

Sea To Sea In 2003

This is my story: the story of a middle age man and his attempt to cycle across Canada. The adventure will take place during the summer of 2003. I suppose this story starts years earlier; when a germ of an idea was planted in my mind. It was during a late summer motorcycle ride that the idea of cycling to the Gaspé was first broached. I was on a motorcycle riding to Baie Comeau with Ron Savoie. He had the idea that we could bicycle to the Gaspé and visit his sister at Carleton. After a discussion it was decided that we would attempt this journey during the summer of 2001. New bicycles were required as neither of us had a road bicycle nor did we possess any experience in bicycle touring. Off we went to Westboro Sports; owned by my son in law, Doug Herbst. After discussions about our requirements and our physical sizes it was determined that we would be well served to purchase new Mikado Radisson touring bicycles. For those that are interested, my bicycle has a mixture of components: Tiagra front and rear derailleurs, as well as Tiagra brakes, with a 105 bottom bracket, these are Shimano components that are near the bottom in pricing but quite adequate for my purposes. The trip to the Gaspé turned out quite successful and after a days rest in Carleton we returned home via the train.

While planning for the Gaspé trip I was researching cycling routes through or around Montreal. I surfed in on the Tour du Canada web site. The idea of cycling across Canada never really entered my mind at that time. But, as I read and reread the journals I began to think about perhaps one day attempting this task. I have never visited the Cabot Trail and the concept of cycling the trail was quite intriguing. The Tour du Canada has a 75 day trip that spends three days cycling the trail and I wanted to attempt this ride. After discussing with my wife Pauline the possibility of taking the



Pauline and John in Maberly

summer to cycle across Canada we agreed that summer 2003 would be the time to accomplish this great feat. The 75 day ride with the Tour du Canada has a total of 62 days riding which is broken down into daily distances. There will be 14 days when we ride up to 100 kms and 20 days when we ride 101 to 130 kms, 20 days when we ride 131 to 160 kms and 8 days when we ride over 161 kms. The longest day will be just over 180 kms. The following are my daily thoughts that I typed into the computer.

Day -3 - Maberly – Vancouver

Pauline and I got up early and drove the truck to the airport. Had a bit of a problem getting through the ticket agent with my large bicycle box. Pauline realized that there was a slight problem getting the bike onboard. It seems that the box I have is just a tad large for normal baggage and has to go as cargo. Can you imagine how pleased I was when I informed the ticket agent that

yes I was a member of the Canadian Cycling Association - and got my bike shipped for free!!!! The agent was a really nice guy and was happy to let me have this freebie. All went well and I arrived safe and sound in Vancouver a few minutes early. The flight was smooth and I had a seat that was just at the rear edge of the wing. The really good news was that all my luggage arrived at the same time as the plane. As I was walking towards the baggage pickup I saw an entry for large baggage and there was my bike. Lucky me!!! When I finally got all my luggage and started to carry it to the taxi area I could not find the guy that had emailed me concerning giving me a ride. The man monitoring the taxis got me a van type of taxi and we got everything in the back. It was a pretty ride to UBC with the sun shining and everything quite green. I have a nice room - single bed but we share a bathroom with 3 others. I put the bike back together without any problem - pumped the tires to over 70 psi - and yes Doug it was difficult. I have met one of the other riders - a girl from Toronto (Judith Jonas). She traveled to BC via train and we will be going to the ferry together tomorrow. There is suppose to be another person here but since we have never seen each other it is difficult to know who they are. I am sure everything will work out. There is a students' union building across the street and I had lunch there - at a subway sandwich place. Going to have dinner there too - perhaps a small pizza or something. My plan is to go to Saltspring first thing tomorrow - if I knew everything would go so well I would have tried to go today - but then I would have had a problem with my luggage. Oh well. I finally met B - the American on the tour. We chat and agree to go to dinner together and will cycle to Mile 0 together tomorrow.

Day -2 - Vancouver – Saltspring

Before leaving I have to lug my bags to the storage area, wow did I ever bring a lot of stuff. The three of us left UBC together, stopping for a delicious breakfast in Vancouver. B had been in Vancouver for a couple of days and highly recommends this restaurant, it was really good. At the Deas Island shuttle we met up with Joe, a teacher on sabbatical, who will be on the tour this summer. He cycled with Judith, who seems to be slower than the rest of us. Unfortunately they miss the first ferry and because B and I are on the ferry we are forced to leave them behind. The ferry trip to Vancouver Island was truly spectacular. The day was sunny and clear with just a bit of a wind. I sat outside with B until it became too windy then went inside and watched the scenery. The ride from Swartz Bay to Saltspring was equally beautiful. When I got to Saltspring I got lost a couple of times and had to phone my cousin Marg for directions. They live on Hilltop Drive and I had to do a bit of huffing and puffing to get there. After chatting we went for a drive near Mt Maxwell

and saw some lovely scenery. Marg had a lovely roast beef dinner with strawberries and ice cream for desert. I was in bed at 9:30.

Day -1 - Saltspring – Victoria - Vancouver

Sunday we caught the 0620 ferry and it was then that I met Ted Harrison and his wife. I believe we have lots in common and will get along fine. John and Muriel Fletcher are at the restaurant. They are good friends from Ottawa who are in BC looking for a new home. Muriel had been talking to one of Ted and Susan's friend about renting their home for a while in the fall. I guess that Muriel is thinking of taking a look around Saltspring!!! We had a good bike ride back from Victoria –



Joe, John, B, Ted, Jack, Judith, Michael



Dipping the rear wheel in the Pacific Ocean

about 80kms. Some people complained that the pace was too fast!!! Unfortunately Judith was not able to keep up and we had to wait for her at the ferry. We miss the noon hour buffet, oh well I am sure we will survive. It seems like a good group with the three men my age getting along quite well. We cycle back to the university, our group has increased in size now Jack and Michael have joined our small group with Joe deciding to sight see around Victoria.

Day 0 – University of British Columbia

Today was orientation day - a day spent having the rules and regulations of the trip explained. We are now 17 riders with Melissa being the driver. Bud, the tour organizer explained the importance of diet as well as encouraging us to take our time and get to know the country. We were divided into six cooking teams of three members each - one team has two members for the moment. My team consists of Ted Harrison from Saltspring with whom I have been emailing for some time and Michael Wagner a young man from Germany. Things look very positive. The truck that will carry our belongings is also carrying stoves, a fridge, coffee maker and all sorts of cooking and cleaning supplies. The first problem of the trip was encountered when I realized that I have entirely too much 'stuff'. In particular clothing - I would imagine that there will be a package being mailed back to Maberly with a few extras. Today we were given a water bottle with the Cycle Canada logo as well as new cycling shirts. The shirt is white with a red Tour du Canada logo. The joke is that we paid \$3300.00 for a jersey and got the tour for free. Tomorrow is picture taking time after which we will dip our rear wheel in the ocean and start our journey eastwards. Today marked the first time that we had meals at the truck. Lunch was served with whole wheat bread, peanut butter, honey and different jams. Today being a special day we also had cheese and fresh fruit. It was actually quite good but then I like peanut butter. Dinner was spaghetti with tomato sauce and a salad. We also had fresh Italian bread. Cookies were our deserts. Again everything was quite tasty. Tomorrow will be day 1 and we will stop using the day of the week and start using the day number of the trip. Day 1 is a 75-kilometer ride from Vancouver to Mission. We have been provided with a map, which provides not only distances between locations but also suggested sightseeing spots for us to visit. The directions look quite complete and easy to read and understand. This is the last night in a regular bed for some time and tomorrow night we start camping at Sun Valley Trout Park. The cooking team will be preparing trout with rice and a salad. Sounds good to me. That is about all for now - soLet the Ride Begin!



