

Another Successful AMTRAK Century in the Books

By Mike Lee, Events Coordinator

41st Annual Amtrak 2015 - Review

As I am starting to write this piece I'm thinking of the many ways I could review Amtrak. The organizer's view point, the rider's viewpoint or maybe the months of planning to get us to Ride Day.

The reality is all of these areas contribute to the success or failure of the event. So let me get to the meat of this.

After Lee Stebbins secures the many permits necessary, Jim Walker secures many other items, i.e. porta potties, wash stations, etc. I start the process of securing the Amtrak Team immediately following the Ride around the Bear. After securing the 120 team members I place them in locations convenient for them, and I continue doing this almost up to the day of the ride, I have the Team.

We have our pre-meeting to disperse information to all new team members and to update all returning individuals. The ride is upon us.

Check-in went smoothly with very little issues. Train cars have all been assigned to riders returning by Train. The day starts in Irvine with over-cast skies and comfortable temps. By the time we hit mid-morning the clouds are gone and the heat is on. Plus with the matching humidity levels, the riders that could have used more training are now struggling to keep the pace up. Torrey Pines found our SAGs running many people from the bottom to the top to help them reach that 80-mile-challenge Rest Stop.

Ice at rest stops was gone, even though we used more than ever. RS3 used 700# of ice. RS2 started the day with 200# and the finish in San Diego started with 500# with the supplier saying

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Thank You Bristol Farms!

For the WONDERFUL donations and help on the 2015 Amtrak Century!!

See page 4 for more pictures



OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

CALENDAR: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar

OFFICERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419328-officers

DIRECTORS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419332-directors

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-supporting-memberships

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Held the first Sunday of each month starting 11am at Carl's Jr., Newport Beach. Take the 405 Freeway to the MacArthur exit. Go south 0.8 miles and turn left on Campus. Go 0.3 miles and turn right into Carl's Jr. (at Von Karman). All Officers and Directors are expected to attend to conduct business. Other interested members may also attend.

MONTHLY BRAINSTORMING PARTIES

Held once a month, typically the last Thursday or Saturday of the month. These special "parties" are a way for OCW members to get together and "brainstorm" articles and ideas for our monthly NewsBlast and quarterly Chain Reaction while enjoying food and beverage. COME JOIN US!

If you would like to host a Brainstorming Party or supply food or beverage please contact Miguel Perea at 714.849.3519. OCW REIMBURSES UP TO \$150!

REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

All Registration for OCW events require the registrant to be logged in. Be sure to always check for discount codes. You will only see the discount code if you are a current member of OCW. The discount code if applicable will be located on a separate page in the specific event area. To confirm if you are current, check the membership data base. If you do not see the link for the membership data base, your membership has expired by at least a month or more.

The new website, registration code, and discount codes are only visible to current members. The website functions are different and I have learned new ways within this site logic, to apply new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. I am continually upgrading the website when there are better ways to protect your personal information, but have it available for our members to connect to each other.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW.

Mike Lee, Events

Editors Musings



Michelle Vester, LCI

Rediscovering A Lost Love

I've been on a bike since the age of 5 when, after my brother took off my training wheels, my parents discovered me riding like the wind several blocks from home. Hey, I had to feed the ducks at the duck pond down the street!

As a kid a bike afforded me freedom. As an adult it was an escape from everyday life.

In the 90s I discovered mountain bike riding and took a break from road. Then in 1999 I came upon OCW and shortly thereafter I purchased a Trek 5500. After that I got into double centuries and was rarely seen off my bike.

In 2010 Alan re-introduced me to mountain bikes and I put away my road bikes, until recently.

I've discovered that I can love both road and mountain, and you know what? It's a most excellent feeling!

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EVENTS 2015

Fall Metric October 24



President's Message

By Miguel Perea, President

Helloooooooo, OCW! After writing short stories on a weekly basis this seems like a daunting task, so I'll do my best to not bore you. As quickly as the weeks seem to go by, it is frightening how quickly the seasons pass. Of course, in Europe there is an actual change of seasons, unlike just the two versions of Summer, regardless of whatever the calendar tells us, we experience in Southern Cal. This year we seemed to have more heat waves than I can ever remember having; is it climate change? Well, it is something, or maybe I am just getting older and can't take the heat as well (not that I ever could). OCW's two Summer events, the Bear and Amtrak (I know the Bear is not technically in the Summer; see my earlier comment about seasons) went by with few problems, and for that I thank Kat Bier and Mike Lee for organizing all the volunteers who deserve the credit for the success of these beloved events. The Bear had a lower-than-hoped registration numbers for a host of reasons, one of which is the lack of a calendar-tiered registration. In future editions we will consider giving a break in the registration price to early signers, so that we can better plan the logistical needs for the event.

As it is now, we are always fretting about the low registration numbers until the week before the event. As for Amtrak, we plan to file a petition with the powers that be to ban heat waves on the first week of September. Well, it'd be nice if we could, wouldn't it. Unexpected weather is always part of cycling events, even in SoCal, and this year was no different. So, the demand for ice was high and the comments about the cold refreshments in Torrey Pines were varied. All in all, most riders seemed to have a great experience and the

train ride home continues to make this a unique experience. Kudos to Lee Stebbins for starting this 41 years ago, and continuing to make it possible with the help of great OCW volunteers.

My Summer was a little different this year, as most of you may have gathered from my weekly messages. Up to this year I had never done a commercial bike tour, and this year I did three! Karla loved the first one, in the Girona region of Catalonia, in NorthEast Spain. This happened to be organized by our friends from BCI, who had a last-minute cancellation and we decided to join in as an excuse to visit my family in Spain. We completely fell in love with that part of Spain, long favored by many European-based pro cyclists as their Winter training spot. Three days into the tour Karla said to me "I see more vacations like this in our future", which was music to my ears. It certainly beats the cruises and the just visiting family, types of vacations. But it does make it challenging to coordinate with other events, which is why I personally missed both OCW events, the Bear and Amtrak.

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if you need more, call us and we'll be back. That didn't happen when we called as they were an hour and a half away. By that time it would be 3:30pm or later. Needless to say we had many tired and exhausted riders.

My hat is off to all of you for surviving a very tough and brutal day on the roads, and the Amtrak team for such great attitudes in spite of tough conditions.

Check out the comments section on the website for riders' comments of the day and their experiences. And just a reminder that what happens on the train stays on the train. I'm looking forward to next year, our 42nd Annual Amtrak Century.

Ride Safe, Ride Predictable,
Mike





"It was a wonderful day, but not by accident. Attending some of the planned events days before, I was very impressed with Mike Lee "getting it right." Mike stepped up and made sure that each station was adequately manned and that the event went smoothly. Organizing an event of this magnitude is tremendously challenging. Our volunteers were great! As you read the comments from the participants, most were very thankful of our efforts and many plan to return next year". ~ Jim Brewer













Hike to Black Mountain Near Idyllwild

Larry Linn and Doris Bingo hit the trail to Black Mountain (7,772') and the Fire Lookout tower in the San Jacinto Mountains on Sunday, August 9, 2015. We drove to Banning on I-10 and turned South onto SR-243 toward Idyllwild. At mile marker 16.75 we turned east onto a dirt road and drove a short distance to the Black Mt. Trail Head.

The hiking trail to the summit was only 3.5 miles, but it was steep in several places. We sure got our exercise on this hike. Interestingly, there is a dirt road nearby that is used by many visitors to drive right up to the lookout.

When we arrived at the summit, there was a very animated and enthusiastic volunteer on duty. We spent about an hour talking with her about how fire locations are identified using the Osborne Fire Finder. The volunteer talked about how it gets rather scary up there when heavy storms come over. She

explained that because the lookout cab is mostly metal, lightning is a serious hazard. To protect the persons inside the cab, they sit on the bed during the storms. Each leg of the bed frame is isolated from the floor by heavy glass insulators. On nice days, volunteers often entertain themselves by watching the hummingbirds and many other small birds that come to the feeders that are located on the walkway around the cab.

It was cool and shady on our way up to the summit, but it was heating up on the way down. The round trip for the hike was 7.7 miles with 2,700' of gain.

