

D&L Stone Coal Triple Century Ride Review

I had set an alarm for 8:00am Saturday morning, but woke up a little earlier, the alarm never sounded. Although I wasn't really worried about the ride itself, I was extremely anxious to get going. I had planned on leaving my house at 10:30, but had already prepared everything the night before. What was I going to do for the next 2 1/2 hours to occupy my mind? I made my morning coffee along with a few fried eggs and toast for breakfast. I looked at social media for a half hour or so, then checked and double checked all of my gear to make sure I wasn't forgetting anything. I took a quick shower to make sure I was fully awake, and knowing that it would probably be close to 30 hours before I would be able to do so again. After what felt like an eternity of walking in circles around my house, I outfitted myself in my biking attire and prepared to head out. The time was 10:25am.

After a quick stop at my dad's house in Tatamy, I continued my nice, easy spin into Forks Township. I stopped to pick up Curt Byler, who had agreed to roll to the start with me, and continue on for the first three hours of my journey. Ordinarily, he would be one of my riding partners who might attempt this entire endeavor with me, but family obligations prevented him from doing so.

Rather than taking the easy, flat route to the start, I decided I wanted to climb over Paxinosa Road East, and down through the neighborhood of Lafayette's College Hill. My thoughts were that climbing a hill would get my legs used to pushing at a certain pressure, making the flat ride on the trail easier. Otherwise I would need the first 30 miles or so to get warmed up.

We arrived at the Forks of the Delaware, the northern end of Delaware Canal State Park, which is an 830-acre Pennsylvania state park in Bucks and Northampton Counties, paralleling the Delaware River between Easton and Bristol, at about 11:30am. There was already a large number of people there waiting for us - family, friends, fellow cyclists, and members of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. It was almost overwhelming. Shortly after my arrival, Scott Pretti rolled up, my partner who was going to ride the entire distance with me. I gave a short interview to Christy Potter from the Morning Call newspaper, took a little time to thank everyone for being there to support us, posed for a few photographs, and was ready to begin the journey.

We departed at 11:55, five minutes ahead of schedule, and headed south along the Delaware Canal Towpath. I wanted to ride slow at the beginning, and try to keep the group together. It was Scott and I in the front, followed by my mother, Deby Steward, then Curt, Neal Hanson, Mike DeJesso and Chuck Patterson with his two kids. There may have been even more riders behind, and I apologize if I've left anyone out, but at that point my mind was focused on the close to 300 miles that lie ahead.

The pace gradually increased, and we eventually dropped Mike, Chuck and his kids, they were no longer in sight. After a couple miles, Todd Weidman and his wife Renee joined us from behind. They got to the start right at noon and missed us since we rolled out early, and raced to catch up. Just after

crossing I-78, only 2 miles south of the start, we encountered our first minor obstacle, a concrete spillway flowing with water about one inch deep. Often, this is just a low spot in the trail, covered in concrete instead of gravel, and it is dry. In the summer, the canal is full of water, and this is one of the locations where the canal is allowed to overflow into the Delaware River. The thought of wearing soggy socks for the next several hours was not appealing, so we slowed the pace to a crawl to get through, so that our feet would not get wet from the water splashing up from our tires, then continued on. In another 2 miles, my mom and Neal peeled off from the group and waited for Chuck and his kids. Their plan was to stop at the Canal Side Cup, a refreshment stand on route 611, to get ice cream before heading back home.

After only another mile, we encountered the first "major" obstacle, at Raubsville. Shortly after crossing a wooden bridge spanning another spillway, there is a set of stairs that requires riders to dismount, carry their bikes up the steps, cross Canal Road, then re-enter the trail on the opposite side of the street. Now the ride got moving. We had been riding at 12-14mph, but now began gradually increasing speed. Our original plan was to try to maintain between 14-16mph, but we kept finding ourselves pushing 17-18mph, just out of habit.

For the most part, the trail had been two tracks wide, which allowed us to ride two abreast. This enabled us to easily maintain conversation as we rode along, occasionally getting into a single-file formation to allow for another passing bicyclist, a jogger, or pedestrians. Before we knew it we were all the way to the covered bridge at Frenchtown, where Todd and Renee decided to break off and head back. At this point we had covered a little over 18 miles in about an hour and a half.

