

Kanata - Nepean



2 Winterburn Terrace, Nepean ON K2G 5W9

January, 2003

This is the first Newsletter of 2003 and I wish everybody a **Happy New Year!!!**

Not surprisingly there are slim pickings for cycling news at this time of year! That's why we rely on you for your news, views, or any other items of interest. For example, I know there are brave souls out there who cycle right through the Winter (not me, I hasten to add!) and it occurred to me that some anecdotes of their experiences and maybe some helpful tips would make interesting reading! You can e-mail me at bkeneford@aol.com , call me at 592-3453 or snail mail me at

*20 Halldorson Crescent,
Kanata K2K 2C7*

with this or any other news. This is your newsletter, so let's hear from you!

We also want to hear from anyone interested in leading a tour this year. Those hazy, lazy days of Summer seem far away but soon we will be planning our tour schedule. Please give our tour director, Stella Val, a call if you're interested and she will let you know when and where the first tour leaders' meeting will take place.

Brooke Keneford

2003 Executive

The new Executive Committee elected at the A.G.M. of November 18, 2002 is as follows:

Barrie Kirk - president
Maureen Edwards - secretary
Christine Walton - treasurer
Brooke Keneford - newsletter
Don McIntosh - website
Norine Ezard - membership
Debbie Wright - publicity
Stella Val - tour director and brochure
Doug Gilchrist, Dennis Langevin, and Penny Estabrooks - Directors at Large.

Many thanks to the outgoing Executive!

X-Country Ski Party

Sue Monaghan would like to invite all members to an afternoon ski party on Saturday, January 25th. The plan is to meet at her house at 1.00 p.m., agree on a close-by trail (probably the same trail as last year) and ski for a few hours before heading back to Sue's house for snacks and socializing!

Please call Sue at 271-1777 by January 18th if you are interested!

Reminder.....

Annual Winter Social

*With Les & Maggie Armstrong's
European Escapades*

The Cedarhill Golf Club
56 Cedarhill Drive
(off Cedarview between Hunt Club and
Fallowfield)
Nepean
825-2186

Saturday, February 1, 2003

Drinks at 6:30 – Buffet Dinner at 7:30

Rolls & Butter
Salads
Carved Roast Beef
Chicken Supreme
Vegetarian Manicotti
Roasted Potatoes
Mixed Vegetables

Selection of Cakes, Pastries & Pies
Coffee & Tea

\$28.00 Inclusive per person
Cash Bar

Please pay by cash or cheque at door.

Call Stella Val – 225-0275 or
Dennis Langevin/Norine Ezard -225-5490
by January 25th

Between January 17th and 26th Dennis and Norine will be in the sunny south. An RSVP by this date ensures we will not have to go through the membership listing and call all those we haven't heard from. If your plans change after you have confirmed you will attend please advise accordingly. Failure to do so will mean that the club will be responsible for your dinner fee!

Wine, Schnitzel and Shaw

Heeding the advice of those Dudley-do-Rights of travel who admonish us to “see our own country first”, the Keneford/Thompson/Shea touring company decided to do that very thing this September past. The plan was hatched one blustery evening the previous November when Rosie suggested a modest tour of Prince Edward County which rapidly grew into a grand tour of three separate areas of southern Ontario: Pelee Island and the north shore of Lake Erie, the Mennonite country around Elmira and St. Jacobs and the Niagara wine region. Time constraints and the mileage between these areas were overcome by our having vehicles on hand to transport our bikes over the longer stretches. In effect, what we did was a “hub-and spoke” exploration of these three quite different but equally interesting areas of the province.

Rather than belabour you with a blow-by-blow daily account of our journeys, I would prefer to give you an overall impression of the highlights.