Back at the car, we drove to La Casita in Idyllwild for their great Mexican food. Larry texted a note to Michelle Vester with a picture of our lunch. That got Alan in trouble because Michelle was fussing at him about us being in Idyllwild and they were stuck down in the flatlands.



Larry was desperate for ice cream, so we stopped at an ice cream shop near the center of Idyllwild for some coffee ice cream.

On our return trip, we took a short detour to Ranger Peak to look at the footings of an old lookout tower that had been removed years ago. This was the kind of day that makes hiking so much fun.







A UCI Student's Journey of Hope

By Alex Marquez

In June, 2016, Alex Marquez, a 2015 41st Annual Amtrak Century participant and student at the University of California, Irvine, will join 100 other Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity members from universities across America on a "Journey of Hope" to pave the road for a better understanding of people with disabilities. The Journey of Hope team will cycle 4,000 miles, from the West Coast to Washington D.C, to raise funds for and awareness of the challenges faced by the disabled and to dispel any misconceptions of their abilities.

Along the way, Alex and the team will make dozens of presentations across the nation, bringing The Ability Experience to the public. The Ability Experience was founded by Pi Kappa Phi in 1977 to foster future leadership while serving people with disabilities. Since its inception, members have raised more than \$15 million. On this journey alone, the team hopes to raise over \$500,000. Alex himself is committed to raising a minimum of \$5,500 on behalf of The Ability Experience and the disabled, and so far has raised \$700.

After cycling an average of 75 miles each day, the team will take part in many special events with those for whom they are riding. Alex said, "Outreach will take the form of "friendship visits." We will be creating lasting memories through dances, educational puppet shows, wheelchair basketball, and a variety of other activities with local groups that support people with disabilities." The team also will present grants to many of these organizations that they will visit along the way.

Says Alex, "For me, the Journey of Hope is about giving back and learning more about myself and others than I'd ever imagined. It is my hope that you will help me with my journey by making a tax-deductible donation to The Ability Experience. Thank you very much for your support."

Anyone can still "Go the Extra Mile" by making a tax-deductible donation to The Ability Experience on behalf of Alex Marquez. For questions contact him at 323-695-0091 or alexem@uci.edu.

To support, please visit:

<http://support.abilityexperience.org/goto/AlexMarquez>



Tahquitz Peak Hike - September 2015

By Doris Bingo

Michelle Vester and Larry Linn planned this hike to Tahquitz Peak especially for Ye Yu who ended up not coming, but Juergen Fisher did join us instead which was a nice surprise. Larry Linn and I went to Idyllwild early under the guise of obtaining a permit at the ranger station, but Larry really wanted to go to the Town Baker before the hike. Larry had a humongous, warm caramel pecan sticky bun and coffee to prepare for the hike. We met up with Michelle, Alan Vester and Juergen at Humber Park and hiked the Devils Slide Trail to Saddle Junction then on to Tahquitz Peak. The lookout tower at the summit was open and the talkative ranger showed Larry how to use the Osborne Fire Finder. From the summit, we had clear views of Jean Peak, Marion Mt. and the Desert Divide. We headed down after a short break and all Larry could talk about was lunch at La Casita. Nearly back at the trailhead, we could hear voices of rock climbers on Tahquitz Rock, but were unable to spot any of the climbers up there. It was sunny but cool during the hike, so the weather was perfect. We had a delicious lunch at La Casita in Idyllwild after a wonderful hike with great friends.





Goat Hill

By Alan Vester, Mountain Bike Dude

Random Tips & Tricks

I've started to ride my road bike lately just for the fun of it. Mountain biking is my thing, but occasionally it's good to hit the paved back roads and spin out some serious mileage. I'm all about the comfort, not speed when I ride. I noticed a few months ago when I started riding my road bike, it just did not feel right even though I have owned it since 2009. The saddle, shoes and pedals had a foreign feel to them.

I thought to myself, why not match my road bike with some of the same components I have on my mountain bikes. So, both my road and mountain bikes share similar components. They both have Shimano XTR pedals, Selle Anatomica saddles and I use the

Sidi Epic MTB shoes. It may seem odd that I do this, but I can tell you this, it works. I jump on my

road bike and the shoes and pedals feel exactly the same as when I'm on the mountain bike. I really like

the Sidi Enduro shoes because they are very comfortable and you can walk in them like a normal person when you dismount the bike.

Having different-style saddles never really worked well for me. I like the same feel when I get on a bike, regardless if it is mountain or road. The setup I'm describing makes for a lot less adjusting and pain when I ride.



Must-have tools. Some of my favorite tools are the ones I'm always using. The Park CM-5.2 Cyclone Chain Scrubber Kit. You can purchase just the chain scrubber or buy the kit which comes with cleaning solvent and a brush. I just buy the scrubber without the kit and purchase

Zep Heavy Duty

Citrus Cleaner in the gallon jug from Home Depot for the solvent. This really gets the chain clean. Don't use it every time you service the drivetrain. I use it about once every three months to perform a thorough cleaning of the chain.



Topeak D-Torq Wrench is the torque wrench I use on all my bikes. It is digital and comes with bits to cover most bolts and fasteners on your bike. You must use a digital torque wrench when working on a bike that is made of composite (carbon fiber) materials. Getting the correct torque on a bolt is critical so you do not crack the frame.



Work stand. I use it so much I'm actually wearing it out. There are several on the market, but the only issue I have with the portable ones is, they are not very stable when the bike is mounted on them. If you can afford it, go with the Park PRS 3.2.1 Single arm professional work stand. It's the

one most bike shops use.



The other tools I use are the normal Allen wrenches, pedal wrenches, chain whip, etc. This may seem like overkill, but I have 8 bicycles hanging in my garage, and every one of them always needs something. Mountain bikes are a lot of fun, but they are very high maintenance.

Digital tire pressure gauge. Tire pressure is critical on both road and mountain bike tires, and a good digital gauge will only set you back \$20.00.

Well, the fall and winter seasons will be here soon, so time to get back to the dirt.

See you on the trails! Alan



President's Message: Continued from page 3

The second bike tour was the highlight of a lifetime: A six-day, Coast-to-Coast, Atlantic to Mediterranean, ride of 739 Km (460 miles), over the intimidating Pyrennees mountain range of Tour de France fame. The ride went over revered climbs like the Tourmalet, the Aubisque, the Aspin, and my own personal torment, the Marie Blanque. A total of 19 climbs, with nearly 40 thousand feet of climbing. Five intrepid OCW members (John Renowden, Steve Loughran, Randy Kiefer, Stuart Gaston, and me as the chronicler), also known as the Pyrennean Five, started the ride on Sep 6, with a mix of excitement and a lot of anxiety. I don't think any of us got any sleep the night before we started, we were so hyped. The first day was the longest, at 140 km, with just a couple of minor climbs, at least by the standards of the following days. Nevertheless, we got to Montory, our destination for the night, tired and a little giddy, but still worried about what was yet to come, and how we would fare. We all slept better that night, after appropriate drinking and celebrations of completing the first day.

The second day we rode 25 km before we started

the climb to the Col Du Marie Blanque, which was supposed to be the warm-up for the main climb of the day, the Col D' Aubisque. The Marie Blanque is a regular favorite of the Tour de France and often described as an impossibly steep climb, starting at a deceptively easy 4%, slowly increasing the gradient, until at 13% you are convinced you have a flat. Being the Clydesdale of the group, getting to the top of this climb was a double high, in sense of achievement and in anxiety producing. This was only the second day of riding, and I knew there was much more to come. Well, you will have to come to the November General Meeting to hear more and see some of the photos and videos from this fantastic trip. The two attached images are the profile from the third day, over the Tourmalet, Aspin and Peyresourde, and one of the Pyrennean Five, celebrating our completion of the tour in Cerbere, in front of the Mediterranean.

Have a great Autumn, best wishes for a safe riding season, and let's hope for lots of rain this Winter.

