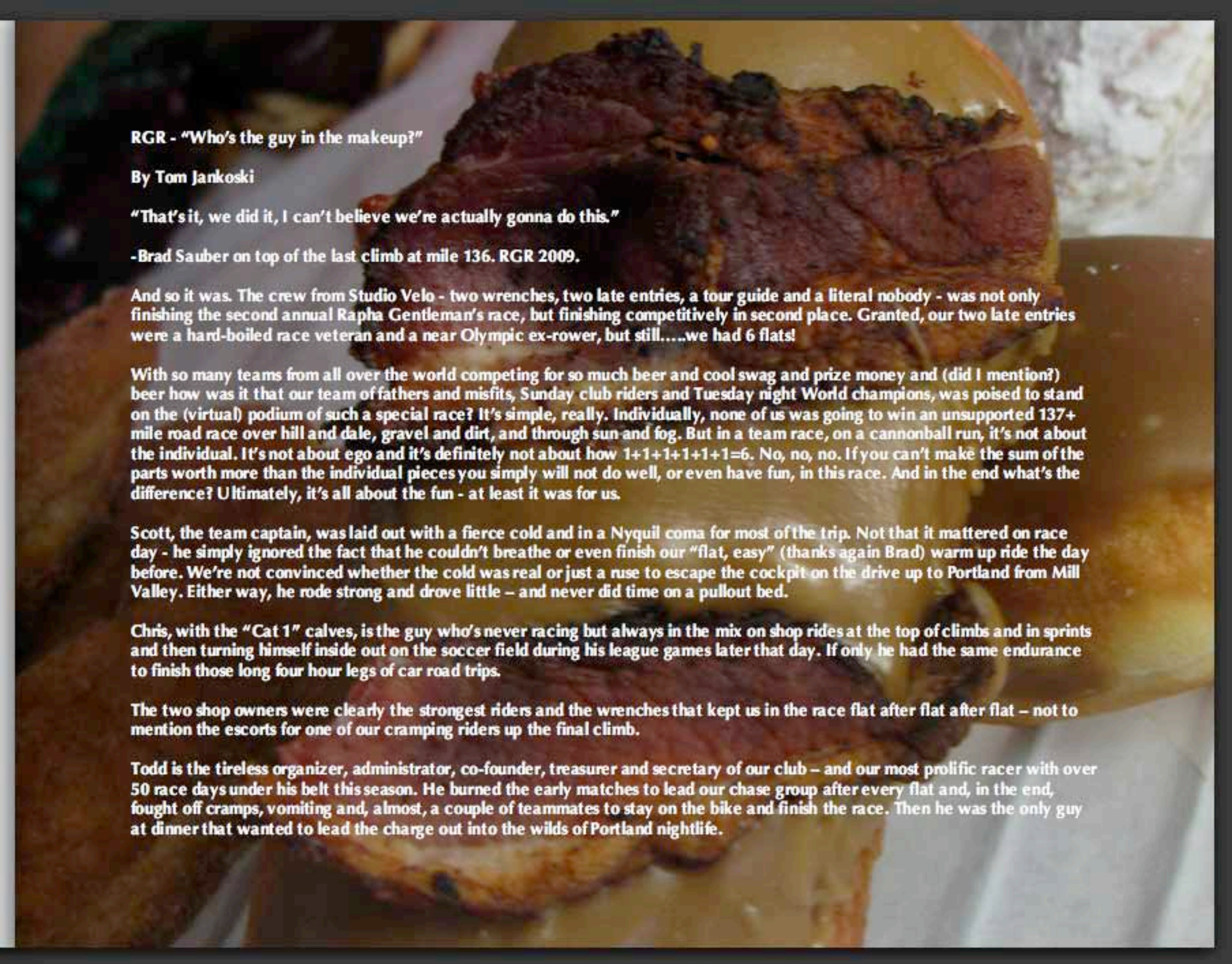




RAPHA GENTLEMEN'S RACE

SEPTEMBER 12, 2009 OTIS to PORTLAND - 137 miles



RGR - "Who's the guy in the makeup?"

By Tom Jankoski

"That's it, we did it, I can't believe we're actually gonna do this."

-Brad Sauber on top of the last climb at mile 136. RGR 2009.

And so it was. The crew from Studio Velo - two wrenches, two late entries, a tour guide and a literal nobody - was not only finishing the second annual Rapha Gentleman's race, but finishing competitively in second place. Granted, our two late entries were a hard-boiled race veteran and a near Olympic ex-rower, but still.....we had 6 flats!

With so many teams from all over the world competing for so much beer and cool swag and prize money and (did I mention?) beer how was it that our team of fathers and misfits, Sunday club riders and Tuesday night World champions, was poised to stand on the (virtual) podium of such a special race? It's simple, really. Individually, none of us was going to win an unsupported 137+ mile road race over hill and dale, gravel and dirt, and through sun and fog. But in a team race, on a cannonball run, it's not about the individual. It's not about ego and it's definitely not about how $1+1+1+1+1+1=6$. No, no, no. If you can't make the sum of the parts worth more than the individual pieces you simply will not do well, or even have fun, in this race. And in the end what's the difference? Ultimately, it's all about the fun - at least it was for us.

Scott, the team captain, was laid out with a fierce cold and in a Nyquil coma for most of the trip. Not that it mattered on race day - he simply ignored the fact that he couldn't breathe or even finish our "flat, easy" (thanks again Brad) warm up ride the day before. We're not convinced whether the cold was real or just a ruse to escape the cockpit on the drive up to Portland from Mill Valley. Either way, he rode strong and drove little - and never did time on a pullout bed.