Rear Row l to r: James and Michael
 Middle Row: Dave, Chris Andrew Jack, John, Ted, B, Eric, George
 Front Row: John Ross, Joe, Linz, Jess, Judith, Mike

Day 1 - Vancouver to Mission

What a life here I am in beautiful BC starting a cycling trip. Day 1 was sunny and warm. We left the University at about 0900 after having lots of pictures taken at the university. First stop was at MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op) where just about everybody had to purchase last minute essentials. My purchases were a mug (left mine in the truck at the Ottawa Airport) and a set of fenders. Although I had a clip on fender for the front tire I had intended on using my rack pack for the back. Once other riders saw that they politely told me that if I wished to partake in a paceline in the rain I had better buy fenders. First day of the tour was a casual ride to Mission about 75 kms away. Ted Harrison from Saltspring Island was meeting his family in Port Coquitlam and had graciously invited me to join him for lunch. This caused us to leave the regular route and follow more scenic roads. We eventually rode 100 kms instead of the scheduled 75 kms. Of note on the ride was a spoke breaking on my rear wheel. Yes for all the bikers it broke on the chain side. Fortunately I was about 15kms from Mission and was able to limp into town and get it repaired. I was fortunate. This day we were the last into camp. We tented by a trout farm and had a delicious trout dinner.

Day 2 – Mission to Hope

Day two was a pedal from Mission to Hope - what a day!!! We left with a very slight tail wind and it picked up and pushed us for the majority of the day. There was one significant climb during the day and a really good downhill run. The champion of the downhill was a recumbent with a speed of 82kms - myself I had a top speed of 79.8kms - I will just have to try harder next time. Ted and I celebrated with a visit to Dairy Queen and a blizzard. Dinner was chickpeas and curry and mushrooms and some other stuff and it was good!

Day 3 – Hope to Boston Bar

Day 3 and the honeymoon is over. Today is generally known as tunnel day as you go through 7 tunnels between Hope and Boston Bar. Also this is the first day of climbing; we climbed approx 900 metres with lots of ascents. When we went by Hells Gate we took time to check out the river flow - it is very impressive and I have some pictures showing the force as the river is squeezed between the rock cuts. Even taking our time and stopping for a bit of food every hour we finished the ride just after lunch. A really beautiful day. I am now awaiting dinner - you will probably notice the constant mention of



Camping at Hope – my tent in centre

food; well I am burning tons of calories and have to keep up my energy, to do that we stop just about every hour for a 5 minute rest and a bite to eat and more to drink (I drink regularly from water bottles filled with Gatorade on the bike) when we arrive at our tenting spot we pick at gorp (good old raisins and peanuts or grains, oats, raisins and peanuts) then wait until supper. After supper we talk, check out our bicycles then go to bed - 0600 we are up and going by 0800 hrs. What a life. Tomorrow will be a continuation of today with lots of hills plus I will be on cooking duty for the first time. I am with a group of two others (Ted Harrison, Michael Wagner) we will make dinner then make breakfast the next morning.

Day 4 – Boston Bar – Spences Bridge

Did I mention that the honeymoon was over? We left Boston Bar in the rain and not only that but we had Jackass Mountain pass to climb after 20kms. I was riding with Jack Fells on a recumbent and Ted Harrison. The climb was long but not all that difficult. I was huffing and puffing by the time I got to the top but I got there. While enjoying the view four more riders came up the climb. They are the 'kids' they are all younger than we are and all good cyclists. We beat them up the climb but only because we had a head start out of camp. We now had a group and headed to the nearest restaurant for a coffee or hot chocolate. Did I mention it was raining? The rain continued off and on for the rest of the day. We went up and down but it seemed mostly up. For those that may be interested I am a fast downhiller - the extra weight that I lug up the mountain helps on the descent as well I try not to touch the brake because I worked so hard to get the benefits of gravity I am not willing to just give it away. We went by Lytton and dropped in to town for lunch. I suppose we literally dropped in because it is quite a steep downhill into town. After a lengthy lunch, with 12 of us present I hit the road for camp. The climb out of Lytton was as hard as Jackass mtn. it just went on and on and on. Finally at camp we started to make dinner, chili, (both with and without meat) salad and a milk pudding. If I must say so myself dinner was a great success. The fact we had hot chili and it was pouring rain did not hurt at all. We started dinner before 4:00 and did not finish cleaning up until well after 9:00 - I was tired. Morning started early, and did I mention the rain - yes it was still raining. Breakfast was porridge and a potato, mushroom, green peppers cheese melt. The recipe called for bacon also but we forgot - fortunately nobody complained. The cheese melt was not really a success and we will never attempt that recipe again.

Day 5 - Spences Bridge –Merritt

Day 5 was a 80 km ride from Spences Bridge to Merritt and the scenery was just beautiful. The rain stopped at about 0930 - just as we finished packing the truck and hit the road. We traveled along the Nicola Valley with lots of climbs. Just outside Merritt two children had set up a lemonade/Gatorade/fruit juice stand. We stopped and had an interesting chat with everyone. This is an annual event for the family and it was a real treat. We then had to pick up the tempo a bit because the sky was turning black. We got to the camping spot just in time for a cloudburst. It rained again - not a problem because everything was wet anyways. As I sit and type this the rain has stopped, it is cloudy and windy. Tomorrow will be a rest day. I need to do a washing as well as spend a bit of time cleaning and lubricating the bicycle. Monday we are off to Kamloops. Today also marked the birthday of Michael Wagner (he is 6ft 7inches and probably 230 lbs) a German student. He is turning 20. I have sweaters much older than that. Today on the ride we caught up to him and he rode with us for a while - in all innocence he asked if we liked to ride that slow. We were in the hills and rolling along on the flats in the mid to high 20s. We mentioned there was a bit of an age difference and in fact 28 kph was not really that slow to us. He said he understood but I am not sure - talk about a generation gap - well in this case a couple or three generations. Life on the road is good - rain notwithstanding. We are all having a good time and looking forward to the remainder of the trip. I notice that my appetite is changing - I eat pretty constantly - last night we had a pasta with meat sauce dinner and it was really good - also a birthday cake. Afterward we went to a pub and had a meet and greet. Went to bed early. On the subject of sleeping, I notice that I am in bed and attempting to sleep by 9:00 rising at 6:00 and leaving the camp around 0800. The tenting is interesting. Mission was at a trout farm and very peaceful - the outdoor biffy lead something to be desired. Hope tenting started the train traffic, as well as the road traffic. It makes for the mandatory use of ear plugs. Boston Bar we camped in the grounds behind a motel. We had two motel rooms rented for showers and toilets, the scenery was very nice with a view of the Fraser River and the train tracks. Spences Bridge was the ultimate. We had the Thompson River directly behind the tents and a train track on the far side of the river, the front of the camping grounds faced the roadway with another train track running beside the road. Stereo trains with a helping of trucks - ear plugs are worn by everyone. Merritt we finally got away from the highway and the train tracks. This morning at about 0500 we were awakened with a cacophony of crows singing. Trust me it was noisy, actually really noisy.

Day 6 - Rest Day Merritt

Once again I must do the cleaning chores. My clothes are in need of a good washing as well I must do maintenance on my bicycle. This morning we discover a really clean Laundromat next to the camping grounds. The people who run the Laundromat/corner store are all excited to tell us about the country music jamboree that comes to Merritt each year, lots of stars. After the washing I go downtown to an internet café where I have mixed results attempting to get emails out. Walking around town we find a good restaurant for a brunch with eggs, bacon, toast etc. The remainder of the day is spent around the campground doing general clean up chores. For dinner the group goes back downtown for a restaurant meal. Mine was fairly good but others were not totally pleased. Oh well, it is another day tomorrow.

