

**"As a kid I had a dream-- I wanted to own my own bicycle. When I got the bike I must have been the happiest boy in Liverpool, maybe the world. I lived for that bike. Most kids left their bikes in the backyard at night. Not me. I insisted on taking mine indoors and the first night I even kept it in my bed."
John Lennon – Quote shared by Mary Conte**

Congratulations on being a Finisher in the 2003 California Triple Crown!!

Each of the rides in the California Triple Crown is a **Major Adventure** in itself!!

You are one of a very select group of 425 people completing the 2003 California Triple Crown. You should feel proud of your accomplishment!! I apologize for the lateness of this letter ... it is for last year, 2003. Here are some statistics as shown on the 2003 Winners Reports found at www.CalTripleCrown.com:

1 Rider, John T. Clare, completed all **14** of the Double Centuries
1 Rider, Dave Evans, completed **12** of the Double Centuries
2 Riders, Mark Dehanke and Tom Parkes, completed **11** of the Double Centuries
5 Riders, Brian Bowling, Charles Griffice, Jeff Landauer, Frank Neal, and Catherine Waltmire completed **10** of the Double Centuries
5 Riders, John D. Long, Tim Skipper, Mike Sturgill, Wick Waltmire, and Michael Warren completed **9** of the Doubles
6 Riders completed **8** of the Double Centuries
8 Riders completed **7** of the Double Centuries
25 Riders completed **6** of the Double Centuries
56 Riders completed **5** of the Double Centuries
66 Riders completed **4** of the Double Centuries
250 Riders completed **3** of the Double Centuries

In 1990, there were **only 32** Winners. In 1991: 75 -- 1992:81 -- 1993:77 -- 1994:174 -- 1995:290 --1996:273 -- 1997:377 -- 1998:288 -- 1999:335 -- 2000:356 -- 2001:290 -- 2002:363 and in 2003, there were **425 Winners!!**

The 2003 Winner's Reports that have YOUR NAME ON THEM are now on the California Triple Web Site at www.CalTripleCrown.com.

You have earned a complimentary California Triple Crown Patch or Refrigerator Magnet with the 2005 Schedule on it. To receive yours, send a Business Size Self Addressed Stamped Envelope at least 4 inches high to: Chuck Bramwell, 4911 Tamarack Way, Irvine, CA 92612. Include a note indicating whether you would like the Patch or Magnet which are shown at www.CalTripleCrown.com. If you want both the Patch and Magnet, enclose a \$2 check made out to "California Triple Crown Association".

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN THOUSAND MILE CLUB

**"We must never be afraid of going too far for the truth lies beyond."
Marcel Proust**

It's one thing to complete Three Double Centuries in a year - it's a whole other matter to complete Five or more Doubles in a single year. There were **109** cyclists who rode at least One Thousand Miles in Doubles in 2003!! These select riders will have an additional ribbon added to their Custom Jersey/T-Shirt indicating "Thousand Mile Club". Even more impressive are **42** of those who are members of the 2003 **Gold** Thousand Mile Club by supporting at least one Double in the series!! See www.CalTripleCrown.com to see who they are. These riders can order a Yellow Custom Jersey and have "Gold Thousand Mile Club" proudly displayed on the Custom Products!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN STAGE RACE

“Don't look back. You know what's going on back there because you just left.”
Phil Liggett

As most of you know, we started a California Triple Crown Stage Race in 1996 and the 2003 results are below. To compete in the Stage Race, you had to complete three of the most difficult Doubles: Devil Mountain, Heartbreak, and the Terrible Two. The Total Elapsed Time for all three rides was then computed and the rider with the fastest overall time was declared the Winner.

Rank	Last Name	First	Age	City	Devil Mount ain	Heartbreak	Terrible Two	Time Back
1	LANDAUER	JEFF	35	ROSEVILLE	12:55	11:10	11:13	0:00
2	CHOI	ROBERT	42	ROHNERT PARK	12:46	11:25	11:30	0:23
3	GRATTAN	DOUG	40	GARDNERVILLE	14:25	11:25	13:20	3:52
4	BREED	CAROLE	47	GARDNERVILLE	14:25	11:25	13:20	3:52
5	BOWLING	BRIAN	29	LAGUNA NIGUEL	14:54	12:04	13:53	5:33
6	BURNETT	PETER	40	CHICAGO PARK	16:14	12:01	13:53	6:50
7	HOLT	DAVID	51	LAGUNA NIGUEL	15:29	12:57	13:55	7:03
8	WOUDENBERG	TIMOTHY	45	MOSS BEACH	16:11	14:13	13:20	8:26
9	FELD	ROLLIN	46	BOLINAS	16:14	13:04	14:51	8:51
10	SMITH	SEAN	23	NEWPORT BEACH	15:32	13:08	15:44	9:06
11	ABRAHAMS	MARK	47	BERKELEY	17:36	13:04	14:51	10:13
12	BRAMWELL	CHUCK	51	IRVINE	16:30	14:24	16:21	11:57
13	TOMASSON	LARRY	55	SANTA ROSA	16:37	14:30	16:19	12:08
14	LYNCH	COLIN	48	SAN RAFAEL	17:05	17:36	15:35	14:58
15	AXTELL	JOHN	42	MINDEN	19:16	15:01	16:17	15:16
16	DEHANKE	MARK	55	GLENDALE	20:47	16:31	16:43	18:43
17	BALLARD	RICHARD	45	SANTA ROSA	21:35	19:19	15:18	20:54

