



“So, did you have fun?” Silence from Dan and me as Leslie waited for her answer, then laughter as we realized we were waiting on the other to answer first and couldn’t blurt out “absolutely” right away! THEN we said yes.

No problem....ride a bike from Paris to the west coast city of Brest, then back again? 765 miles of adventure. For this gal, who less than 2 years ago thought her 2 centuries in 2 months (in 1 year no less) qualified for “stud-status,” this was indeed *Pam’s Grand Adventure!*

There's no "short" version because how do you condense 90hrs of Pam’s Grand Adventure? Impossible!

My biggest goal was to finish and finish smiling & happy....I almost had it! In retrospect, I didn't eat right in Dreux, so the last leg was way too hard....it was *ONLY* 40 miles. Big mistake on my part and that is the only time my attitude suffered....coincidence? For almost 700 miles, we were on "Pam's Grand Adventure!" then when the rough just kept coming, it occasionally became "Pam's Damn Grand Adventure!" but still said with a smile and a shrug, then after Dreux, it was "Pam's F-----g Grand Adventure!" Ahhhhhh, yessss, I was a delight those last 20 miles or so.....

The highlights: Rain – Dan - Amazing climbs – Rain – Really dark nights – broken camera – no flats – so many languages – more rain – the people cheering – 89:17 – Dan – 2:45 hr sleep – more rain – more climbing – linoleum beds – mashed potatoes – jambon sandwiches – more rain – more climbing – bon jour! – Merci!

The rest of the story:

DID IT!!! Finished 89:17, so didn't get the goal I'd set, which I had thought was "logically" attainable, but conditions were pretty rough and I'm 100% grateful to be successful. :) Nope, not one self-berating moment beating myself about how I coulda shoulda wished-I'd done "better" this time around!

The French say it was the worst conditions in over 50 years, more than 30% DNF (did not finish), which is especially hard for riders who actually DID finish the course and didn't make the time cut-off. 765 miles, the most amazing climbing I could've imagined. Made the 3 mountain passes in Colorado in one day seem a wistful happy play-time... Seemed like it did nothing but rain, mostly steady pouring downpour, nights were dark, wet & cold. Even the times it didn't rain, and yes, there were some, are overshadowed by the times it DID. Seemed my rain coat just stayed on. (Showers Pass Elite 2.0 rocks!)

Inspection: My adventure started on the way to inspection Sunday morning. I was looking SO forward to this!! I still remember my amazement at my first Saturday morning rally and seeing maybe 100 bikes? I wore my cell phone out calling people about this being the coolest thing I'd ever seen. Inspection was 50x that!! Well, I was a little let down, but in a good way. They'd cancelled full inspections because of the rain. Good for me cuz 50 yards from the hotel, my right cleat broke and down I went into my median. Dan said to get it together & deal with the cleat later, so we did. Headed in "skating" on the right cleat, hollering at each cyclist "do you ride speedplay?" One actually said yes AND had a spare set! Told him I only

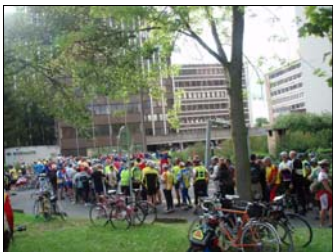


needed the one adapter plate, but he said it'd be easier to leave everything at the hotel & let me pick. Cool! Turns out this guy, Kevin, had a no-show bike and had just purchased a bike to ride PBP. The speedplays were what he originally had but he used the pedals that came with the bike instead.....definitely my lucky day and not his!

3 minutes later we stop for Dan to put on his jacket and MY LEFT CLEAT BREAKS! Now I'm still skating metal on metal to get to inspection...can you sing "slip sli-i-i-ding away...", now both pedals and now we're late. Got through, picked up the cleats at Kevin's hotel and sat down and Dan put on my new cleats for me (sweetie...he wanted to get to our hotel to do it but I was too psyched out to ride 3 more miles skating on both feet and begged to do it now instead) Another day of goodness coming to Pam. Jim Bronson and another rider, Chris, both had stouter tools for us to use. Throw in Chris' mom adopting me and bandaging my boo-boos and it became a parking lot event!