Chris, with the "Cat 1" calves, is the guy who's never racing but always in the mix on shop rides at the top of climbs and in sprints and then turning himself inside out on the soccer field during his league games later that day. If only he had the same endurance to finish those long four hour legs of car road trips.

The two shop owners were clearly the strongest riders and the wrenches that kept us in the race flat after flat after flat - not to mention the escorts for one of our cramping riders up the final climb.

Todd is the tireless organizer, administrator, co-founder, treasurer and secretary of our club - and our most prolific racer with over 50 race days under his belt this season. He burned the early matches to lead our chase group after every flat and, in the end, fought off cramps, vomiting and, almost, a couple of teammates to stay on the bike and finish the race. Then he was the only guy at dinner that wanted to lead the charge out into the wilds of Portland nightlife.

continued - Hobbs , the cool headed analyst and navigator that had our route mapped for every 3 meter stretch of road before us, blazed trails through airport security and generally had any type of logistical snafu handled before it could even happen. Thanks to Hobbs, our beds were turned down and there were chocolates on our pillows every night. He even had a fully charged air compressor in the trunk of his car to fix the flat tire he'd inherited while his car was parked at the airport over the weekend. Oh – he was also a decorated collegiate rower at Oxford – yes, that Oxford.

Brad, the big diesel engine with the local insight, put our travel infrastructure in place arranging key transport for the night before, day of and return legs of the trip. Did I mention he's the only guy I know that can pull a pace line at 26 mph while snapping award worthy, professional images for the photographic record? Oh yeah, and he was still feeling the affects of a bad crash a couple of weeks back. Calling Brad "just" a tour guide is like calling the Dali Lama a mellow guy.

And finally, there was me. I brought nothing but average legs, an inexperienced and perhaps naïve riding outlook that couldn't see past 87 miles but refused to believe anything horrible could actually happen, bad food (pop tarts anyone?), and the wrong sunscreen. Yep, that's right, I brought sunscreen for babies, not bikers, and by the start of the race I was recognizable only as the "guy in the makeup", laying the stuff on so thick I was more ready for work at a geisha house than a bike race. My edge, as always, was just being smart enough to know I didn't know anything. When I was told to eat, I ate, when they said drink, I drank. When they gave me funny looking pills for lactic acid relief and electrolyte replacement I shoved them in my mouth with nary a question.

Our team bled together, sweat together, ate and drank together and, yes, even shat together (we have pictures....er... unfortunately?). Of course we rode together too, but that meant more than rotating pace lines and short, disciplined pulls. It meant no egos, no bickering, no impatient waiting at the tops of climbs or during checkpoint stops. It meant stronger helping weaker, and later, maybe surprisingly, weaker helping stronger. On this day - this crazy, fun, emotional day - for Studio Velo the sum of our parts was very much greater than 6. I think it was closer to 22 – as in all 22 cases of beer that was our 2nd place bounty.

And who knows, with slightly better luck, maybe just one fewer flat, we might've actually won the thing.

When you surround yourself with such a great team success is surely better measured by the volume of laughter than by the color of the medals. But just in case, we're all riding tubeless next year. Allez Studio Velo!