California Triple Crown Stage Race Plaques were presented to the top 3 Men (Jeff Landauer, Robert Choi, and Brian Bowling) and the Tandem Team of Doug Gratton and Carole Breed at the Awards Breakfast held on 9/21/03. Paul McKenzie received an Honorable Mention Award after setting a new tandem record on the extremely hot 2003 Terrible Two!! Unfortunately, we didn't have any Women Finishers but the top 3 Women will also receive a plaque in future years. You can check these plaques at www.CalTripleCrown.com.

You don't have to do anything special to sign up for the Stage Race. In 2005, all you have to do is to sign up and ride your heart out on the **Mulholland Double, Devil Mountain Double, and the Central Coast Double**. Of course, that's much easier said than done!! Also, if you ride any Stage on a tandem, you must ride all three Stages on a tandem with the same partner.

The California Triple Crown lays down this challenge: be among the select few who are able to finish the Stage Race in 2005!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN CLUB COMPETITION

Congratulations to the following cycling clubs on the 2003 Leaderboard with the California Triple Crown:

- Davis Bike Club with 25 Finishers
- ADO Gang with 14 Finishers
- Orange County Wheelmen with 12 Finishers
- Fresno Cycling Club with 11 Finishers
- Santa Rosa Cycling Club with 10 Finishers
- Western Wheelers with 10 Finishers
- Almaden Cycle Touring Club with 8 Finishers
- Kern Wheelmen with 8 Finishers
- Orange County Rebel Riders with 8 Finishers

- Sacramento Wheelmen with 8 Finishers
- Veloce Santiago with 8 Finishers
- Grizzly Peak Cyclists with 7 Finishers
- Redlands Water Bottle Transit Company with 7 Finishers
- San Fernando Valley Bicycle Club with 7 Finishers
- Marin Cyclists with 6 Finishers

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN HALL OF FAME

“Winners are losers who got up and gave it one more try.”
Dennis De Young

The California Triple Crown Hall of Fame was started in June of 1999 to recognize those who have accomplished a significant milestone by riding over 10,000 Miles in the Double Century Series!! These select few cyclists have completed over 50 Double Centuries!! New Hall of Fame web pages will contain resumes for each of the people inducted in the Hall of Fame.

These select few who are in the Hall of Fame have demonstrated a huge commitment to long distance cycling. They have shown **a commitment to excellence that very few cyclists have demonstrated anywhere in the world.** Future inductees into the Hall of Fame may also include Ride Organizers and Support Volunteers who have demonstrated a huge commitment to the California Triple Crown Double Century Series, as well.

The following riders were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Awards Breakfast held 9/21/03 after the Knoxville Fall Classic Double.

Howard Anderson spent several years of Velodrome racing in New York ... He was inducted into the California Triple Crown Hall of Fame after completing 50 Double Centuries or 10,000 Miles in Doubles. Howard is 74 years young!! His advice to new riders: *“Train enough so that you will enjoy it, then if you enjoy it your training will have more purpose. And if you have more purpose improvement soon follows!”* Howard says biking keeps him healthy, happy and hungry!

John T. Clare completed his First Century way back in the 1960's, started riding Doubles in 1999 and has now cranked out well over 50 of them ... he completed 15 in 2000 and 15 more in 2001!! His advice to new riders: *“Pace yourself. Eat right: don't try something new. And remember that trying to gain time by going like a banshee downhill isn't worth the risk. It's wiser to gain your time on the climbs, not the descents.”* John T. is 62 years young but feels like 35.

Ken Bartholic completed his First Century in 1990, his First Double in 1991, and has now completed over 50 of them!! He's also known as the California Triple Crown Route Sheet Engineer. Ken said his most influential rider is John Robbins because they rode most of the early Doubles together and it was good to have mutual support. His tips for new riders: *“Pace yourself. Learn what your nutrition needs are. Follow the training program in Bicycling Magazine.”*

Richard Hoff was inducted into the California Triple Crown Hall of Fame for completing 10,000 Miles in Doubles at the young age of 50 after completing his first Double in 1994. He has completed 9 Straight California Triple Crowns including 4 Terrible Twos. He cycled across America in 25 Days back in 1996 with the PAC Tour Team, rode well every day, and finished in better health than he started with. His advice for new riders: *“Stay within yourself!!”*

John Beam was inducted into the Hall of Fame for completing 50 Doubles at the age of 52. Just 14 years ago, John was smoking two packs of cigarettes a day and now he smokes up the mountains on the Double Century Circuit. His personal philosophy is: *“LIVE TO RIDE, RIDE TO LIVE ... Go hard or go home!!”* His best Double Century was at the 1996 Terrible Two when he remembers feeling so strong and fast at the end and he completed 9 Doubles that year!