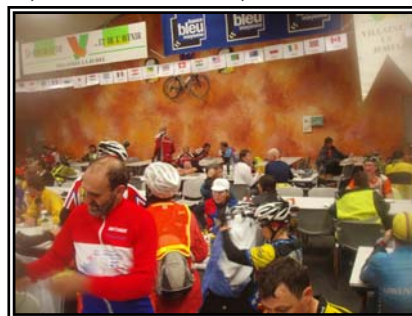


The Start: Amazing!! Thousands of bikes, thousands of spectators, walking stilt people, a fire-eater, fireworks, inflatables, music, grandstand, speeches – WOW!!! We decided to eat at the official dinner and



even getting to the start at 8pm wasn't early enough to get us in the 1st wave. Until seeing a YouTube video, I'd forgotten about us doing "The Wave" all around the track. We are all SUCH excited dorks & I was goosebumpy thrilled to be a part of it! First we stage up on the track, then it's time for my first control – I'm starting PBP!!! Move us out to the parking lot, then the starting line – still gives me goosebumps! There's the gun & the fireworks and off go 500 riders and all hollering at each other in so many languages. We took off at 10:33pm. It's dark, it's raining and HERE WE GO!!!

Got to ride with our LSR buds Rani Freeman, Brenda Barnell, Mark Metcalfe & Gary Smith this first leg and what fun we had! Climbing at night, **Perch (88 miles)** that first time and it finger shaking cold. We dive into the hot mashed potatoes never tasted so good - Great idea Dan!! Course, it took FOREVER to get waited on just like I'd heard. But off we go now, then comes sunrise – wow. Got some pretty nasty wind that first day and Rambo Rani took



and finally getting to **Mortagne au** WAS COLD! Teeth chattering, control and dipping a jambon into



the punch a big part of it, just motoring like a mini-train.

Riding into **Villaines (138 miles)** the first time was fantastic! People cheering, banner across the street, the whole bit. Went ahead & changed clothes, but don't know why. Everything was soaked within minutes again. I screwed up & changed in the restroom, which took forever, so I didn't do that one again. We ate in the restaurant across the street and got to see Brenda & Rani off and sit with other buds Steve Gray & Cheri Brown a few minutes, so that was definitely a highlight. Off we go like conquering heroes – more *Merci's* and *Bonjour's* than I'll ever count and SO many big cheers all around.

Fogeres (192 miles) doesn't trigger any real memories – ARGH They're already fading!! Seems this was the little windy straight up road to get out and we picked up Mark here. Gee....still raining!

On to **Tinteniac (227 miles)** for us and I had lots of time to make up my “*Tinteniac, Tinteniac, TinTinnnnaroo*” songs. The people on the road are just fantastic! Cheering, clapping, offering water and food. Little kids jumping & cheering too. Sometimes in the middle of nowhere, sometimes in clusters in towns, but always cheering and they MUST be miserable standing in the rain, but there they are and they look like there is no where they would rather be – I tried to Bonjour and Merci every single one.

Had me a nice “boy butt buffet” going here with Dan, Mark and Gary & we voted for real food this stop, so up we go to the cafeteria. Ran into Puerto Rico Milton with a rear derailleur getting worked on...hope he finished! His bike showed up 3 days late & panic was setting in for him. Makes my blood curdle to think of that feeling if my Pet hadn't shown up. Just makes me almost gag I'd be so sick.