Day 7 - Merritt to Kamloops

I awoke at 0530 this morning with the pitter patter of rain on my tent. Is this rain ever going to stop? The ride today was to take us from Merritt to Kamloops. The distance was to be approximately 90kms with a long hard climb just prior to getting to Kamloops. We had a delicious breakfast of porridge and gorp. It was actually quite tasty. As we were getting ready to take down the tents the rain stopped, unfortunately we were camped on earth - read dirt. The tent was dirty and there was not much we could do about it. On the road today I rode with Ted and B. (short for Bertha). She had a flat prior to getting out of Merritt so that slowed us down. Other than that the ride was uneventful. The scenery was spectacular as we rode up the Nicola Valley past lakes and rolling hills. We stopped quite often to take pictures and enjoy the views. We rode a paceline most of the day - a fairly relaxed paceline because we often ride side by side so we can talk. Singing has also entered into our pastime on the road. Unfortunately Pauline is the person who has the voice in the family as well as the knowledge of songs. We know the first line of many songs but have yet to get through a complete song. I suppose the real challenge was the climb prior to Kamloops. The distance was approximately 5kms long with some slopes being 11 percent. That is 11 feet rise in 100 feet. My understanding is that the Trans Canada Highway tries to keep their climbs to 6 percent. Time will tell. The climb today was not all that hard - I just worked my way into granny gear (small chainering at front and largest cog at the back) and kept pumping. The hill was long and I was huffing and puffing but not killing me. I passed a couple of people who had stopped for a rest but my resolve is to complete the tour without putting a foot down on a climb. One of the girls, Linz, left me in her dust, wow she sure is strong. Our kph average for the day was 23.2 kph - not too bad for the mature teenagers. We were fourth or fifth into camp. Just another glorious day. Wish you were all here :) :) Tomorrow is a really big day - 176 kms from Kamloops to Sicamous. Early to bed tonight.

Day 8 - Kamloops – Sicamous

What a day - started with a 12 km downhill, of course we climbed it the day before but the downhill makes you forget all the previous pain. We got off to an early start - about 7 of us left camp just prior to 0700. Perhaps we were all a bit concerned about the distance - between 160 and 175 kms depending on the route. (I took the shorter but more difficult because of the climbs). I had a wonderful breakfast of porridge and gorp with brown sugar. I do not know how much I ate but it is safe to say it was a healthy portion. Once on the road we all cycled through Kamloops and joined the Trans Canada Highway. After a bit we followed the Thompson River. Speeds were not excessive but were probably above the posted limit - then we hit the TCH and let it all hang out. This is one of the few times when the extra weight I am carrying helps - I can go downhill with the best of them - unfortunately the climbs are another story. The road was smooth with a wide bicycle lane and the traffic really respected us. Conditions were first rate and we really rolled along. Our avg kph for the first two hours was over 30kph and that is very good for me. Today Ted, B and I formed a paceline and spent the day pulling each other along. Our days end average was 25.4 for the day and I assure you there were lots of climbs - We spent about 6 hours exactly in the saddle. Did I mention the hills - there were a couple of tough climbs - in particular we stayed on the TCH out of Salmon Arm and faced two tough climbs. If any of the TDC vets did this route I would be interested in knowing the percentage of the two climbs. The scenery was spectacular as we followed the Shushwap Lake from about Sorrento to Sicamous. The campsites this evening is quite beautiful with a beach and lovely green grass for our tents. Tomorrow another day and I know it is going to be just wonderful.



Day 9 – Sicamous – Albert Canyon

Wow - Wow - Wow. Today was a scheduled 112 km ride from Sicamous to Albert Canyon. It was just wonderful, the weather was near perfect and the scenery was just magnificent. As we left Sicamous we made a left turn on the

TCH and there was a snow clad mountain. Just breathtaking. As we progressed during the day we saw more and more. I can hardly wait until tomorrow. Today I was riding with Ted Harrison and B. We ride at approximately the same pace and agree about stops during the ride. We ride a relaxed paceline with stops each hour. The first stop will be for maybe five minutes when we have a drink and a small bite to eat. The second stop will be a bit longer when we will have just a

Tenting in Sicamous

bit more to eat (I mean a larger quantity than the previous time) this continues throughout the day with a 20-30 minute stop at lunch hour. Today we had teen burgers at A&W in Revelstoke. Sitting out on the porch we were able to admire the scenery. During lunch we were joined by 'Spicy' Mike; so named because of a misunderstanding when reading a recipe. He now realizes there is a difference between a tsp and a tbsp. Trust me when you are dealing with hot chili peppers there is a difference. While in Revelstoke we took a trip through the town and visited a bike store - B needed a part for her Camelback, which the store did not have. When it came time the climb out of Revelstoke to the Trans Canada was not all that easy. Once on the TCH we climbed and descended to Albert Canyon. Not sure where the camping was I sought the registration office. Sure enough it was at the top of a hill and the camp spot was down at the bottom. It was still just a wonderful day. Tonight we are making plans to visit the hot springs/spa/swimming pool that the camp spot offers. Dinner is cooking and will be a chicken stir fry - after a day of riding in the mountains we sure build up an appetite. Tomorrow we start with a pleasant little climb over Rogers Pass. My thighs and knees are aching just thinking about what awaits. The campground is overrun with prairie dogs - quite cute but a bit of a nuisance and they are recommending that we do not leave food in our tent or in our bike pack overnight. They are quite bold and curious - I'll make sure to close up my tent when I go to bed tonight.

Day 10 – Albert Canyon – Golden

Rogers Pass - what a way to start the day. Actually I got out of the tent just before 0600 and had a large bowl of porridge with brown sugar and gorp. Rather tasty and hopefully this will power me for the first part of the day. Ted and I rode together all day. First to leave camp at 0700 we started the climb. Yes, right from the camp we had a climb for 36 kms. At times it was rather steep and then would soften and allow us to relax a little. We went through a couple of snow sheds and after an hour stopped for our usual break - more food and drink. We continued the climb, the scenery was just wonderful there were clouds scattered above the mountains but the air was clear. We stopped for pictures and to just admire the splendor. After two hours we stopped for another break, here the TDC truck stopped to say hello and wish us well, we were aware we were close to the top and said we would meet them at the summit. Off we went for the final 5 kms and after about 2 hrs and 15 mins of climbing we summited Rogers Pass!!! Wow was it every good to see the summit sign and Melissa (the truck driver) was on the side of the road taking our picture. Into the cafe for a coffee and to warm up. It was quite cool and we had experienced just a bit of rain on the climb. After a 15 to 20 minute break we left to enjoy the downhill. It was really exhilarating - I had a top speed of 78 kph going through one of the snow sheds - smooth road and limited traffic. Just wonderful. After a long downhill we then started to climb once again. Personally I found the second climb as difficult if not more difficult than the climb to Rogers Pass. We seemed to climb forever and forever. We took our usual stops for food and drink and then just before the town (settlement with about 3 houses) we started what must have been a 15km - 20km downhill. The good news here is that during all this downhill we had but two vehicles pass us. We had the whole half of the road! We ended up playing a game of chase, one would get into the slipstream of the other and then shoot out and try to pass - great fun and not dangerous because of the lack of traffic. We were like two kids playing - just wonderful. Unfortunately we still had a significant amount of kms to cover before getting into camp. There was one other rider in our vicinity and we crossed lead back and forth. He, Spicy Mike, stopped in the town of Golden to get some nourishment (actually I think he wanted a quick feed of sugar). Leaving Golden with about 5km to go to camp we encountered yet another hill. This is a real beauty and it was grunt time. We finally got to camp and I can say that I was tired. Lots of climbing and a day ride of 118 kms. For the whole trip we averaged over 21 kph and I had a top speed of 79 kph. I think this is quite good considering all the hills. The ride was one of the most difficult we have had to date if not the most difficult; for interest we were first into camp. It helps to be first out of camp also. Could this have something to do with the necessity to get up during the night to visit the woods, can't sleep so might as well get up and get going. Tomorrow is a short day, but I would imagine a difficult day with lots of climbs. This will be aggravated by our being on cooking duty. Hamburgers and all the works. More to follow. .