Cheers! Miguel

COME RIDE WITH US

www.ocwheelmen.org



SATURDAY RIDE LIKE A PRO

Please check out the opportunity to ride the Saturday short ride with one of our friendly League Certified Instructors.

We are fortunate that we have a dedicated group of LCIs that volunteer to head this ride every Saturday.

This ride is for those who would like to have a bit of personalized training, like learning to be a bit more comfortable riding on the road. Our LCIs cover many topics, and you can ask all the questions you want.

The Saturday Ride Like a Pro is a slow “no drop” ride to sharpen your skills. So come on out, learn to ride safer and have some fun!

For more information go to: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419732-ride-like-a-pro-rides



Fall Metric – Sylvan Park, Redlands - October 24, 2015

Registration will open right after Amtrak. Watch your email for the notice. 150 riders Max. OCW Members only. What, you're not a member? Get your free website account and then join the greatest Bike Club in Orange County. Be sure to note the member discount code in the Fall Metric section of the website, otherwise you'll pay twice.

Event Help

Every event that OCW produces requires a volunteer group to enable it to happen. From Pre-Planning to day of and the cleanup the following day. These events and the resulting revenue allows OCW to provide all the parties, meetings, and food that we plan during the year. All operating within our budget constraints. When the call goes out for help, if you can, please help us to continue our reputation of a great experience to other members and cyclists. I hear from outside riders all the time of what a great event we put on. **THANK YOU TO ALL THAT HELP!**

As many of you know I no longer reside in Orange County and have moved to Arrowbear Lake, my family's vacation home. We have been here full time, coming up on 3 years. I am beginning to be very involved with the local businesses up here since joining the Running Springs Area Chamber of Commerce. That plus working this past winter at Snow Valley Ski Resort which I plan to be on the staff again this year. This has left me little time to ride, but recently I am finding more time to ride on the hill. So the point to this is that OCW needs to find a replacement for me as I will be working with Big Bear Cycling on their big event of "Tour de Big Bear" and maybe the "Amgen" tour if it comes here in 2016. The future is looking to be busier than ever with my photography business and support of all the community events on the hill. I will be continuing to assist on the website when things may get crazy, but know that I do truly miss riding with the club in Orange County. I know that I leave the club in very good hands with a group dedicated to the future.

Website

I am so very happy with all the members that are managing the website. If you have any issue with personal data, we are glad to help. Contact Tony Perez for most issues and if he can't resolve it I am only an email away.

Ride Safe, Ride Predictable,

Mike Lee, Events-Webmaster
events@ocwwheelmen.org



Links Bike Tours

Just in case you missed it, we lead bicycle tours in Provence. This will be our 13th summer in France. We limit the group size to 6 plus us. Wouldn't a Tour of Provence make a great Birthday or Anniversary gift? How about gathering some friends and joining us this summer? We have 1 tour set from Sept 5 – 14 with space available. We can set up a tour in July, August or later in Sept if these dates don't work. The cost of \$3,995 includes all accommodations, all meals, premium bicycle rentals, outstanding cycling routes, souvenir jerseys, and outstanding leaders. Check out our website

www.linksbiketours.com and then email us at: yourmissinglink@me.com

Come join us. Sincerely, Link and Kathy





Fabulous Fish Tacos



Taco-seasoned fish topped with mild creamy coleslaw and tomatoes served in a corn tortilla is the best of south-western and seafood.

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds fish fillets
- 1 (1.25-ounce) package low sodium taco seasoning mix
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 cups coleslaw (shredded cabbage)
- 1/3 cup nonfat sour cream
- 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
- 1 bunch green onion, chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped green chilies
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 8 (6-inch) corn tortillas

Instructions

1. In bowl or plastic bag, coat fish with taco seasoning and lime juice.
 2. In large nonstick skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray, sauté fish over medium heat 5–7 minutes, until flaky and done.
 3. In bowl, combine coleslaw, sour cream, mayonnaise, green onion, green chilies, season to taste; set aside.
 4. Warm tortillas according to package directions or heat in microwave 30 seconds. Fill each tortilla with fish and coleslaw mixture.
- Repeat with remaining tortillas.

A Southern California Bike Tour *By Kevin Ansel*

On Sunday, August 23rd, as many enjoyed the annual OCW picnic, Kevin and Ximena Ansel pedaled south on the first day of a six-day bike tour. Fully loaded with panniers, tent, sleeping bags, and other gear needed for a tour we set off from our home for San Elijo State Beach in Cardiff by the Sea. We planned to stay in the Bike n' Hike which cost \$10 each.

After a nice day riding along the coast we arrived at the camp site. When we checked in we met Bob from Tucson. Bob was completing his trip from Canada to Mexico. We enjoyed the afternoon sharing bicycle travel stories and comparing gear. Bob would say "Do you have one of these?" We would say "Yes. Do you have one of these?" We were both surprised at how similar our touring equipment was.

The next day we headed south until we got to Del Mar. We made a left turn and headed east toward our destination for the day, Escondido. We had a large amount of climbing as we traveled through the rural areas of San Diego. We climbed up and over the towns of Del Sur and Rancho Bernardo. We had one final climb to Dixon Lake where our camp site was for the evening. The climb was a 10% grade. We were not moving very fast with our 70 pounds of gear. Our slow pace turned out to be a good thing. About 30

yards in front of us, a huge palm tree suddenly cracked and fell on the road. Can you say "Timber"? We were lucky we were not riding any faster or we might have been crushed.



The site at the lake was quiet and beautiful. We enjoyed a nice evening cooking dinner on our backpacking stove and ate while enjoying the view. That night we could hear the coyotes howling not far from our site. We were truly back to nature. Day three we were up early and on the road as we planned to ride 57 miles to Doheny State Beach.

The route through Escondido followed a well-traveled highway so we were glad we got an early start. We rode through the towns of Vista and San Marcos on our way to the San Luis Rey Bike Trail which ends in Oceanside. It was a dark and cloudy morning and threatened rain. And sure enough we got

some. Along the trail we stopped and put on our rain covers to keep our panniers dry. Luckily the rain passed quickly.

We had a nice tailwind and flew through Camp Pendleton and San Onofre. We relaxed at a coffee shop in San Clemente and talked to some of the locals. We checked into the Bike n' Hike at Doheny and set up camp. Again we shared our site. We met Paul who just completed riding cross country

from Florida to San Diego and was now heading to Los Angeles. We also met Naomi who was from England riding solo from Canada to Mexico. And we met Joel. He had ridden from San Francisco to Mexico and was on his way home to Los Angeles. It was his first tour and you could see it in his eyes. He was hooked and could not wait for his next trip.





In the morning of day six we stopped at a diner for breakfast before making the 30-mile ride home. We ended up riding 240 miles for our tour. The longest day was 65 miles. Since we rode from the

house it was a car-free vacation. And camping makes a trip like this very inexpensive. Fall is a great time to bicycle tour in Southern California. Don't be afraid to look in your own back yard for a little adventurous travel.

Day four was a short day but it was very hot. Our destination was O'Neill Park out in Trabuco Canyon. We checked in early and set up camp under some large oak trees. After we hand-washed our bike clothes we made the mile-long walk over to the Rose Canyon Cantina. We decided to treat ourselves to a nice dinner. It was well worth the walk. It was a warm night so we slept without the fly on the tent. It was nice to lay there at night and watch the full moon travel across the summer sky.



We headed out early again as the temperature was supposed to be 99 degrees. Our destination today would be Featherly Park in Yorba Linda. We had rented a small cabin there for the night. We elected not to ride Santiago Canyon because of the heat. Instead we headed down Irvine Boulevard to Jam-boree. We made our way over to Santa Ana Canyon to where it dead ends at Gypsum Canyon. Featherly Park is right there at the 91 freeway. We checked into the cabin and wasted no time hitting the swimming pool. It was a refreshing end to a hot but satisfying ride.



Idaho Hot Springs Mountain Bike Route Sampler

By Lee and Cathy Painter

In July, OCW members Cathy and Lee Painter completed a section of the Adventure Cycling Association's Idaho Hot Springs Mountain Bike Route.

