

The Long Road

Newsletter of Randonneurs Ontario Celebrating 25 years, 1983-2008

October 2008







25TH ANNIVERSARY!













October 2008

Letter from the Pres:

It was a fabulous weekend! The club's 25th Anniversary celebration went off without a hitch. Twenty five riders started off en-masse in a light drizzle that lasted only 15 minutes and turned into a cloudy, but pleasant day. The riders quickly divided into 2 main groups that would separate slightly between controls, but regroup at each control. The testosterone factor was kept in check for most of the brevet by copious amounts of ice cream and a couple of good cowboys who reined in the errant race horses. We may not have all finished together, but we're still "rookies" at this Audax thing.

I was so proud to be part of this year's celebration. I'm not sure if it was the scenic ride or the promise of a free supper and generous glasses of wine that brought so many randonneurs out of the woodwork, but whatever the reason, it allowed me to meet so many of the faces that I'd previously only known by name.

Getting together and appreciating each other as a whole club and not separate chapters, is what this celebration was all about. It's what I'd like to see next year in the Fleche a celebration of riding, teamwork, and togetherness.

Patti Von Niessen

Editor's Corner:

This special edition of The Long Road celebrates the 25th anniversary of Randonneuring in Ontario.

I was lucky to have access to almost 200 past issues of our newsletter from the last 25 years, and I've chosen to reprint 3 articles from them. The first is an article by Ken Dobbs describing the origins of "audax" style cycling [Ken has just finished a more in-depth history – watch for it in upcoming issues].

The next reprinted article is about the origins of Randonneuring in Ontario and how the Toronto Randonneurs got its start.

Finally, I read many many wonderful ride reports in the old newsletters. From all of them, I had the difficult task of choosing one to reprint here. The one I choose is not about the longest ride, or the fastest, but I think it wonderfully describes the experiences and people that you meet on a ride that make each ride memorable.

The Board designated this year's Loyalist 200K in Picton to celebrate the anniversary. Twenty four cyclists rode the brevet, then were joined by family and friends for a celebratory dinner. I included two reports of the weekend, one from Scott, and experienced Randonneur, and Kathy's, a relative newcomer to Ranonneuring.

I hope you enjoy this special issue. The next issue of The Long Road will return to its usual format. Here's to the next 25 years!

Linda



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Henri Desgrange and the Origins of Audax Cycling	sport tourism", something that, according to him, had become dormant in France. He advocated long group excursions, events that would not degenerate into competitive races, inspired, it seemed to him, by what was happening in Italy among the members of a group called "Audax Italiano".	
Translated from the web site of L 'Union des Audax Francais by Ken Dobb		
 Henri Desgrange had been a talented bicycle racer. He had held the hour record of 35.325 kms (without drafting assistance) and, following his retirement from racing, had retained a taste for physical exertion. In his publication, L' Auto, he urged youth to engage in sporting activities, not necessarily within the framework of organised competition, seeing in these activities a way of training the body and maintaining good health. Having been a cyclist, his inclination towards the promotion of the sport was to be expected. From 1901, he began to promote group cycling, re-establishing what he termed "long distance" 	Who were these cyclists that as his model? Their story ha June 1897, when a group of complete the distance betwe some 230 kilometres – in the dawn and dusk. One has to i roads at that time, and the te used, to appreciate the diffic Under the leadership of Vito this out-of-the-ordinary even in Naples in the evening of t spread the news of the succe distinguished with the term	ad begun on the 12 th of twelve riders set out to en Rome and Naples – e same day, between magine the state of the chnology of the bicycles oulty of the undertaking. o Pardo, the organiser of nt, 9 participants arrived hat day. Newspapers ess of the attempt. They

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Italian - those who had finished the event. This term - "audace" - was soon translated into Latin -"Audax" – and this name stayed with them.

Neopolitan cyclists, no doubt somewhat jealous of the success of their Roman counterparts, undertook to do the same route, but in the reverse direction, between Naples and Rome. Twenty of them made it to bered medal and a corresponding certificate of the finish, and it was during the course of a reception held in their honour that it was decided to initiate a group of skilled riders who could manage 200 kilometers or more in a day. This group took the name "Audax Italiano". And from this starting point, medal. This badge was enamelled in yellow, the the model of long group rides, led by a ride captain, spread throughout Italy. Sections sprang up in the major towns, and the number of cyclists awarded the kilometre brevet medals to this day). This is how "Audax" designation, never ceased growing.