Ron Hanson completed his First Century in 1988, his First Double in 1992, and has now completed over 50 of them ... many with his very good friend, Dave Evans!! Ron's love of nature is the reason that the Eastern Sierra Double is his favorite double century ... He says that the scenery is some of the best in the world and why he enjoys the ride so much. His advice to new riders: *“Talk to Dave, talk to Dave, and talk to Dave.”* ... Dave Evans is a great mentor!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN WEB SITE

The web site is the best way to keep in touch with all the latest that's happening. Just go to www.CalTripleCrown.com and then check out the "What's New on this Web Site?" page. Over the next year, I'll be making a ton of improvements and additions to this so stay tuned.

If you don't have access to the Internet yet, check it out at a friend or family member's house, or Internet Coffee Shop near you!! Warning: you'll need at least an hour because there's so much to look at!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN PRODUCTS

" I thank you for the quick response on my order. All 4 items were exactly as I had ordered and were very professionally created. I appreciate your efforts in providing this service to those of us who love doing Double Centuries.
Darryl MacKenzie

Again this year, we have a number of great new California Triple Crown products available. I've been working with Voler, DeFeet, and Charlie Irwin on these new California Triple Crown Products ... and then building the new web pages. Photos, detailed descriptions, and Frequently Asked Questions about these products which can be found on the web site.

I decided to work through the many product issues and get those web pages completed before finishing this letter. Then the Orders started to come in fast and furiously ... we have processed and completely shipped over 1,300 Orders for Products since 1998!!

When you see the new California Triple Crown products, I hope you'll agree with me that they are really great!! Current inventory for these products can be found at www.CalTripleCrown.com so check there to see if we have your item in your size in stock. Here are some of the highlights:

- The **Voler Blue and Yellow Short Sleeve Jerseys** will continue to be sold and look outstanding.
- The **Voler Blue Long Sleeve Jersey** will continue to be sold. These Jerseys are excellent -- besides looking good, they keep you warm in the cold mornings but not too hot in the afternoons!!
- The **Voler Blue Windbreaker** is extremely high quality ... made of Vortex RipStop MicroFiber which is a high performance and lightweight material. This will be a super Windbreaker for those cold Winter Mornings!! However, it is quite lightweight.
- The **Custom PACE Jersey** is beautiful with Ribbons on the Back Pockets and CTC Logo on the Sleeves!! For Hall of Fame and Gold Thousand Mile Club Members, we have a Yellow Custom PACE Jersey available this year. In addition, these riders can specify Circular Custom Text around the outside of the California Triple Crown Logo with "Hall of Fame" and/or "Gold Thousand Mile Club"!!
- A **Custom T-Shirt** is being built with the same excellent process as the Custom PACE Jersey this year ... allowing the front pocket area to be customized with the rides you did as well as custom text.
- The **Custom Cap** is a white Baseball Style Cap with an adjustable slide closure on the back dressed up with your California Triple accomplishments on the Front!! Your Name and "Thousand Mile Club" can be added as Circular Text surrounding the Rides you completed and the California Triple Crown Logo.
- The **Refrigerator Magnet** has the full color California Triple Crown logo on it with next year's schedule. This California Triple Crown Refrigerator Magnet will look SUPER on your refrigerator!! This places the Ride Schedule in an easy to see place for your whole family to become familiar with so they can support you and the rides. Each California Triple Crown Finisher will receive one of these or a Patch at no charge. A major benefit to this on your refrigerator: It will be a constant reminder to you not to eat so much ... so you can climb those hills easier!! :)
- **Voler Arm Warmers** match perfectly with the Voler Jerseys. They also look super with the PACE Jersey.
- **DeFeet Socks** look great and work extremely well. The Bear socks look pretty cool with the Voler Products.

- **Specialized Water Bottles** look excellent with the full color California Triple Crown logo on the front and back.
- **Custom Plaque** is looking better than ever this year!!
- **Custom Ceramic Mug** is really awesome this year!!
- **Plastic Coffee Mug and Mouse Pad** continue to be outstanding products!!

A **BIG THANKS** to Charlie Irwin and his company for building all of the Custom Products this year as well as doing the shipping and handling on the orders. These products have become really popular ... so it's a big job!!