The full route is 500 miles of dirt roads and secondary paved roads mostly in National Forests. Besides fantastic mountain scenery, the big draw is that the route passes 41 soakable hot springs. We only had 6 days available for our tour, so we planned a 130-mile loop.

The Adventure Cycling map was a big help in planning the trip. In addition to the detailed map, it has turn-by-turn directions, elevation profiles and a listing of what facilities are available in the towns on the route. We also downloaded their GPS files. We read several online journals written by others who had ridden the route. And we used Google Maps (using the cycling option) to find the elevation gain and loss for each section.

We toyed with the idea of travelling light and doing this as a credit card tour, staying in motels and lodges, and eating in restaurants. But the distances were too great, so we decided to take camping gear. And since we haven't learned to do minimalist camping, that meant towing our BoB trailers.

We looked at lots of photos of

the route, and the road surfaces looked pretty smooth. We read about people who'd done the whole route on cyclocross bikes.

And since the loop we planned was $\frac{3}{4}$ on pavement, we decided to ride our touring bikes - Soma Juice rigid 29ers. The only change was to take off the 700 x 32 tires and put on 29 x 2.3 knobbies.

The night before the tour, we stayed in the Cascade Lake Inn. One of the challenges when you drive to the start of a tour is where to park. When we checked in, we asked for their suggestions. They said we could park in front of the inn, very kind of them. This felt like a pretty safe place, since the owners live on the property.

The next morning we had breakfast at the coffee shop across the street; we were probably the only customers the waitress didn't know. Then it was time to get the bikes and BoBs out of the car and head out.

The first day we went through the only cities on the tour, going from Cascade (population 900) to Donnelly (population 150), Roseberry (population 0) and finally McCall (population 2900).

Leaving Cascade, there was road construction with only a single lane, with flaggers letting



alternating northbound/southbound groups of cars through every fifteen minutes. We were concerned about how we'd get through - in similar situations, we've had to unhitch the trailers and throw bike and trailer into the pilot car, or look for a pickup with an empty bed and hitch a ride. But this time we got lucky, we arrived just as the northbound group left, the flagger told us to follow the group, and they held the southbound group until we were through.

As we headed north, we took a shortcut from the published route, staying on the paved main highway rather than taking a secondary dirt road. Shorter distance and faster speeds on pavement made us confident we could make it to the motel we'd reserved in McCall. We wondered how much traffic there'd be on the shortcut; turns

out the construction worked in our favor. With the flaggers sending vehicles in groups, we'd have a big gaggle of cars pass every fifteen minutes, then have the road to ourselves. Trying to make the tour as easy as possible, we bought lunch at a sandwich shop in the small town of Donnelly, then rode to the ghost town of Roseberry to eat. We'd hoped to buy a drink and look at antiques at the Roseberry General Store and Museum, but the owner had retired and arranged to have the contents auctioned. Leaving Roseberry, we encountered the worst traffic of the tour. We had to wait five minutes for a cowboy, his cattle dog, and a dozen cattle to pass through. We enjoyed watching the dog scurry from one side of the group to the other, keeping them all together.

At this point we were back on the published route with little traffic. We checked into our motel in the early afternoon, unloaded the trailers and headed to the grocery store. We bought

lunch and dinner for the next day: baguette, meat and cheese for lunch, sausage and zucchini for dinner. The sausage went into the freezer in the mini-fridge, it would keep our groceries cool on the next day's ride. After a shower, we walked to a local brewery and had salmon tacos for dinner.

The next morning we started with oatmeal and coffee at a local cafe. The second day of riding was the one we expected to test our capabilities. The plan was to go from McCall to the Ponderosa Campground, the first established campground on our route. It was 30 miles mostly on dirt roads with 2000' of elevation gain and 3000' of descent. If we could make it to the campground, we'd have running water, rest rooms and a table. If not, we were riding

through national forest, so we could camp on any flat spot, though we'd have to filter water and improvise for toilets.

The ride profile was ten miles of flat to easy climb, ten miles of fairly hard

climb, and then a ten-mile descent. The long climb was mostly in granny gear, with some



hike-a-bike as we faded near the summit. We had a late lunch at the summit, eating only one-third of our sandwiches since we were so tired. The road on the descent to the campground was mostly washboard, making us wonder about all the smooth road we'd seen in the pictures, and why we'd left the full-suspension bikes at home. Fortunately, there was very little traffic, so we could wander all over the road looking for a smoother line, without much success. We would stop every ten minutes or so to rest our hands. We arrived at the campground in the late afternoon, and immediately had a second lunch of the rest of our sandwiches. We set up camp, took a water bottle shower, and fixed dinner, enjoying a meal that almost looked normal, with fresh veggies including tomatoes we'd brought from home.

The third day looked to be in our comfort zone, going to the



Poverty Flat Campground, 23 miles with 1100' elevation gain. And it was reassuring to know there were established campgrounds every 5 or 10 miles along the way. The day started with some more wash-board dirt road, then switched to pavement. We stopped at Teapot Hot Spring, perhaps 50 feet off the road on the bank of the Salmon River. There were rocks stacked to make a rustic hot tub with hot spring water mixing with river water. Looked inviting, but the water was way too hot to do more than stick my toes in briefly. Maybe if the water in the river had been higher... Further down the road, we stopped to look at 16 Mile Hot Spring. It was full of people soaking, so we continued down the road. During the afternoon, the sky began to cloud over, making us wonder if we'd get a thunderstorm before we got to camp. The rain held off, and we arrived at Poverty Flat Campground in mid-afternoon. After

setting up our tent, we filled our water bottles, pumping water from a well. The rain started as we were about to start cooking dinner. We sat in our tent reading our books for a half hour, and when the rain

stopped, cooked our dinner in a hurry as we listened to thunder. Luckily this was all the rain we got during the trip. After dinner, we visited with the couple in the next campsite; having seen two bikes on their rack we figured we would have stories to share.

Day four figured to be an easy day, 17 miles with 1400' elevation gain, going to the North Shore Lodge on Warm Lake. A leisurely start, and an early arrival at the lodge. Along the way, lots of wildflowers, but also miles and miles of dead

trees from a fire in 2008. We thought about stopping at New Penny Hot Springs, but we weren't comfortable leaving the bikes right next to the road and hiking a quarter mile to the springs. Next time we'll bring a stronger lock and cable. When we ar-



rived at the lodge, we were happy to hear they had one cabin available. We hadn't made a reservation since we weren't sure how many days it might take to get there (there were plenty of places to camp if the lodge had been full). The cabin hadn't been cleaned, so we had a lazy afternoon sitting in lounge chairs on the lakeshore, reading, reviewing maps and watching people in and on canoes, houseboats, standup paddleboards and such. We marveled at how uncrowded and relaxed it was compared to anywhere in Southern California. The cabin was a log cabin built in the thirties, definitely quaint but comfortable. For dinner, we had a homemade freeze-dried dinner (that wasn't sealed well enough to keep for the next trip), supplemented with a can of chicken from the tiny convenience store at the lodge.

The last day started with French toast in the lodge coffee shop. The 26-mile route started with a 1600' climb, followed by a 2200' descent all the way back to Cascade. Got there in time to pack up the bikes and trailers,



grab a late lunch and start the long drive home.

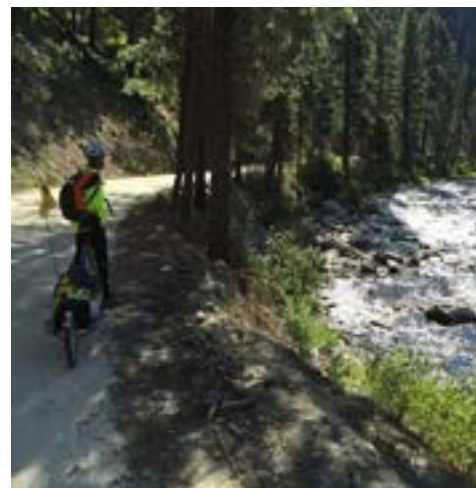
Our feelings about the trip? We're anxious to try a longer portion of it in the future. The mountains were prettier than we expected, sections looked like they belonged in a national park. We enjoyed seeing a couple of foxes, a marten (like a squirrel on steroids), and more deer and chipmunks than we could count. We were lucky with the weather, with pleasant temperatures and only half an hour of rain. We were happy to have no mechanical or navigation problems, that we didn't need the spare day we'd built into the itinerary. Next time we'll manage to do more hot springs.