It was this model of a group excursion, strenuous in light of the distance involved, that Henri Desgrange wanted to introduce to those who had abandoned competitive cycling and were balking at taking up the sport again. He thought in this way to give them the taste for cycling again, less intense but no less salutary for physical well-being.

In 1903, the Italian Audax group announced their intention to ride to Paris the following summer. Desgrange lamented the fact that there was not a group in France that could emulate the Italians. It was then that Georges Lefevre, the same person who was to originate the idea of the Tour de France, wrote a series of articles in L'Auto in which he described the Italian group and their proposed undertaking. He set forth the idea of a reception of the Italians by a group of cyclists from the French capital who would sport for the sake of participation rather competiride before their Italian counterparts on the route. For this he required a group of cyclists who were themselves capable of riding a long distance in a group. He suggested that L' Auto become involved in the undertaking and become the spearhead of the renewal of sport tourist cycling in France.

On the 7th of January, 1904, Henri Desgrange announced, on the front page of L'Auto, his intention of founding a French Audax organization, modeled

on Audax Italiano, following the ideas set out earlier by Georges Lefevre. After several preparatory outings led by Charles Stourm, another colleague at L' Auto, the first official ride of the French Audax took place on April 3, 1904 on a route between Paris and Gaillon. Of 37 participants, 29 succeeded in travelling the 200 kilometers required to obtain the designation "Audax". They were rewarded by a numachievement awarded by L' Auto.

Charles Stourm, who had acted as ride captain on this historic ride, was awarded the first numbered same colour as the pages of L'Auto. (Translator's Note: Yellow remains the signifying colour for 200 yellow became the distinctive colour of French Audax, long before the colour became associated with the leader of the Tour de France, an event that would not be created until 1919.

We have shown that French Audax was a creation of Henri Desgrange, for whom these riders were every bit as important as those who rode the Tour de France. Each year in the pages of L'Auto, the rides of Audax were listed together with competitive races like Paris - Roubaix, Paris - Tours, or the Tour de France, in the calendar of events published by the paper. Until his death in 1940, Henri Desgrange served as honorary President of Audax, attentive always to the activities of the organisation. His work was carried on by Jacques Godet, his spiritual son, who embodied completely the spirit of the sport. For him, in this modem world, Audax was wisdom, and, further, Audax was health: a philosophy of tion, and for the sake of physical well-being.

The Origins of the Toronto Randonneurs



Now that the Toronto Randonneurs' first season has come to a close, we thought it might be a good time to review how the group came about, look at our first year of events and suggest some ideas for this year.

In September 1981 Mike Barry and Mike Brown, the co-owners of Bicyclesport, were flush with the pride of achievement: they'd just completed a successful attempt of the "Raid Pyrenean". This was no minor accomplishment. The endurance ride had taken them the length of France's Pyrenees Mountains within an allocated time limit of 80 hours. While exhausted, the two were filled with enthusiasm for this type of riding

It seemed only natural that after completing the "Raid" that the two turned their attentions towards riding Paris-Brest-Paris -- the World's most famous and prestigious endurance cycling event. While the event, which is only held every four years, requires that entrants complete a 1,200 km course within 90 hours, it's not without a following. In 1979, 1,800 riders attempted the challenge. Early this year, Brown and Barry decided they would enter the 1983 edition of P-B-P. But this created a problem. Because of the event's vast popularity and its demanding nature, P-B-P's organizers require that all participants complete a series of qualifying rides within After the initial success of the 200 km event, many the previous year. These timed and controlled rides known as randonees-- cover routes of 200, 300, 400 P. The 300 km was organized, this time tracing a and 600 km.

But the organisations running the qualifying rides must also be authorized by the Cyclo Club Parisienne, PBP's controlling body. As a result, up until this year the only authorized randonees in North America were held in Syracuse N.Y. and in Vancouver. While Vancouver was obviously out of the question, Syracuse was not a much better alternative. Although it's within driving distance, the thought of motoring there after a busy Saturday in the shop, riding 400 or 600 km, and heading home again was a little daunting to Barry and Brown.