There are tons of details on each of the products on the web site so check it all out. The order form is on the web site and ready to go. If you've already placed an order, you can always place another one!! If you don't have access to the Internet yet, check it out at the house of a friend or family member or at an Internet Coffee Shop near you!! If you can't get to the Internet, send a Business Size Self Addressed Stamped Envelope with 55 cents postage to me: Chuck Bramwell, 4911 Tamarack Way, Irvine, California 92612 ... and ask me to send you the Order Form.

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN VOLUNTEERS

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others."
Audrey Hepburn

Many folks ask us, "How can we help make the California Triple Crown continue?" One way that you can help is to order and wear some of the products. So if you're a finisher for the second, third, or seventh time, place an order for a Jersey this year. Then wear your Jersey or T-Shirt with pride, and tell everyone that will listen what the California Triple Crown is all about!! Now that you're a Triple Crown Finisher, other riders who never dreamed of doing a Double, let alone three of them in one year, will be looking up to you for advice and leadership.

Why are Double Centuries so successful in California? Why are Doubles continuing in popularity here but becoming less popular in other places? There are many reasons I'm sure. One reason is that I see so many excited volunteers at these rides helping in a big way to make these challenges possible. Please think seriously about giving back to our sport: Volunteer for at least one Double next year!! You can make a difference!! Get creative with food, music, atmosphere, have fun and make a memory for a lot of other cyclists!!

Most impressive are the **42** cyclists who became members of the **2003 Gold Thousand Mile Club** by supporting at least one Double in the series!! Also on the Web Site is the 2003 Support Volunteer Report which tracks the Doubles you or your family members volunteer to support. This information is based on your input on the Registration Forms. These rides can only continue if volunteers (spelled Y-O-U) jump in and help. It's not enough to just ride the rides because if that's all everyone does, these major adventures will go the way of the dinosaurs!! It's not easy running Rest Stops 200+ Miles from nowhere so each of these rides needs YOUR help.

Which of these Doubles need your help? All of them!! You and your family can have fun and make a difference: call the ride organizers and tell them you want to help. Put on your thinking cap and make that Rest Stop a great memory for all who drop by!!

I'd like to recognize the Triple Crown Ride Organizers: Jim Watrous for the Hemet D.C. Scott Halversen and the Quackcyclists for the Devil Mountain Double. Brian Stark for the Central Coast Double. Dan Shadoan and the Davis Bike Club for the Davis Double. Bill Oetinger and the Santa Rosa Cycling Club for the Terrible Two. Kermit Ganier and the L.A. Wheelmen Bike Club for the Grand Tour. Rory MacLeod and the Quackcyclists for the Knoxville Fall Classic Double. Chris Kostman, Deb Caplan, and Planet Ultra for the Death Valley Doubles, Butterfield Double, Solvang Double, Mulholland Double, Eastern Sierra Double, Classic TOTF, Heartbreak and Eastern Sierra Double. These folks give tons of time and energy to keep these Doubles continuing. **It's easy to tell these people what you don't like about their events. It's just as easy to praise them for all of the good things they do!! Thank you to all of the Ride Organizers for a great 2003 season!!**

REALLY BIG FUTURE GOALS AND ADVENTURES

"Without a goal, there can be no real success. One of the best definitions of success I have ever heard goes something like this: Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal. Someone has said the trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never crossing the goal line."

Thomas S. Monson

There's lots of room for improvement in the California Triple Crown series of Doubles. For example, training with a coach can bring a huge improvement in speed and climbing power. There are plenty of ways to improve on comfort making these rides more fun. Of course, none of these Doubles are ever easy but that's the challenge of them -- each one provides a Personal Growth Experience. When you're ready, consider stepping up to the harder rides in the Triple Crown for even more challenge and a deeper sense of accomplishment. Since these harder rides are **among the most difficult Doubles anywhere on the planet surface**, you'll always have room for improvement right in the California Triple Crown Series of Double Centuries!!

**"We rolled across the *high* plains ... *Deep* into the mountains
Felt so good to me ... Finally feelin' free"
"Roll Me Away" by Bob Seger**

How about riding from coast to coast - all the way across America -- using only a 3 week Vacation? I've ridden three full Pacific - Atlantic - Cycling (PAC) Tours with long distance **cycling legends, Lon Haldeman and Susan Notorangelo. I can not say enough good things about these Cycling Expeditions Across America.** I was fortunate to be able to ride a PAC Tour in 2000 ... it is so fun to get out on some wide open roads!! My CalTripleCrown teammates, Ken Bartholic, Cheryl McMurray, and I wrote a detailed account of our trip which you can find at www.CalTripleCrown.com. I highly recommend these trips: I still wake up in the middle of the night dreaming of riding endless Roller Coasters!! Checkout www.PACTour.com for all the information. Completing future Triple Crowns can provide those "Personal Growth Experiences" to get you ready to roll!! **It's amazing what you can accomplish** - and Lon and Susan are the true wizards at helping you turn your dream into a reality!!