Finally, a few thoughts about planning and equipment:

- Adventure Cycling recommends a minimum group size of three - if one person gets hurt, the second person can stay with the injured person while the third goes for help. But even in the most remote parts of the loop, we'd see one or two vehicles an hour, so we felt we could always get help.
- We planned to do the trip in five days, but allowed ourselves six days. We just didn't know how far we'd be able to ride in a day with a mountain bike and a trailer. Turns out we finished the itinerary as planned, and probably could have done it in one less day.
- In the National Forest, you can camp pretty much anywhere you can find a flat space big enough for your tent. But it turned out that most flat spaces already had developed campgrounds. Finding a good spot for dispersed camping would have been hard.
- Looking at the map, we could see the route was almost always along a creek or river. Being from Southern California, we didn't assume they would have water. Called the local Forest Service office asking if we could find water, the ranger laughed and said we shouldn't

have any problem. As it turned out, we were able to get all the water we needed from the spigots at established campgrounds.

- Since we were camping on our own, we brought some extra things. In case our camp stove failed, we took an Esbit solid-fuel pocket stove. In case our water filter clogged, we brought water purification tablets. We brought one extra freeze-dried dinner, and as usual, we finished the tour with two or three pounds of leftover trail snacks.





Public Relations

Paris Brest Paris 2015

How can something this difficult be this much fun?

You just keep going until you arrive. And if you do it right, you enjoy almost every mile of it. - Jan Heine

By Greg and Stacy Kline, LCIs

Dix... Neuf... Huit...

The pre-ride chatter died away and the sound of two hundred riders clicking shoes into pedals could be heard.

Sept... Six...

The enormous crowds of onlookers that cheered the riders the day before were gone, only a handful of volunteers and family members were there to watch the final group start the Paris-Brest-Paris 2015 roll out.

Cinq... Catre...

There were no pre-ride instructions for the 84-hour group. No music or speeches blaring over the loudspeakers.

Troi... Deux... Un...

And then we were slowly rolling through the starting gates, riding through the pre-dawn darkness with two hundred other riders in high-viz vests, the last wave of the almost 6,000 riders that would ride Paris-Brest-Paris in 2015. As we rounded the first bend, I realized that we had done what we had set out to accomplish.

We were here.

Km 0 (Mile 0) Hour 0

After four years of planning and training we had made it to PBP. It would be great to finish, preferably within the time limit, but that was secondary to just being able to take part in this incredible event. Our goal was just to ride PBP, and here we were riding. Now that we had accomplished our goal, there was nothing left to do but keep pedaling and see how the ride turned out.

Neither Stacy nor I like brevets that start at night, finding that we get little sleep the day before the ride despite attempts to nap. We tend to get sleepy around 2:00 in the morning whether we start in the morning or in the evening, so we prefer to start early in the morning and get a full day's run first. That meant we'd have to start with the 84-hour group, the only group that started in the morning, and we would have 6 fewer hours to finish PBP than the majority of the riders who had 90.

Would that turn out to be a mistake?



Conservative pacing, cheerful optimism, and appreciative awareness can be important ingredients in Paris-Brest-Paris.

- Kim Freitas

This would not be our first 1200K brevet, so the distance wasn't something that would be untested, but we would need to ride considerably faster than we did before.

Our fitness levels were very good, having just completed the difficult “100 Cols Tocht”, 2500 miles and 201 French Cols, over 200,000 feet of climbing in 30 days, a ride that featured the great climbs of the Tour de France - Ventoux, Galibier, Tourmalet, etc. We then spent 10 days in Paris to rest, recover and enjoy the city with just 14 days between the two big rides. While not 100% certain, we thought we had a pretty good chance of successfully finishing PBP within the time limit.

Another big plus of selecting the 84-hour start is we would avoid the dreaded “bulge” - the huge mass of riders that would overwhelm the controls and would mean standing in line for everything from getting our brevet cards stamped, to eating, getting a cot to sleep in, or even using the rest-room. On the other hand there was a chance that we’d miss out on experiencing the almost inconceivable enormity of the event.



Check-in was a breeze as there were no lines and we had plenty of time to chat with the volunteers. They must have been exhausted after helping thousands of riders register, many of whom spoke no French at all. Despite all this the volunteers were cheerful and encouraging.

Since we started towards the back of the pack, and rode at a moderate pace, we soon found our-

selves near the back of group Z, and apart from a handful of slower riders, or those who had stopped in the first few miles with mechanical problems or flats, there were almost 6,000 riders in front of us. Nowhere to go but up!

Our moderate pace left us riding alone with just a few riders to be seen ahead and a few behind. Not too different from a brevet in California really, but quite different from what we had expected from the accounts of PBP we had heard from other riders.

After several years of carrying, but not eating food between controls I've found that just eating at controls or rest stops worked just fine for me. Stacy had only had a couple “emergency” cookies in her handlebar bag so after a few hours of riding we were getting hungry and stopped at a boulangerie-pâtisserie and cafe for a quick snack and cup of coffee. We began passing other riders who were either taking longer breaks at the roadside cafes than we were or were beginning to slow after the excitement of the start began to fade.

Km 136 (Mile 85) Hour 6

Although it was not a control on the outbound leg of PBP, we stopped for lunch in Mortagne-au-Perche, a beautiful little town and birthplace of writer/philosopher Alain (Émile Chartier) who said:

“In short, the important thing is to get started. No matter how; then there will be time to ask yourself where you are going.”- Alain (Émile Chartier)



Well, Alain we had already started in Paris and since the question was raised I suppose we were going to Loudeac where we planned to sleep for a few hours. The big picture was to ride to Brest and back to Paris of course, but I've found that keeping day-size chunks of the ride in my head was more manageable than thinking about the whole 1200k ride. I remember reading [Ron Himschoot's advice to treat riding PBP like eating an elephant](#) - one bite at a time.

At Mortagne we could see evidence of the huge number of riders who had come this way. An enormous parking area for bikes was there, but it was mostly empty when we arrived. There was no wait for food or assistance, and the volunteers were cheerful and relaxed, and we enjoyed having time to talk with them. The stop was decorated with humorous drawings by the local randonneuring club, the Randonneurs du Perche, who were volunteering at the rest stop.



If you look at the first photo you can see the volunteers at the snack area set up in the parking lot - bike parking area. They had croissants and sandwiches and also coffee and beer on tap.

At PBP there was beer at every stop.

It was available both on tap in the bar area set up outside and also in bottles in the restaurant. They also had bottles of wine.

The Germans and English tended to go for the beer. The French usually opted for wine with their meals.

The Americans were mostly horrified by the idea of drinking alcohol on a brevet and stuck to their powdered electrolyte sports drinks. We had fun trying everything and we skipped the sports drinks opting for more tasty options.

Volunteers directed us out of the stop and back onto the road towards Brest. Eventually we met up with San Francisco randonneur Larry Sokolsky, which surprised us since he is a very strong rider. It turned out that he had broken a crank and had spent quite a bit of time getting it repaired. A local had driven Larry to several bike shops to track down a replacement, but without success. Eventually, he drove Larry back to his place and gave him a mountain bike crank that while not perfect, would work. They got it installed and Larry was able to continue his ride.

It was a pleasure to ride with Larry the rest of the day and late into the evening. We separated just before Loudeac when our pace started to slow and he wanted to press on to the control. Stacy and I had a hotel booked and we planned to sleep a few hours in Loudeac. Our drop bag is bright yellow and it was easy to spot in the huge pile of bags. After retrieving the drop bag we made our way to the hotel for showers and a few hours of sleep. We decided to stay in Loudeac until the control closed to get as much rest as possible, then ride to Brest and return to Loudeac for the second night's sleep.

