

The "RAMBLER"
Newsletter for the
Clinton River Riders Bicycle Club

January 2004



Awards Banquet—A Delicious Success

We did it again. Another successful club year, capped off by a fantastic Awards Banquet. Big Thank You's go to Eric Noyes and Mimi Gendreau for taking the reins of this year's banquet with heavy assistance from Bill and Julie Windhorst, Darlene Phillips and Doris Mulligan. The white bearded fat man in the red suit just happened to be passing by again and passed out presents for the kids. Throughout the event emcee John Tarantino called out prize winners who received presents donated by many of the members and Metro Passes donated by the club. The sit down dinner included an array of holiday foods and delicious desserts. Ride Director, Bruce Freeberger tallied the numbers and handed out awards to ride leaders, mileage mavens, and hard working volunteers. Doris Mulligan and I had the delight of roasting some of our more deserving members with anecdotes of their past year behaviors. And lastly Debbie and Steve Angst put on another tremendous slide show highlighting the year's club events, both on and off the bike. In all it was a grand time, a good way to end the year and look forward to the next.

Letter from the Interim Editor

Al Barton's "Road Rage" article last month generated a couple responses which I've included in this month's newsletter.

Also some of you who have been around awhile will remember that great oracle of years back called Dr. Bike. After some exhaustive searching I think I may have located him and convinced him to once again provide answers to some of your more perplexing questions about life with a bicycle. Feel free to email me with your questions and I'll forward them on to the good doctor for his comments and jaded advice.

Finally, our club is fortunate to have a diverse range of activities for our members to get involved with including running, swimming, ice skating, hiking, wallyball, skiing, movies, dinners, bowling. "Bowling??" Sure why not. Just call a few members you met on a recent bike ride or at the monthly meeting and see if anyone is interested in a bowling outing. Pretty soon word gets out and more members want to join in on the fun. All it takes is someone to get the ball rolling (pun intended), and that's called volunteering. After all, that's just how the club got started many years ago. A few friends got together and decided to do a bike ride. And the rest as they say,... is CRR history.

Gary Haelewyn—Interim Editor

Bill & Annette Smith—Publishers

January 2004						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 FINANCE MEETING	20	21	22	23	24 X/C Skiing Hanson Hills
25	26	27	28	29 RED HAT MEETING	30	31

HOTLINE

586-819-0222

(Press 1 for latest info)

WEEKLY EVENTS**CHANGES**

Bruce Freeburger

586-775-8838 Bruce@BIKEsonTV.com

Mondays 1st of Month Club Meeting, 7:00-9:00PM, Clinton Macomb Public Library, 40900 Romeo Plank (From Prestige, take Garfield (N) to Clinton River Road (E) to Romeo Plank (N). Bldg is on right at (SE) corner Romeo Plank and Canal. 1st floor on right

Tuesdays OPEN

Wednesdays OPEN

Thursdays OPEN

Fridays OPEN

Saturdays 9:00AM Meet Jane Bernard at Schultz Funeral Home (Toepher & Gratiot) for a 14-16mph 25-30 mile ride to Windmill Pointe. Breakfast follows.

9:00 AM Meet TJ Hill at the Stoney Creek Boat Launch for mountain biking to unknown destinations at the pace of the slowest rider for a distance to be determined.

Sundays 9:00AM Meet TJ Hill once again only this time at the West Branch Ski trails for more of the same Mountain biking.

10:00AM Join Jane Bernard and the Wolverines at the Cadieux Café (Cadieux bet E Warren and Mack) for rides to Belle Isle or Mt Clemens at varying speeds. Distance and speed varies between 25 and 40.

BWR T-shirt Designs will be voted on at the February Meeting!!!

February 2004						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 CLUB MEETING	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29						

SPECIAL EVENTS

January 19 - Finance Meeting 6:00PM— Open to any club member. John and Marilyn Tarantino's home located at 6041 Malzahn, Shelby Twp, MI (586-677-0482). It will be about a two hour meeting.

January 24th—X/C Skiing—Call Bruce Freeburger for details on this trip to Hanson Hills in Grayling. Dinner follows somewhere on the way home.

January 29th—Red Hat Meeting— 6:00PM: informal meeting at Diane Baker's house. No need to wear a red hat, just something purple. Bring a small dessert. Diane will show the Red Hatters how to tie all those scarves that are in their drawers in unique ways to make them fun to wear and fashionable. Please join us even if you have never attended an event before. Call Diane at 586-739-0261.