Faced with this, the pair applied to Paris to run the events in Ontario thus giving birth to the Toronto Randonneurs. The first event, the 200 km, was run on a course starting in Markham, going out through Uxbridge, around the north shore of Lake Scugog to Lindsay and returning to Uxbridge and Markham via the south side of the lake. Maps, route cards and control chits guided the 25 participants around the course, which avoided main, heavily traveled roads wherever possible. Cafes and restaurants along the way provided control points.

(The idea of a randonnee is to cover the distance within a prescribed time, usually based on an average speed of 15 km per hour. It is not, however, a race. Provided they make all controls along the route, the riders who finish last receive the same award as the front-runners.)

All 25 riders completed the 200 km route within the required 14 hours, but one performance was especially notable. Due to a break in his Achilles tendon, which occurred two weeks before the event. Kaz Sadek had to ride the course with his right leg in a cast. To enable him to ride at all, Bicylesport removed his right hand crank and fitted his bicycle with a low fixed gear. As a result Kaz was able to pedal with his left leg while resting his cast on his bike's padded downtube. But even with this handicap he wasn't the last rider to finish.

of the participants started thinking about riding P-Broute around Lake Simcoe. Of the 23 who started in Toronto, 19 finished. Among those who made it

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back was Kaz. While his cast was gone, allowing him to use both legs, his right leg was still heavily bandaged. He finished with the main group in 14 hours. It proved a very hard ride for all participants. Heavy winds in the second half were joined with heavy rain at the Uxbridge control, which lasted up until the finish at Yonge and Sheppard. Two riders quit in Uxbridge and a third finished way outside of the time limit, not reaching Toronto until 1 a.m.

the midnight departure of the 400 km event. The night ride to Barrie was beautiful on quiet roads with a bright moon lighting the way. Dawn broke as the tight group, enjoying one and another's company, skirted the north shore of Lake Simcoe. An early breakfast was eaten in Orillia before the group tackled the long stretch northeast to Kinmount. Once there, they turned south, hitting Bobcageon, Lindsay and Uxbridge before arriving home. Two riders were seriously affected by the hot summer sun and were forced to abandon. But such was their enthusiasm that they rode the course again the following week, thereby enabling them to qualify.

The thought of attempting to complete the distance in 40 hours was enough to restrict the field in the 600 km event to 12 starters. Two of them only traveled the first loop of 350 km around Lakes Simcoe and Scugogo The other ten managed to get about three hours sleep before starting the final loop of 250 km. In the early morning hours, the biggest problem proved to be staying awake. But as all those who managed to go this far were quite evenly matched, it became a matter of honour to keep the group together. All ten finished in about 38 hours. But when the end of August approached and P-B·P loomed, an irony developed. Neither Brown nor Barry was in the ranks of the six Toronto Randonneurs who were heading off to France. They were so Miller asked some strangers where he might buy successful in building enthusiasm among the Bicyle- some clean t-shirts. Rather than offer directions, sport staff, that the owner's absence would have left the shop too short staffed during $P \cdot B - P$ to operate. That means the Toronto Randonneurs' founders will have to wait until 1987 to test their skills in the next P-B-P.

Besides Kaz, the TR members who made the trek were Martin Heath, Tom Platt, Mike Miller, Tony Beek, Barry Robishaw, Hans Breuker and Florent Darras. They were joined by Jacques Morrans from Ottawa. Rounding out the Canadian contingent was a group of four riders from Vancouver. A ride the distance of P-B-P is almost as much a test of machines as men. Unfortunately, the night before their departure, Martin's freewheel failed the test. As a result he spent most of the evening patiently whit-Only 12 starters showed up at Yonge and Steeles for tling springs from bits of rubber stolen from his bar end plugs. The springs which restored his rear block to working order weren't the only bit of handiwork on Martin's bike: it already sported a crank he previously hand carved from a chunk of aluminum. But Martin wasn't alone when it came to trouble at the start. Shortly after the group set out from Paris, Tony was plagued with two punctures. Gradually, however, the kinks were worked out and they set off on the course, cheered on by small gatherings of locals at the roadside. The event was not without further delay, however. At some point along the course the TR group pulled over to assist an entrant from the United States whose lighting system was refusing to co-operate. Again, Martin's mechanical skills came to the fore and the reluctant dynamo system was restored to order. The American joined the bunch, but soon was forced to pullover again - this time the victim of a snapped crank arm. Apparently lacking the raw aluminum necessary to carve out a replacement, Martin did the next best thing. After producing a length of rope from his bulging saddlebag, Martin and the others took turns towing the hapless gent into the next town, where, after some difficulty in locating an Italian-threaded replacement, repairs were made.

