



The Long Road

January /February Vol. 22 No. 1

www.randonneursontario.ca

President's Corner

As we enter into a new cycling season it is time to reflect on the past season. Because the province is so large and the travel distances make it difficult for everyone to get together, the club will be holding two Awards Nights. The Randonneurs Ontario Annual Awards Dinner will be on February 26th at the Montreal Bistro in Toronto. The Ottawa chapter will be holding an Awards night on February 19th at the Cheshire Cat. These are the nights that we honour the club members who achieved exceptional milestones. So mark your calendars and be sure to come out and join the festivities. Look for the information on these events elsewhere in this newsletter.

The club will be represented at the Toronto International Bike Show March 4th to the 6th. Please make a point to come out visit our booth and socialize while you are there.

The Executive has met twice this year and we are working very well together. We have "new" members who bring a lot of strengths and insights to our meetings. We will be discussing the Route Change protocol and setting this up shortly. We will also be posting our Route Archive on the web page for our members. We have also moved to a new provider for hosting

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Editors Desk

Hello everyone, well winter is still with us. The skiing has been not too bad as a cross training exercise. But I know a lot of people are itching to go riding.

It's also that time of year for membership renewals. The documents required are included with this newsletter. Please read the forms carefully. Also, a special note that the disclaimer/waiver has to be witnessed, which is a new requirement.

Toronto Awards Dinner

Date: February 26th

**Location: Montréal Bistro & Jazz Club
65 Sherbourne St. Toronto, ON M5A2P9.**

Phone: (416) 363-0179.

Cocktails at 6:30 pm

Dinner at 7:00 pm

Cost: \$40.00

Please send your ticket requests to Jim Griffin along with payment by Feb. 19th

James Griffin

8735 5th Side Road

R.R.3 Everett ON L0M 1J0

Ottawa Awards Dinner

Date: February 19th

Location: Cheshire Pub, upstairs

Dinner at 6:00 pm

Cost: whatever you order to eat and drink

Good luck to everyone.

Jim Morris

Randonneurs Ontario
 Long Distance Cycling Association
 www.randonneursontario.ca

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our web page, which will save the club some funds.

Alan Thwaits, who brought us in to the electronic age by continuing the development of our web page and mail list, has decided to step down as the List Administrator. Jim Morris has offered to fill the breach for us. Thanks Alan, for your years of hard work.

The Toronto Chapter and the Simcoe Muskoka Chapter will be holding a New Members night April 15th. The location of this event will be announced shortly.

As I sweat out the kilometres in the basement waiting for reasonable weather I have the opportunity to reflect on the club's history. It is amazing to think that two guys Mike Barry and Mike Brown who where inspired by Jock Wadley started this club to achieve their dream of completing PBP in 1983. Because the club

grew so quickly neither of them was able to find the time to actually go to PBP but they did go and complete the Raid Pyrénéen. The two Mikes idea was the seed that has grown into the club that we have today. Over 100 Brevets are scheduled over four chapters that cover everything except for Northern Ontario. We have over 100 members cycling distances that seem to be impossible to the average person yet every member is just that, average people with a passion to go further and challenge him or herself.

Finally, our club works because of the work of our members who volunteer their time and expertise. Without you there is no club. So try to find the time to organize a ride, work on a committee or help in other ways and thank those who do that for you.

I hope to see many of you at the upcoming events and out on the road.

Peter Leiss

Book Review

Geoffrey Wheatcroft -
Le Tour: A History of the Tour de
France, 1903 - 2003;
Simon and Schuster, 2003.

To be a randonneur is to be connected to grand traditions in cycling and bicycle sport. It is also to be, a little bit, in love with France. In cycling, there is no greater tradition than that of that most French institution, the Tour de France, with which randonneur cycling is connected, if not at the hip, then, perhaps, at the toe.

Henri Desgrange is our common parent, and 1903 the year both in which the Tour was first run and in which the ride that would eventually give rise to the randonneur movement, took place.