February 2nd MEETING Agenda—2004 BWR T-Shirt designs will be voted. New officers will also be voted. You must be a member to vote. Membership dues will be accepted before the meeting starts.

March 21 Southeast Mich Bike Feast 3:00PM: sponsored this year by the Slow Spokes Bicycle Club. It will be held at St. Germain Church in St. Clair Shores. Bob Lasko (586-939-2788) has tickets with all the particulars on the tickets. The tickets cost \$5 and will include entrance, main dishes of homemade roasted chicken and stuffed cabbage. There will be a fashion show put on by the Prestige Bicycle Store and bicycle items available. They also would like each club to have a representative do a five minute talk about their bike club including history, funny story, favorite rides, etc. Proceeds from the feast will go to the ARC Cycling program that combines the talent of a sighted Captain with an un-sighted Stoker. Bob George will be leading a optional bike ride before the feast along the shoreline, of course weather permitting

CLUB OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Call Bill Duemling (586-468-2947) or Diane Baker (586-739-0261) to nominate a new club officer. Officers will be elected at the February Meeting.

Clinton River Riders Bicycle Club

Officers

President: John Tarantino 586-677-0482
redtandom@aol.com

Ride Director: Bruce Freeburger 586-775-8838
bruce@BIKESonTV.com

Treasurer: Marilyn Tarantino 586-677-0482
redtandom@aol.com

Secretary: T.J.Hill 586-293-0162
tjbiker@juno.com

Editor: Gary Haelewyn 586-286-5094
bluecyclist@yahoo.com

Publisher: Bill & Annette Smith 248-652-2278
bsmith02@comcast.net

Sunshine: Julie Windhorst 586-939-6073
redtandem@todaylink.com

Legislative Liaison: Mike Sproul

FOR SALE

Trek 8000 Mtn Bike 45cm asking \$150
Jarvinen 200cm X/C skis and boots size
42- asking \$25. Call Gary Haelewyn
(586-286-5094)

Interesting Website

From Jane Benard:
www.americanbridge.com/taters.htm

2004 Blue Water Ramble Chairs:

**BWR Chair Person: Still
Open—(Diane Baker 586-739-
0261 will co-chair)**

Committee Chairs

- **Food:** Tom and Sue Graham
- **SAG:** John Tarantino
- **Parking:** Jerry Pavlat
- **Cleanup:** Bill Stimpson
- **Publicity:** Bob Crowley
- **Routes:** Open
- **Ferries:** Open
- **Registration:** Bills Baker & Duemling

Q: What do Kevlar (used in bike tires), fire escapes, windshield wipers and infant carriers have in common? Dee Whitmore knows. Call her for the answer.

RECIPIES

Doug MacDermaid would like any recipies for the upcoming *CRR Recipe Book* by the end of January. Email your favorites to Doug at lbrickne@wideopenwest.com or mail them to 39818 Edgemont Drive Sterling Heights, MI 48310.

GEOCACHING ANYONE?

Remember what I said about Bowling on the first page? Well there's a couple in the club who bought a GPS device and started Geocaching on Sunday mornings. They told a few friends who joined them and they told a few friends. Now in it's third year Diane and Bill Baker join others for breakfast at a local restaurant at 8:30. Then they're off to a park for hiking and/or searching for buried treasure. Can you identify where the treasure behind Bill (photo at right) is located? Call Diane (586-739-0261) Saturday afternoons to find out where the next Sunday event will take place.



Ahhhh the Retired Life—Here's a section for those lucky members no longer in the rat race.

From TJ Hill:

Bikers and others, Today (Tuesdays and Thursdays) I met Dave Komendera at Onyx at 10:30, Art Meerhaeghe also showed up. Dave and I did two periods of 30 minutes in a paceline changing the lead on five minute increments. After the first period we did five minutes of stand up and BS skating. After the second period we did more BSing, backward skate practice and watch the figure skaters do their jump turns and spins. We got on the ice at 10:38 and left at 12:20. Outside there was rain and so we were not motivated to ride. After getting home I went to Harbor Freight and Salvage located on Groesbeck just south of 15 mile east side of the street. I bought a head lamp for \$2.99 and a lot of other bargains. The head lamp fits over your head and has a swivel mount. This is not only good for bikers who ride at night but for anyone that has ever been on hands and knees looking for a lost something while holding a flashlight in one hand. The retail on the headlamp was \$5.99 and I thought that was a bargain.

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS!!!