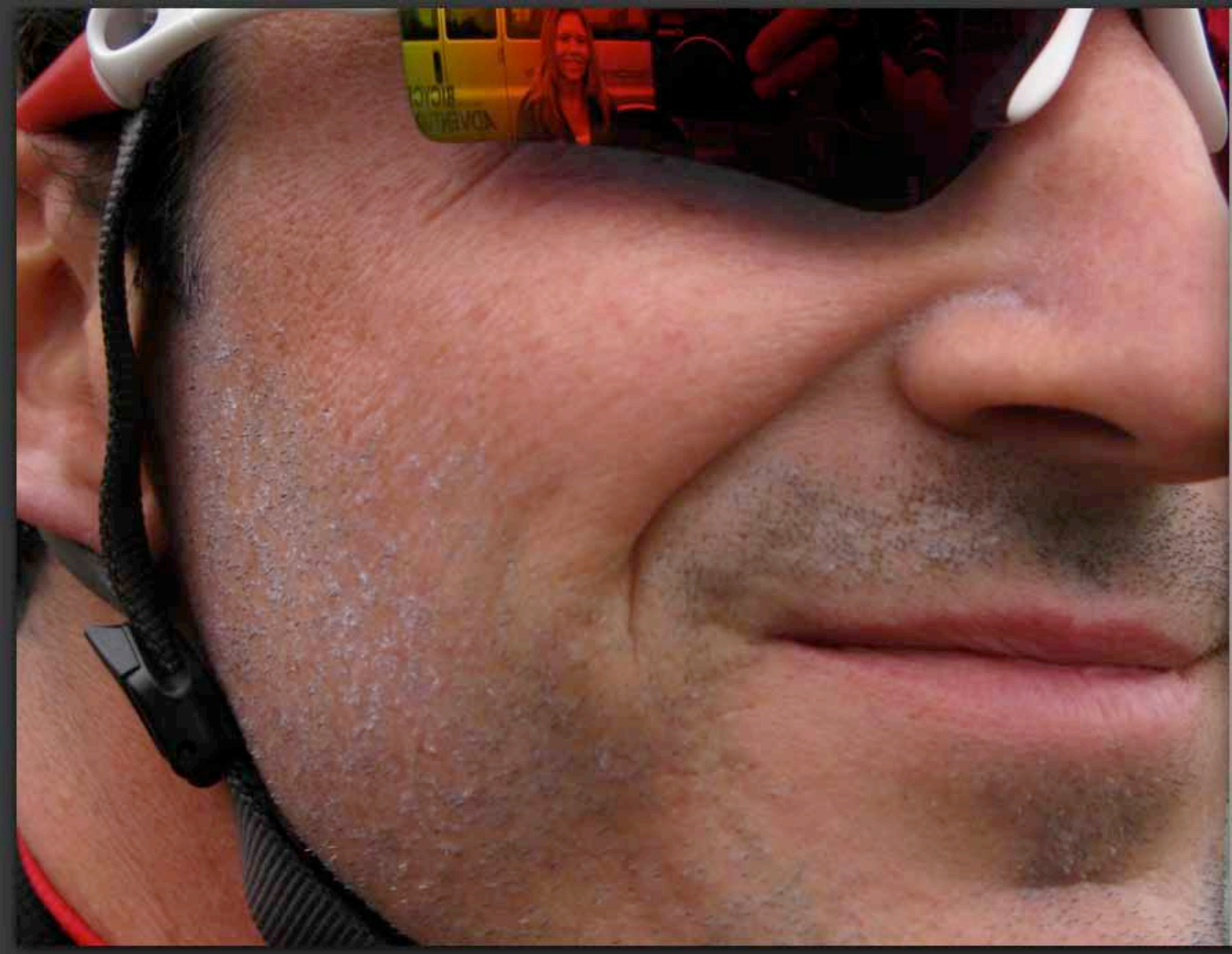






OREGON RGR ROUTE-137 MILES







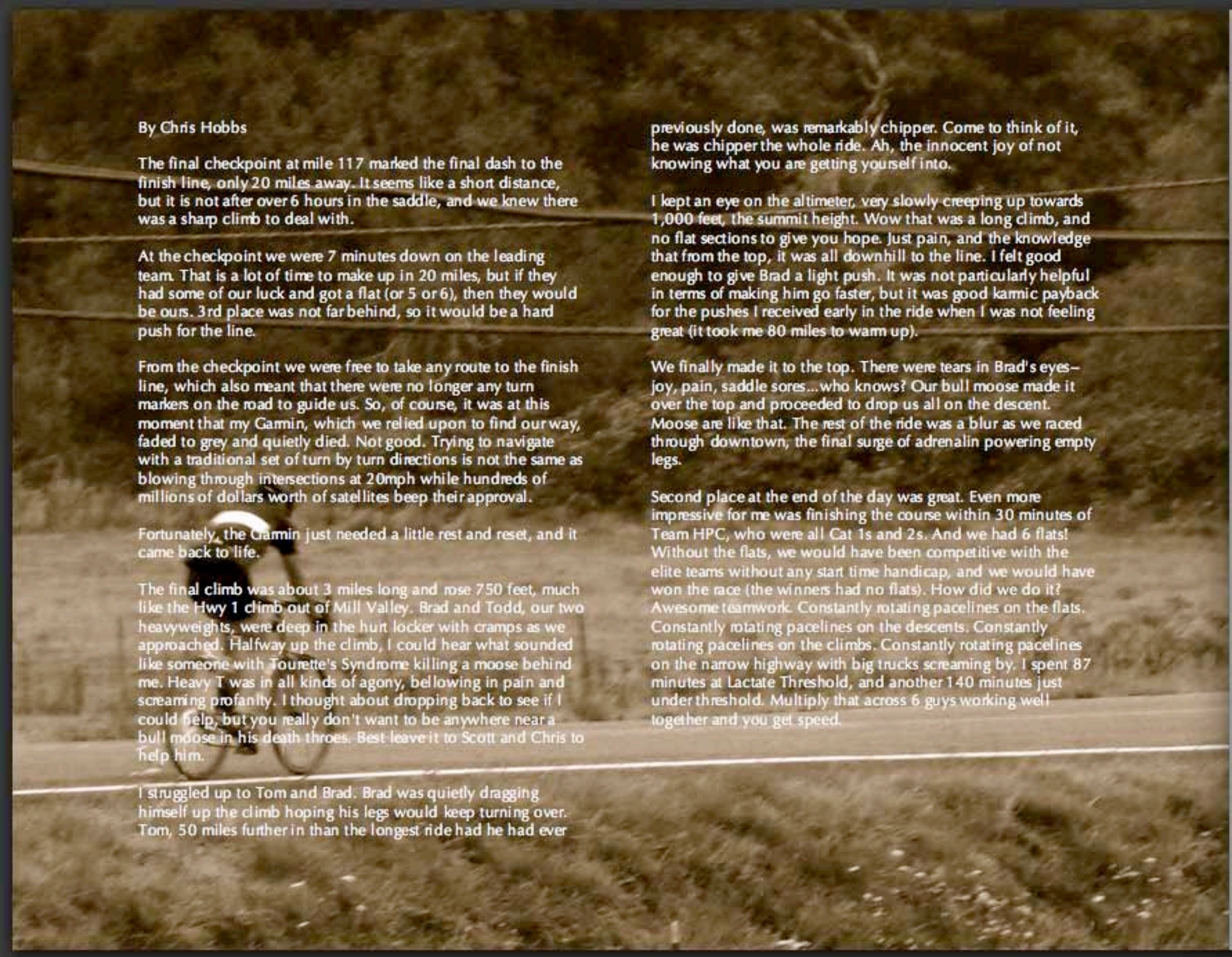
RGR - A Wounded but Happy 'Soldier'

137 miles 6,900 vertical feet of climbing, 7 hours and 29 minutes ride time and a complete melt down at on the last climb 125 miles into ride. What is a complete meltdown!! For me it is when both legs start to cramp, I am talking, every muscle from my knee to my hip, and two (friends?) grab the back of your jersey and make sure you don't sit on the side of the road. For anyone who has experienced leg cramps at the end of a hard ride you know how painful and debilitating they can be. Both Chris and Scott, sometimes together and sometimes alone, pushed me for over two miles up the last climb while I whined and moaned like a wounded soldier lying for dead on a battle field. It is moments like this that you find out who your friends really are and how a real team race differs from regular "team" races.