On to **Loudeac (280 miles)**, the “black hole” of controls Dan calls it and I believe it! Have to do lots of climbing to get there and of course...it's raining! So, Mr. Moon is nowhere to be found, it's dark, the roads are narrow and you can't help but be ready to be there already! Pull in and again, cheering and clapping, all the “bon courage” cheers. The volunteers are GREAT! They're pointing your route in before you have to actually stop & look, they're keeping everyone moving and you know they've got to be tired too. They're piled up in the rain also & always happy to see you and keeping you going. Pull up to the big awning where our drop bags are and takes me a minute to realize, but it isn't raining!! Moving slower than I should be, but Dan keeps us moving. We get cards done, food (my weak desperate attempt at asking for cold milk “lait froid” got me a happy bowl of milk like a kitty cat & I was SO excited knowing I'd get another bowl on the way back!), and we get started on our bike changeover, but vote for a nap instead. Cathy Smith turned into SAG goddess! She even stood in line and got all of us beds (Dan, Gary, Brenda, Rani & me) By the time I laid down, my brain was still going...don't forget the helmet light, need new batteries in the taillight & so on, but then... sleep for an hour on my noisy creaky cot (sorry neighbors!) Then came the shoulder push – time to get going!

As we leave Loudeac, it isn't raining, so what a great treat to finish the bike prep dry ☺

Carhaix (326 miles) is next and we get to spend a lot of daytime riding in the spectacular French countryside – Wowza!! Everywhere you look it's a postcard come to life. Of course, you've still got to get your head down and pedal out the miles, but OMG what a gorgeous place to do it. Although...as Iowa taught me, the word “scenic” really means “Severe Climbing Everywhere – No end Is Coming.” It was worth it! (my blown knees and Achilles learned to dread the words “scenic byway” in Iowa & Wisconsin!) The most fabulous views, little towns that looked straight out of the movies....Mother Nature does good work! Dan got some A+ sandwiches at the store across from the control....had sliced boiled egg inside – yummmmmm!



Onwards & upwards to **Brest! (382 miles)** Beautiful scenery here! We got in with a nice large group (OK, some squirrels too, but no complaints). We sat in on beautiful forest-like climbing and passes and the weather was actually nice for a couple of hours! Course, now it's time to climb the highest point in this part of France....my "specialty"! Getting to the radio tower took on a whole new meaning when the sucker was THIS far up. Mostly just long (several miles), but STOUT cross-winds & some steepness. I actually passed a few folks – yippee!!! C'mon radio tower!! Also watching all the riders on their way back go screaming down was pretty motivating...that was gonna be ME once I turned around & climbed this sucker again! Got to the top and crowds were all over the roads cheering & clapping. You just couldn't help but be proud! Met up with Mark too, so I think that was the last picture before the camera crapped out....TOP OF THE WORLD!!! The sun was out and I had miles & miles of descent ahead of me, what could be better?? Only thing is the wind was SO strong, I couldn't do my normal woo-hoo screaming descent, instead had to ride the brakes, keep everything tucked in and try not to fall over! Each town makes you climb up into it & Brest is no different, only this climb we saw one of the accidents that's been talked about. We came upon the ambulance still there and saw the smashed up car & bike. I pretty much had to take a look, then ignore it. There's a lot of distraction there & I couldn't afford that. Talked to a guy in Brest (Ken) who was abandoning. I tried to talk him out of it with "let's get you something to eat, put your head down...." But he said no – said he saw the wreck & it flipped a switch in him....that's a lot different from being tired, so I hushed in a hurry. He was catching a train back. Again, you have to put it out of your mind, finish the potty, get food, change clothes & get back on the bike...time to head home.



Takes Mark AND Dan to hold my Pet back!

I'd been giving out lapel pins, but decided Brest was when I'd give out Sharon Steven's bracelet (mostly because, though it was on my wrist, I was either too tired or too fumbly to get it off in time to do it quickly on the road), so I found a little girl giving out water (maybe 6 or 7?) couldn't speak English, but we all understood my big smile and "Merci from Texas." She repeated Texas with a big smile too and then a bystander who'd seen me squeal my monkey for someone else, pointed to her with a question and of course all had a big time squealing Penelope the monkey on my camelbak!