First of all, we were happily surprised to discover that there is a whole other, lovely, pastoral and unspoiled countryside out there, just minutes off the asphalt hell that is Hwy. 401 and its demon-twin, the QEW. One quiet country morning, on a road just outside Beamsville, we caught sight of said QEW at the height of the commute - cars lined up in lemming formation, inching painfully forward, belching exhaust and baking under the growing heat of the day. Free as birds ourselves, our hearts melting with pity for those poor souls, we went on our footloose way, rejoicing. One afternoon we came across white horses roaming withers-deep in a field of late-summer wild flowers. Shortly afterwards, a flock of grouse appeared on the same road ahead of us, murmuring and milling about like fat, feathered soccer balls. One of their number had been, sadly, killed by a car and the birds appeared to be holding a full-scale Irish wake over their fallen comrade.

Our daily journeys frequently took us along shore roads, where we discovered once again the peace

and exhilaration of a wind-tossed day by these bright, shining, wonderfully beautiful lakes. The north shore of Lake Erie is to be especially noted for its unspoiled emptiness (bring a lunch, though!). One afternoon, we dragged our bikes, very naughtily, across a Dep't. of Highways barrier marking a washout and fetched up on a lovely piece of deserted road, sheltered by dunes, blooming with goldenrod and wild asters and overlooking a blue and white-capped view of the lake. Only a few hundred yards long, it was nonetheless paradise.

And nothing can compare to the morning when, having arisen at 4 a.m. to catch the early ferry off Pelee Island, Brooke came thundering up the stairs, calling for all hands to come out and see the blaze of stars just before sunrise. We stood silent and awestruck gazing upward, dazzled and drenched with starlight. Afterwards, we cycled on toward the ferry dock, through a rosy, pink dawn with the birds just beginning their day's work and a new day ahead of us as well.

For those who care for the sporting life, there is the exhilaration of being paced by a horse pulling a Mennonite buggy. It seems that local farmers often recruit their horses from among the retirees of nearby harness-racing tracks. Too old to cut it on the race circuit, these elderly hay-burners nonetheless resent being overtaken by cyclists and will give you a run for your money if you try to pass. Never mind the bewhiskered and bonneted couple in the buggy, hauling desperately on the reins.

Concerning more practical matters, throughout our holiday, the food was adequate and occasionally inspired. We discovered, to our great surprise, a few first-rate restaurants in some seriously no-horse places. In Erieau, a faded resort town which saw the last of its glory-days *circa* 1952, we discovered one such gem adjacent to our dilapidated motel. *Molly and O.J.'s* restaurant next door however, was almost equal to anything we enjoyed in France. A mystery as to what genius presided over that kitchen - and what such a talent was doing in Erieau. In a more up-scale mode, at a winery on the Niagara Escarpment, we dined deliciously in a lovely room overlooking Lake Ontario, with the lights of

Toronto shining in the distance. There were other meals, ranging from inoffensive to pretty good. Good wine was to be had too, a fact which can sometimes redeem indifferent cooking.

As a diversion from biking, there is theatre for your evening amusement. At Niagara-on-the-Lake we went to a Noel Coward play at the Shaw Festival. The town itself is heavily but tastefully touristified and features great shopping and strolling, in addition to theatre. NOTL (as the locals call it) is a fine old Loyalist town, saved from certain collapse by a major infusion of revenue from the theatre festival. Nearby is the small but worthy Gypsy Theatre in Fort Erie. We had a dickens of a job finding it, sequestered as it is in a converted Canadian Tire store, but the place has a certain panache and we very much enjoyed their production of "Misery".

And yes, there were occasional disasters, in the form of yellow-jacket infested picnic areas, depressive landladies, bibulous and overly-chatty hosts, days that turned out to be longer than anticipated, and accommodations in the middle of nowhere that did not "do" dinner. This last was solved by causing a cab to be summoned. Nor should I fail to mention the hot noontime when Phil nearly caused a fatality among the good folk of the Hay West brigade by accidentally locking one of the lads in a port-a-potty. His cries and thumps eventually caught our attention and Phil let him out, feigning surprise at the man's plight.

In summary, get off Hwy. 401 and other related works and poms of the devil. Rural Ontario is lovely. The back-county roads are quiet and welcoming. Exchange rates don't apply, the food and drink are OK to (occasionally) excellent and you don't have to get on an airplane to get there. The natives speak a form of English and are generally friendly. Take your bikes and go! We're glad we did.

Sandy Shea