French controls are *jambone et fromage* sandwiches, *haricots* and *omelets*). You need to know what (besides embarrassment) will keep you going when you're not having fun any more (attitude and determination are just as important as conditioning). You need to know how your body reacts to dehydration, glycogen depletion, and sleep deprivation and you need to know what to do about it. Riding 1200 kilometers is not the same as riding 100 kilometers 12 times.

Preparations for your bike are much easier. You are going to log a lot of kilometers on your bike. Make sure it is durable and comfortable. Light weight wheels, for example, are useless if they keep breaking spokes. A powerful headlight is useless if it burns out batteries too fast. When stuff does break you tend to be a long ways from a mechanic. Keep your bike in good running order and be sure you know how to make simple repairs (in the dark if you have to). Know how to fix a flat (you may want to carry a spare folding tire, just in case), change a brake or shifter cable (you may want to carry spare cables), and true a wheel with a broken spoke (you may want to carry a spoke wrench). Get a comfortable saddle, comfortable shorts, well fitting shoes and well-padded gloves. Make sure your position on the bike is ergonomically correct.

Preparations for accommodations in France are even easier. Get a passport and talk to Real Prefontaine about the rest.

My third piece of advice is to not try to ride 1200 kilometers: psychologically, it too daunting. I tell everyone: "I cannot ride 1200 kilometers, but I can ride to the first control". How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. The first control is usually around 80 to 100 kilometers. That's a distance you can get your head around. That's a distance you already know how to ride. Don't worry about getting to the second control until you get to

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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. Or mail (preferable a diskette) to Susan Allen, 2356 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6K 1V9

Next publication deadline is End of May.

the first control. If you don't think you can make it to the next control, concentrate on just making it the next 20 kilometers, or the next intersection if that is all you know you can do.

My final piece of advice is to never quit a brevet until you've had an apple fritter (or a *pain au chocolate*). When you bonk, and you will, it affects your spirit as much as it impacts your physical performance. When you get to the point that you just cannot go on, eat something before you make a decision to quit. If you fail to finish, it should be because the time expired: not because you bonked, not because you were dehydrated, and not because you were tired. Eat an apple fritter, drink a liter of water, take a 15-minute nap, then get back on your bike and ride. The agony of defeat is mild compared to the haunting memory of quitting.

Oh, okay, one more piece of advice. Get down to the brevets and meet as many of the randonneurs as you can. You'll find they make the best of friends. Get to know them, talk to them, ask questions, ride with them, pay attention to the way they take on a brevet. I know it is a long drive from Penticton, but that's no excuse. After all, I have a long drive from Seattle (and sometimes a long wait at the border), yet I'll take every opportunity I can to spend my time riding, laughing, and anguish with them. I look forward to meeting you there. I'll be the guy frantically trying to fasten my Carradice bag to my bike in time to make the start.

Note of Thanks to an Anonymous Cyclist

Ron Penner

I have to pass along a note of thanks to an anonymous cyclist who helped me finish the Pacific Populaire (50 km route) this past weekend, and describe the adventure that should never have happened.

Being in a hurry on Sunday Morning, I left my mini-tools (and even my spare tube and pump) on my winter bike, grabbed the road bike and headed off to the ride. (Small comfort that I can still think like an invincible teenager at the age of 44). I felt so good on the ride that I even had fun getting some air time off the speed bumps on the 37th Avenue bike route early in the route. My wife (Laura) and I got to the check point in good time, chowed down some banana loaf, and started back, thinking about nothing but making good overall time.

About 4 km later, I heard a pop out of the back of the bike, and got severe contact between tire and chain stays. A spoke had broken. Obviously, the speed bumps were a bad idea. I backed off the brake, no help. This event had DNF written all over it. Oh well, live and learn. We quickly discussed which route I would walk home, while Laura finished the event, grabbed the car and tracked me down.

As I was walking along the route, at least half the riders offered help, but when they heard that it was a broken spoke, they couldn't help much. Finally, after about 10 minutes of this, one of them (red and black Cramerotti - never got the name), turned back and pulled out a spoke wrench. We adjusted to the point where the wheel would spin freely and I was ready to go again.

Now came the hard part. Laura would be back at the car and heading straight for Westminster Highway to find me walking

home. Not good. I had to catch her before she made it back. So, while he was still putting tools away, I said thanks once more, hopped on board, and cranked/wobbled off to play catch-up! Luckily, I did catch up with about 3 km to spare, and we ended up finishing the event with exactly the same time as last year.