"The doubles I rode since I discovered them in '94 were all memorable, and in some way, preparation for something I never imagined I could do - the Race Across America (RAAM)." Sam Beal

How about the ultimate challenge: the Furnace Creek 508 followed by the Race Across America? Impossible? No way--just ask the many Triple Crown Winners who have now gone on to compete very successfully in the ultimate long distance race. My hat's off to all of the Triple Crown finisher's who went on and completed any part of RAAM this year. Check out the 508 and RAAM on the web on my Favorite Sites page at www.CalTripleCrown.com. I was on a 508 Team in October, 1999 and had a really good experience. Completing future Triple Crowns can serve as the launch pad for your really long rides!!

How about completing Paris - Brest - Paris in 2007? I rode PBP in 1999 and am reeling over how great it was!! Here's a piece of my ride report ... "I was so pumped when I got the finish that I nearly passed out!! Certainly, this was heaven. ... So many memories. PBP changed me, big time. Deep down inside I now have a deeper passion for cycling. I didn't think that was possible. But it's very true." Completing future Triple Crowns can serve as the cornerstone of your training program!!

CALIFORNIA TRIPLE CROWN COMEBACKS

At the end of the ABC Coverage of the 1989 Tour de France, Greg Le Mond lifts his 5 year old son up to the Winner's Block as the announcer says:

"Comebacks are always a part of the fascination with sports
From so far down, to so high up
How does it happen?"

Like so many things, it begins with the most simple belief
The one you must have in yourself
That must be translated into results by dedication
The knowledge that dedication which feeds on belief can make it so."

When you're looking for incredible comeback stories, you don't have to look further than some amazing people who completed the 2003 California Triple Crown series!! I asked Frank Neal to tackle the big project of talking to so many California Triple Crown Winners who have made a major comeback in 2003. Thanks to Frank for the following:

WOW! Can you believe it?! We have completed another year of awesome cycling adventures! You are a Winner! You know what it takes to complete three Double Centuries! You have the physical and mental ability to finish some of the toughest challenges in California! Finishing a Double Century has so many personal challenges, mental and physical,

and you beat them. And, there are the outside factors, like the weather and thoughtless drivers. You conquered them all! Congratulations!

Beyond the factors that all of us have endured to finish our Triple Crown, there are some riders who have had additional physical challenges. They have conquered more than most of us. They are heroes in our own back yard. They are Comebacks! Please enjoy some of their stories...

Update: Comebacks 2001. In 2001, we had eight Comeback stories. Each of these individuals came back from challenges in 2000/2001 to complete their Triple Crown in 2001. Here is an update of their progress in 2003 (in parenthesis is their challenge from 2000/2001).

Ken Bartholic. 6 Doubles. Inducted into the Hall of Fame 2003. (Bike/car collision, broken collarbone).
John Beam. 8 Doubles. Inducted into the Hall of Fame 2003. (Not bike related, jaw relocation).
Charles Griffice. 10 Doubles. Inducted into the Hall of Fame 2000. (Bike/deer collision, strained back).
Frank Neal. 10 Doubles. 46 career Doubles. (Bike/car crash, broken vertebra and punctured lung).
Bill Palmer. 5 Doubles. 35 career Doubles. (Bike/car collision, major knee surgery and related Hepatitis C).
Doug Patterson. 6 Doubles. Inducted into the Hall of Fame 2002. (Paceline accident, shattered shoulder).
Tom Romano. No Doubles. He is Road Racing and skiing. (Bike related, replaced ACL knee ligament).
David Nakai. 3 Doubles. 44 career Doubles. Paris-Brest-Paris Finisher 1999. (Car accident, broken neck).

Update: Comebacks 2002. In 2002, we had eight Comebacks. Each rider came back from challenges in 2001. Here is an update of their progress in 2003 (in parenthesis is their challenge from 2001).

John T. Claire. 14 Doubles. Inducted into Hall of Fame 2003. (Bike accident, broken collarbone and ribs).
Mary Conte. 3 Doubles. Participated in Paris-Brest-Paris 2003. (Replaced ACL knee ligament).
Ivey Henderson. 1 Double, plus Solvang Brevet. 27 career Doubles. (Prostate Cancer).
John Robbins. 6 Doubles. Inducted into the Hall of Fame 2000. (Triple heart bypass).
Mark Martinez. 4 Doubles. 21 career Doubles. (Pulmonary edema).
Tom Miller. 2 Doubles. Tom is focusing on RAAM and 508. (Bike/car accident, crushed leg).
Frank Neal. 10 Doubles. 46 career Doubles. (Solo bike crash, dislocated hip).
Bill Palmer. 5 Doubles. Set tandem record at Davis 24-hr. Time Trial w/ Emmy Klassen. (Tuberculosis).