Top of Rogers Pass



Emerald Lake

Day 11 Golden – Field

Another glorious day on the road and I am cycling across Canada - wow. Today we started with a climb, 18kms to be exact, it might have been a bit cool in the camp but I sure worked up a sweat in short order. The weather was nigh on perfect, no wind and reasonably cool. Ted and I left camp a little before 8:00 o'clock and started the climb. At first it was reasonably steady with the odd downhill, not really steep downhill but it gave us a break from pedaling. Then we came to construction - we were let through (this is common on the construction spots - they let cyclists move to the front of the line and then cycle through without any traffic - at the construction spot we crossed the bridge and then started another climb, this time it was 3kms with a 7 percent grade, we finished the climb and took a rest, after all it was about one hour of cycling from the camp for the 18kms - not too bad a pace. We continued on to Field, Ted went to the camp and I went with Jack Fells to Emerald Lake. It was beautiful with the water not surprisingly being emerald. Actually it was very picturesque. Tonight marked our second attempt at cooking for the masses. Ted, Michael and myself did a feed of hamburgers with Doritos and salad with cookies for desert. We had veggie burgers for some and the rest of us ate the 100% beef burgers - no body went home hungry. I think the secret to cooking on the tour is to emphasize quantity. As an aside the previous night we had a tuna surprise or melt or something. It was less than appetizing, the only thing that saved it was lots of cheese on the top and the soup that we had prior to the surprise. The soup was a tomatoes and vegetable with rice soup. The rice was burnt and the veggies were raw. Not the best combination. While riding on the TCH I have noticed numerous bungee cords on the side of the road - one wonders what it was that they were holding down, especially when they look industrial strength. Another thing we see are lug nuts on the shoulders, not just one or two but at least a dozen since starting out. Usually if not always these lug nuts hold wheels to the rims - this is another scary situation. Campgrounds - last night the scenery was spectacular - just wonderful - we sat in our chairs and drank in the scenery. (also had a beer) Tonight we stayed in the group camping area at a Federal park - Yoho National Park. It is quite nice but without electrical power. There are prairie dogs in abundance and one or two have decided to like my tent and chair. I was at the truck when one of them tried to get into my tent and another time one was sitting on my chair - very nervy. I must sign off now - am cooking breakfast tomorrow and we are riding to Banff. The trip there is not that long- 82 kms - but with lots of side trips we will be well over 100 kms for the day - the start of which will be a climb over Kicking Horse Pass. I am looking forward to the scenery - it has been just fantastic.

Day 12 - Field – Banff

Today was memorable in fact it may well be the finest day in cycling I will ever have. Yes, it was that good. When I got up the sky was clear and the sun was about to rise. I had to get up early because I was on breakfast duty this morning and that meant I had to get going around 0500 to get the different foods out and get ready to cook for the group. We provided a really good breakfast of bacon and eggs, cooked to order. For the veggies we had 'make believe' bacon and they were quite happy with that. Most people had three eggs, some bacon and toast, others had more. The really hungry had a cold cereal also. By 0845 we had everything cleaned and packed. Leaving the campground you could see the start of Kicking Horse Pass - a steady climb for 7 kms but not too steep. The highest point we reached was 1750 metres above sea level at Lake Louise. Back to the climb, we stopped to see the spiral train tunnels unfortunately there were no trains in the vicinity. When we reached the top of Kicking Horse we then did a U turn to go back and take a secondary road to Lake Louise. The O'Hara Lake road was about 17kms long and had been closed for some time. The road although rough was completely car and truck free. Very relaxing and the scenery was spectacular. When we got to Lake Louise the sky was clear as could be and the glacier in the background was glistening. There were about 8 cyclists from the group present at the lake shore and we had our picture taken - really special. I took the opportunity to call Pauline, it was very emotional; we had climbed the Rockies, and the scenery was so beautiful it was just breathtaking. I won't forget that moment for some time. After enjoying the scenery and having a celebratory peanut butter sandwich we left to continue our journey. James joined Ted and myself for the ride down to Lake Louise Village. Was I every glad I had not climbed from the village to the Chateau - it was very steep, in fact very very steep. Speeds going down hill were pretty good but the switchback slowed us down. Even with the switchbacks it was still enjoyable. After the village we continued on the Bow Valley Parkway. This was a fantastic ride. We started a paceline with James (much younger and stronger than Ted and myself) pulling us for perhaps 10kms. Once I checked my computer and noticed we were riding along at over 40kms - at times in the 45km range. Lots of fun. We had our lunch sitting on a grassed area admiring the view. You may wonder if this was first or second lunch or perhaps early afternoon snack - it was second lunch because we would stop in another hour for afternoon snack :). Again we rolled along quite quickly, perhaps too quickly but it sure was enjoyable. We saw a moose beside the road and a little later came across a mother bear and two cubs crossing the road. Later there was a mountain sheep eating beside the pavement, and he/she was not going to move for traffic. It just looked at us as I took a picture. Not a care in the world. The ride continued toward Banff - lots of cyclists on the road and just a few cars. Again the scenery was awe inspiring. The pavement was smooth, no wind, a warm sun and rolling hills - it was wonderful - we formed pacelines, slipstreamed down hills and road three abreast as we told tales. Lots of fun. Coming into Banff we did a scenic tour of the town and then rode to the camping spot. Another federal camping spot on the edge of town at the top of Tunnel Mountain. We are in Tunnel Mountain Village Campground II. Very nice and quiet.



Chris, Eric, James, Dave, Joe, John, Michael,
Ted



Camping Banff

Day 13 – Rest Day Banff

The last thing I want to do is to go for a bicycle ride. We took turns walking to the laundry to clean our dirty clothes. I took the opportunity to talk with Pauline and my sister Catherine who is visiting at Maberly. Afterwards we took a bus to the centre of the village and had a great brunch. We went to the Banff Park Lodge for a scrumptious all you can eat brunch - and I am sure the hotel lost money on us. Cycling all day sure gives one an appetite. After the lunch we strolled through the town and took the bus back to the campgrounds. The comment we heard on numerous occasions was that tourism was down because the Japanese are not coming to Banff this year - has to do with SARS, if that is the case I could not imagine what it must be like in a 'normal' year. The place is packed with tourists. You can hardly pass on the sidewalks for the people. Today was a special day for Banff, the Calgary Sports Car Club was touring through the town. I saw half a dozen Lamborghinis, at least 20 Ferraris and a bunch of Porsches - times are tough for some. I might add that some of the drivers had to be in their young 20s. There must be a lot of money around.

Day 14 – Banff – Cochrane

Today we leave the Rockies. Cycling through the mountains has been just spectacular, I have enjoyed every minute. This morning there is a bit of a discussion on which direction to turn as you leave camp. Bud's directions are quite explicit but one of the group is having difficulty. Judy finally leaves after frustrating many of those that tried to help her. Today we are joined by Ray who will ride with us until Toronto. He has completed the tour in previous years and just wants to ride himself into shape and see the country once again. We leave camp and head towards Canmore and a Tim Horton's. Once again the day is sunny with only a slight breeze. We cycle on and I am amazed at how quickly we leave the mountains. The sight of the snow covered mountains quickly disappears and we are riding on rolling terrain. The road has a good wide shoulder and we make good time. Unfortunately the wind picks up and we get a good cross wind that turns into a bit of a head wind as we near Cochrane. The wind is quite strong by the time we get to Cochrane and I am careful as I put up the tent. James is not so fortunate, his tent is uprooted and he has a few tent poles break. He goes off to the local Canadian Tire to purchase another tent. (the store will not warranty his previous tent that he bought at a Canadian Tire) He and a few others also purchase chairs.