Desgrange - sadistic, abusive, arbitrary, and connected to a mean-spirited streak of French political life - placed his mark indelibly on the first years of the Tour. Making up Tour rules - often in the course of the event itself - Desgrange made riders' participation difficult and, not infrequently, influenced the final outcome of the race.

His own athletic background was in time trialing. It was perhaps this that framed his attitude to the Tour and its riders. He was interested in seeing that the rider who worked the hardest, who suffered the most, and who had the most individual talent, was the rider who was the eventual Tour winner. He resisted technological innovations, such as multiple gearing, that would give a rider an advantage not based in a rider's own abilities. At one point, he went as far as to require all riders to ride a generic bicycle to avoid any advantages a particular manufacturer might build into a bike.

More surprising from someone who founded Audax cycling, he had contempt for co-operation between riders and devised rules to suppress the advantages gained by riders working together. He applied these rules arbitrarily to promote riders he favoured or, more specifically, to disadvantage those riders he despised.

To further offset the influence of rider co-operation, he made room in the Tour in the 1920's through the mid-1930's for *touriste-routiers* - those prototypical *randonneurs* - who rode independently of any team sponsorship. These *touriste-routiers* form a shadowy presence throughout the Tours of these years. Never challenging for the lead of the overall classification - a preserve of the professional riders of the sponsored teams - the names of these riders are recorded winning a stage here, taking a difficult mountain climb there: tough men taking on the most brutal of cycling events with only the faint hope of meaningful pecuniary reward.

As influential as Desgrange was on shaping the race, the story of the Tour is very largely the story of the riders who have participated in it.

The chronicle is a procession of the most distinguished names in the history of cycling sport - Petit-Breton, Lapize, Thys, Bottecchia, Frantz, Magne, Maes, and Bobet. It is a history of great rivalries - Bartali and Coppi, Anquetil and Poulidor, Hinault and LeMond - and of great individual specialized skill, that of the climbers Bahamontes and Virenque, for instance.

The history of the Tour encompasses both great personal triumphs and, equally, the story of individual tragedies. The history incorporates the stories of Christophe whose great riding skills were undermined by ill-timed illnesses and mechanical failures, of Vietto who sacrificed a certain Tour victory to his team captain and then was denied the opportunity to secure a victory for himself by the advent of the Second World War, and of Poulidor, the best rider never to win the Tour. Tom Simpson, one of only three riders to die during the course of the event, is an essential part of the Tour's history. So, too, the Tour riders whose lives were marked by tragedy - Bottecchia murdered, probably by fascists; Coppi throwing his life away in scandal and disease, Pantani victimized by his own depression following his disgrace in the sport; and the generation of cyclists sacrificed to military service in the First World War.

More recently, the story of the Tour has been one of the dominance of single strong riders riding at the head of powerful teams - Anquetil, Merckx, Hinault, Indurain, and Armstrong. It is

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Ride Organizer Orientation

The Toronto chapter will be hosting a Ride Organizer orientation session on Thursday March 10, 2005 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. This presentation is open to all interested members, but will be especially useful for new ride organizers. We will cover the duties of the ride organizer and the associated paperwork involved. Please rsvp to anne_pokocky@hotmail.com by March 1 if you plan to attend, so that we can prepare an information package for you to have at the meeting.

Location:
Gabbys Grill House
2572 Yonge St
Toronto, On
(Between Eglinton & Lawrence)

Agenda:
6:30-7:00 - Gather, socialize and order food/drink if you like.
7:00-7:45 - Information session
7:45-8:00(ish) - Question & answer

Rocky Mountain 1200 km Odyssey

(Part Three of the Trilogy)

Day 3 and 4: The Final Push (or was it Crawl?):

Up Rogers Pass and down to Revelstoke:

Generally on these long rides, you eat before you sleep and then you get up and eat again, that way your body recuperates over the sleep and you have fuel for the day ahead. I had a second breakfast with Stephen after sleeping. It was good to chat and vent about the scary decent from the night before. It was definitely the worst leg of the route for me and it appeared the same for others.