> The roadside spectators' enthusiasm wasn't restricted just to encouraging cheers. At Brest, Mike they piled him into their small sports car and whisked him off to a shopping area, aided in the purchase and then returned Mike to the halfway point's rest area. While none of the Toronto Randon-

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neurs matched Herman De Munck's time of 43h 46m hours, they all finished within the time limits, not a trifling feat in the P-B-P. (This year marked the fourth time that De Munck, a bullet shaped Belgian, finished P-B-P first. Sponsored by a French cycle manufacturer, the 45-year old's efforts were aided by fully-staffed and well appointed "team car". For the 1987 P-B-P, De Munck hopes to tackle the tandem record with his son's assistance.) Leading the Toronto group in was Hans with a time of about 79 hours.

To go with the medals that confirmed their status as "anciens" of the P-B-P, the Toronto Randonneur group also brought back a trophy for having the largest number of entrants from an overseas club. While the effort was taxing, it seems P-B-P, if anything, boosted all the Toronto participants' enthusiasm towards cycling. Indeed, many of them went directly from resting up after the finish to cycle tours of continental Europe and Britain.

« THIS YEAR»

Unlike the January dinner, which marks the start of the 1984 season but will require little training, this year's other innovation, the first proper running of the Toronto-Ottawa-Toronto, will be a taxing experience. The scenic, and hilly, T-O-T course has already been mapped out and given two trial runs (neither within randonnee time limits.) At Thanksgiving, a group of four attempted a round trip assault but were thwarted by endless rain and chilling temperatures. Rather than do the entire 900 plus km T-O-T route, they turned it into a 700 km Toronto-Westport-Toronto event. Some two weeks later, Mike Brown and Mike Barry did a one-way run to Ottawa on the new Moultons. Besides being run as an end of season randonee; the T-O-T will also be set up as a Raid to better accommodate member's training and vacation plans. (In a Raid, riders can attempt the distance at any time they prefer and, so long as they check in at all the controls within the required time limits, they will receive an award.) While most of next year's events will stick basically to the Lake Simcoe/Uxbridge routes, there may be a new 200 km course leaving from Toronto

and using the Halton Hilly route through the escarpment north of Burlington. The proposed schedule of events is as follows:

April 8 100 km. April 29 100 km. May 20 200 km. June 17 300 Km.

July 15 400 Km. August 19 600 Km. September 16 T-O-T.

As always, any suggestions that come to mind while waiting the winter out on rollers will be gratefully received.

Ride Report: The Revenge of Zeus

By Martin Heath [June 1999]

Trying not to be late for the start of the Wednesday 200k, I found myself forced into the Keele St gutter, dodging holes and hyperventilating diesel fumes. Chris and Andrea drove up nonchalantly 10 minutes later. Recovering from my efforts I observed a welldressed woman who was talking incessantly to Isabelle and Pete Dusel, and from the expression on their faces it was apparent that she was not part of the team. I surmised that either she had been up all night or had forgotten to take her medication – she was parasailing above the smog we were breathing. When I actually responded to her chatter she steered the discussion towards bicycles, thinking that ours were the one seen in department stores. Not wishing to dampen her enthusiasm I provided her with a mantra: TBN, TBN, TBN. She departed happily, still chattering away.

Pete Dusel and I cleared through the smog layer and at Kettleby I found that my right side crank has worked loose. Tools were tried at the gas station and when these didn't work Pete continued alone. Contemplating the situation, I realised the inadvisability of mixing old and new equipment: I had installed

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modern Campy Mirage cranks onto the original Zeus axle on the Cinelli using the original 16mm Zeus bolts cranked down with a ground-down Stronglight tool which was still sitting in my workshop. A triathlete lady stopped and informed me of a bike shop in Aurora. Whilst phoning for the taxi, I stroying the sidewall of the new Continental 1000 could see those Zeus cranks hanging on the wall laughing at me. We went to Aurora (no luck) then bolt was fitted. Cost: \$70 for taxi plus the bolt.