Back to Carhaix (435 miles) Yup -climbs were just like I remembered! Met up with Jim, who I met on the pre-ride and he chatted with us til we all converged at the top to dress for the descents. Oh, those were FUN!!!! Since descending is one of the few things I do well, it was time to play and boy we did! Dan and I would scream by big ol' guys like they were standing still. A couple of times, we were challenged for our "Descent King & Queen" awards, but never de-throned! Had to chuckle the couple of times big guys thought they'd out-descend the blonde chick – not a chance - at least, not when I'm trying! On one, I heard someone holler "Pam" but I was hitting full stride, so still don't know who it was...never saw em after that.

Carhaix was a quicky control. We were both feeling OK and chose to hit the store first for potties & food. Ran into Carol Madison here and she was so sweet fixing us jelly sandwiches to take, so we made pretty quick work of this stop. The bad news was hearing that Brad and Mike had gotten so sick that they had to abandon. 2 of our strongest LSR's. Pretty big reality check.

Back to Loudeac (482 miles) How is it always dark & rainy into Loudeac? Well, it is. This time, my tired peeped out. We wound up surrounded by a group of Japanese (initially very cool) Only thing, they didn't understand English and apparently not French either (gauche or au droit), so I started panicking. Dan even asked Gary to slow down a bit to let my panic subside. I like the diversity, but plowing down dark, narrow, windy roads in a tight, tight pack while it's pouring rain and you're surrounded by people that can't understand "don't hit me or stay away" was NOT a fun time right then. Finally, we just made sure we were in front of the group and eventually we left them – whew. Just like Dan predicted, we spent too much time in Loudeac.

Actually sat down to eat, took a shower (way too long, but nothing seemed to work quite right) got led to a mattress (again, thanks to the SAG Queen Cathy!) and got my 2nd hour sleep. Up at 4:30a to get rolling. This time it IS still raining, so our bike finishes were in the rain while Mark, Rani and Brenda went on. Off we go!

Time for *Tinteni*ac, *Tinteni*ac, *Tin-Tinnnnnereeee* (at 535 miles) This was another really pretty stretch that was all dark last time!!! We even stopped for pastries & potties and had a lovely ride into Tinteniac. Met up with Gary & Cathy here (again!) Plus, tried to take care of some chores....saddle adjustments, things like that. (500 miles in wet shorts will make you desperate for ANY kind of adjustment) Dan was thinking ahead and Cathy was SO nice. I know she hadn't slept any more than us, so she was wooped too. Dan told me to go on to Fougères, while he went BACK to control to take care of some things. I had a great 30-40 miles alone before Dan caught me not knowing he was beginning to panic "knowing" he should've caught me long before he did....he'd decided he'd passed me and we were both about to be screwed. Instead, I'm just happily (ignorantly!) pedaling along, singing songs, drafting some, pulling some, just pedal, pedal pedal, not thinking a thing about him not catching me yet. I knew I wasn't lost! ☺ This was a beautiful stretch. Still nicer when Dan came by and patted my bottom though!

Let's see...**Fougères (at mile 570)** was just another stop in the road for us. I remember that danged ol' windy road climbing up into that spot though! Now it was time to get on to **Villaines La Juhel again (at mile 623)**. This was a GORGEOUS mountainous stretch that we must've missed because of darkness last time, but wow! Tiring as expected, but stunning scenery and there in the middle of a climb would be a family at the end of their driveway clapping and cheering as you, I mean I, crawled by at 8mph. Huff, "bonjour," puff, smile, weez, "merci" as I go pedaling by! Then a few miles down the road, another driveway and more people, then a little town straight out of the movies – gorgeous!

