

Leading up to Leelanau

Register by Aug. 15
to save on fall tour

The glories of Leelanau County are the stars of the show for hundreds of riders expected to participate in the Leelanau Harvest Tour (LHT) on Saturday, September 15.

"A lot of riders come here for the beautiful scenery and then stay for the wineries, the beaches and our great small towns," says Tour Director **Dan Wittkopp**. "We encourage riders to come for long weekend mini-vacations to visit the Sleeping Bear dunes, Fishtown, Glen Arbor, Northport and Traverse City, not to mention Suttons Bay where the tour starts and ends."

Wittkopp notes that last year's tour brought 522 riders to the area, with some coming from thousands of miles away. This year, the tour has registrants from California, Wisconsin, Illinois and Ontario.

Organized by the Cherry Capital Cycling Club (CCCC), the tour offers 20, 40, 65 and 100-mile routes, with five food stops along the way and a sumptuous buffet at the end of the ride, catered by Sparks BBQ of Traverse City. More than 50 volunteers staff the tour and its sag wagons, making for a smooth, enjoyable ride.

"Another thing that we're proud of is that Leelanau County has very good roads that are better and safer than most," Wittkopp says. "That, combined with the beautiful countryside, rolling through farmlands and forests, makes for a very positive day."

He notes that many cyclists consider the LHT a bargain, considering the food stops and barbeque. Registration is currently \$35 for individuals and \$80 for families, with fees increasing to \$40 and \$90, respectively, on Aug. 15.



Although this is only his second year as tour director, this isn't Wittkopp's first rodeo when it comes to major events. Back in the '90s he served as Fleet Captain for a regatta of 65-70 boats he organized at the San Juan Island Yacht Club in the Pacific Northwest.

Wittkopp and his wife, Patricia, lived for more than 20 years on San Juan Island, where he served as the director of finance and operations for a small start-up company that manufactured printed circuit boards and developed software drivers.

Thereafter, the Wittkopps moved to the highlands of Costa Rica for several years before rising crime levels in the country prompted them to return to their home state.

Currently, Wittkopp rides an average of three days a week with the CCCC, aiming to achieve 120 or more miles in the saddle. He notes that the tour serves as a major

fundraiser for the CCCC, which uses the funds to support cycling in the Grand Traverse Area.

For more details on the Leelanau Harvest Tour, or to register, go to <http://www.cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org>

Root for the Roubaix

This Saturday's Cherry Roubaix bike race will include two teams from the Cherry Capital Cycling Club in the dash around Leelanau County.

Team organizer **Mike Corcoran** notes that the women's team is called the Queen Annes and includes **Merry VanderLinden, Mary Peterson** and **Darcie Pickren**.

The men's team, known as the Balatons, includes **Mike Stivani, Bradley Terrill, Tom Haug, David King** and **Matt Jones**.

Mike Corcoran is also riding in an unsponsored team, the Morrelos, which includes **Ben Laird** and three guys known as "TBA." Come on down and give our riders a cheer!

President's Letter Some events you don't want to miss

The RAT ride is a wrap, and we're already prepping for the Leelanau Harvest Tour ride in mid-September! Many thanks to the 60-plus volunteers who made the Ride Around Torch a big success. First-year tour director **Paula Anderson** and her husband **Scott Pyles** worked hard to make the RAT happen, and there were many smiling faces along the route. Check out the large number of RAT photos posted on our club website.

Also check out details of the Social Saturday ride on August 18, as indicated below, and the fun Honor rides on Mondays when our members often host coffee during or after the ride. These are the types of social events our members have requested and are a great way to meet new people in the club.

On August 4, please come to Herman Park, located on the south side of Suttons Bay, for the finish of the Cherry-Roubaix bike race. Cheer on the club's womens & mens teams, who finished second and third respectively at the Bike Benzie Fondo in early June.



Mike Corcoran has done an excellent job setting up time trials and organizing both teams. For more information on this ride, log onto www.cherry-roubaix.com.

Later this year, look for a member survey in your email inbox. We'd like your input on how to make this a better bike club, and what additional things we should be offering. One idea we're kicking around is a Bike Touring 101 "class" that involves a round table talk about touring, sharing ideas from experienced bike tourists, and then a two or three-day

"mini-tour" of Leelanau County. Stay tuned!