This race and the accompanying days and nights have produced hours of stories to be told for years to come. I have been very lucky in my life to experience many special days on the bike, and the greatest ones are the ones you can share with your riding buddies. The satisfaction of being part of a team far exceeds any personal achievements.

I often say that the people I most enjoy racing with are the ones I can spend three hours in the car with riding to and from the race. In this one weekend we traveled on planes and by car for many hours and the effort and commitment demonstrated by each of the members of the team made this amazing weekend happen. We overcame a 5am departure to get the race (getting up at 5am is not something I have always been successful at, not to mention we were out until late the night before fueling our bodies w/ pasta and bread for the long haul), missing race waivers, a cold (Scott was on a steady regiment of Nyquil), flat tires (Brad had 4 flats plus the rocks Scott put in his tire while repairing the first flat), and Tom also had a 1 inch slice in his rear tire around mile 105, missing van keys (one key is gone, the other was locked in the van, and it took more team work to get the locked van door open that it did to get 2nd place!), and a long line at Voodoo Donuts in Portland that may have cracked lesser men, just to mention a few. For the most part I enjoyed very little responsibility on this trip other than showing up and riding my bike, and for that I must thank, Tom, Chris Hobbs, Brad, Scott and Chris. I also want to wish a speedy recovery to Colin for whose miss fortune (Colin broke his hand on a ride a few weeks before the race) allowed me to participate in this killer weekend. I will be working hard and looking forward to the next cycling adventure with the gang from Studio Velo. Todd Crisafulli



A cyclist is riding on a paved road that curves to the right. The road is bordered by a grassy shoulder on the left. The cyclist is wearing a white helmet and dark clothing. The background is a blurred landscape with trees and a clear sky.

By Chris Hobbs

The final checkpoint at mile 117 marked the final dash to the finish line, only 20 miles away. It seems like a short distance, but it is not after over 6 hours in the saddle, and we knew there was a sharp climb to deal with.

At the checkpoint we were 7 minutes down on the leading team. That is a lot of time to make up in 20 miles, but if they had some of our luck and got a flat (or 5 or 6), then they would be ours. 3rd place was not far behind, so it would be a hard push for the line.

From the checkpoint we were free to take any route to the finish line, which also meant that there were no longer any turn markers on the road to guide us. So, of course, it was at this moment that my Garmin, which we relied upon to find our way, faded to grey and quietly died. Not good. Trying to navigate with a traditional set of turn by turn directions is not the same as blowing through intersections at 20mph while hundreds of millions of dollars worth of satellites beep their approval.

Fortunately, the Garmin just needed a little rest and reset, and it came back to life.

The final climb was about 3 miles long and rose 750 feet, much like the Hwy 1 climb out of Mill Valley. Brad and Todd, our two heavyweights, were deep in the hurt locker with cramps as we approached. Halfway up the climb, I could hear what sounded like someone with Tourette's Syndrome killing a moose behind me. Heavy T was in all kinds of agony, bellowing in pain and screaming profanely. I thought about dropping back to see if I could help, but you really don't want to be anywhere near a bull moose in his death throes. Best leave it to Scott and Chris to help him.

I struggled up to Tom and Brad. Brad was quietly dragging himself up the climb hoping his legs would keep turning over. Tom, 50 miles further in than the longest ride he had ever

previously done, was remarkably chipper. Come to think of it, he was chipper the whole ride. Ah, the innocent joy of not knowing what you are getting yourself into.