For some reason pulling into Villaines from the other direction was a whole new world for me! Of course, my tired might have made anything seem a whole new world! (tough stretch for me) Dan insisted on a hot meal here and we debated taking a nap. The restaurant was PACKED! The entire town turned out tonight & families were helping riders carry trays, you name it! We got to sit with some really sweet locals and 1 spoke broken English, so it was great! It was dark again now (and surprise, surprise, it was raining!) I was psyching to nap (only 3 stretches left!) but Dan started changing to "we may as well get this next one done." (It's about 11pm maybe?) Ug...OK.

Ok, so some "boy" is taking WAY too long to change clothes in the drop bag truck & we need to get rolling, so I start shucking clothes under my big towel (as best I can) and up walks this sweet old man to use the ATM – he is MORTIFIED! After I calm him down and finish my shirt, we share a laugh and he tells stories and even gets a photo and my email. Laughs all around. Now I'm shucking my shorts (still got my towel over my lap) and a young couple walks up to use the ATM – what?!?! He looks away, but she looks at me laughs a bit, shrugs and uses the ATM. Lordy, what I do for 3 minutes of dry shorts!

After changing mental gears though, I was keen to go, mostly cuz we were starting out with our week-old new buds Greg & Lisa Jones. We'd decided to ride the next leg together, but then the Danimal started getting tired on me and talking about sleeping in a ditch and I started getting VERY nervous. We were riding with a pack and talky Jim was there, so I asked him to chat w/Dan and keep him going. He was great! Chatted us through many weary miles and then this science fiction climbing started – what?!?!?! Taillights ahead of us NEVER went over the top, just kept climbing for hours. My gawd, after we finally made it to Mortagne, I started thinking it was REALLY good to do that at night. If I'd had to stare at those climbs all day long, my mind might've psyched out more....bad enough to see the taillights go on & on! ☺ Insult to injury, there was a straight up teeny stretch to get into the control itself – argh!!! But we're here, **Mortagne au Perce (at 674 miles)** and those climbs are behind me!

Of course, we meet up with the whole LSR group here again (it's about 4:30am Friday) We dine on a sumptuous supper of mashed potatoes and spaghetti – yummmmm! And while I'm fighting tired, we decide the floor a foot away looks like a spectacular bed – and we were right! We laid down about 5:10am, with my watch set for 6am and my camelbak was the world's best pillow. We just spooned right up next to our nameless new friends and were OUT!

On the road at dawn and here we go to **Dreux (at mile 720)**. Nancy Guth tells me these 2 last/new stretches aren't that bad after about 20 miles or so. (Note to self.....NEVER LISTEN WHEN NANCY GUTH SAYS "NOT THAT BAD!") We all knew the mountain pass coming up and I just keep saying "downhill soon...wee! downhill soon...wee!" No problems, just lots of clothes adjustments now that night is over. Beautiful scenery again!! My attitude is good – smiles are genuine – chatty with other riders – it is GOOD to be me!

We hook up with Greg & Lisa again & Dan starts out-climbing me of course, so I encourage him & tell him I'll catch on the downhill! Pretty fun actually, kept leap-frogging one gal (Maile sp?) who would spin up and sing "how's it going?" I'd always say great or weeeee or fun, how 'bout you? (We actually got to meet at dinner Saturday after and that was a BLAST! She was so sweet saying she'd seen so many wrecks on PBP that she started especially checking on single females and said I had the clearest eyes and best answers and she had hoped to meet me after...and we did!)

But then Greg & Lisa start panicking! They actually might miss their cut-off, so they start hammering & Dan says "jump on!" We do and we're flying in a pack of 12-20 bikes at 20+mph. I don't have a lot of matches left in me, but this IS fun, then I start fading and Dan says "few more minutes?" OK, I dig in, then he'll say "one more hill?" Ok, dig in again, then he said.....45 MORE MINUTES? – WHAT?!?!?! We're trying to paceline Greg & Lisa in and as a tandem, they're used to pulling, but now Dan really wants to help them, so he starts coordinating the paceline (pretty cool to watch him coordinate total strangers!) and I bail off into a group we're passing. Oh yeah....we'd passed the Metcalfe Express, so when I bailed I kept thinking Mark would come up on me, but he didn't.