There was a rip snorting head wind and the washboard gravel on the side road north of Beeton has not improved. After losing 2 hours I don't expect to see Chris and Andrea but here they are returning down Hockley Valley. It seems very hot and if its like this now, what will it be like in July?

I found Pete white faced and heat stressed in the Hockley Village store on the return. He was about to equipment!) I made it with 4 minutes to go. say something but instead gave a spectacular involuntary projectile vomiting demonstration against the Of course I still had to ride downtown and my next ice cream cooler. The young ladies were very understanding - I had already mentioned the heat to them and this was before I realised that Pete was hiding in 10 minutes to go and was able to re-lubricate my the bathroom. To be fair to him, it was seeing me that precipitated the event - I must have looked awful! Anyway, if you go in there this year 'wan of vis- Isn't cycling wonderful? age' expect to be followed by someone with a mop. bucket and bottle of Dettol. Perhaps, as there is soon to be thousands of freelance nurses roaming the Province we should just install a red cross station at every convenience store, so let's all vote for Harrisment and make it happen! We can also buy new handlebar tape with our tax cuts.

Pete, feeling better, pedaled on to Beeton where he was 10 minutes outside the control time. Isabelle sagged him back to Maple

My ride traced the all too-familiar route with a now diminished side wind through Shomberg and Pottageville to the sense of the revenge of Zeus where I estimated a

9:10 finish in Maple. A familiar figure appeared at the side of the road: Larry Strung had been driving to meet his buddies and seeing me churning along had decided to stop and present me to his young son as an example of how not to cycle in one's semidottage.

At King's Cross and dusk, I ran over an object, detire (which had already pinchflatted the previous night). I had been riding all day on about 90lb to Spokes and Blokes in New Market where a 15mm wrong - these have to be at 120lb and that is difficult to do with a hand pump. As two mountain bikers passed I briefly contemplated "Rrride on the Rrim to win!" but reason prevailed and in the gathering dusk I was able to boot the tire with a Cliff Bar wrapper.

> So here is the reason for lights on a 200k - it was now dark, it was 10k to the finish but there was still 30 minutes to the official brevet closing. My little bottle generator buzzing pleasantly and "Star Wars" blinking behind (talk about mixing old and new

> checkpoint was the Amsterdam Brewery at Portland and King - closing time 11 pm. Well, I made it with brain and write these notes.



Loyalist 200K: 25th Anniversary Celebration

Yesterday was the fourth running of the Loyalist 200.a route that was developed, tested, refined and ultimately has become the success story it is mostly due to the efforts of Steve Rheault and Peter Leiss.

The Loyalist 200 was developed for the purpose of establishing a "Club" ride, with a starting point (Picton) that would be centrally common to both Toronto and Ottawa.

I was fortunate enough to be a participant on the inaugural event (2005), which was followed by a superb BBQ at Peggy's (Pete's equal other) parent's home in Picton. Subsequent to the event that year, Peg's parents were to leave the area for the east coast (if memory serves me correctly) and just to be clear that decision had nothing to do with our presence at their home. Given that our fortunes had taken a turn for the worse and this BBQ arrangement would no longer be available, it seemed fair to assume that the Loyalist 200 would become just another ride in the Club's ride portfolio.

Although the 2005 edition of the Loyalist 200 will forever leave an indelible mark in my memories, this year's edition will squeeze those memories a bit to make room for the memories that I will take from this year's edition of the "event".

I refer to this year's edition as an event because our sitting Executive Board allowed us to celebrate the milestone of the Club's 25th Anniversary.

To honour the Club's success, the Board made the arrangements as necessary for all interested members to participate on the Loyalist 200 ride, followed fabulous spread. There was lots of wine, pleasant by a dinner extravaganza at a local establishment.

The starting point was switched to Napanee from Picton to accommodate the overnight accommodations (Napanee) and/or the dining facility. To further the faces and personalities that I have known and accommodate the dining logistics the start time was moved up one hour.

It was agreed that the Club would form two riding groups as required to accommodate the different fitness levels. The concept was a great idea and for the most part worked very nicely until after our Black Creek Cheese Company control (120 K). The euphoria as apparently created by the quantum amounts the ice cream at the BCC control soon translated to power to the working muscles, the speeds became too great for some and subsequently split the groups into a few more smaller groups.