I got my stuff ready and left after breakfast. I also lightened my load a bit, but not completely. I thought the Stephen/Jaye/Jim group had left already. So I left. I caught up to Peg and we found our way out of Golden, although some of the signs

Book Review, Cont.

an era of the event that Desgrange would have despised and that he worked to prevent. It is the genius of Geoffrey Wheatcroft's book **Le Tour**, however, that it goes beyond a description of stage victories and losses to show the extent to which the Tour has become an event embedded in, and reflective of, French society. Using the device of chapters intervening in the chronological recounting of Tour events - each entitled "Repos", the rest days during the Tour - Wheatcroft writes brief descriptions of the various regions of France and outlines the significance of each to the history of the Tour. He locates the roots of the Tour in the period of the modernization of the French nation - its transition from an agricultural society to the present-day modern economy. He captures the effect of French political history on the conduct of the Tour, particularly the consequences of the two World Wars that have marked French society so profoundly. He shows, as well, how the Tour has had the effect of binding French society together - a vehicle for French mass communications to bind a disparate nation together.

Highly recommended.

Ken Dobb

Erratum

A cycling historian has recently written that the sources of cycling history are "exiguous, inaccessible, and largely corrupt". I fear that my dependence on one such source has introduced a significant error in Part II of the history of randonneur cycling published in the previous issue of the club newsletter. Contrary to what I wrote in that article, Audax cycling does in fact have a series of rides that go beyond the original 200 kilometer brevet length. It is a series that parallels the randonneur series of 200, 300, 400, and 600 kilometer distances. In fact, there are grounds for believing that the Audax series was in place before that of the Audax Club Parisien. There were no Audax-style teams entered in

either the 1911 or the 1921 editions of Paris-Brest-Paris. It may well be that differences within the A.C.P. about how club cyclists were going to participate in the 1921 edition of P.B.P. was an issue that factored into the split in the club's membership of that year.

It is known that there was an agreement between Henri Desgrange and the president of the breakaway Union des Audax Cyclistes Parisiens to end the touriste-routiers class of riders for the P.B.P. edition of 1931 - a class of riders that Desgrange had introduced to P.B.P. in 1901. There was further agreement between the two that cyclists riding in Audax-teams would replace the independent touriste-routiers riders. It is possible that the U.A.C.P. built their brevet series first in anticipation of their participation in the 1931 edition of P.B.P., with the randonneurs of the A.C.P. emulating their initiative. This, however, is speculation on my part. It underlines the problem I have had in writing the series of articles on randonneur history. There have been no series of documentary records - club archives or newspaper articles - available to me in the writing of these articles. Nor is there any body of secondary sources in English - books and journal articles - available for someone with an interest in the subject to draw upon.

Instead, I have relied on information found in a variety of web sites. Piecing this information together has been very much like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle - trying to meld together scraps of information differing in relevance and reliability.

I think that, to a large extent, I have been successful in getting the outline of what happened right. But I am conscious that some of the information I have depended is suspect, and further, that some of what I have written is personal speculation. There is need for further refinement.

There is an emerging literature in France on cycling history and on the origins of sports journalism in that country. I hope, in the next few months, to take a look at that literature to see whether it casts any further light on the emergence of randonneur cycling.

Ken Dobb

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seemed missing. Then on Highway 1 (the Trans Canada highway) I picked up the pace a bit. I was feeling good. I was alone again. There was a lot of traffic; luckily there was a good shoulder, but not good enough for riding side by side. As I rode, behind me I heard a really bad scraping noise from one of the cars behind. It passed me. It was a car with a camping trailer, with bikes at the back which were dragging down the highway! I hoped my bike wouldn't be doing that after the finish, when I will get rides up to Edmonton. Eventually the driver found out what happened and pulled over. I had to pass this trailer on the side of the highway. Then a short time later, the Stephen/Jaye/Jim group passed me. Stephen said "hey, Trevor I know where you can get a bike mountain bike for cheap". I thought to myself, how did he know that my current mountain bike (fall/spring) bike was dieing and I needed to replace it? I was really confused by the comment. Then I finally got it. He was referring to the dragging bikes. Anyway it's always good to lighten things up on a ride.