Day 15 – Cochrane – Beiseker

Today is the day that we meet Don Peddie. Don is the author of 'Spin Spin Spin' a journal about his cross country trip with TDC in 1996. Ted and I left camp at Cochrane at about 0700 - first stop came in approx 5 minutes when we saw a Tim Horton's. The coffee machine on the truck is still broken and try as the cooks might the coffee was borderline terrible. Tim's offered not only coffee and a donut but also a quick look at the paper. Very enjoyable, unfortunately we had to leave and start a climb. Bud sure knows how to warm us up in the morning. This morning we have a nice 12km climb out of Cochrane. This is not a continuous climb but flattens a couple of times and the grade is reasonable. Perhaps my opinion of a difficult climb has changed after climbing all the passes in the Rockies. The rolling hills are taking their toll and we are getting tired. Stopping every hour for a break allows the butt to relax as well as a bit of nourishment. At the end of the climbs (top of the hill) we notice a cyclist standing waiting for us. Don is there and after introductions we continue on to the town of Airdrie. This is Canada Day and a large parade is in progress. We manage to weave our way through town and end up in a coffee shop for a long break. When Don arrived the speed of our paceline picked up significantly. Don is extremely fit and a very very strong cyclist. Attempting to stay with him is hard on the body and we last only a short time before we have to ask him to slow down. After Airdrie we have a lovely ride to the town of Beiseker. Arriving in Beiseker we discover that Mel the truck driver is not yet at camp. She carries all our supplies and thus there is nothing to do until she arrives. We head into town. This is small town Alberta and everything is closed, well not everything but just about. We find a grocery store and make a bulk purchase of ice cream bars. 6 bars for the three of us

sounds good. They tasted good also! Dinner was hosted by the town of Beiseker, bbq'd hamburgers, chips and our cooking team made potato salad for everyone. This was greatly appreciated and we really enjoyed the bbq as well as the meat. Good Alberta beef!!! The Albertans are quite sensitive about their beef and the problems associated with mad cow disease. The burgers tasted great and everyone is healthy today - so no problems. We went to bed at our usual time, 9:00 to 9:30 and as we were falling asleep the camp manager lit off a few fire works. I thought they were shooting at the prairie dogs but it was only fire works - just a little excitement. Just another day on the road cycling across Canada. What a life.



Grain Elevator at Beiseker



Don & John at Horseshoe Canyon

Day 16 - Beiseker – Drumheller

Today sure had lots of surprises. Today is a bit shorter we should be cycling about 90kms so we slept in an additional half hour. Leaving camp at 0800 we had a bit of a problem. The telephone (yes only one phone in Beiseker) was not working properly and Ted decided to go and look for a phone. Don Peddie was riding with the old guys and James also joined us. There was a bit of a problem in communication and we thought Ted was going to a service station at the edge of town but he went enroute to another spot. We waited and searched for him finally leaving to find him waiting for us.

Everything worked out fine. Today with the short ride I was expecting an easy ride with a tail wind. We had a side wind and it was rolling. The pace was a bit quick and I seemed to tire easily - perhaps the breakfast I had was not sufficient or the pace was too hard. (probably a bit of both). We motored on towards Drum - did I mention that Don is a strong cyclist - he can really motor. I found myself near oxygen debt on just about every climb and lots of times on the straightway. We stopped at Horseshoe Canyon - the Canadian version of the Grand Canyon (?) In the middle of nowhere suddenly there is an opening in the earth and a canyon appears with mountains (hills) etc in the valley. Very impressive. The ride towards Drum turned exciting. Don flatted almost immediately - the three of us stopped and helped him change the tube - well we offered encouragement and advice on how to do the change more quickly). The sky had turned black and there was lightning in the background. There was rain coming and it was going to be nasty. Tube changed and off we went.

Two hundred yards and Don flatted. Once again we stopped and although he strongly suggested we leave him and get to town before the storm we waited for him. The storm was closing in quickly and the wind had really picked up., The wind was now quite strong; I would think in the 50km range and the sky above was black. Tube replaced and off we went.

At this time it might be prudent to mention that Don's tire was well broken in - it was well worn. In fact you could just about see the cords in the tire and not only that it had a tear in the centre. He candidly commented he had been hoping to get two more rides from the tire and might have over estimated its worth by one ride!! Off we go - and I mean we were pedaling. We were in the very high 48-49 kph range with the tail wind. Before Drum there is a hill - a steep hill and we had to go down this hill, which is better than having to climb the hill. Down we went - I was now pedaling as fast and as hard as I could and just going 50 kph - the wind was now on our nose. We had to work hard to get into town and as we entered the town limits we saw cyclists waving to us from the DQ - good enough for us, in we went. The rain started and it really poured. We watched the rain turn to hail as we ate hamburgers and chips. The weather had taken a real turn and it was also cold. Anyone still out on their bicycle without proper clothing would be in real trouble. Rain stopped and we left to finish the cycle to camp at out 10 kms away. Arriving at camp we were informed the truck was yet to arrive - in fact Mel was running late and still in Calgary. At 5:00 Bud called from Ontario to tell us that Mel would be arriving in one half hour. She had been in Calgary for a bulk food buy. Traffic and general congestion had slowed her down - remember we can do nothing but sit and wait for the truck - no clothes, food or drink. I did notice that one of the guys went for a swim in his lycra cycling shorts - and people wonder why we wear them. Mel arrived at 1745 and you should have seen the truck. Jammed to the rafters and then some. An interesting story about the storm - two of the riders were at Horseshoe canyon when the storm broke - they spent one and a half hours in the men's washroom - if you have ever visited a washroom in a public location I am sure you can appreciate their situation.

Day 17 – Rest Day

Today is a rest day and I am doing a washing and taking it easy. Went to town for a big waffles and sausage breakfast - Don kindly drove 8 of us to Drum in his jeep, you can imagine that I have no desire to get back on a bicycle today - next week (tomorrow) we start our long days on the prairies so I am trying to rest my body. Hopefully I will get an opportunity to visit the Tyrell Museum in the afternoon. Unfortunately I did not get a chance to visit the museum. I did, however get to spend time with Don and do a bit of sight seeing in downtown Drum.

Day 18 – Drumheller – Youngstown

This is to be a day of surprises and good fortune. I was awakened early with the sound of tent zippers. People are concerned with the distance today - Bud the tour director has said it will be approx 140 kms but we were to discover that there was construction on the road and a 9 km detour was recommended. After a breakfast of porridge and raisins plus a banana I left the camp spot with Ted. We cycled into Drum and stopped for a coffee at WIFS an acronym for Waffles Ice Cream Flap Jacks and Salads. After that we started to leave Drum and had a climb for about 5 kms. I suppose this is a good time to mention that the prairies are not flat, at least not the Alberta prairies. The scenery was just wonderful and there was little to no traffic. We climbed and climbed for a great majority of the morning then had a 7km downhill run - wow it was fun. At the bottom of the run we stopped in the town of Delia for a cup of coffee. I should mention that coffee is not the real reason for stopping; it is just nice to sit on something other than the bicycle saddle. While ordering the coffee a 'local' asked us if we were on the TDC - surprise surprise and we said yes. His wife had recommended the detour to stay away from the construction. He informed us that she was working in Hanna and we decided to thank her for the suggested route. After a pleasant conversation with Heather she recommended we have lunch at the Doll Palace. It is Friday and they are having an all you can eat fried chicken buffet. We went. Michael had joined us on the road so the three of us went to the restaurant. It was staffed by the nicest ladies you could meet. Everyone was interested in the tour and asked us many questions. They also insisted we have seconds plus desert. And it was delicious. What a wonderful experience. Back to the riding. We had a great day on the road. For some reason I was quite strong and could really pound on the pedals. Must have been the rest day. Or it could have been the rides with Don Peddie. Don pushed us and I am sure that did not hurt me at all. The temperature and road conditions were nigh on perfect. We had smooth roads as well as a slight tail wind. Thank heavens because by the time we were finished we had pedaled more than 150 kms with an average of over 26kph. The avg is somewhat misleading because that entailed a fair bit of town cycling where our speed was quite low. We were doing pacelines with speeds well over 40 kph and always over 25kph - it was just a great day. On one occasion we noticed we were climbing a hill at 34kph - well beyond our normal ability. We got to Youngstown at about 3:00 - tired and happy. We are staying inside the gymnasium because the field is alive with grasshoppers. Grasshoppers are alive and well in this part of Alberta - we ran over them on the road and one occasion I had one in my mouth - yes I need protein but not with a feed of grasshopper. We are going to have a pot luck dinner sponsored by the community of Youngstown. We are treated like Kings everywhere we go. What a life - what a country. During the day I hear meadow larks singing and thought of my wife - missing her. The showers are quite an experience. We used the local public school and the shower heads are set up for the young folk. I had to bend to get my head under the water - the tall guys would have lots of problems. The people here are very very generous. The town is not a ghost town but it is close to becoming one. Farming is the local industry and it is not going well - all the young people are moving and the adults are quite concerned. If you wanted a deal on a house you sure could get one for next to nothing here. Again these people are putting on a pot luck dinner for us - extremely generous of them.