So, another thank you to a helpful cyclist, and a generous nature.

Island Riding

Cheryl Lynch

Having just returned from Vancouver Island and still feeling elated from another "breath-taking" (in more ways than one) ride there, I am ... procrastinating, or no, torn (!) between entering the club membership forms from the Social and writing a blurb about Stephen and Carol's own little paradise for the newsletter (oh, don't worry the memberships will get entered..).

I think I understand how one goes about earning 9 or 10 Super-Randonneur medals, as our esteemed ride organizers have done. The roads are idyllic, some with so few cars you can forget that cars drive on them too. The scenery is spectacular. The Populaire route had several great views of Georgia Strait from exotic corners of Nanaimo, we crossed several raging rivers, fruit trees were blossoming and hobby farms are incredibly interesting to check out as you pedal past. Is there really indoor fox hunting in Cowichan Valley? There are monkeys and emus, we saw them.

It is said (and I can corroborate) that island rides are excellent training for PBP. Why, the un-initiated might ask? Well, as Keith would say, if there is a hill anywhere nearby, the route will go over it. A "Stephen- route" is one where you see a hill in the distance down one fork, and flats down the other and you just know which fork you will be taking. Okay, maybe you take the flat fork on the 200, but you take the hill on the 300.

So how much climbing is there, you ask? Well it seems nobody is sure. I measured 3100 feet or so on the Populaire, which Stephen said was too low. More like 4000, he said. Great I think, going into the 200 km brevet, this weekend has only another 1000 feet of climbing in twice the distance. Susan tells me Stephen told her the Populaire was 3000, so we ask Stephen and he says 3500. Okay, an extra 1500. I should be fine.

Since Susan has been keeping our Sunday rides at race pace all winter, I suggest we try to ride with Ken Bonner for as long as we can. The good news (!) at registration was that Ken has the flu so will be taking it easy. Sarah and John somehow got wind of the plan, and also having survived the winter training rides, are nowhere to be seen as the ride starts. I go to the front thinking, just try to pass me, and hear Susan and Ken chatting behind me. Soon I am pretty much anaerobic, and yes they are still chatting.

Finally Ken does pass and we latch on. In fact, I think we hung on for a couple of kilometres, but only because Ken seemed to be slowing down for us at the top of the two hills we hammered up after him. I think he mentioned that the 50 km to the first control at Shawnigan Lake was "all downhill." I guess, if you discount the "all uphill" parts.**

Rolling is more the descriptor I would use. Which is also how PBP is described. Personally I like rolling hills. I'm convinced that they train recovery, like fartlek training I guess.

Another really great part of the Island 200 is the grey Volvo at Youbou. We were all happy to see Sharon's smiling face (and banana bread and coffee) although Roger missed one of the best days of weather that ride has ever seen.

Amazingly Ken was still at the finish when we arrived (guess he really was sick), and the number on his altimeter seemed to confirm what my legs had been trying to tell me. 6100 feet. Or maybe he did a couple of extra hills. Hmm.. maybe he helps Stephen invent these courses? Somehow I don't think Stephen needs any extra encouragement.

Anyhow to make a lengthening story short (the membership forms are staring at me), if you haven't had the opportunity to take in the early season Vancouver Island rides.... there is still always the 300!! I am not sure how much climbing, 10,000 is just one of the numbers I have heard. Oh, and it is always dry (this year at least). Many thanks to Stephen and Carol for all their fantastic support!!

** I should mention that one person did stick with Ken through the "downhill" stretch, and he also came in very handy in keeping our train running for the remainder of the ride- Thanks Mike. And Keith, of course.



Coming Events

L. Mainland 300 km – Apr 26

6 am: Burnaby Lake Sports Complex
John Bates & Danelle Laidlaw 421-1717

Peace Region 200 k – Apr 26

Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Island 400 km – May 3

Also 300 km
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

Interior 300 km – May 3

Bob Boonstra 250-828-2869

Peace Region 300 k – May 3

Also 200 km
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Seattle 400 km – May 3

5 am: Kings Motel, 1334 Roosevelt Ave E, Enumclaw Bill Dussler bdussler@atbci.com

L. Mainland 400 k – May 10

6 am: Tim Hortons, Tsawwassen Roger & Ali Holt 946-8438

Fleche Pacifique – May 16-18

Entry deadline is April 26 Harold Bridge 941-3448

Peace Region 400 k – May 17

Also 300 km
Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Island 600 km – May 24-25