A rider caught up to me. I thought he was doing the RM1200, but he wasn't. He was a cyclist out for a morning ride. We rode side by side for awhile and chatted. He was riding what looked like an expensive trek bike, maybe even one similar to what Lance rides. I explained to him that I could not draft him. I told him about the ride I was doing and he said he was going up Rogers pass, up to a place I didn't recognize. I hope I got him interested in Randonneuring. Things got a bit uncomfortable riding side by side,

with the heavy traffic, as I just missed a pot hole. I explained this to him and he took off ahead of me. I avoided his draft. I really enjoyed his company (his name escapes me).

After that I crossed a bridge and the climbed up pre-climb to Rogers Pass. The shoulder on the upward side was very, very small. It was about 10 to 20 cm wide. Basically just the white line! At first this bothered me, but when I realized how slow I was going, I figured if I hit a pot hole, my bike would not hit very hard due to the lack of speed. I got to a flat section and the regular shoulder had appeared. I took a quick break off the bike and as I did, Peg passed me. Then I kept climbing and climbing.

Then there was a long descent but with a regular sized shoulder. Before the climb up Rogers pass. I passed Patti and Bob as they were stopped on the side of the road. I asked if they were ok. They said no. I stopped, but they said it was just old age, so then I continued on. They were smart to take a break before the climb up Rogers Pass.

I climbed up the pass. I stopped part way up on a flattish section to take a drink of water. I then continued on and stopped just before the tunnels on the pass, to turn on my lights and to switch my glasses to clear. Once done the tunnels I switched back to sunglasses. Later I realized that that the tunnels are short enough just to take the sunglasses off instead of stopping and switching. Sometime before this switching Patti and Bob passed me. I met up with them and a bunch of other riders in the small town of Rogers Pass. By this time it was close to noon and very hot out. There was gas station there and a restaurant. There were riders at the gas station. I went to the

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restaurant and had a quick meal of pasta. I got back to the gas station and refilled my gatorade. I bought too much and gave a bottle to another rider. Then I continued on, it was practically a descent all the way to Revelstoke with some smaller climbs and another set of tunnels (this time I just put my glasses in my pocket).

On the way down to Revelstoke, there was a car pulled over on the shoulder. It was a couple volunteers from one of the previous controls. They had their hatch back open. They said "this is a secret control and have a can of coke". It was great. It was exactly what I needed as I was getting tired and needed some cold caffeine. It was great.

I got into Revelstoke and realized that I could not read the street signs. One of my contact lenses seemed to be messed up. Eventually I made it to the control.

Revelstoke, the Control to solve all problems, but no sleep:

At the control I got some pasta and phoned the local bike shop about the aerobar arm-rest. I was concerned because my bike doesn't have drop handle bars and so I didn't have method to battle the wind if it got windy into Kamloops. They didn't have any of those parts.

I asked a group of riders if I could join them. They said "you are not a consistent rider!!!" which made me feel like I just opened a PFO letter from a job interview. I defended myself and said, "I am riding well when I feel strong, and

riding like crap when I feel weak, but I am trying to ride my own ride." They agreed with that and I asked when they were leaving and they told me. Shortly after that, before I had a chance to feel that my ego got obliterated; Peg said to me "I will ride with you Trevor". I asked her what time she was leaving and she said in about 1/2 an hour or when it cools off. I said "ok I will ride with you, I just need to have a shower and do a few things."