Day 19 - Youngstown – Kindersley

Did I mention that we had been having good weather? The evening before we had been spoilt with a wonderful pot luck dinner by the kind folks of Youngstown. After dinner we had three visitors. A reporter from the local paper interviewed a couple of the group and requested a group picture. Melissa asked us to wear our TDC shirts and bring our bicycles outside the gym for the picture. Unfortunately we awoke (in the gymnasium) to a slight drizzle. This did not stop the picture taking and we all smiled for the camera. I believe there will be an article in the Youngstown paper - time will tell. The other two visitors were Heather Jager and her husband Egbert. Heather is the person who informed us of the scenic detour the previous day and is interested in completing the tour in a few years. I remember that I spoke to Gary Scarcella last year about the tour and here I am on the tour this year; I told her be careful or she would be on the tour next year. They were both interested in the types of bicycles on the tour and the rationale for our decision. Now for a discussion about the weather. A drizzle at 0700 quickly turned into rain which turned into an all day rain with side winds and headwinds. This was a 155 km riding day and it was not pleasant. In fact it was quite miserable. Thankfully I dressed appropriately, I was wearing my gore tex socks (thanks to my wife) gore tex jacker and gore tex tights. I also wore an old shower cap over my helmet - I was ready for the worse that Mother Nature could throw. This was not fun - we stopped at every restaurant/garage on the way - the stop in Cereal for breakfast two was interesting because all the locals were so happy to see the rain; we were of another opinion. I rode with Ted and Michael (from Germany) for most of the morning. Michael is the youngest rider on the tour as well as the tallest. He makes a wonderful wind block. Unfortunately he was not feeling well or was nervous but he rode in the third position for the whole morning!! Sure could have used his help but what can you do. We struggled on - lunched at Alask. I phoned Pauline to tell her I was still okay and on my way to Kindersley (I had phoned from a garage earlier). We stopped at every garage/restaurant on the road - hot chocolate to warm the hands and the body. It was cool and it was miserable. Finally we made it to Kindersley. Camping in the community camp spot left a bit to be desired. The rain had turned the field into a mud pit - our bikes and bicycle shoes all plugged up with the goo. After 150 plus kms we were on cooking duty. Thankfully Mel and Chris (bad knees and did not ride today) had cut up vegetables for us and after a shower I helped with the dinner. The dinner was a pasta and chicken dish with salad and a sauce. The sauce was quite good - Feta cheese, mushrooms, peppers, parsley, and asparagus

which we put on the pasta at the last minute. This turned out to be quite tasty. It takes lots of work to feed 18 hungry and tired bikers. Finally got them fed and then we had a general meeting to discuss the rules and regulations concerning putting things away in the truck and the time for the meals. We have a flexible attitude towards breakfast when we have long riding days. Days in the 150 km plus range we have breakfast at 0600 to 0700. Shorter days it is 0630-0730. The cooking crew must pack the truck and clean up after breakfast. This takes time and means the cooking crew is always the last to leave camp. Bed came a little after 9:00 - remember we are up at 0515 to get breakfast preparations going. Tired and wet I was asleep early.

Day 20 - Kindersley – Outlook

Morning came early - breakfast duty. I get up and put my dry sock on, then my gore tex socks on and then put on my soaking wet shoes. In fact most everything I have in the tent is wet - we need a good drying day. This morning we are preparing oatmeal and pancakes. Things go quite well and we are able to clean up and pack the truck by 0845. We attempt to clean up our bikes and get our shoes cleaned. The shoes have a cleat on the bottom that fastens to the pedals to allow you to pedal more effectively. Finally at close to 0900 we are on the road. We had experienced rain during the night and again the grass/mud was wet and messy. Today we leave the camp and proceed to route 7 and turn east. Next town is Rosetown in 83kms. You could probably see it in the distance because we are on the prairies. After a bit I notice that my hear rate is 111 beats per minute and we are traveling at close to 40kms per hour. Yes there was a tail wind – just wonderful. It sure raises you spirits to have the wind push you down the road. We stop at the Husky service station in Rosetown and I have a humongous cheese and mushroom omelette. We proceed to camp which is another 70kms away. Our luck runs out about half way to the camp. It turns dark, we lose the tail wind and we feel rain. James has joined Ted and myself for the final push to the camp. He is a stronger cyclist that we are and we sure appreciate his assistance in the paceline. We get a little wet but nothing like yesterday. Just before we enter Outlook we must go down into the South Saskatchewan River valley and of course climb back out. Nothing like a good climb after a 158 km day. We arrive in camp to find out that there is only one shower for the men. That means we have a queue. I finally arrive at the front of the queue only to discover the hot water has run out. Not a great moment - I shower anyways; most certainly not a long shower! Did I mention the rain, well it is still raining and I go back to the tent to wait for supper. Perogies and a bean salad with sweet squares are on the menu. Quite good - sour cream and salsa add to the flavour. I realize the farmers are enjoying all this rain but I sure would like to have an opportunity to dry my clothes etc. Maybe tomorrow. Perhaps this is a good time to explain that I type this journal/daily report after I arrive in camp after a long ride. For instance we have just completed three days with rides over 150kms and two more days coming with rides in the 120km range. Sometimes you will notice spelling errors, grammatical errors and a questionable use of the English language. This is caused by the conditions under which I am living as well as the fact that sometimes I'm just plain tired. Please excuse all errors. This will be an early night - good opportunity to catch up on my sleep.



Jess and Linz preparing dinner at Outlook

showers. Once again I get a cold shower. My luck is consistent. After a long day of cycling (okay only 120 kms) I was really looking forward to a warm shower. Maybe next time. Dinner was a rice dish with a vegetable dip. Ray had to leave the tour for a couple of days and visit his family (father ill) when he returned he brought a big dish of rice and veggies with him. Very tasty. Tomorrow promises to be a warm day with a relatively short ride of 120 kms. Then a rest day in Regina. I will report more next time. Everything is going fine - I am enjoying the cycling and the people we meet are all interested in our trip. We get lots of questions. The bike is going really well and my legs are getting stronger. All and all not a bad way to spend the summer. Loving life but missing my wife.