I had SUCH fun jumping from group to group. Discovered I'm actually pretty strong compared to some others that aren't the freaky LSR all-stars I'm used to! I'd pull and pull the pace up, they'd pull, the pace would slow...pretty cool! Got in with a great Danish team that was just right for me and we had a grand time for many miles after they accepted me in. Up til mile 710....first dog in the road and I scraped my teeth avoiding a 10 bike pile-up. I do NOT know how I didn't go down because I could feel that guy's scower on my bike and leg as I swerved around him. Scared the @\$! out of me for several minutes (guess cuz I was so tired). The Danes regrouped and invited me back in and I just couldn't. I saw PBP end for me in that second and decided no more wheels for me but Dan's, so I just pulled ahead and let em on my wheel as long as they wanted. After that, I pulled anyone that wanted to keep up and funny thing was almost every single one slowed down when I did for my little breaks! **SO happy to see Dreux!!!! I made it....40 MORE MILES and I'm an ancienne!!!! ☺**

So, that leg was by myself and it was fun. Best part is Dan not only got the tandem to their time cutoff, but played domestique at control and got them on their last leg prrrrronto!!! Greg & Lisa, were just beside themselves at getting done – AND they made it to St. Quentin too – yeah!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dreux – practically home!!! The whole gang pretty much re-groups & off we go to St. Quentin en Yvelines!! Here's my big goof. Dan offered me a sandwich and I said no. I wasn't really hungry and I (disrespecting the course) thought "it's only 40 miles." BIG MISTAKE!! My attitude went into the toilet about 25 miles from the end and I know a bunch of it was not getting a big sandwich in me. Misery. And I made it misery for poor Dan too. @\$! This and #\$\$%! That! Oh....what a treat I was. Every little town had (for me) steep windy climbs into it and there were DOZENS on this last stretch – I was furious and I was a hag! Plus, I started seeing cross-

eyed from the tired and that scared me a bit too. Throw in my blistery crotch and I was an absolute JOY to be around!

Dan stopped me a couple time to put raincoats on/off or to check me out and I even stopped ½ way up a big climb to rest – DAMMIT!!! But other people were walking it and I'd be #\$\$!% if I was gonna walk – not a chance! Fun memory though, towards the top"ish" tons of neighbors were out and one was clanging away with a cowbell – good inspiration to get to them! We're with a lot of people and I think Dan is pretty surprised to see all these folks around us.

FINALLY we see St. Quentin and Gary tells me 10k more. OK, but there better not be ANY more surprises! We got a motorcycle escort through a couple of red lights and the poor blistered cookie was SO grateful....so grateful in fact, that I just ran a couple on my own after he left...wasn't that nice of me? (no WAY was I gonna crawl off & back on that saddle ONE MORE LIGHT!)

We're here! I can see the stadium....I can see the barricades lining the street...I'm grinning like a demented idiot! Dan stops to use the porta-potty about 1km from the finish cuz he thinks they'll be too crowded. In retrospect, I wish I'd waited so we could've done our victory lap together, but he told me to go and I just said OK. Wow, what a greeting!!! I hear someone holler "way to go Pam" (turns out it was Tom Milton) and the crowds are lining the street...they're hollering all the "bon courage" yells and cheers, a few "go Texas" and a few more "Pam" yells from other finishers and I just boo-hoo!!! I'm crying and laughing and hollering "merci, merci!!!" and it was the most overwhelming feeling that I think I've ever experienced. No way words can explain - made me feel like I was the only rider that had ever done this, not one of 5,000, not a slow one out of 100 years+ of this ride, but like I was the only one. Absolutely fantastic.

The Finish:

Now as I ride to get my card stamped, I'm still crying and laughing and apparently looking like a rejected mental patient cuz the ambulance drivers are looking at me funny and I'm trying to laugh more than cry, but I'm SO excited, SO grateful and SO relieved! My little man foursome regroupes and Dan, Mark, Gary and I WAIT for about 30 minutes in line to get our cards done – ARGH!!! But they're done and we're official.