I had a shower. Ray, the volunteer there showed me where to go. Then after the shower, I asked Ray about the aerobar part I was trying to buy. He said that he could just tape it on and he did. I said if it falls off, I guess I could just leave it. I had been worried that my pump didn't work any more (as it had been in the flooded pannier). He tested it and said it was fine. He said my tires were fine (I think he has a PSI calibrated finger). I checked my pannier and found an extra contact. I wasn't sure if it was baked from the heat so I tried it on in the bathroom, covering the sink with a piece of paper towel. One of the volunteers ensured that no-one disturbed me while I put the contact on. It worked and I could see better than before. My original contact disintegrated or fogged up. It was a night and day contact, which I was using for the first time on a long ride. It permitted me to sleep in it, but it must have not held up to sweat and sunscreen that got in my eyes as I rode in the heat. The new one seemed to work well. I could definitely read street signs. I got all my batteries ready for night riding. Ray also got me a plastic bag (on which he wrote my name and number) to leave behind some more of what I was carrying.

So I got all those things done and

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was ready in time to leave with Peg. I had no time for sleep, but at least I had some piece of mind. Peg and I talked about what to do when each of us stopped. We decided to just keep going as the other person will need to stop and we would be able to catch up. She needed to stop to put a jacket on and I passed her. I took a quick break as well. When I got back on my bike, I nearly fell over. My seat post got turned and I noticed that my seat was about 1 cm lower than it should be. I am guessing it was that way from Jasper (when my knee problems started to occur). I fixed the seat height and started off. I noticed that speed on my odometer was acting strangely. Peg passed me and went up a small hill. I pulled over and fixed this problem as well (which was good because there is an unmarked turn after Enderby). I then went after Peg. As I climbed a small hill, my knee screamed out in pain. I figured it was because I put the seat back where it belonged. I decided to stop and do some stretches. I hadn't used Jaye's Advil yet, but was seriously contemplating it. I knew that there was a Shell gas station at the next turn but I was not sure if I could make it before it closed. I figured at the next stop I would buy some extra Ibuprofen and some extra batteries. It turned out my knee settled down without the drugs, so I continued on. I found a gas station that was open, I figured if I should get extra Ibuprofen it should be now, but it took forever to buy the batteries and the Ibuprofen. The cashier was putting oil in one of the cars and there was a line up at the till. I waited patiently, but was anxious to get going, figuring that I wouldn't catch Peg. I

finally got out of the station and the cashier ran out after me, giving me my sunglasses.

I got going and only to stop to put my helmet light on and switched to clear glasses. The bugs nearly ate me alive. I kept a jacket on, but felt a bit hot.

I got to Sicamous, and knew there was a 24 hour Husky there. Peg left her lights on, so I would find her there. I bought some gatorade and some food. Peg left ahead of me. After she left, Patti and Bob showed up. I told them I didn't get any sleep. The cashier and the truck drivers talked to me for a bit. One said it took him a while to figure what we were at night, but said we were very well lit up. Another truck driver nearly hit a guy on a recumbent and was sort venting in a guilty feeling way. The cashier thought we were crazy riding on the hottest day of the year.

To Enderby

I then left to go the next bit to Enderby. I felt like I was struggling to stay awake. It was really hard at this point because I ran out of things to think about and keep me awake. I stopped a couple of times for cliff shots and kept my eye out for a vending machine. During one of my stops I looked straight up with my headlights off and I saw the Northern Lights right above me!!! It was amazing. In Golden I had dumped my camera, to save weight and because I didn't think I had time for pictures. At that moment I really wished I had it back. It reminded me of my childhood in Edmonton, where I would often see them directly above me.

I was really suffering. I found in the past that if I had someone to chase it would keep my heart rate up, but no luck

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continued

this time. Then I heard Patti behind me. I decided to do the opposite to keep myself awake. I will keep my heart rate up by not allowing the catch. It worked for awhile. Then I made a turn and was not entirely sure about it, so I waited up for Patti. I rode with Patti and Bob for a while into Enderby. I couldn't keep the pace, but kept them in my sights. During the descent down Kicking Horse Pass I noticed that if I nodded my helmet lamp that the cars would turn off their high beams. I did this even though Patti and Bob were ahead of me. I figured it would help them out as well. Patti and Bob got to Enderby a few minutes before me. As I approached the control someone in a truck asked me what the ride was about. I was feeling miserable and I didn't want to miss the control. I said, "Sorry I have to find where I am going".