Also 400 km
Stephen Hinde 250-245-4751

Interior 400 km – May 24

Richard Blair 250-372-1873

Peace Region 400 – May 24

Wim Kok 250-785-4589

Seattle 600 km – May 24-25

6:30 am (take 5:50 ferry from Edmonds) Kingston commuter lot 1st Ave between Ohio & Iowa, Kingston

Jon Muellner jon@mountainbike.org

Halfmoon 150 – May 25

50, 100, 150 km: 9 am: Langdale, Halfmoon Bay Robert Irvine & Brad Proctor 885-1044

L. Mainland 600 km – May 31- Jun 1

Michel Richard & Karen Smith 732-0212

Island 300

Stephen Hinde

All riders had similar weather--moderate rain until nearly noon, dry for the rest of the ride. There were some winds, but most were not affected too badly. The exception was the Nanaimo-Campbell River run. The weather up Island was worse than the south, so Sandy and Stella had 12 hours of rain, a nice tailwind into Campbell River, and a blistering gale in their face coming out. The joys of starting at home!

Numerous riders commented on the flowers on the route, both the wildflowers and the cultivated gardens of Oak Bay. With all riders finishing in good weather, the mood was fairly positive. That's good, considering the climbing (is it really only 10,500 feet?). Doug Latornell did concede that the difference between Henri Lagrange (of "Assassins" fame)(see Gary Fraser's article about the '91 300, or Harold Bridge's article about the '02 ride) and this route organizer, was that at least this route organizer rode the route. I found it rather pleasant, if somewhat slow.

Both Sarah Gallazin and Michel Richard need some follow up bike maintenance. Both had clunking sounds from their rear wheels. Both went to Oak Bay Bicycles (across the road from the checkpoint), and both had fresh grease injected into the bearings. Apart from several flats from the Allen/Latornell team (was that 5?, and did you really ride over that piece of glass after identifying it as a hazard?), the odd loose light bracket, there were no other mechanical difficulties.

How well are you prepared for this year's series?

Danelle Laidlaw

Oh, I don't mean training, silly - I mean clothing!! If you need to spruce up your cycling wardrobe, then we have something for you. I now have a large stock of jerseys, shorts, jackets and a few pairs of tights. We also have a few long-sleeved t-shirts from the Populaire for sale.

Contact me at 604 737-0043, or 1-877-606-BIKE if you are calling from outside the lower mainland and let me know what you need.

Rider Alert

Danelle Laidlaw

For the lower Mainland series - 300 km ride on April 26th - you will be required to have lights and fenders as per the BC Randonneur rules - www.randonneurs.bc.ca/introduction/rules.html

If you do not have lights, front and rear, you will NOT be allowed to ride. Your front light must be a proper headlight (acceptable by law in BC) and must be mounted on your bicycle (as per PBP regulations). The small flashing LED light will not be acceptable.

If you do not have fenders, a time penalty will be assessed.

Summer 400 -2002-August-10/11

Harold Bridge

The late Spike Milligan, of Goon Show fame, set out to record his war time Royal Artillery experiences in a "Trilogy". It finished up as 4 books. What do you call a 4 book trilogy? (it is like a 3 wheeled bike). Whatever it is I feel I should complete mine about my 13th Super Randonneur Season.

I wrote about the April 20th 200, the May 4th 300, and the August 24th 600. It suggests I should write about the August 10th 400 to complete the "Quadology" The basic route concept was the same as we first used in 1988. Out to Yale, turn round and through Hope to Huntingdon/Sumas and onto Bellingham before heading north back to Burnaby. But this time our intrepid route coordinator found us some new roads to use, late in the day. For the slow pokes that meant route interpretation in the dark!

I am lucky, I can get on with plod without bothering if I have company or not. Just as well these days, I'm slow overall, even if I'm quick in short bursts (and they are getting shorter). The first obstacle, Fell Rd, straight up from the start, had me out the back right at the start and at that point I wasn't about to put in one of my bursts.

Along 7A (aka Barnet Hwy) I passed a rider, who I later got to know as Benjamin Lewis, dealing with a flat tyre. At Mission a coffee and muffin seemed in order and Tim Horton's are but a block off route. By that time Benjamin had re-passed me and I was the last one at the Kilby control staffed by my friend Sandra. I got there to find Wayne Harrington fighting both a flat tyre and the mosquitoes. His mini pump gives him 60psi and he needed 80. My old-fashioned frame fit pump provided that. By Woodside Wayne had vanished and again I was "Lanterne Rouge".