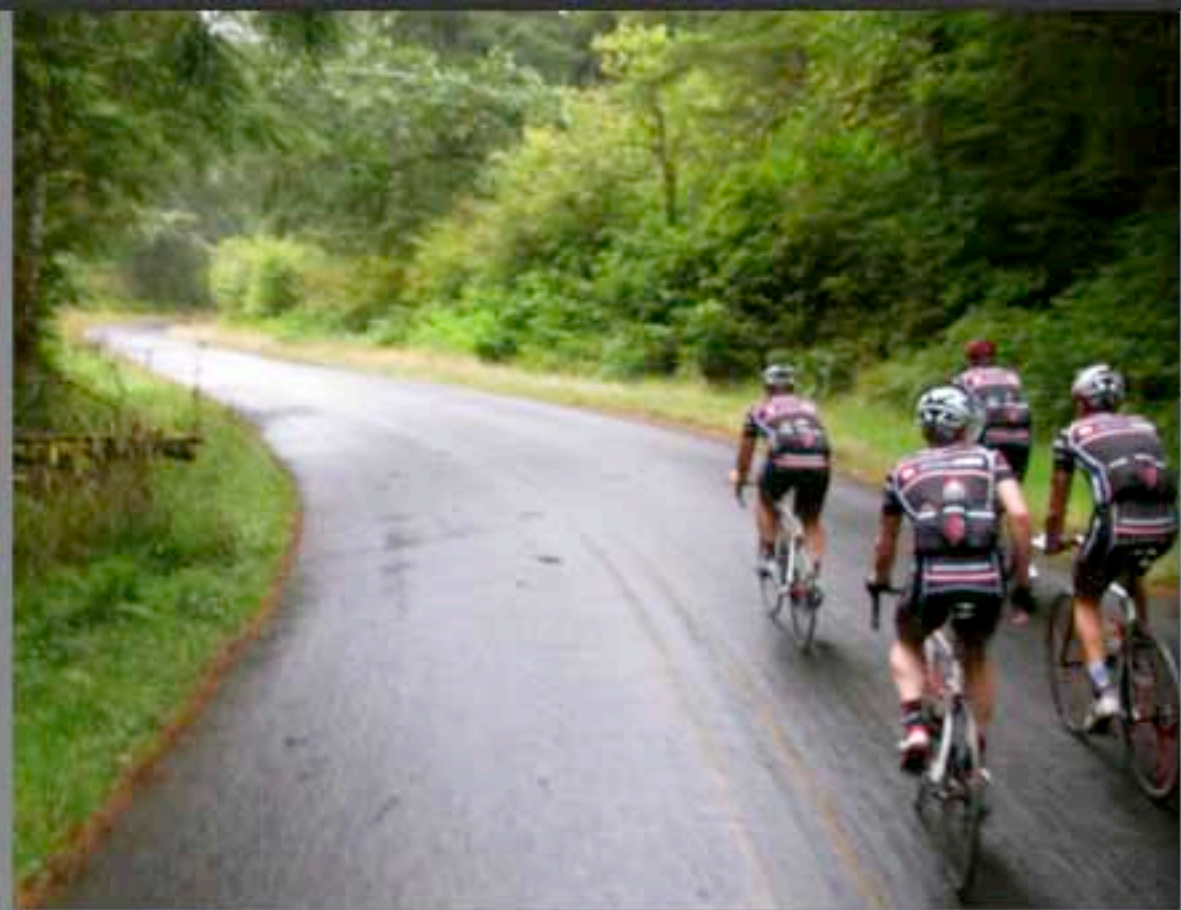
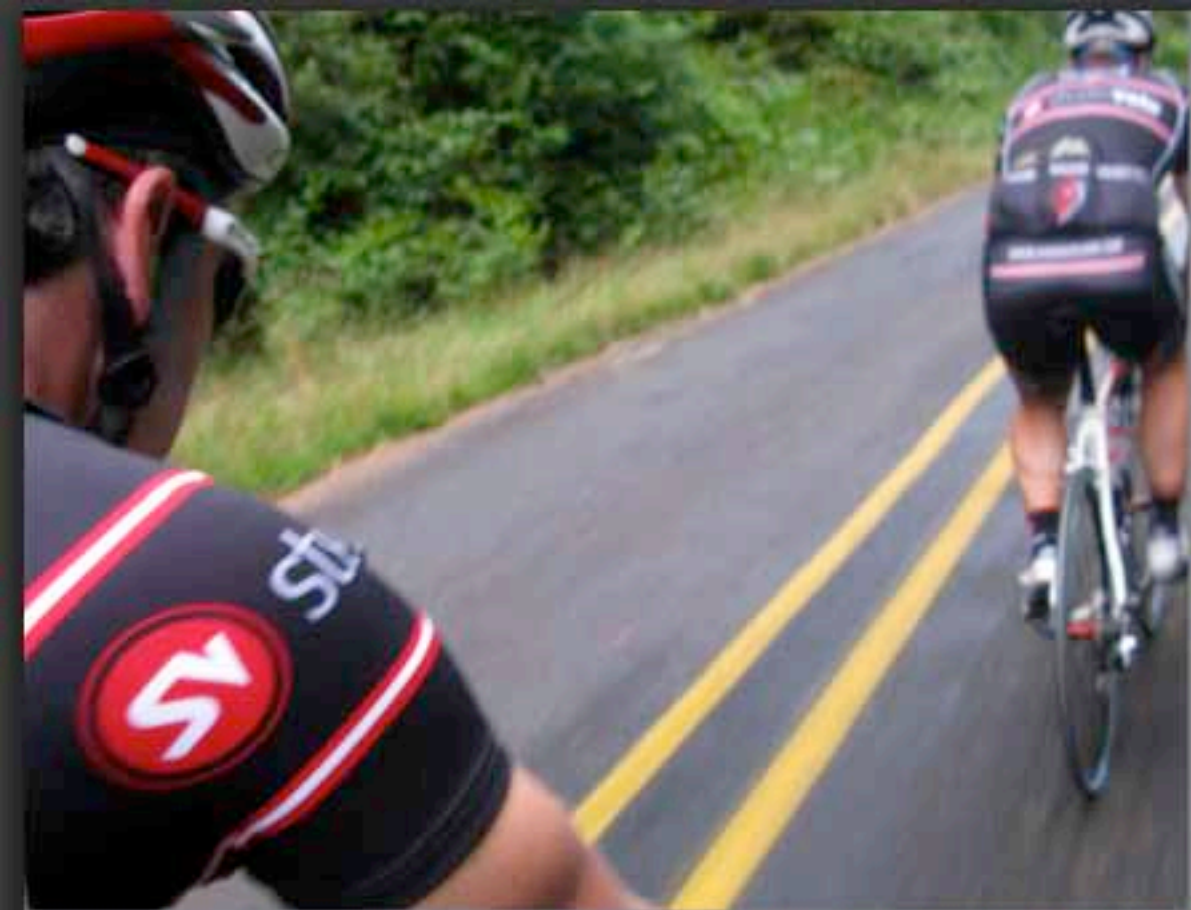
I kept an eye on the altimeter, very slowly creeping up towards 1,000 feet, the summit height. Wow that was a long climb, and no flat sections to give you hope. Just pain, and the knowledge that from the top, it was all downhill to the line. I felt good enough to give Brad a light push. It was not particularly helpful in terms of making him go faster, but it was good karmic payback for the pushes I received early in the ride when I was not feeling great (it took me 80 miles to warm up).