Combacks 2003. In 2002/2003, the following Riders overcame extreme physical challenges to complete their California Triple Crown 2003. "Special Congratulations!", to each one!

Mike Burns. After 15 years of severe knee and lower back pain, Mike discovered orthotics. Along with a proper bike fit, the combination dulled his chronic pain. In 2003, Mike hit the Doubles Trail with high expectations. He finished two Doubles. At Davis 2003 he drafted with an unfamiliar group. He became the victim of a "Davis paceline crash". With severely pulled quad and groin muscles, Mike ended up on crutches. Rehabilitation was slow. Mike got back on the bike as soon as he was able. It appeared his year was over. But, he was able to come back to complete the Death Valley Fall "Furnace" Double. He says, "It's better to finish later as a solo rider than to DNF due to a crash caused by a squirrely rider." He continued, "Have a plan. If it isn't working, admit it and figure out an alternate plan." Welcome Back, Mike!

Clem Bartolai. Clem started his Double Century career in 1990. In 1999 he was diagnosed with Peripheral Neuropathy in his legs and feet. This is a condition that causes excruciating foot pain. Clem says, "It's worse than hot foot. It's a burning like having your feet severely sunburned. On the advice of his Doctor, he stopped cycling. He researched the condition and found no evidence that it was bike related. He returned to the bike and began easy cycling in 2001. He finished one Double in 2001 and one in 2002. The pain seemed to be less while cycling. So, in 2003 he came back with a vengeance by finishing four CTC Doubles and the Solvang Brevet! While the pain is chronic, he is back and looking for a good year in 2004. His inspiration is his love of the sport, Lance Armstrong, and prayer. He says, "Develop a solid relationship with God." By the way, Clem is 67! It's Great to have you back, Clem!

Editor's note: In 2003, Clem's daughter, Renee Smith, got hooked on Doubles. She finished her first Triple Crown. On a final training ride for Solvang Double 2004, Renee was struck by a car. She suffered a broken collarbone among other injuries. She is mending and ready to get back on the bike. Hurry back, Renee!

Dan Crain. Dan began 2003 with a passion. He wanted to enter RAAM. He was riding before work, at lunch, and after work. After a finish at Death Valley Spring Double, he crashed a post on the River Trail during a night training ride. His injuries were minor, except for one. He broke a small bone in his hand. The blood supply to that bone was compromised. To save his hand, he had to have a cast up to his armpit! He had to wear the cast for NINE weeks! He could not train at all, because the sweat was ruining the full-arm cast. He missed RAAM. But, he came back to finish Grand Tour and

Knoxville Doubles to qualify for his Triple Crown. We hope all is well with his hand. Best Wishes for a future RAAM! Glad you are back, Dan!

Chuck Holmberg. Do you recognize this cowpoke? He rode his first Double in 1994 in cowboy boots. He has flowing gray hair and twinkling eyes. He was an animal forensic pathologist at UC Davis. He has since retired and moved to Oklahoma to tend the family farm. He was a seven-time Triple Crown Winner. In 2001, he was struck with an unknown and undiagnosed muscular/nerve syndrome. He became dependent on a walker. Doctors could not diagnose it or recommend a treatment. Chuck was not able to finish his Triple Crown in 2001 or 2002. With some old fashioned animal medicine and a really positive attitude, he has overcome much of his challenge. He got back on his bike and rode against the hot and dry winds of Oklahoma. In 2003, he drove his old Geo Metro to California to complete three more CTC Doubles and capture his eighth Triple Crown. His career total is now 46 Doubles. His goal is to complete 50 Doubles. Chuck, we hope your Geo is up to the task?! Tailwinds and Good Rides in 2004! Welcome back!

Tom O’Kane. In 2002, Tom was a new rider in the Triple Crown Series. He completed 5 Doubles. For 2003, he had his sights set on 10 Doubles. After completing 4 Doubles, he was continuing his training with a ride on Cruisin’ the Conejo. On a fast downhill, he lost control of his bike. He doesn’t remember the crash; but the result was 60 stitches in his face, four missing teeth, and a fractured neck. While he was back on the bike in three weeks, he was slow and tentative. Unable to ride a Double, he was a volunteer at Heartbreak Double. He says, “Apart from helping, this put me back in touch and fueled a desire to ride.” He returned to the CTC circuit with a finish at Eastern Sierra 2003. Tom is planning an aggressive Double schedule for 2004. It is good to see Tom looking and riding so well! Congrats, Tom!