Day 22 - Craik – Regina

Headwinds, headwinds, headwinds. That just about covers the whole day. It was rough today. We were the 2nd into camp today (four of us) Spicy Mike was first, we arrived at the end of a 124km ride at 5:30. We left at 0800!! This was a tough day. The wind was right on the nose and was blowing probably more than 30 kph. This caused us to form a two

Day 21 - Outlook – Craik

Rain during the night - in the morning my tent was soaking as was most of my clothing. This rain is really getting me down. Today the weather promises to be better. Ted and I leave camp together with the temperature promising to rise. We cycle on a paved but rough road for approx 60 kms. I stop and take a picture - I am sure you can see forever or just about forever. Finally getting to Kenaston, the blizzard capital of Sask. We stop for a bit of food and a warm coffee. I am somewhat worried because I am not overly dressed and the sky is black. Fortunately the sun decides come out and things warm up. We are lucky. We pass a couple of other riders and stop for a break, other than that this is a normal riding day. We arrive at the camping spot around 3:00. The showers are large and clean. There are four unisex rooms with

person paceline at the start. After a couple of hours we met Andrew and Jack and formed a 4 person paceline. We changed lead every 1 km and tried to maintain a 20 kph pace. Even that was hard and lots of times the speed dropped to 15 kph. We took a break every hour, and needed it. This was just a difficult ride. This day turned out to be the most difficult riding day of the whole tour. The wind wore us down then beat us – it really was a tough day. Tomorrow is a rest day and I need to do a laundry as well as rest my backside. The group responsible for dinner arrived late and this was understandable. I think that dinner was closer to 9:00 than 6:00 and nobody complained. I took a warm shower (25 cents and worth every cent) and then started a washing. Fortunately I did not have to wait too long and had everything washed and dried by 9:30. Then to bed. No problem sleeping. My dinner was a tuna salad sandwich with a coke and a banana. Not all that nourishing but all that I wanted.



Stove and camp in Regina

Day 23 - Regina - Rest Day

What a surprise today I awoke to the pitter patter of rain falling on my tent. I suppose this is better than raining on a riding day but I am not too sure.

Today I had planned to have a nice brunch someplace and clean up my bicycle. The bicycle is running perfectly but needs normal preventative maintenance. Today I was planning on devoting a few minutes to cleaning and oiling and tightening things. The forecast is for the rain to stop by noon hour so this afternoon I will spend a few minutes on the bike. For the first time today I notice that my right knee is a bit sore. I would think that is caused by the abuse it received yesterday. Nevertheless I will take particular care of my knees. My cadence probably slowed in the wind yesterday so over the next couple of days I will really spin-spin-spin.

See all the hardships I have - and you thought I was off on a 75 day holiday :) The pitter patter of rain has now increased and is a bit of a steady rain. We sure are having our share of inclement

weather - and we started out with so much sunshine. I am sure this will change.

Day 24 - Regina – Melville

The day following a rest day seems to be a strong riding day. Today we started with 4km of hard packed road. Did I mention that it had rained overnight and the hard packed surface was now muck - not to be confused with mud but thick muck. Once through that we started on our way to Melville Sask. The coffee situation has not improved at the truck. I have resigned myself to not having any coffee until we stop at the first coffee stop we see. Hot chocolate has replaced coffee and it seems to work okay - but you can still taste a burnt flavour in the hot chocolate. This morning we have a bit of a side wind and a bit of a tail wind. Things are looking up. We start a paceline with 5 of us- Ted, B, James, Michael and myself. We get a couple of pulls from Michael but the paceline falls apart. A bit of a side wind as well as too many people causes a problem. Michael goes off on his own as does James. For the rest of the day Ted, B, and I ride either in a loose paceline or side by side. James drops back from time to time and we have a bit of fun upping the speed and causing a bit of stress on the body. Good fun. Tonight we are camping at a Municipal campground where there is a ball tournament taking place on the weekend. The kids and their parents are filling the campground quickly and we have a small space - but close to the toilets. The setup is really first rate - that is for the ball diamonds. The washrooms and shower rooms are a disgrace. I don't believe that they have been cleaned this year!! A really lovely town but the washrooms - leave a little to be desired. (I am being very polite - alright very very polite). During the night the kids play until dusk, then the parent decide to have a campfire and a few drinks and discuss the upcoming tournament. Sleep was a problem and everyone woke up in a sleepy foul mood. Can't blame the kids. Besides when we awake the sun is rising and we are going 150 kms to Binscarth. From time to time I get emails asking questions or making comments concerning my notes on the road. My sister Catherine, has mentioned that I seem to have a pre-occupation with food and the meals. Well, not a pre-occupation but I sure mention the meals a lot. Food is important to us. Each day we burn calories in the range of 5,000 to 6,000. Food becomes a concern. We eat often and a lot. Supper in Melville is an example. We had stopped for a milk shake on the way into town and then had a snack when we got to camp. Dinner was a lentil soup (it was a left over from two nights ago and needed serious help in the spice dep't) and then burritos and rice. Jack Fells has now been given the nickname 'the chicken nazi' (from the Seinfeld show) because he counted out the pieces of chicken we could have with the burritos (4) then after everyone had eaten we were allowed second, again he counted out the pieces of chicken we could have. The dinner actually lasted two full courses with the odd person having thirds. Desert was rice krispie squares (in our case they were balls). We all had one or two helpings. During the day I had eaten at least two peanut butter sandwiches, stopped at DQ for a blizzard (med size) as well as 3 bananas and gorp. Breakfast was porridge and pancakes. This cycling sure gives you an appetite but you sure burn up a lot of calories. Next time I am on the road to Manitoba!!

Day 25 - Melville – Binscarth

The sleep last night left something to be desired. I awoke with a tent filled with dew - everything seemed damp. Got up and had porridge for breakfast (no second choice!!) Ted and I left the campground together a little before 0700 and

started on our way to Binscarth Manitoba. We cycled through the town of Melville and started on our way. Without the aid of coffee for me I might add. After about 50kms we were stopped at the side of the road having a snack when a vehicle stopped and asked if we were okay. A really nice lady asked if we needed help and how we were enjoying Sask - really nice. We kept looking for a store/garage etc and could not find anything. We cycled 88kms to Esterhazy before we stopped for a coffee break. Here we were directed towards a restaurant 'Soup and Stuff' for a sticky bun and some coffee. The lady was a good salesperson so we also had a bread pudding. We continued on, the roads that Bud had selected are really good - very quiet yet paved and good for a cyclist. A car would have difficulty because of the rolls and the holes but the bikes are much slower and easier to manoeuvre. We saw the large potash operation about 10 kms out of Esterhazy - wow is it ever big. Finally we arrived in Manitoba - not a big sign but there was a sign where I had my picture taken. Prior to the Man border I started to notice the increase in grasshoppers. They were really plentiful and we would run over them with our bicycle tires and make a crunching sound. Once a large truck passed us and a mass of them was tossed in the air and into my face. Quite an experience. Finally, after 150 kms, we arrived at the camping spot. Warm showers and an opportunity to dry out all my camping stuff. Things are looking up! The campground in Binscarth is beside the highway in a valley - we have been treated to a truck coming down the hill and using its engine arrester to brake the truck. That sure woke everyone up. Looking forward to tomorrow - should be a shorter ride, only 120 kms. Must remember to turn the clock back one hour.

Day 26 - Binscarth – Minnedosa

Today is cooking day so we attempt to get an early start. By leaving early we will have extra time to prepare supper. Today the ride is approximately 120 kms and is considered short. We have a later than normal breakfast. The cooking crew canvasses the riders about the time they would like to have breakfast so today is not so early. Tomorrow we are on breakfast duty and it will be from 0600 to 0700 because we are going to have to ride about 150 kms and the temperature is to be 32 degrees. This morning we start slowly, enjoying the scenery but also annoyed that the road is rough and bumpy. The bumps not only shake the bicycle but also do damage to ones butt. Just before lunch (10:15) we stop at Shoal Lake for a sticky bun and a coffee. The coffee pot on the truck is still not working properly. Here we eventually have about 10 riders. Once you see a bicycle outside a restaurant or bakery you automatically drop in to see what is good. The lady behind the counter is quite excited about all of us stopping. After a long break we finally leave. Next stop is Minnedosa. I need a new battery for my watch. I replaced the battery just before leaving but it is not working properly and will not give me my heart rate. Once I have a new battery we go to the camp spot. Today we have a really nice spot beside a lake. I walk to the showers only to discover that they cost \$1.00 - back to the tent to get some money. Dinner is a soup/stew recipe that Michael has created. Lots of veggies, potatoes, etc with pasta thrown in near the end. We fry up some chicken and tofu - the meal is about 20 minutes late but is a success. John Ross' wife is visiting and brings a cake. It is a welcome to Manitoba cake and is very good. The meal is a hit. Unfortunately we must also clean up the mess. This takes well over an hour. Of all the things I am doing this summer I must admit that cooking duty is not my most favourite. Tomorrow morning we are making porridge and eggs. Fairly easy and we should not have any problems. Unfortunately the weather is quite warm and some of our clothing is damp from previous rains as well as clothing needing a good washing. The truck is not a pleasant area when it is warm. Tomorrow we must pack the truck before we can start our ride. Late start, hot day and a long ride - not the best scenario. I am enjoying the summer nevertheless. This is a great way to see the country and a wonderful way to spend the summer. I do miss the family so I guess there is a price for everything.