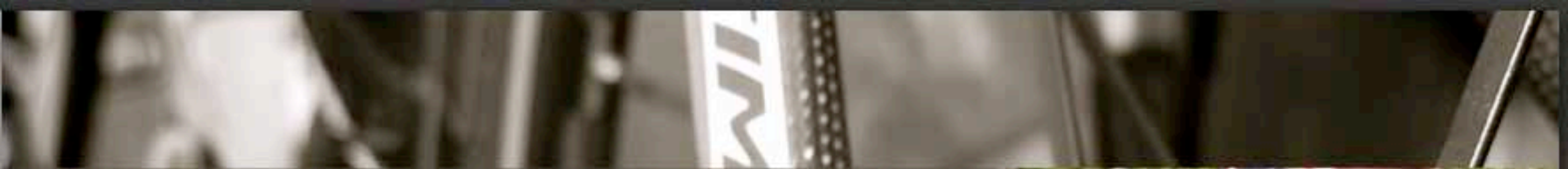
We finally made it to the top. There were tears in Brad's eyes—joy, pain, saddle sores...who knows? Our bull moose made it over the top and proceeded to drop us all on the descent. Moose are like that. The rest of the ride was a blur as we raced through downtown, the final surge of adrenalin powering empty legs.

Second place at the end of the day was great. Even more impressive for me was finishing the course within 30 minutes of Team HPC, who were all Cat 1s and 2s. And we had 6 flats! Without the flats, we would have been competitive with the elite teams without any start time handicap, and we would have won the race (the winners had no flats). How did we do it? Awesome teamwork. Constantly rotating pacelines on the flats. Constantly rotating pacelines on the descents. Constantly rotating pacelines on the climbs. Constantly rotating pacelines on the narrow highway with big trucks screaming by. I spent 87 minutes at Lactate Threshold, and another 140 minutes just under threshold. Multiply that across 6 guys working well together and you get speed.