The second morning was bright and sunny, much nicer than the overcast of the first morning. Stacy and I were once again near the back of the field since we had stayed at Loudeac as long as possible. The control was not crowded, and we didn't see huge numbers of randonneurs until we neared the long gradual climb of Roc Trevezel and saw the bulk of the 90-hour riders returning from Brest. We could now see for the first time the enormity of the ride. There was an endless line of riders as far as the eye could see, in both directions. As we rode along, we entertained ourselves by looking

out to those we knew.

As we neared the summit, the line of riders still showed no signs of ending. When we hit the downhill portion, instead of hammering down the other side we took it easy and continued to look for friends as we coasted.



Still the line of riders continued, all the way down the hill and to the bridge leading into Brest before it began to taper off. Most of those riders started 12 hours before we did, but now they were only a few hours ahead. Hopefully we could catch up with them before we reached Paris, it would be good to ride with some of our rando friends.

The Brest control was nearly deserted and almost closed by the time we reached it, but we made it in under 36 hours, Stacy's fastest 600K ever and in her words, not by choice. The 84-hour start is especially difficult because the outbound route only allows for 36 hours to reach Brest. We ran into Don "Brown Bear" Bennet in Brest. Don's a strong rider we got to ride with on the California Gold Rush Randonnee 1200K in 2013 and on last year's 3CR. Don was also riding with the 84-hour group. He wasn't quite ready to leave when we were, so we headed out with the intention of reaching Loudeac again before sleeping. It didn't quite work out that way, since we got sleepy when we reached Carhaix. Rather than press on while drowsy, we rented cots in the dormitory and got

some much-needed rest.

Unfortunately the Carhaix control, which had a great selection of food on the outbound route, now had nothing left to eat. Nada. Zilch. I guess that's one thing to keep in mind when choosing the 84-hour start. No problem, we'd get food at the next control. While we were napping the control volunteers rounded up a pot of soup that they served the riders when they awoke. That was unexpected, but very welcome. Merci!

We got back to Loudeac later than we had planned, and headed back to the hotel once more for another shower and some more sleep. It was morning when we got up to continue and mentally at least it felt like starting fresh. We were closing out the controls to get as much rest as possible and so far we felt great. There was only 450 km to go and we had all day today and until tomorrow afternoon to get there.

Eventually we caught up with an 84-hour group going our pace that had some familiar faces in it. Bruno, a German rider we had ridden with briefly the first day. Rene Dodge, new to randonneuring but riding as fresh as if she was doing a Saturday morning club ride. Robert Sexton, a very strong rider of the sort I admire most. Strong enough to have finished much faster, he chose instead to embrace one of the central tenets of randonneuring - camaraderie - and worked to keep the group together and riding well. Robert was doing the majority of the pulling. A rider from India was in our group as well as Michael Sokolsky, Larry's brother. We had hoped to eventually meet up with Larry again on the second day, but found out later that he had DNF'd at Loudeac. Bummer.

The group was well matched and the miles flew past as we chatted. Eventually we got to the control at the town of Fougères, famous for its castle. As we rolled into the control we spotted a bar with a barbeque set up in front with some sausages on the grill. They looked great, so we decided as a group to get our brevet cards stamped and return here for a snack.

The spicy sausages were a local specialty a "gal-

lete saucisse”, served wrapped in a crepe. A couple of those and a cold beer were the perfect afternoon snack on a long ride. The waiter had asked what we’d like in English and when I answered in French he apologized and said he hadn’t realized I was French. Poor guy, he must have been really tired from cooking to be misled by my limited French.

The lunch stop was judged to be a complete success and we rolled out again feeling refreshed. The other riders wanted to stop at a grocery store and get some supplies, but Stacy and I decided to keep riding at an easy pace and let them catch up later. We’ve found that momentum can work for or against you, and what worked for us was to keep moving as long as we felt good. We planned to ride as far as we could until we got sleepy and then get some sleep at the next control.



One of our favorite parts of PBP was the support and encouragement of the locals in the small villages we passed through. There were decorations and hand-written signs of encouragement. There were people standing on the side of the road cheering and calling out encouragement to the riders.

Kids would line up with their palms out for a high-five as the riders rolled past. People would set up tables in front of their house and offer snacks and drinks to the riders.

Sometimes the support was even more elaborate as in the town of Tanniere where a rest stop was erected with tarps and chairs where they served homemade crepes and coffee. We had to stop. It was great to take a break from the saddle and chat with the townspeople who had worked so hard to help the riders. We gave them “San Francisco Randonneur” pins as tokens of our thanks and waited for our group to catch up with us so that we could share this amazing stop with them.

Eventually the group caught back up to us and once again the miles drifted by as we chatted. In the distance I could see a rider I thought I recognized. Turned out to be Clyde Butt, another SFR rider that we had ridden with on Gold Rush. As we got nearer we could see that Clyde was in pain. It turned out that he had crashed on the first day and was having a hard time. He rode with us for a while, then dropped back and let us ride on ahead without him.

That evening we rode into Villaines (km 1000) where the town made the riders feel like Tour-de-France professionals. There were barriers set up on the sides of the roads with locals who cheered the riders as they rode up. There were inflatable arches to ride under and an announcer on a microphone who narrated the approach and did interviews with the riders. In the control, after you ordered your food the local kids would carry your tray for you and escort you to the gymnasium which had been converted into a dining area. If you ever want to feel like a celebrity, just ride PBP and stop in Villaines.

Once again we booked a nap and got a couple more hours of sleep. Neither of us had any trouble sleeping at the controls and next time we probably won’t bother with a hotel. Now we only had a little more than 200K to ride. We started seeing more and more riders who were having trouble staying awake. The sides of the roads were littered with randos wrapped in space blankets taking naps. Several riders had Shermer’s neck and were no longer able to hold their heads up and look where they were going.

Still we were cheered as we rode through each

village. The French love an underdog and since we were at the tail end of the riders we were perhaps cheered even more enthusiastically than those at the front of the ride. It never failed to lift our spirits and it's something we'll never forget. The roads in the villages were narrow and several times a car would ride up behind us but be unable to pass us safely. They would slowly follow us all the way through town and then when they reached a safe spot, all of the passengers would cheer out the windows as they passed.

It's a bunch of folks who're staffing a roadside table at 3am for our benefit! I stop, though I don't need anything, I'm just choked up with gratitude and wonder. These people probably have to go to work in a few hours, but here they are handing out free refreshments to us!

All along the route, the children giving water or cookies, the families brewing coffee in the middle of the night, and the crowds applauding and shouting "Bravo!" as we passed were unbelievable.

- Adrian Hands

So far our strategy of sleeping when we got drowsy and closing out the controls to get enough rest was working great. We also had the benefit of being familiar with the layout of the controls since this was our second time through them and could get through them more efficiently. We kept plugging along and were happy to realize that we were both feeling great. The food at the controls was good and there was plenty of selection. Sleeping at the controls turned out to be no problem. Everything was flowing along nicely. We'd even had a slight tailwind almost all the way to Brest, which had reversed only in the last few hours and now continued to give us a gentle tailwind back towards Paris. Even the weather was great, unlike other editions of PBP that had days of rain. We had seen evidence of a few showers as we rode, but so far we had missed them all. Would our luck hold?

Nope. On the last evening it started to drizzle. Maybe it would stop. It didn't, it started to rain. Maybe it would stop. Nope, it started to pour. We stopped under an awning at a small market that was open in the middle of the night to serve randonneurs. They had hot coffee which was very welcome and we put our rain jackets on. As we continued we

saw riders still sleeping on the sides of the road, oblivious to the hard rain.



As we rode through the night I found myself getting hungry. Where would I find something to eat in the middle of the night in the middle of nowhere? On PBP this was never a problem. In the next small town I stopped at a small table where a handful of locals were offering riders homemade cake and coffee. The cake was fantastic, sort of a cheesecake with fresh plums baked into it. As I thanked the locals and gave them pins I was once again reminded of what an incredible event PBP is and why riders come back again and again. How can something this difficult be this much fun?

The rain had petered out after a few hours and we were only damp instead of soaked when we arrived at Dreux the next morning.