Day 27 - Minnedosa – Portage la Prairie

Last night was not a great night for sleeping. Seemingly it was Saturday Night Dance Night at a reunion party. After the dance some of the partiers returned to their trailers and continued the party. This is after the kids had kept us awake as well as fire sirens. There was a RV near my tent that had an air conditioner compressor running for the majority of the night, this was topped with a thunder and lightning storm at 3:45. Not a lot of sleep. To make things more interesting I was on cooking duty and had to be up at 5:30 to start breakfast preparations. Porridge and eggs were on the menu and everything went smoothly.

Michael had to leave the clean up so that he could work on his chain, Ted and I had to finish the work by ourselves. We finally got everything organized and started the ride. The first portion was to Neepawa (home of Margaret Laurence) where we stopped for a coffee and a muffin. To that point we were averaging about 30 kph - a freshly paved and a tail wind. What a lovely day. When we left Neepawa we still had the tail wind, but we were soon to change direction and the wind soon came into our face. This turned the cycling ugly. We had about 100 kms left and a head wind that was strong - it was a long day. Ted and I struggled onwards. The heat increased to well over 30 degrees C and this caused us to take frequent stops for ice cream, sandwiches and whatever helped us rest a bit. I

drank lots and lots of fluids. When stopping at a garage I bought fresh cold water and was it ever good. Finally we



Canola Field near Portage la Prairie

made it to Portage. I was tired and happy to get the days ride finished. The prairies are lovely but a headwind sure knocks your energy. Ray returned to the ride today after spending the last day with his wife and family. He brought a wild rice, bacon, veggies and chicken dish that was really delicious. For the first time I had Saskatoon berries. These berries are similar to blueberries we know in Ontario, they are very tasty and seem to be very juicy. This was a great meal, really delicious. Everyone will be in bed early tonight since we all got very little sleep last night and today was really difficult. The heat and the headwinds have worn us down. Bed early. Tomorrow I will meet Pauline's parents and her brother and sister in law at Lockport. Hope to have a foot long hot dog too!

Day 28 - Portage – Beausejour

This is a day that had everything. The morning started with the arrival of a garbage truck at the dumpster in the campground. I'm telling you that 0500 comes early. Might as well get up because I have a full day ahead. Breakfast was French Toast and porridge. Everything went well and we were out of camp early - approx 0700. We started with a group of four riders. Ted, B, Jack and myself. A great many of the others had decided to go to Winnipeg and do some sight seeing and shopping. I was meeting Pauline's parents in Lockport and would go there. Things were going very well when B got a flat tire. While she was fixing the flat another group of riders met up with us and we now had a group of 8-10. All of a sudden there was a big bang and B had over inflated her tire and it burst. Back to repairing the tire. A group of us decided to leave her alone (with Ted and Lindsey) and we went on towards a town for a coffee and sticky bun. The black sky that had been following us decided to rain and a bit of lightning and thunder - things were deteriorating, along came a wind and of course it came directly into our face. This was not a good omen. The good news was we went to Marguerite for a break and the lady running a small cafe was quite excited to see the group come into the store. We waited and waited for B and her helpers. Finally she arrived after having three flats and a problem with her chain. Time was now 1045 and I wanted to be 80 kms down the road by 1300. This was not going to happen. Jack and I left the cafe and formed a two man pacerline. The rain came as did the wind. We worked quite hard and made it to Lockport at 1345.

Quite good considering the conditions. Here I met the in-laws. John, Frieda, Johnny and Jan were waiting for me, Susan showed up for a second to wish me well. I had a foot long hot dog at Skinners and Grampy had a coupon for a second hot dog at half price. Not wanting to miss out on a bargain I had the second hot dog. I was quite full. When I started to get ready to leave Johnny brought in all the goodies they had brought for me. There must have been three boxes of goodies and I was on my bike with only a rear rack pack that was already quite full. I gave it a good try and managed to get a lot of things packed into the bag and my pockets. Nanny put about 5 power bars in the rear pockets of my cycling jersey. I then left to finish the final 30 kms of a 160 km plus cycling day. The heavens opened and I got soaked right to the skin. I was wearing a nylon shell and that helped by I was really wet. My watch is causing me a problem, in the rain it has started to steam up and I can not see the figures. Not only is it my watch by also my heart monitor and I use it regularly. I made one final stop in Beausejour to say hello to Pauline's cousin Jeff who runs the GM garage in that town. We had a nice chat and then I went to the camp. A new rider had joined us for a portion of the ride. Katherine seems to be a very strong cyclist and is fitting in quite easily. A great day - rain, wind, hail, and sun. Dinner was late, actually quite late and I finally ate after 8:00. No problem falling asleep. Tomorrow is a long 170km day to Kenora.

Day 29 - Beausejour – Kenora

Day 29 Beausejour to Kenora.. Did I mention that it rained yesterday. When I awoke this morning there was a heavy mist, so heavy that you could barely see across the campgrounds. Once again everything I owned was wet and I was packing a wet tent. The air was actually cool and I wore a jacket and arm warmers while I ate breakfast. Bud has said this would be an easy century day (over 160 kms) and we were all excited to get on the road. The cook crew must have been extremely excited because we had one choice for breakfast - porridge and it was sticky; to remedy the situation they put in more water and apricots. We now had sticky, wet porridge with fruit chunks. On the road our first stop was Whitemouth about 40 kms away. We stopped at the Hilltop Bed and Breakfast for a second breakfast. The owners must have been surprised to see four cyclists waiting at the front door when 0900 hrs rolled around and they opened. They were even more surprised when about 10 of us showed up over the next half hour. The food was really great, all home made breads for toast and fresh eggs and pan fried potatoes. Really good and quite inexpensive, the service was a bit slow but this was more than made up for by the smiling young girl waiting on our tables. After just over 1 hour we left to get back on the road. B was riding with us and was very excited because her husband had driven from Wisconsin to meet her in Kenora. We met him on the way and B left us to take a ride with him - wonder why? By now the fog had all burnt off and Ted and I picked up the pace a bit. We kept a fairly steady pace through the Whiteshell Provincial Park and on to West Hawk Lake. We stopped there and had a \$4.50 milk shake. It was good but still a bit expensive. We took a short cut to get onto Highway #1 - ducking under a closed road gate and riding through some grass but made it anyways just at the provincial border. We stopped and got a free map at the Ontario visitors bureau then followed hwy 17 to Kenora. At Kenora I checked the mileage and the avg speed and noted a 168k m ride with an average pace of 26.4 kph, definitely a personal best century ride for me. Once at the camp we set up and I completed my washing. Then for entertainment I watched the courting ritual of the Canadian male. Yes, Katherine is quite attractive and has managed to acquire a few suitors. I do not know if they are serious suitors but it was sure fun watching them as they jockeyed for position. It is great to be married and an observer in this ritual. I am sure there will be more to follow. Went to bed a little after 9:00 and did not have any problem sleeping. Mel whose tent was close to mine mentioned that perhaps there was snoring coming from my tent - can you imagine. The funny thing is that it was not an even snore but just one 'snort' every now and then. Oh well, it didn't bother me. Woke early to the sound of rain - it was followed by the crack of thunder and then lots more rain. Rest day and it is raining - oh well. Not to worry when I finally got up the rain was a drizzle and it promises to be a good day.