UNSANCTIONED

UNMARSHALLED

RACE STATS

137 MILES

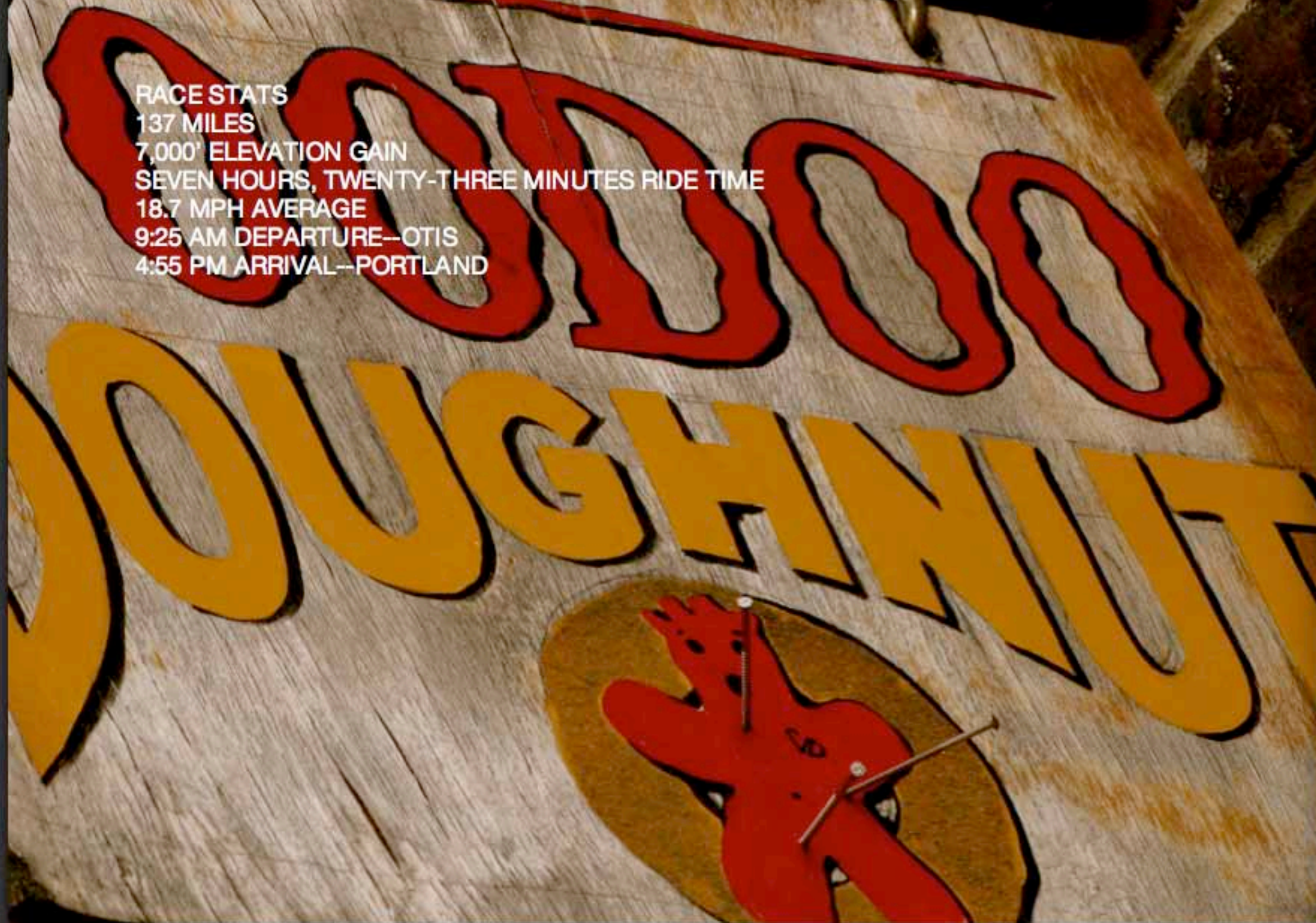
7,000' ELEVATION GAIN

SEVEN HOURS, TWENTY-THREE MINUTES RIDE TIME

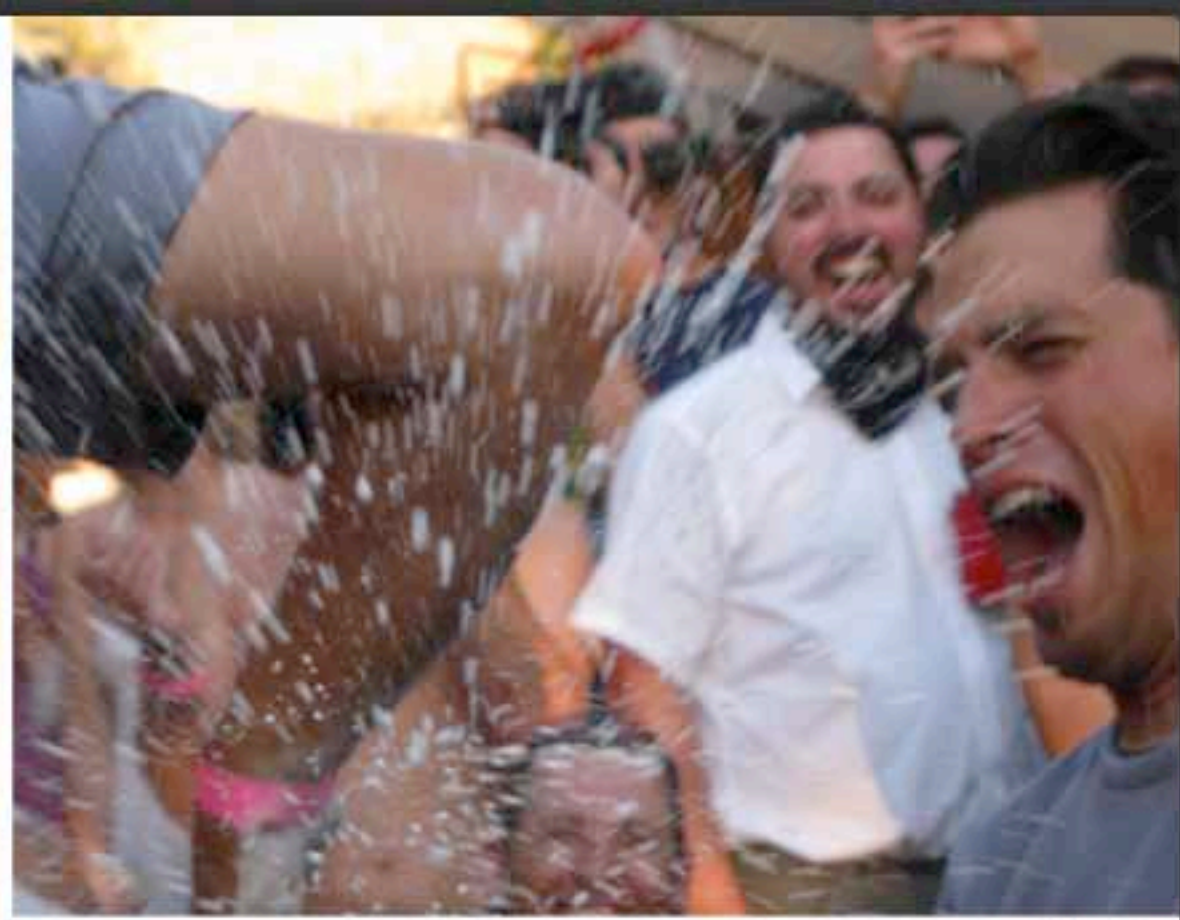
18.7 MPH AVERAGE

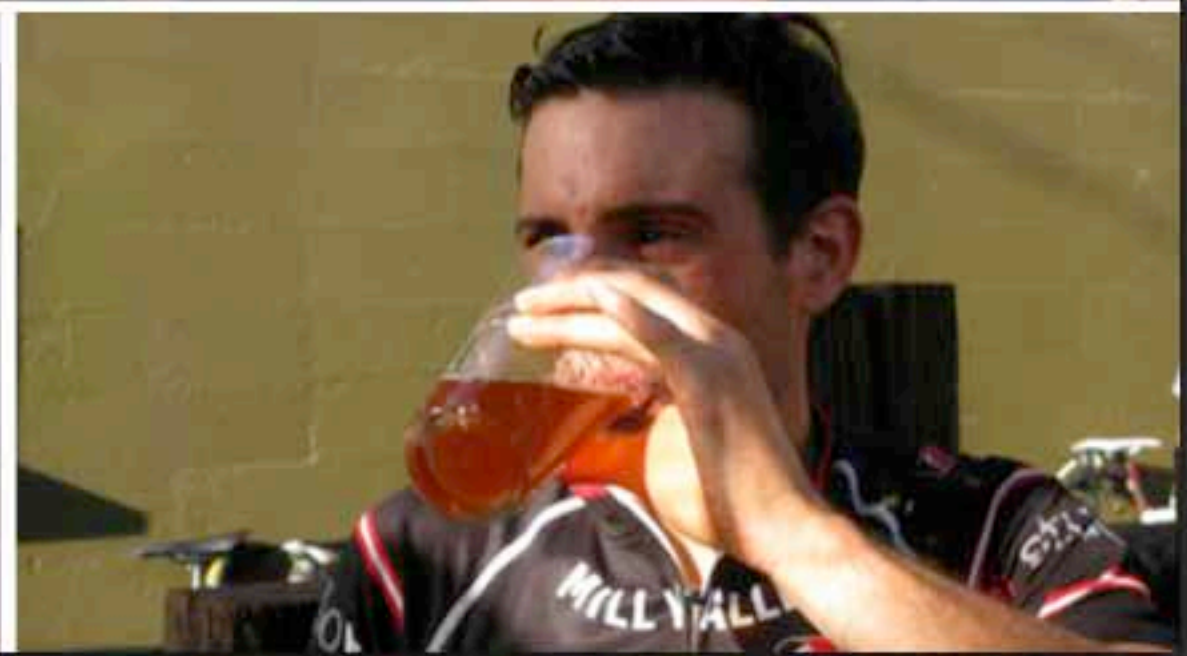