Bday	First Name	Last Name
02/02	Al	Burczycki
02/03	Mary	Miller
02/06	Barb	Berthelsen
02/08	Rod	Klann
02/08	Mary	Klann
02/13	Sally	Palaian
02/16	Juergen	Hortig
02/17	Diane	Baker
02/17	Cindy	Rosiek
02/18	Annette	Smith
02/24	Dick	Klein
02/26	Steve	Padgett
02/27	Doug	MacDermaid
02/28	Ralph	Schmidt

5

From: Bhbike@aol.com
Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 15:39:00 EST
Subject: Andrea Karge Halligan English Channel Swim 9/3/03
To: Bluecyclist@yahoo.com
By William F. Halligan

Our first glimpse of France across the Channel was from our B&B's bathroom window. You could stoop over, or sit rather unglamorously on the throne and see the lights of Calais over the roof-tops of Dover. I was the helper, the water bearer, the domestique, the guy who'd paddled kayak support and carried gallons of Gatorade and Accelerade for all the long swims Andrea Karge had done to ready herself for this trip. So this is only the helper's point of view. It was her swim.

Andrea had been a collegiate swimmer, an All American at UCLA. She qualified for the Olympic trials a couple of times. And then, burned out, she stayed out of the water for 17 years. Back into swimming at the University of California at San Diego's Masters program, she'd won her age group at the Waikiki rough water a few times and in 2001 she swam the 21 mile Catalina Channel in 8 hours 33 minutes. At age 47, with yet another year of distance training behind her, she was ready for the English Channel.

We were staying at the Hubert House, a place steeped in Channel swimming history. The Australian, Desmond Renford, for a time "King of the Channel," who did 19 successful crossings in 19 tries, stayed here. So did James "Doc" Counsilman, the great Indiana coach who swam the Channel in 1979 at age 58. Des and Doc even shared a few full English breakfasts--fried tomatoes, fried eggs on top of fried bread, sausages that taste like hot-dogs and something that vaguely resembles hash browns--downstairs in this building years ago.

In those days Des Renford swore by Reg Brickell as the boat captain he'd most like to have guide him across the Big Ditch as he called it. Reg, he claimed, could sniff the air and tell you that although the seas were calm and the Union Jack might be hanging limply from the staff on Dover Castle that it was all going to change in a few hours and it that would not be a good night to set off for France from Shakespeare Beach. And he'd inevitably be right.

It was Reg who piloted Penny Dean's record breaking 7 hr. 40 min. swim in 1979.

Fast forward twenty-four years. Andrea and I have met Reg Brickell the younger. His reputation is that he's a gruff old fisherman, a man of very few words, but a man who won't steer you wrong. If his nose says it'll be a bad night or morning for a crossing he'll pass up a pay-day rather than take you out for your Channel attempt. And we've heard he can size a swimmer up and take the course that will generate the best result. He guided Chad Hundebly to his Channel record of 7 hrs 17 min. in 1994.

There's disagreement these days about who's the best man to guide Channel swimmers, even disagreement about which Channel organization to follow. But after asking a lot of questions of swimmers who'd been here before, Brickell seemed our best choice.

We meet him at Jetty's Pub, right on the harbor in Folkestone, and the guy has a personality that seems contrary to the scouting report. He's got an easy smile and sports a gold anchor earring on his left earlobe. You suspect that here's a guy who never met a stranger. He buys Andrea and me a couple of pints of Guinness and wants to know a little about her swimming, her training, her stroke count, her speed. There've been some bad nights lately, he says. Some failed swims, though not on his watch. Because of the European heat wave in the summer of 2003, water temperature isn't an issue--it's close to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. But wind, waves and tidal currents still raise havoc. Andrea is one of several swimmers scheduled to go on the next neap tide, but what did she think of going early, taking a Spring tide if one night the weather looked especially good? It would be a good idea to catch any break we could. Fine with us, we tell him.

"Well, then call me at home every night at 7:30. I'll tell you if it's a go." We hang out in Dover. The travel books say that Dover is "less than charming," so I expect a gritty On the Waterfront kind of place. But it has its own kind of charm. In fact, I think I prefer it to the highly caffeinated, Starbucks-on-the-corner, 130 steps a minute pace of London. Swimmers gather in three places in Dover:

On the pebbled beach of the harbor in the morning where they do their swims and talk about where they're from and where they've been. Alison Streeter, Queen of the Channel with 41 crossings, will be there, and her mom, puffing cigarettes and sitting in a lawn chair on the rocky beach holding court. And then, late mornings or mid-day at Chaplins (even though Dickens Corner, just next door, has the best coffee in Dover). Then, at night, not a pub over draught but a messy little Internet cafe called Cafe en Route 66. That's where the swimmers' stories are told and the plans shared. And who's out there on the tide tonight? Did so-and-so make it today?