Although the ride started with a little rain it was not enough and/or did not last long enough to dampen our spirits and with the rather unseasonably warm morning made for very pleasant riding conditions.

The ride itself was as always spectacular. Anyone who has had the opportunity to ride in Prince Edward County is fully familiar with the geographic beauty the region offers and the quiet user friendly roads.

I believe we had 27 riders that came out to enjoy the day and of special note: we had four riders who successfully completed their first ever 200 and more notably two of the first timers were a Father/ Daughter (17 years young) combo, each of which on single uprights. I believe that 17 could well be the youngest Brevet finisher on a single in our Club's history? Congratulations to all the participants and a special congrats to you first timers.

The dinner reservations were for 35 plus at 7:00 and it was attended by most participants, Members and/ or their loved ones. The dinner was an absolutely conversation and ambiance to compliment a wonderful meal.

On a personal note: it was fabulous to hook-up with admired for many years now and as well, a privilege

to finally meet some of the newer Members.

I would like to thank all that made this event the success that it was, and most notably - Patti: the force behind this event, Isabelle/Keith: the ride organisers, Jim G/The Club: signing the check for all the food and beverages.

Scott

The Loyalist 200km Brevet

This year the Loyalist ride was also a celebration of the Ontario Randonneurs 25th anniversary. This brevet, which usually starts in Picton, was reorganized to begin and end in Napanee in order to facilitate the ready looking forward to the Loyalist brevet 2009!! hotel and dinner accommodations for so many participants and their spouses. Twenty five people participated in this brevet. Bob and Patti rode tandem, Guy and Mike rode their respective recumbents. It was my first time on this ride and I was finally able to meet members of the Ottawa club and others that I had only known as names and contributors to the mailing list.

The day began as overcast with light rain, but that tapered off after the first hour. Memories of the day include the bridge outside of Picton and the stop at Little Bluffs Conservation Area where we got off the bikes and had a short hike along the bluffs. Another good memory is pedaling past Guy who had assumed the role of paparazzi and had positioned himself on the ground, in the middle of the road to take a group photo as we cycled past! We rode as a group and managed to more or less stay together until the third control at the Black Creek Cheese Factory where a lot of ice cream was consumed. At this point the faster riders powered on ahead, no doubt fuelled by the ice cream. Owen and I slowed our pace and were fortunate to meet up with a small group waiting for the ferry. Thanks to Scott, Phil and James for the support and company during the last 40km of the day.

As we pulled into the hotel in Napanee there was a small group cheering and clapping, control cards

were collected. The dinner in Napanee was fun. I was thoroughly entertained by all the PBP stories flying round the table. Thanks to Vytas, Fred, Scott and Paul J for the colourful anecdotes. After dinner we all joined Patti to acknowledge two new riders, Martin and his lovely wife (sorry, your name escapes me) from Ottawa who completed their first 200km brevet that day! And we all clapped for a father and daughter team who finished the ride (the daughter, whose name also escapes me, is only 17!!!). It was a great night out and a very positive way to spend some club money. Thanks to Patti for organizing the dinner, thanks to James for dishing out the dough, thanks to Isabelle and Keith for organizing the ride, thanks to Linda for taking the photos and thanks to the people who continue to amaze and inspire me with their cycling achievements. I am al-

Kathy

September 6, 2008 Loyalist 200

Owen Beck - Finisher Kathy Brouse - Finisher Scott Chisholm - Finisher Peter Dusel - Finisher Peter Grant - Finisher James Griffin - Finisher Bill Hyde - Finisher Vytas Janusauskas - Finisher Paul Jurbala - Finisher Fred Krawiecki - Finisher Emily Little - Finisher Pat Little - Finisher Mike Maloney - Finisher Keith McEwen - Finisher Marni McGarry - Finisher Martin McGarry - Finisher Jim Morris - Finisher Phil Piltch - Finisher Guy Quesnel - Finisher Isabelle Sheardown - DNF Trevor Stocki - Finisher Patti VonNiessen - Finisher Bob Waddell - Finisher James Wilson - Finisher

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Loyalist 200K: 25th Anniversary Celebration

























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