9:25 AM DEPARTURE--OTIS

4:55 PM ARRIVAL--PORTLAND





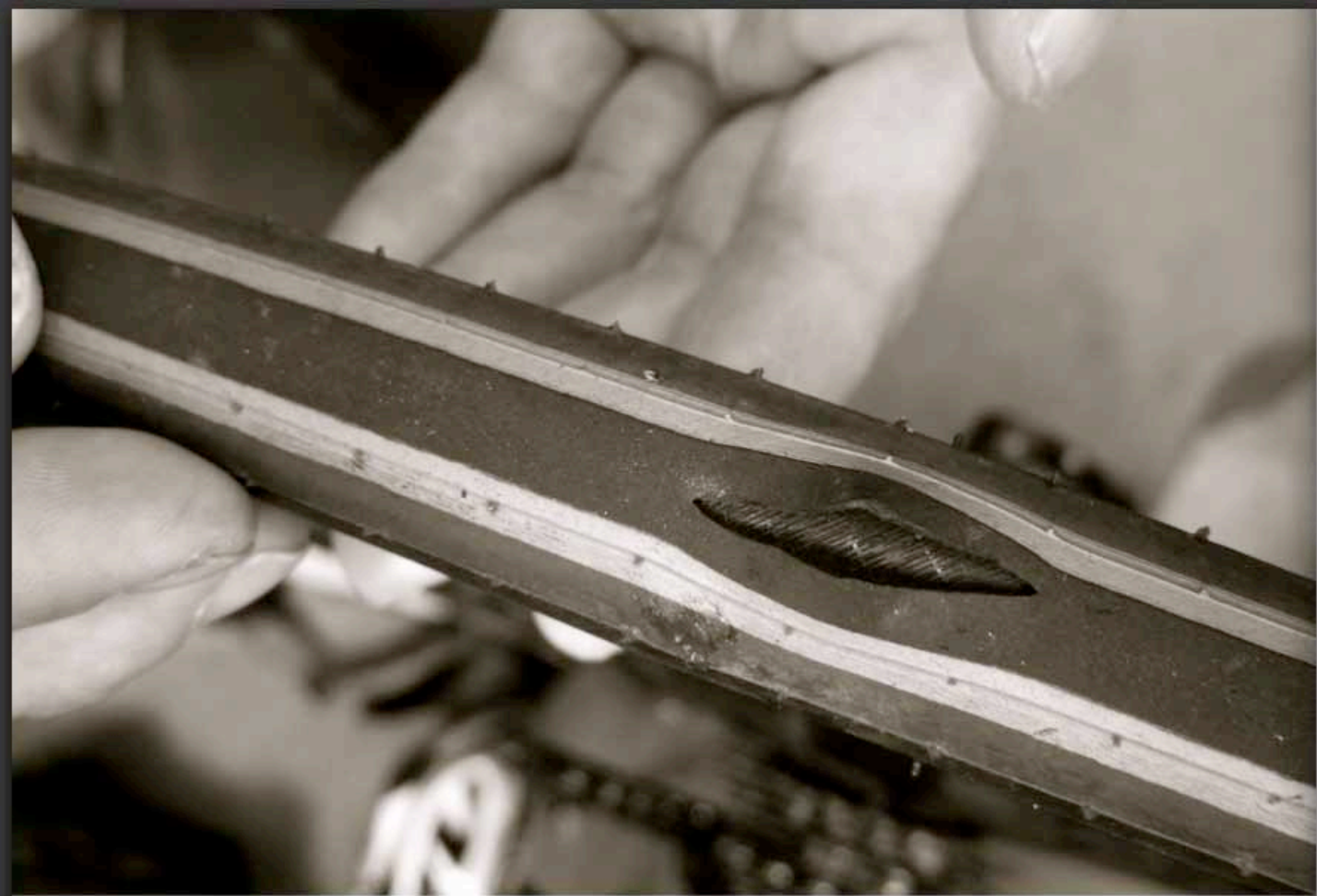




OREGON



SHARE THE ROAD



A special thanks to the men of Studio Velo - Scott, Chris & Colin. Thanks for organizing this hootinany. We look forward to many more.