The food, which had been good at all of the controls, was amazing at Dreux. Whoever they got to cater the control did a spectacular job and since we weren't in a rush we lingered and enjoyed it fully. We shared a table with a randonneur from China who fortunately spoke very good English so we were able to communicate. He told us that China had sent over 50 riders to PBP this time, and will be hosting its first 1200K brevet next year.

Eventually we decided to press on, and since we

only had about 90km to ride the question of whether we would finish in time was replaced by the certainty that we would, so we took our time and enjoyed talking with the volunteers on the way out of the control.

After riding for a while we caught up with Jack Holmgren, another San Francisco Randonneur and a delight to ride with. He had stopped several times to render assistance to other riders and would finish slightly outside of the 90-hour limit. Fortunately the rules allow a time bonus for helping riders in distress and Jack's ride would still qualify.

As we rode through the flat farmland before the

final hills in the forests of Rambouillet I got my first and only flat of the ride. I sent Stacy on ahead who had smelled the barn and wanted to have a sub-82-hour finish. I swapped out the punctured tube for a spare, then rode quickly to catch up again. Since there was no need to conserve energy with the end so near I pushed hard to see how fast I could ride. Instead of being weaker, I found as I had on other long rides that I felt stronger at the end than at the beginning. When I caught Stacy she was feeling good too so we upped the pace and fairly flew through the forest and over the last rollers back to the Velodrome.

What a way to finish PBP!



*I Wanna No Holes In My Armadillo **

By D. Michael Bush

Roadway debris is an overlooked deterrent to bicycle commuting. After getting flats even with my Gator and Armadillo tires, I decided to get serious. I taped a magnet to my shoe.

This is not just a bicycle problem, but affects all those on the road. There aren't easy solutions. Those who are careless don't have any sense of responsibility and it's virtually impossible to catch them. Then you have the street sweepers who, a local bike mechanic says, "sweep weakly."

I hope readers have some other ideas. In the meantime, I'm going hunting.

D. Michael Bush



This is what I picked up during a five-mile stretch one morning.

It does take some extra time getting to work when I have to safely circle around and pick up a nail, screw, drill bit or razorblade. I do feel good that the path I travel will be a little bit better for those who follow.

On days when altruism is running low, it's time to enter the game mode. By clicking my shoe off the pedal, I imagine taking the safety off a gun. I spot my prey...then fire while rolling. The more I visually sweep the road ahead, the better I get at avoiding nails to my own tires.

There are lessons to be learned about metallurgy such as some bolts aren't magnetic, like this (below) stainless steel trophy along with this other catch of the day.



2015 Summer Riding in Italy

By Elvin Padilla

Tuscany

Four days in Rome without a bike. Airbnb place was nice but probably a mistake; being alone in an apartment in a big city where nobody knows you can be a very isolated experience. I had just left 6 grueling years of living and working in inner-city politics and I was looking to get healthy again, and that meant getting back to the bike. This was my first visit to magnificent Rome, a great privilege to be there, but I was itching to get on a bike outside of the city. So I left two days early for an unplanned ride in Tuscany. Settled in Salvapiano Holiday Ranch, where I found a last-minute vacancy. Very nice staff, BMC bike also very nice. Rode for three days and immediately came to appreciate why cycling in Tuscany is famous. Quite simply -Tuscany is beautiful. On the first day I rode to Suvereto, a charming medieval hill town. I stopped for an espresso and panini before heading back down. The second day I rode through Montioni, a beautiful national park. On the third day I rode to the Tirreno Sea (which I mistakenly thought was the Mediterranean!). I stopped and enjoyed watching an ancient scene of a lone fisherman with his net.

Lake Como

The following day I take the train to Milan to visit my sister. After our visit she drives me to Como where I take the ferry to Bellagio. I stay at Locanda della Maria, a tiny hotel in San Giovanni, a hamlet in Bellagio. I rented a bike from IL Perlo Panorama, where I wanted to stay but was sold out. Great people at both places. Carlo, IL Perlo's superb manager, picked me up to get the bike. Lake Como is serious hills terrain! On day one I rode San Giovanni to Lecco to Varenna then caught the ferry back to Bellagio. Spectacular scenery around the lake. Narrow roads. Surreal tunnel riding. On the second day I do the famous Ghisallo climb up to the also famous Sanctuary of the Madonna del Ghisallo.

A serious climb – I made sure not to stop out of fear I would not be able to start up the climb again. Visited the lovely chapel and the Ghisallo Cycling Museum next to it. The last day's ride was a triangle of San Giovanni to Onno to Asso to Nesso to Bellagio. Lots of climbing but not as steep as the Ghisallo where I was fighting to keep my breath while standing on the smallest gear. Stunning panoramas everywhere. Swiss architecture in the tiny tucked-away towns. Stopped at a ski lodge perched above the notorious Muro di Surmano for an espresso and wondrous view.

A very solitary journey so far, but the bike keeps me company and joins me in each day's discovery. I have dinner one night at San Giovanni's seafood restaurant (maybe San Giovanni's only restaurant?) where I have the pasta with fish ragu. The fish was caught that morning in Lake Como, which has to be one of the most beautiful places on earth.

I take the ferry back to Como and have lunch with my sister and her girlfriend. Awesome rabbit bolognese pasta! Back in Milan I do laundry and prepare for the next stage of my journey: a full week Bike Experience at Hotel Dory in Riccione.

Riccione Hotel Dory Bike Experience

I arrive by train in Riccione, a resort town on the Adriatic Coast. Hotel Dory staff picks me up at the station. I settle in my suite: very nice place. Rider orientation later in the evening followed by dinner. Alessandro comes out of the office to meet me; he was my contact and big help reserving my room, bike and registering for 2 races: the Squali GranFondo and the Nove Colli. I later cancel on the Nove Colli – which means 9 hills – after a friend invites my girlfriend and I to gather in La Morra, Piedmont, to meet with some Italian framebuilder named Dario Pegoretti.

Hotel Dory orientation, delivered by Alessandro and Stefano, the hotel manager. About thirty riders assembled in the lobby. Stefano asks for everyone's county of origin, and we hear from Germany, Canada, France, Australia, Israel, Luxemburg, Ireland, and England.

I'm the only one from the U.S! (Later I met two other Hotel Dory veterans from the U.S. who did not attend the orientation.) It was agreed that English would be the official language of the week – I'm in luck! It's immediately clear this crew is extremely well-organized and that it's all about the bike experience. (I was later told that Dory is the hotel that started the Bicycle Hotel industry in Italy.)

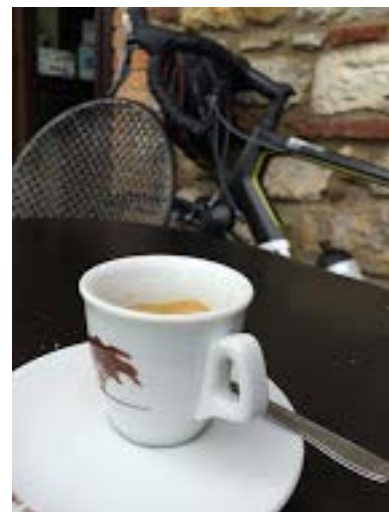
After orientation Alessandro takes me to pick up my bike in the storage room downstairs, a high-end bike collection like I've never seen. I pick up my Scott bike with Ultegra, very nice. Alessandro gives me my race packet for tomorrow's first annual Squali GranFondo. In the packet: a "Guest" sign, a hat, bike chain lubricant and a bottle of wine (this being Italy).



Morning of the Squali. We meet outside the hotel early and ride together to Cattolica where the start is. Over 1000 riders! Lots of clubs present. All top-shelf carbon bikes except one titanium I saw. Lots of noise, public announcer on the PA, clicking of shoes in pedals and we're underway. A bit tricky making my way across the group as I move from the far left to the far right. I'm in my first bicycle race in Italy (or anywhere for that matter, I'd only done biathlons in a previous life many years and many pounds ago)! Soon after the start the signage gets thin and uncertain.