As I climbed the ramp up from the end of Hwy 7 to join Hwy 1 I saw Eric sprinting through the "bear left" into Hope with the sound of an approaching semi's horn in his ears.

It was a surprise when, between Lake of the Woods and Yale Benjamin caught me. The abbreviated route instructions indicate 41 km on Hwy 7 from Kilby to the junction with Hwy 1 at Haig. To the unsuspecting that is a trap. At Agassiz Hwy 7 makes a definite right turn where it joins Hwy 9. Distracted by the charms of some of the "Bikeathon" riders that was taking place Ben had managed to get all the way to Harrison Hot Springs before finding out he was off course!

At Yale there was no sign of Wayne and I assumed he was across the road in the restaurant, although I couldn't see his bike. I left Ben to his sandwich with the excuse he would soon catch me. It was a tough solo ride all the way to Hope where Wayne, who pulled in just behind me, said he had been about 100 metres behind me all the way with Ben a bit further back.

I was pleased with progress to this point, I was on schedule and, with the headwind ride to Chilliwack in mind, took a few minutes respite again. Mountains do strange things to airflow and the headwind/tailwind trip wasn't as bad as I had anticipated. At

Chilliwack Wayne, Benjamin and I were together and remained so the rest of the trip. While Wayne and I repaired to the Tim Horton's next door Ben made do with 7/11 fair not realising there was a TH right there!

At the border it was close to lighting up time. But the initial ride was on well known roads as far as Sorenson Rd where we ignored Goodwin Road's groove to the south and continued west into unknown territory. I had equipped the bike with a McGuire owned 4-D cell pack designed to power the Cateye Micro Halogen. I also had a Cateye LED and of course my Union halogen headlamp powered by a Union BB generator.

(Today, 2003-March-19, I found the above in my "routes" file. As I excused the submission by stating at the top I had written about all the events that led me into my 13th (and final?) Super Randonneur season I felt I should complete and send this to Madam Editor. I don't think the event got another report).

Completing this after about 6 months means I have to dig deep into what passes for a mind. In Everson I found that the generator was playing up. But it only needed a tap. Night time navigation on rarely used roads slowed us down and there was a detour or 2 when I lead the others astray through thinking I knew where I was going. Once on State Route #542, Mount Baker Highway, I thought my troubles were over. However the left turn onto Britton Road was a lot further out of Bellingham than I had assumed. But Wayne gallantly chased me down and turned me back to where Ben waited for us.

We arrived at Denny's, Bellingham in time for a control at 23:53, giving us a 3hours and 18minutes margin on dead line at what is claimed to be 317.8 km. We felt justified in sitting back and enjoying a relaxed meal before hitting the road again, which we did soon after 01:00.

The roads through Bellingham have been used often enough that there was no navigation problem until we got to Ferndale. There we had to tread carefully to find our way onto the worst bit of road in North America, Portal Way. That 9 km of broken and unshouldered road seemed to last forever and we stopped at the



Roger Street
Photo by Don Munro

Texaco more to get off the accursed road than for the coffee.

The control was to be in the Canada Customs at Pacific Highway, #15. But when we got there the Customs man was standing outside waiting for us! From there a series of zig-zags, where pieces of Croydon Drive featured on a regular basis, took through Surrey. Were we got as far west as 132nd St.

After descending what will henceforward be known as "Blanche Hill" to the Pattullo Bridge, we (I, anyway) struggled up that brutal little bank to Queen's Park. That left us with nothing more to do than follow New Westminster and Burnaby back streets until finally at 07:32 we were welcomed by at the finish by John and Danelle.

Hope we SEE you out there - any questions about the ride - call Danelle or John at 604 421-1717

Bicycle Choice Formula

Keith Bontrager (submitted by Tom Hocking)
Light. Strong. Cheap. Pick Two.

In Memory of Roger Street

Susan Allen

I'd like to thank Eric and Val for their articles below on Roger. They both say so much about him.

I'd like to thank my fellow randonneurs for coming out on March 2 for Roger's memorial ride. It was great to have the support. All the regular Sunday riders greatly appreciated your attendance.

Roger was a great friend. To Eric and Val's articles I can only add that Roger quietly encouraged me (and others) to accomplish more than we thought possible.

Roger Street

Eric Fergusson

On Tuesday morning (Feb 25) at about 6:45 Roger Street had a heart attack and died while riding his bicycle. It happened at 16th and Blanca.

The heart attack is unexpected. By all accounts Roger was in excellent shape. He had done a fast 100 km training ride on Sunday and was looking forward to a quick

SIR (Seattle) Populaire this coming Saturday.