At the control we got soup and bread. Peg had some sleep. I desperately needed some. There wasn't really a sleeping facility at this control, but there was a bench. The volunteers explained the unmarked turn on the road ahead. Patti, Bob, and Peg left as I tried to get some sleep for 0.5 hour. Another group arrived. I couldn't sleep as I was worried about the unmarked road and it wasn't quiet. So I got up and checked out. On the way out I grabbed an emergency coke from a vending machine.

The long (20 or so km) upward road to Salmon Arm:

I tried to catch Peg, Patti, and Bob. The chase kept me awake. There was a long hill up to the unmarked road. I

had the photograph displayed at the check point burned in my mind. I had zeroed my odometer at Enderby (the trip meter went to zero once it went over 1000 km!! So I might as well get the systematic error in calibration small). I found the turn and made it. Then a dog chased me.

Salmon Arm to Sleep or Not to Sleep?:

I got to the Salmon Arm checkpoint after a little confusion with the street names. Peg, Patti, and Bob were already there. They all had showers and were almost ready to go. I had breakfast and then had a shower, but by that time they had left. In the shower I could not decide if I should sleep. The sun was just about to come up and the day was going to be hot. If I slept for a few hours, I would have to fight the heat later in the day and the finish would be tight. I decided to ask the volunteers to wake me up in 10 minutes. I went to sleep after preparing all the stuff from my drop bag....

I awoke to a volunteer saying "Sorry Trevor, we could not wake you..." "I said how long had I been sleeping???" I was hoping it was not 3 hours or something like that. She said "it has been 25 minutes". Whew! I was relieved. They said they tried after 10 minutes and they could not wake me, then after another 10 minutes and again they could not wake me. Then after another 5 minutes it worked! I guess I needed that sleep. They said the next step would be to drag me out of there and hose me off.

I felt better after that small amount of sleep. My throat was sore, so I

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continued

got some advice about it. I dumped a lot of weight, and left. I got out on the road and it was cool outside.

The final 100 km....:

I got down on my aerobars and seemed to ride strong for the first 30 minutes or so. I had my coke with me and I figured if I got too tired I would check in a hotel on the road and ask them to wake me in an hour. I had to stop and eat cliff shots a few times. But that meant more "nature" breaks and the need to drink more water.

I went through the construction site with no problems. No work was being done and there was hardly any traffic. It was good timing again.

Once I was within about 30 km or so, I needed to get water from my third water bottle. My third water bottle was attached with a strap so it would not launch when I went over rail road tracks. I had to stop to gain access to it. When I stopped to remove the strap, there was a shadow over me. It was another cyclist; with I believe a British or Australian accent. He asked "is everything ok?" I explained about the strap and was really happy he stopped. I got ready to go and he left. He yelled something that was like "yahoo we are almost done". I also yelled something like "WAHOOO". Then he dropped me, like a sack of hammers. I then realized how I felt when I got into the Beauty Creek Control after Jasper, how I was convinced that I would not finish because of my knee problems. I was about to start weeping because of the

surge of emotion that came over me but I thought, "wait, its hot now, I can't waste the water" and in an instant, nothing left my tear ducts. Then for the rest of the way I keep myself awake and just kept chanting "it's hot... it's hot" all the way into Kamloops.

I got to the end and a bunch of people clapped. Susan Allan sat me down in a chair and filled out the paper work. She gave me my medal and Doug came by and gave me a water and beer. It was great. I was done with about 3.5 hours to spare. Then I chatted with some of the other riders and called my sister to pick me up.

"I made it."

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