Ride safe! Bill Danly



Good times on the beach in Elk Rapids during last month's Social Saturday.

Save the date for Social Saturday!

Save the date for this summer's second Social Saturday ride and picnic on August 18.

The event takes place at the Cherrybend Community Park Pavilion, 10090 E. Lincoln, with several rides available, followed by a picnic.

All food, beverages, and place settings will be provided by the CCCC. It's BYOB if you prefer something in addition to kid-approved beverages.

Questions? Contact Carrie L. Baic at 213-313-4990 or socialdirector@cherrycapitalcyclingclub.org

New Members

A big CCCC welcome to these new faces at club events!

Name	Hometown
Jeff Gaft	Honor
Darby Moreno	Honor
Lisa Breithaupt	Lake Ann
Amelia Wilks	Mancelona
Mark Gottsleben	Fife Lake
Joe Mello	Suttons Bay
Ginny Mello	Suttons Bay
Sue Welton	TC
Rick Rump	Maumee, OH
Kenneth Semproch	TC
Tim Ward	Glen Arbor



SPEAKING of socializing: Anne Couturier (center), pictured here with Mikke Kilts and Carrie Baic, hosted a get-together and picnic at her cottage on Long Lake last week after the Honor Ride with dozens of cycle club members turning out on a perfect summer day. Thanks Anne! Photo by Joane Mitchell.



Bob and Laura Otwell making the scene in Florence, Italy near the start of their two-month bike tour.

East Europe on Two Wheels

Bob & Laura Otwell's 2,500k 'Magical Mystery Tour'

Bob and Laura Otwell have enjoyed the kind of bike-touring adventures that most of us can only dream of: they've ridden the circumference of the United States, have biked the wilds of Alaska, and have rubbed elbows with a million other cyclists on the streets of Bogota, Colombia, among other epic events.

So, what to do for an encore? This spring, the Otwells completed a 60-day, 2,500 kilometer ride across East Europe, winding their way from Italy through Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Germany to Copenhagen in Denmark.

That meant riding about 40 miles per day, mostly down quiet country roads through the farmlands and vineyards of East Europe along with towns that were rich with medieval heritage.

"Our purpose was to ride from sea-to-sea, meaning from the Adriatic to the Baltic," Bob Otwell says, adding that he and Laura had been thinking about making this trip for several years in between their other cycling adventures.

Residents of Traverse City, Bob and Laura are both civil engineers with an admirable record of community service. Bob served as executive director of TART Trails for several years after wrapping up his engineering firm in town, while Laura obtained

a teaching degree and went on to work with TART, SEEDS and Norte.

A NEW DIRECTION

In 2011, their lives took a new direction when they rode more than 9,000 miles around the perimeter of the United States, camping all the way. They followed up that trip in 2014 with a ride around the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec province, then completed a three-month ride through the wilderness of Alaska and British Columbia.

"Part of the reason we wanted to go to Europe this time was because when we rode

to Alaska there weren't many restaurants or campgrounds," Otwell says.

He adds that the comforts of Europe were immediately evident. "We left on April 15th when there was still snow on the ground and landed in Italy where it was 70 degrees with all of the leaves on the trees."

Ironically, they began their trip north by riding south through Italy.

"We stayed in Bologna for three days and then headed south for eight or ten days, ending up in Siena. Then we took a train to Venice and headed north."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Laura and Bob camped most of their way across East Europe.



BLAST FROM THE PAST: A recent issue stated that CCCC's first ever women's race team was formed this year for the Grand Fondo. Wrong! The first ever women's CCCC race team was formed in 1987. Karen Wells, Karen Ferguson, Donna Fedrigon, and Joy Schmuckal raced in the Big Mac Attack, a team time trial from Mt. Pleasant to Mackinaw City. They placed 1st with a time of 9:17:00.

Karen Wells remembers: "The women's team in 1988 was myself, Karen, Joy and Barb Aja. We raced in the Big Mac Attack again and took second place with a time of 8:46:32. Awesome experience! Very looong race!"