Now that it's over, I'm fighting sleep, my eyes won't stay open and Dan decides we'd better get back to the hotel (3 MORE miles). Fun to run back into John and Nancy Guth. What a treat for a newbie to hear Nancy Guth sorta complain!!! She was going on about sore hands, sore crotches and having to crawl back to the hotel – why it was almost like listening to a normal person! ☺

About ½ way back we get our first and only angry motorist and he STALKS us!!! We're pedaling down the road, quiet and still and this guy starts honking. Well, dopey me waves and hollers "merci!" Big mistake. Dan raises his voice & says "turn right" hoping we'll get away, but he follows, honking, screaming past us, then he u-turns & u-turns again to come BACK behind Dan. Dan's hollering "get on the sidewalk." As I get on the sidewalk, I'm terrified the guy is trying to run over Dan cuz he's still honking & screaming. Little ol' lady at the bus stop is even staring at him. Thank goodness he left eventually and we got home safe & sound.



Notes:

- Route was well marked. We only had 1 missed turn & Gary hollered before we'd gone a 1/4 mile - wow! – THANK YOU GARY!!!! For the life of me I can't remember which stretch that was.
- Had NO mechanicals during the ride - AMAZING!!! No flat tires, nothing! Only major scare for me was me breaking both my cleats on the way to inspection - argh!!!
- The people really were on the route cheering us on...IN THE RAIN! Unbelievable! Dan said later he thought I'd get hoarse with all my "bonjours" and "mercis" but it was SO humbling to see a little 4some on the corner of nowhere clapping for you. Then you'd see the same little ol man outside his house when you were riding back to Paris and had to wonder how long he'd been there? How long did he go inside to sleep? Had he ridden this before? Alllllll the stories you'll never know. I didn't dream it could be as generous a ride as I'd heard, but it humbled me even more to see them huddling in the rain to clap. Sometimes with umbrellas, sometimes just themselves.
- No physical nightmares. Knee, achilles, feet issues for both of us, but I think more wear & tear than anything! Biggest thing for me "after" is the swelling. Still can't really feel my fingers, but the pinkies are almost normal, so I'm sure the rest will come along. They're swollen so much I can't easily clean my fingernails (eeeeeeewwwww!!!! ☺) Pretty swollen from knees down, but again, hard to complain about THAT after what we put everything through – probably mostly the plane rides. Dan actually got through on his one original pair of shoes, which was surprising with all the feet issues he's been going through.
- Dan couldn't have been a better babysitter. Let me ride as fast as I would and never made me feel a hindrance. Towards the end (the last 20 miles finally got me mentally) I think he was scared we weren't going to make the 90hr, but he never said it out loud. Every so often if I was standing still like putting on my coat or something, he'd say "we need to get going" but never ever tried to push me in the least. Even let my cranky mood vent for 20 miles. I tried SO hard to be positive NO MATTER WHAT, but the last stretch got me and he just let it get me.
- Got about 2:45 hrs sleep total. Slept 1hr in Loudeac each way, then about :45 in Mortagne au Perche on the way back. That last 45minute sleep was the best sleeping on hard linoleum floor you could DREAM of!! I've never loved hard linoleum so much and my camelback was the world's MOST perfect pillow - life was great!!! I can HEARTILY endorse the wall between the 1st and 2nd columns!!! :)
- Of all the gear, toys, trinkets and crap I'd been buying for the past year, the \$210 Showers Pass rain coat was the best spent money!! Even Dan the man liked it so well that he bought one. He's said out loud he doesn't know how we could've finished without them and I agree 100%.

All in all, I'm more grateful and humble to have finished than anything and I have the utmost respect and honor for other riders that did this ride, but didn't make the time cut-off.

Next goals? Who knows what 2008 will bring!