Roger has been a central figure in BC Randonneurs since he rode his first brevets in 1993. He is a two-time finisher at both Paris Brest Paris and the Rocky Mountain 1200, and a six-time super randonneur. He is one of only 9 BC riders to have earned 2 Brevet Randonneur 5000 pins (sometimes called 'Super 5000'.) In 1998 he was the winner of the John Hathaway Award with an event distance total of 5676 km... and it was Roger who first started calling the award by the name we all now commonly use - the Iron Butt Award. In 2000, he was looking for a change of pace and rode across Canada - Spanish Banks to Cape Spear, Nfld. - 7433 km, average riding speed 25 km/hr, 151 km/day.

In the fall of 1998 Roger became club treasurer, and oversaw the period of extraordinary growth which followed. For the four years that he was on the randonneur committee his strong opinions, bluntness, and clarity of thought helped keep the club on track on an ongoing basis. It would not be going too far to say that by 2002 he had become the conscience of the randonneur committee. In 2002 he teamed up with wife Sharon to co-direct the Rocky Mountain 1200 - perhaps our club's finest moment.

Roger's wife Sharon is another central figure in BC Randonneurs. In addition to co-directing the RM 1200 last summer, she co-organized the Pacific Populaire in 2001 and 2002. She frequently supported Roger and other riders on brevets and flèches, and has been a familiar sight on event days for many years.

This is a loss that is no doubt difficult for everyone. Me included. Roger was a great friend, and there is no one whom I admired more. I can't believe he's really gone. I will miss him greatly, and remember him always. Goodbye Roger.

My memory of Roger Street

Val White

I didn't know Roger Street very well when he accompanied us on the first and only 600km ride that I have completed. He was one of those big, fast, popular riders in the club who I saw at the start of the ride for a few minutes and never afterwards. He rode with the 'in' group.

But, back in 1997, Roger didn't have anything to prove and I did, having previously attempted, but not finished, two 600km rides. Danelle and I were planning to ride the August 600km ride along with the unruly bunch of Bob Marsh, Bob Bose and Keith Fletcher who just wouldn't or couldn't ride in a proper paceline. I don't know how it came about but Roger deigned to ride with us, as he just wanted to make the miles to get his Super Randonneur pin, and didn't care about the time. It felt great having someone take charge.



We set off in the early morning and sweated through a hot August day, the group sticking fairly close together. Roger was keeping the boys in line and we were actually riding with some kind of synchronicity. In the early evening we were really humming along in single file when all of a sudden we crashed. Danelle, who was in front of me, went down, I rode over her wheel and went down, and there we all lay sprawled at the side of the road. Bob Marsh, who had been up front and not involved, came back to lift us up off of each other and to try to determine what had happened. It turned out that Roger's wheel had seized completely in an instant, bringing him and all those behind him to an abrupt halt. (Roger had taken his wheel apart, greased it and put it back together the night before! I'm not sure what that said about his mechanical skills!) I do remember that as we stood at the side of the road cleaning our wounds and with blood dripping down our legs, several nice Americans stopped and offered assistance. We had just left a control town, so "No problem" said Roger, "I'll just take a lift back to the town and call Sharon". The rest of us resigned ourselves to continuing without Roger, figuring that Sharon would just come and pick him up. We rode shakily off and finally struggled into the motel at about 3am where we were to have our two hours of sleep.

After we had had our showers and fallen instantly asleep, Danelle heard a knock on the door and answered it, saying, "Oh, it's another Rando rider!" We had thought we were the only group doing this ride, so were surprised that someone else was showing up. Then she said, "Oh, it's Roger! How did you get here?" He was like an apparition. In our exhausted state, we just couldn't figure out how he could be arriving at our doorstep, not too long after we had gotten there! We obviously didn't know Roger and Sharon very well. Roger, not to be deprived of his Super Randonneur pin, had asked Sharon to drive down to wherever it was in Washington State, not to pick him up and take him home, but to bring another wheel so that he could continue the ride! And Sharon actually did this in the middle of the night! We were amazed and impressed, but soon went back for our second hour of sleep. Roger had to sleep on the floor.

We finished the ride without mishap the next day, all of us between 39 and 40 hours, Danelle having a flat in the last 2 km and Roger and Bob staying to help her fix it.

Since then I have felt that I owed a great debt of gratitude to Roger for his encouragement and example in helping me to get through that event.

Thank you, Roger