At left: Karen (Gilbert) Ferguson, Karen Wells, Joy Schmuckal, and Donna (Fedrigon) Wares on the Attack in 1987. Below, the '88 team with the addition of Barb Aja.



A day on the road in old Slovenia.

Biking East Europe

Continued from last page

"Italy had the most road cyclists with lots of them riding in packs," he adds, "but elsewhere in Europe everywhere we went we found bicyclists just out doing everyday things, like little old ladies on bikes going out grocery shopping."

Laura rode a Surly Long Haul Trucker with size 38 tires, while Bob rode an "Otwell" touring bike that he hand-built with size 32 tires. "When it comes to bike touring and tires, I feel the wider the better," he says.

ON THE ROAD

The couple camped most of the way across Europe, staying in an occasional inn. "One of the nicest places we stopped at was an

inn in Slovenia where they let us camp in the back for ten euros. It had a sauna, a shower, beers and a pastoral, mountainous view across the way."

The couple were lucky to have no rain and no flats, the bane of most road trips. "We started calling it the magical mystery tour, but way-finding was hard because we went through seven different countries with no language that we could speak," Otwell says. He adds that English is spoken in most big cities in East Europe, but not so much in the countryside.

Fortunately, they had a phone app that helped them locate campgrounds. They also used whatsapp, which is popular in Europe, to keep in touch with friends and family back home.

IMPRESSIONS

The Otwells saw notable differences between what was formerly East and West Germany, which were reunited in 1989. There were few, if any, bridges along the river marking the old border. The villages of what was once communist East Germany seemed to be quieter, like they were set back in time.

"Probably the place that we liked best was riding the backroads and the little villages of the Bohemian Czech Republic," Otwell says. "That area fit my vision of what the trip was all about."

Another memorable stop was in Tapolca, Hungary, where Laura's grandfather came from. Copenhagen also proved to be a fun stop where the Otwells wrapped up their trip with a three-day stay. "The flow of bicycles in Copenhagen is unbelievable; everyone rides and the hardest thing is finding a place to park your bike."

Bob's philosophy on bike touring is pretty laid back. He advises going slow, enjoying the scenery and rolling on the aforementioned wide tires for safety. "We tried to be really flexible on this trip and just talked to people as much as possible," he says.

Although Bob and Laura are both retired, they seem to have no limits on where to ride and what's possible on two wheels.

"We met a Dutch couple who were close to 80 years old that went riding for a month in Morocco in the winter," Otwell says. "They really extolled the scenery there and all of the things to see and do. It makes you think about all of the places you can go on a bike."

How to deal with an aggressive driver

By Adam Marsal,
(www.welovecycling.com,
Jan 22, 2016)

The vast majority of drivers are very polite. But there are some exceptions. Some time ago, Lance Armstrong and a riding partner were brushed by a motorist. Lance gave the guy the finger and threw a rock. The motorist turned the truck around and ran them off the road. That doesn't sound like a good idea, does it? What is the best you can do when a bike rage is about to come? Here are 10 pieces of advice and suggestions collected from other cyclists.

Try to claim the lane

That way, if a driver overtakes too close to you, there is a space for you to escape into. If you ride too much on the right side and a driver overtakes closely you have no space to do anything. If he or she is getting too close to you with the back of the car, slow down. That way any collision will be at a slower speed.

Helmet camera

Cycle with a helmet camera, so that any incident will be filmed. If it is serious enough, you can report it to the police.

Always smile

Challenge them, but do it with a smile. Anyhow, if they're angry you can always make off in a direction they can't.

Evidence

Take out your phone and photograph the driver and the number plate. If they think that you are about to take photographs to



you are going to meet a complete nutcase high on drugs, carrying a knife or an iron bar.

Drama

Pretend that your iPod is in fact a police radio and ostentatiously read their number plate into your sleeve.

Middle-finger

Flipping the finger never ends in anything good. By no means raise your middle-finger. Flipping the finger invariably brings on the Red Mist Syndrome. Anything can happen then.

Safety Corner

By Skip Miller

identify them in a report to the police their behavior tends to calm dramatically.

Stay calm

Shake your head at them and say nothing. This will make them wonder what they did wrong. Sometimes they honestly didn't know they broke some rule which could offend your rights.