We see Dover Castle and walk the White Cliffs. I think of Mathew Arnold and the famous poem. I look across to France. It looks much closer than Point Vincente does from Catalina. I have the fleeting thought that this Channel is perhaps overly-hyped; that maybe it's even less a challenge than Catalina. I have the thought standing there looking out but know better than to say it out loud. As of 1992 there had been more than 10,000 documented attempts and around 400 successful crossings. Eleven years later, the total number of successful crossings stands closer to 600. But there must be something out there to make this a very special strait. The two great land-masses funneling tides that can run 18 feet must make this a difficult and even dangerous place.

Monday night we're having dinner at Collin's Boat yard and Andrea phones Reg from the bar. She's back to the table in less than two minutes. Not tonight, she tells us. It's calm now but it'll be a rough one later, according to Reg. She orders a beer.

The next day we hear that a good swimmer we've met, Marcus Diaz from the Dominican Republic, has made a try in the night but abandoned when he encountered 30 knot winds and 6 foot waves in the middle of the Channel.

Reg knew. Why didn't the captain who took Marcus out?

Tuesday night it's dinner at the Arlington--by the way one of 3 really good restaurants in Dover (the others are Light of India and La Scala). Andrea mentions to the waitress that she's in Dover to swim the Channel. With a perfect dead-pan face the waitress says, "There are boats for that, you know." She brings Andrea a cordless phone so she can check in with Reg again. Her conversation with Reg is brief. It'll be a fine night. She'll be swimming on the morning's outgoing tide, at 4:30 am.

Our friend David Clark, who swam the Channel in 1988 and has crewed for many attempts, is in England on a family matter and he drives down to the Hubert House for the night. I've purchased a long collapsible pole and David helps rig a coat hanger to the end of it to suspend Andrea's feedings. And Andrea's brother, Franz Szymanski, also a past collegiate swimmer and Olympic trials qualifier, has flown to England from Washington, DC to do some pace swimming. We turn in, but Andrea doesn't sleep.

I've been in a kayak beside Andrea for long swims almost every week since February. Her long swims have ranged from a relatively tame 6 miles, all the way up to 17 miles a couple of weeks before her flight to England. Kayaks aren't allowed to support Channel swimmers so I'll be on board Reg's boat, the Viking Princess, mixing drinks (Accelarade and Gatorade), rigging the feedings, keeping track of stroke counts and speed. Cheerleading.

In many ways, this is just another long swim. It is rougher; the chop on the outgoing tide is beyond anything she faced in La Jolla Cove, or off Coronado. Though, frankly, the only real waves we encounter are wakes from the ferries and high speed seacats that ply these waters. And while my Timex G.P.S. says she's making over 4 mph, it's up the coast of England on the tide, not straight for France. While this is her hardest long swim of the year, she's certainly not out of her league here. It seems almost routine, another one of Andrea's weekly long swims.

I'm susceptible to sea-sickness, but a 25 mg Bonine tablet makes me nearly immune. I wish I could say the same for Andrea's brother, Franz. He's taken his Bonine, but he's still miserable. At 3 hrs. 40 minutes into the swim, he puts on a wetsuit and gets in for an hour. When he clambers back aboard he's sicker than ever. Apparently wearing a wetsuit in heavy chop is not the ticket. He says some very unkind and unprintable things about the craziness of the swimmer and of everyone involved in supporting her. He heads for the opposite side of the boat and is very colorfully sick over the side then goes below. Nearly four hours pass before we see him again.

Andrea hits the slack tide, and she's slowed by an opposing current. In her long training swims we've worked out an number of hand signs, one of which signals her to put in a five minute sprint. I have a mental debate with myself; should I give her that signal now, or wait? Will five or ten hard minutes now save her an hour later, or simply tire her so much as to put the swim in jeopardy? I decide against it, and even now, after the swim, don't know if it was the correct move or not.

But Andrea swims like a metronome. Except for the first half hour when she swam an amped up adrenaline-fed pace, her stroke count never falls below 63 and never rises above 64 strokes per minute. There are other swimmers in the water. La Jolla Cove's own Becky Jackman started about 20 minutes earlier than Andrea and a couple of hours in we catch up to her. There are also two teams of relay swimmers. Andrea passes them. At 8 hours, she's within three miles of Cap Gris-Nez. Franz has reappeared from below decks and reports he's ready to do some pace swimming again. I figure Andrea has about an hour left. "If you get in now, you might finish with her. But why don't you wait a little. Maybe half an hour. Then I'm sure you'll be able to go in with her when she finishes."