Jerry Hlebo. Jerry will be a Comeback story every year he continues to ride with us. He has a chronic, non-bike related, back problem. In 2001 he had an unsuccessful laminectomy. Physical therapy and spinal epidurals have, also, been unsuccessful. Jerry rides with constant pain. He came back in 2003 to finish Davis, Terrible Two, and Knoxville. He is already planning his Triple Crown for 2004. He is inspired by Lance Armstrong’s battle against cancer, “I am not on his degree, but we fight our own battles.” He continues, “Stay focused and accomplish the goal before you, including overcoming pain. Pain is temporary, but defeat lasts forever.” Jerry, we look forward to seeing you on the Double Trail this year!

Robert P. Thomas. Robert experienced a solo bike crash 20 miles from the finish of the Davis Double 2003; caused by a combination of fatigue, hands off the bars, stretching, and probably hit road debris. He suffered a broken pelvic bone, but didn’t realize it. He got back on the bike and finished. The next day, he was a passenger in a carpool back to San Diego. Intense pain finally convinced him to go to the hospital. He says, “Tell everyone, I strongly DO NOT recommend this methodology!” The doctor said he is very lucky that he didn’t cause further damage. After three weeks he was able to begin swimming. He spent six weeks on crutches. He gives special credit to a soft tissue specialist who helped with the recovery of the soft tissue around the broken pelvic bone, “I’m confident that’s why I’m doing so well.” He was back in the saddle as soon as he got off his crutches. Having already finished two Doubles; he needed one more, he says, “To be sure to get one of those great Triple Crown jerseys.” He set his sights on Death Valley Fall and finished DVF “Furnace” Double to reach his goal for his first Triple Crown! Welcome back, Robert!

Double Comebacks. As if one Comeback is not enough, some of our riders have experienced a Comeback and then been struck by a second year of new challenges. These two riders have prevailed after two years of courage and are an inspiration to all of us.

Cathy Waltmire. We missed this story last year. In 2000, Cathy completed her first Triple Crown. The day after her third Double, she collided with a young rider during a recovery ride on the River Trail. Fortunately, the young rider was okay. But, Cathy did a face plant. She sustained facial road rash and a concussion. Her season was over. In 2001, she came back to finish her second Triple Crown. 2002 was not so kind. While riding a technical downhill, during Cruisin’ the Conejo in May, her tandem had a front blowout. Cathy was hospitalized with broken ribs and bleeding in her lungs. Her Captain (Wick Waltmire) had road rash, but was otherwise okay. Not to be detoured, Cathy came back to finish Grand Tour and Knoxville to capture her third Triple Crown 2002. Cathy came back with a vengeance in 2003! How about 10 Doubles!! Cathy says, “Courage is Fear that has said it’s prayers.” Oh yeah, did I forget to mention that Cathy didn’t finish her first Double until she was 50 years young?! Cathy, you are awesome!

David Nakai. In 2000, David suffered a broken neck in an auto accident. After his inspirational Comeback Triple Crown in 2001, he started 2002 with a vengeance! Unfortunately, he suffered a ruptured disk in his back early in 2002. While he is back to riding ultra distances, he has changed his riding style. He says it has made him realize how hard gear-mashing is on his back. Learning how to “spin” is hard for this gear-cruncher. But, he remains philosophical, “I guess I’ll learn how to spin and, maybe and finally, become a real cyclist”. In 2003, David came back to complete 3 Doubles. His advise to any cyclist, “Have fun and ride safe!” If you know David, you know his advice is simple and sincere. Welcome back, again, David!

Honorable Mention. Some of our Rider Friends have had challenges that prevented them from completing their Triple Crown in 2003. We wish "Tailwinds" to the following.

Anna Catharina "Cat" Berge. A Triple Crown finisher in 2002, Cat trained for the CTC Stage Race 2003 on a tandem with Paul McKenzie. In late February 2003, she partially tore her ACL knee ligament while skiing. Doctors chose a conservative, non-surgical, course of treatment. Her injury was not considered a "deadly blow" to her cycling. But, Cat was not able to train during the spring. Her goal was to ride strong by Terrible Two. A natural gear masher, she had to admit that she had to learn to spin. Was she successful? Oh, yeah! She and Paul set a course record at TT! She is philosophical, "I realize how important it is to face hardship with a positive approach. During my downtime, I started a women's social biking group. I have found many new friends I would not have connected with." Cat, we look forward to seeing you in 2004!

Paul Biron. After a year away from the CTC, Paul started 2003 with 2 Doubles (Butterfield and Death Valley Spring) and 3 Brevets (Solvang, Mulholland and Ridge Route). He was riding strong until Race Across Oregon. He was struck with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. After Ridge Route, he was unable to finish another Double in 2003. At press time, he is still battling the fatigue. Get well and hurry back, Paul!

Greg Somerville. Greg was a racer with a history of unfortunate accidents. Multiple head injuries finished his racing career. He tried Doubles. Continued head pain caused him to leave the Double Century Series. He moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where he could be closer to the VA hospital that specialized in his condition. He is back to riding ultradistance events. He has done some Doubles in the Southeastern States. He hopes to return to California to join us during some of our Doubles in 2004. Greg, we hope to see you soon!