Further complicating matters there are several other rides going on at the same time. I see one Squali group mistakenly turn off with one of the other groups. The multiple groups add to the confusion. I keep watch for the red arrows signaling the longer tour I signed up for. At one roundabout the arrows break off and I follow the wrong one as I begin a long climb in the wrong direction. I look behind me and see other riders, though two would turn back after realizing we were off course.



I came upon a patch of gravel and there's a car approaching rapidly on my left. No room to maneuver, I'm in the gravel and my wheels slide out from under me. I go over slow enough to catch my fall, I dust off and continue the climb. Only one rider following me now, an older gent – late 60s, early 70s I'd guess – but strong and experienced. A Scotsman, lost like me. We ask an event guide where the riders are and he says 10 minutes ahead. Not too bad off course after all, except he meant the front riders! The Scotsman and I had unwittingly taken a massive shortcut and were now ahead of the race leaders. Given how big the shortcut was I couldn't believe the lead riders were only 10 minutes away. As the Scotsman and I watched them zoom by on a climb he pointed out they were all on the big chainring. A different breed of cyclists.



Later the Scotsman and I rejoin the course which winds up a beautiful panoramic road with great vistas of the Adriatic Sea. We stop at the summit where there are a few cafes. There are cyclists everywhere. My new friend buys me an espresso. After crossing the finish I say goodbye and take off in search of the correct route from the starting point in Cattolica. I make the correct turn at the roundabout but later get lost again at a different point. At this point I decide to forget the course and just explore. I come across a small town where everyone is getting out of church; lots of very well-dressed people congregating. I decide to do the panoramic ride again to take pictures. I summit at a different medieval town. On the way back down I find myself on a treacherous and very steep road – really rough. I stumble into a Catholic sanctuary, whose members look at me with puzzled amusement. Statues of saints line both sides of the road as I climb as fast as I can

back up to find a different road down to Riccione.

Another bad, steep road! I worry about a flat as my bike and I are both taking a real beating. Then it happens, I hear and feel a rush of air leaving my rear tire as I'm on the steep descent. No one and nothing around except endless fields and donkeys. I find a safe spot off to the side of the road and hope my one spare and pump will work while wondering how I'll get back if they don't. I feel a hint of desperation, but then great relief when the spare inflates. Great relief. I keep off the saddle and push the pace almost the entire 21 Km back to the hotel, where I arrive with a feeling of enormous gratitude.

First day in Riccione Wrap-Up: Lost twice. One fall. One flat. Many new equestrian friends.

The next day I'm up early for breakfast and the day's ride, confident I can now handle anything. That day and the rest of the Dory week were fantastic. I made friends and shared meals with fellow riders, climbed San Marino, saw the Giro d'Italia fly by, swam in the Adriatic Sea, joined a wine and balsamic vinegar tasting, perfected handwashing my kit in the kitchen sink, ate lots of good food (including one pasta served in a chicken broth that was excellent), drank lots of good wine, and talked bikes with Dino, a super cool advanced rider who had his own name on the top tube of his custom bike, wore white bibs, changed into fresh clothes during lunch breaks, and has his own separate parking space in the bike storage. Dino insisted I put Campagnolo on the custom Pegoretti my girlfriend ordered for my 50th birthday present. "Cam



pagnolo straight away” he said. In fact, across the board all the Italians I asked said “Campy!”

One American friend I made – Jeffrey - was kind to invite me to his table as I was eating alone the first few meals. Jeffrey encouraged me to keep a cycling journal. When I asked him “who will read it?” he responded “You will.” I figured he was right.

Other memorable Riccione moments: riding fast in a group back to the hotel after a huge BBQ lunch. Riding up cobblestones, then down, through a tiny medieval town. Seeing a second rider with only one leg hopping to his bike after refilling his water bottle. (the first one-legged rider I saw was near Bellagio as he and a fellow rider zoomed past me as we rode around the Lake Como.) And a rain storm, which as a Californian I had forgotten what is like. Not to miss my big chance to see, feel, smell rain again, I walked to the Adriatic Sea, stepped out onto the cooling sand, looked out over the sea and sky, and thought: “Thank you.”



Postscript

La Morra, Italy. Dinner with Pegoretti enthusiasts from around the world. Dario's at the head table welcoming everyone. My girlfriend elbows me and says “There's another Italian framebuilder here.” That's nice, I thought. Later comes another elbow in the ribs: “His name is ... De Rosa?” Good thing it's almost impossible to choke on pasta.



Dario Pegoretti, renowned as one of the greatest framebuilders in the world, kindly invited his friend Dorian De Rosa, another famous framebuilder, to show everyone his new steel frame model for his new bicycle company: BIXXIS. Keep a lookout: the first Dorian De Rosa Prima bike in the USA will soon be on the roads here in Orange County!





A Unique Cycling Charity Organization

There are many worthwhile charitable sports fundraising events held every year, including charity bike rides or triathlons. While cycling is a highly satisfying and rewarding endeavor for participants, there are some challenges which these events face. Some willing charity participants may not have an adequate bike to use and can't afford to buy one for themselves. This is often a problem for those that are new to cycling or who have been absent from the sport for many years. Not everyone owns a bike, and only a small percentage of those that do have one that is suitable for an endurance ride such as a metric or full century.



Los Angeles-based Bicycle Angels was created in December 2009 in order to help fill this need by President and Founder Dave Gold. Dave, an experienced eight-year veteran of endurance cycling and a former TNT Cycle Team Coach, has competed in over 35 organized centuries so he understands the needs of cyclists. Bicycle Angels is an IRS-registered charity which loans bicycles to individuals who want to participate in fundraising bike ride or triathlon events. The bikes are loaned for free to participants for training and to complete their chosen charity event, thus removing a major hurdle to charity fundraising.

To date, bicycle loans have been made to cyclists participating in fundraising rides held by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Multiple Sclerosis Society, AIDS Lifecycle, Diabetes Society, Arthritis Foundation, Crohn's and Colitis Foundation and other charities. So long as the event has a minimum mandatory fundraising amount and the charity meets Bicycle Angels' standards, a bike can be borrowed for nearly any charity ride or triathlon.

The results of this concept have been very impressive. The bike loan recipients have raised over \$450,000 for charities since Bicycle Angels' start. Over one hundred thousand dollars has been raised in each of the past three years; for 2014, Bicycle Angels helped raise over \$160,000. As the size of Bicycle Angels' efforts grow, these numbers will continue to increase.

Over the past five years Bicycle Angels has loaned bikes to over 150 event fundraising participants. In addition to helping cyclists raise money for worthy charities, the bike loans also get people engaged in the sport of cycling. Loanees also gain improved fitness, social interaction and sense of accomplishment which comes from endurance cycling and fundraising. All of this has been accomplished on a fairly small operating budget of less than \$5000/year. In fact, the return of funds raised by participants on Bicycle Angel's 2013 operating budget was over 3400%.

Bicycle Angels also has a small riding group called "Team Bicycle Angels." Formed in 2013, the group has participated in two centuries and three fundraising rides so far. The group also helps provide volunteers for the charity's activities. Currently, the group is training for the 2015 Solvang Century. Bicycle Angels' strategic plan is to help an even larger number of cyclists and charities by becoming a national charity themselves. To that end, they plan to open two additional offices by the end of 2016, and by the end of 2017, hope to have helped raise over \$1 million. Based off of the scope and broad range of this charitable initiative and low operational costs, these figures seem viable so long as the charity receives the support it needs to grow. Bicycle Angels really needs financial support to make this happen, however.

As an IRS-registered non-profit company all donations are tax deductible. Bicycle Angels accepts donations in the form of funding, and donation of new and old bicycles, bike parts and accessories. Many of the bikes in Bicycle Angels' fleet were donated by a cyclist when they purchased a new bike and wanted to see their old bike remain useful.

Those who wish to learn more about donating or the availability of a bike loan may visit the Bicycle Angels website at www.bicycleangels.com. Also, please "like" Bicycle Angels' FaceBook page to help them increase visibility.



Board Meeting Minutes

The Board Meeting Minutes can be viewed in detail at www.ocwheelmen.org



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