Don't be aggressive

Just turn around, give them a smile and a wave at them to thank them for being patient, even though they are not and you're actually in the right. Keep in mind that less aggressive response usually calms people down.

Never get into fights

Ignore any eye contact and allow them to pass. The problem is you never know when

Simple kiss

Blow them a kiss! It's even more effective when you're dressed in Lycra. They will be so concerned about what other people might think that they will just shut up and drive away.

And what experts say:

As cyclists, we're in the far more vulnerable position in these conflicts, so staying safe—and not escalating with a response—should be your top priority. When you're dealing with someone yelling at a stranger on the street, you're not dealing with a rational person. So do not shout back. Do not gesture at the driver in any way. Breathe, think, and ride away in one piece. If this person is an absolute idiot, don't you want them to stay away from you? In case of exchange of opinions admit the driver scared you. You can smile or give a thumbs-up. Just because this person is angry doesn't mean you have to be. If they're continuing to drive, they're answering your wish—let them continue on their way.

cycle shorts

BY THE NUMBERS: More than 600 riders turned out for the recent Tour de TART, which should be helpful in raising funds for completing the trail around Boardman Lake.... Meanwhile, the Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association was thrilled with the turnout at their Trails Festival in July. They had a goal of 300 riders, but despite a forecast of torrential rains, they had 351 registrants, up over 100 from last year.

SPEAKING OF the trail around Boardman Lake, recently the Traverse City Track Club donated \$15,000 to complete the final segment of the trail. TART Trails will use the

funds to help construct two bridges and 300' of boardwalk to make the long-sought loop trail a reality.

MESSAGE FROM Meagan McLain (who is a new mama once again!). A few volunteers for Cherry Roubaix are needed on August 4 at Herman Park in Sutton's Bay from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 1-3 p.m., serving food to the riders. If you are able to spend a few hours helping out, please let Meagan know at: meagan@mclaincycle.com

TOUR TALK? Bob Otwell, whose European bike trip is featured in this issue, is considering a "Bike Touring 101" workshop for cyclists interested in touring. Experienced tourers would discuss bikes, trailers, equip-

ment, routes and other inside info. Stay tuned for a possible event this winter.

BATTLING BIKE TOURS: The Club's Leelanau Harvest Tour has some stiff competition this year, with five other major biking events being held around the state on the same day, Sept. 15. Those include the Tour De Troit in the Motor City, the new Lakeshore Harvest Ride in Douglas, the Lord of the Springs bike race in Yankee Springs, the Grand River Tour de Ionia and the Big Mac Fall Shoreline tour in Mackinaw City. The competition underscores the need to support our club's Leelanau Harvest Tour this fall! Register now to avoid the fee increase on Aug. 15...



Volunteers Jay and Darlene Warren and Ann Huber helped make the good times roll at the food stop in Eastport.



Club Safety Director Skip Miller volunteered with Carol Miller and Sandy Mitton.

Makin' it happen: RAT volunteers at the final food stop.

RAT Report

A gorgeous summer day and a great turnout made for another successful Ride Around Torch in mid-July.

First-time RAT Director **Paula Anderson** was apprehensive about the turnout right up to the week of event, but things worked out just fine. "We had 917 riders registered with about 80 no-shows. I think it went pretty well!" she says with a laugh.

Final numbers are still being tallied, but it's anticipated that the RAT raised about \$12,000 to be used by the club to support cycling in the Grand Traverse area.

Paula is super-thankful to the 60-plus volunteers who came out in support of the tour. Kudos also to photographer **Steve Mitton**, who took most of the photos here. Look for more of Steve's work on the club's website and facebook page.



Jim and Joane Mitchell got to ride for a change!



Sag wagon volunteers Ed Parker and Doug Coster helped Annie Vanderwater with a flattie...



Whether you rode with a pack or just with a friend there was plenty of camaraderie on this year's Ride Around Torch.



Club Vice President Dave Drake joined Linda Deenen and Connie Zoutendyk in selling merch.



Don't ya just love that last big hill on the home stretch of the RAT? Dave Orr takes it to the limit...



Left: A strong turnout by local cyclists, including a group lead by Bob McLain. Photos by Steve Mitton.