Steve Cimini. Steve is a past Triple Crown Winner and an avid bike commuter. In March 2003, he was struck by a car while cycling through a familiar intersection. He received severe injuries that required major surgery on his leg and knee. He says, "It takes a split second to make the difference between contacting someone's bumper or missing them by a whisker. Even when you're doing everything right, you can still get seriously hurt. Wear a helmet, obey laws, ride predictably, and watch for crazy drivers as they are certainly not looking out for you." Steve has had an amazing recovery and he is already riding Century's. His Doctor calls him the "Miracle Patient". He is a Postal Carrier with a walking route. He is back to his full route and his limp is hardly discernible. He is expecting to be back to Doubles in 2004. See you on the road, Steve!

Tim Coleman. Tim is a past Stage Race Winner. He started 2003 with finishes at Death Valley and Solvang. During Devil Mountain Double, while descending Mt. Diablo, Tim's handlebars failed and caused him to Endo. He did a major face plant. He was airlifted and needed surgery on his neck. At press date, his condition is unknown. We wish Tim, "The Best". We hope to see you back on the Doubles Trail, Tim!

Support Honorable Mention. The CTC requires a lot of non-rider support. Some of our Supporters are also facing challenges. Last year, we noted a long-time Supporter who is facing a challenge with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. Here is his update.

Bill Oetinger. Bill is the organizer of the Terrible Two. Bill wants everyone to know he is doing fine. His white blood cell count is still at "normal". His doctor requires cycling (actually, "exercise"). Bill is logging 7,000 miles each year. He says, "Never has 'taking my medicine' been so much fun!" Great News, Bill!

Comeback Stories. We thank the Riders, above, who shared their stories with us! In 2004, there will be new stories. If you are a Comeback Story, or you know of a Comeback Story for 2004, please contact Frank Neal at Cycleman@bigplanet.com. It has been my privilege to share stories with so many TRULY AWESOME Riders. We wish, "Tailwinds to All"! – Frank Neal, aka. Garfield, "The Kickstand Guy".

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I'd like to also recognize those California Triple Crown Winners who are over 60 years of age. If you want to meet some present day heroes, ride with some of these cyclists and you'll quickly be in awe at their positive mental attitude and their outstanding physical conditioning. In fact, you've probably ridden with these folks and not even known it because they are so young both physically and mentally. I can only hope to be in such good shape down the road!! Special congrats to these youngsters. As Neil Young says, "Long may you run."

It was a great personal achievement to complete these Doubles this year. My hat is off to you for your accomplishments!!

Riding 3 Double Centuries in a year is **ONE BIG TIME, MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT!!** You have taken the most simple belief that you have in yourself and have translated it into results by dedication. In 2003, YOU were a California Triple Crown Finisher!! Congratulations!!

The Triple Crown ride organizers and I congratulate you. We hope to see you going for the gold again in 2005!!

"To learn, as we grow old, the secrets of our soul"
"Question" by the Moody Blues

In the Tour of Two Forests Double, Heartbreak Hill is at Mile 138. There are Mile 138's in everyone's life ... where the climbing gets real steep. Some come earlier in the race. Some later. **But wherever you find them, you can overcome them.** Completing a Double Century is not about winning the race against 100 or 1500 other cyclists. It's about winning the race against yourself.

To improve. Against your best self. There is a Hindu proverb that says, "True superiority is not how a man measures up to another but **how he measures up to his prior self.**"

To do the very best with what you've been given.

From the Deserts, to the Mountains, to the Ocean, the California Triple Crown rides provide a lot of awesome cycling adventures, challenges, beautiful scenery, great memories, and fun for each of us!!

I'm already planning how I'm going to improve on my next Double!!

See ya' on the road!!

Chuck

Chuck Bramwell
California Triple Crown Guy
CBrams@CalTripleCrown.com
"There is nothing a good day of cycling won't cure."

"I love the 'excuse' of one of our older riders said after a long 2 hour climb. We had been at the rest stop for about half an hour. He finally comes, and smiling says 'I would have been here earlier, but I got tired'."
Catharine Berge, 7/18/03 Ultra Cycling E-Mail Forum

"You should spend at least two hours a day on bodily exercise; however, if you should decide not to, you will someday spend two hours a day taking care of your disease."
Thomas Jefferson
Quoted by Dave Tanner in "Is Excessive Exercise Bad for Your Health?"
Nov-Dec 2003 Ultracycling Magazine

"Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things."
Robert Brault

"Where did I find all these words?
Something inside me is burning
One day I hope we'll be in perfect harmony
A planet with one mind
Then I could tell you
All the things inside my head"
"My Song" by Mike Pinder and the Moody Blues