He waits. At about 8 ½ hours into her swim, he jumps over the side. An hour later Franz climbs back aboard and Andrea isn't done. It's now beyond the time she'd hoped to finish. I see that you can't underestimate this Channel. I've heard a few tales of swimmers struggling just off the French coast, some as near as 400 yards off shore, only to fail to bridge that final distance. The tide sweeps Andrea west of Cap Gris-Nez, then threatens to fling her east of it again. Reg and David Clark confer and amazingly, over the engines and her own churning stroke she hears them. "What's going on?" she shouts from the water, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong," David tells her. "You've got less than a mile to go and you're doing fine. Just go hard." "Why?" she calls back. "Why go hard? What's wrong?"

Reg talks to David in a quiet tone. "If she gets caught in the tide, she could be swimming another hour or more. If she can just crank it up she can be done in 15 minutes."

David yells down to Andrea, "Look, the tide is going to turn against you. Just go hard."

Andrea lifts her stroke count to 70. In just over 15 minutes she reaches the rocks south-west of the Cap. She climbs a steep, boulder-strewn bank to clear the water. Reg blows the boat's deep-throated horn in celebration and it's done. The Channel crossed. 10 hrs. 09 minutes. We learn later that Becky and one other swimmer, a Japanese woman we haven't met, also had successful crossings that day.

Back on board, Andrea's jazzed, stoked. She hugs and high-fives everyone. She looks fresher, happier than when she finished Catalina, though no doubt she was happy with that swim as well.

Two or three days later the neap tide began. This is when most successful crossings are done; the tidal flow is gentler, the currents less troublesome. But this year the weather turned. The Channel was tossed by squalls and wind. Only one day of the neap looked even reasonable. There were no successful crossings during the early September neap tide. I'm writing this in early October and my sources in Dover tell me that after Andrea and Becky made it across, there were no more successful swims. Andrea's swim and Becky's were likely the last for 2003. So it was a good call that Reg made: a good decision to go on the Spring tide on a fair morning rather than wait for the neap and take chances with unsettled weather.

People ask why. And like a mountain climber Andrea says, "Because it's there."

It was Hunt, the leader of the Everest expedition that saw Edmund Hilary make the summit in 1953 who first offered that famous answer, "Because it's there." And of course millions of the ignorant over the decades have assumed that the impersonal pronoun "it" referred to the mountain, and, in this case, to the Channel. But the look on the swimmer's face, a glow of exhilaration that goes all the way through, tells you that they're wrong. It is there. But It is not a mountain nor any body of water.

I met Andrea and William at the top of Mt Solidad in San Diego over the holidays. No, they didn't swim up they rode their bikes to the top. But if you have aspirations of swimming the English Channel or just want do some laps at a local pool give Gary Green or Dave Komendera or Ann Schmidt a call. Not only are they good cyclists but they're also avid swimmers.

“Road Rage” Responses

Having ridden 55 years on these roads I am no stranger to the wrath of the irate motorist and can thus have empathy with Al Barton who has recently expressed his frustration with the actions of irate motorists and the feeling of a need for revenge against such. There is little doubt that the biker would be the loser in the long run, if we were ever able to confront the offensive motorist. This of course does not relieve the sense of anger and frustration each time we are buzzed, cutoff or otherwise abused by a motorist or his/her passengers.

What I propose is to ride your Mountain Bike on the great variety of dirt roads that exist in southeast Michigan. They are out there for all to see and they are virtually traffic free. They are not car free but more than one car passing at a time is a rarity.

For stress free riding, “ride where the cars aren’t.”

TJ Hill, dirt road biking aficionado

Also, Bill Duemling suggests members check out the following website on “road rage”: <http://www.bikemaine.org/str-brchr.htm> > Be sure to check the PDF file links at the bottom.

WANTED

Next year’s slide show will be created by Doug Macdermaid. Doug is asking members to send him pictures of club activities throughout the year. Contact Doug at (586-939-4670). You can also email your digitized pictures to Doug at: lbrickne@wideopenwest.com

Also, Doris Mulligan would like to hear any amusing stories about our members throughout the year. You can either mail them to her at 26450 Crocker #1212 Harrison Twp, 48045, or call Doris at (586-465-9342) and tell her the story and she will write it for you.