We were down to three riders, Scott, Curt, and I. We would take turns riding side-by-side, with the third rider either far out front, or at a safe distance behind. The weather had been very dry, so the reason for keeping distance was that a noticeable amount of dust was being kicked up by the lead riders(s). Before long, even with keeping distance between us, we could notice the dust building up on our bikes and bodies. The trail is mostly covered with a crushed red shale, like the color of red bricks. The powdery red dust slowly accumulated on everything, giving it a pinkish hue.

We rolled along without incident, periodically having to line up single file as we approached other trail users, narrow bridge underpasses, or the occasional flock of geese. About half way to Bristol, across the river from Stockton, NJ, we had to go around a construction site, where a bridge over the canal is being re-built. This required us to dismount our bikes once again, and actually walk our bikes across the canal. Luckily, the canal was empty at this point, probably drained dry for bridge construction equipment access.

In another 3 miles we passed through the town of New Hope, where the path gets a little more narrow, and several buildings actually back up right to the trail. There is a set of stairs we needed to walk our bikes down before riding briefly along, then crossing Main Street. The trail soon makes a dog-leg - first a left turn, over a bridge, followed by a quick right turn. This section through New Hope is not

too difficult for us to navigate, having been through on previous rides, but can be a little confusing on a person's first time through, since it is not obviously marked with signage.

At about 2:45, just before Yardley, Curt was talking of peeling off to turn around and head back home. At this point I tried to play Devil's Advocate: "You know, if you ride just another couple miles, you'll be at 50 when you turn around - this will put you at 100 miles for the day. You may be disappointed if you get home and your odometer only reads 96..." He lets me suck him in to riding as far as the I-95 underpass, where he turns back, having covered just over 50 miles.

Five more miles down the trail, in Morrisville, is another one of those confusing, poorly marked sections. The trail seems to end at a culvert where the canal passes underneath Bridge Street. From experience, I know to exit the trail to the east just before reaching this point, turn right onto, then cross Bridge Street, and look for the set of stairs to the south that lead back down to the canal towpath.

In just one more mile is yet another confusing spot. Here the trail seems to end where a set of railroad tracks passes through. It looks as though a singletrack trail has been beaten in where you could climb up to, and cross the tracks, but this is absolutely NOT the way to go, as there may be a high speed train that utilizes these tracks. Again, from experience, I know to backtrack a very short distance, and look for the other singletrack trail to the east, ride (or walk, as the stone in this area is very large and much harder to traverse) along the west side of the rail bed that crosses underneath the previously mentioned obstacle, then head back west a short distance where the canal path continues.

Another mile down the trail is one more exit and re-entry point, where the canal passes underneath Tyburn Road through a culvert. Again, as with the previous obstacle, we needed to bounce to the east, follow the rail bed very briefly where it passes under the road, then take the SECOND right turn to gain access to where the trail continues. The first right doesn't go anywhere - I've learned this the hard way on more than one previous occasion.

Most of the canal path has been very scenic and rural feeling, but the further south we got, we could tell we were getting into a more urban area. There are at least a half-dozen road crossings, including one at the entrance to a Home Depot/WalMart shopping center. At one point we stopped to help a stranger in need, a middle-aged man fixing a flat tire. Although we were on a mission to complete this ride, I felt that part of being a courteous trail user was to at least stop to see if he needed any assistance. And even though I instantly regretted stopping because I could smell alcohol on his breath, and saw the half-empty bottle of cheap vodka lying in his pile of belongings on the side of the trail, I felt an obligation to help him get his tire with a new tube back on his wheel since I had already stopped.

In Bristol, the route gets a little confusing where the trail crosses Bristol Pike at the underpass of I-276, but we made the next left at Green Lane and picked up the trail in between the WaWa and the Bristol Amish Market. Previously I had thought this was the end of the trail, but on the advice of Terri Monserrat, Elissa Garofalo, and Claire Sadler at the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, we

meandered our way another two miles south to Bristol Lions Park to locate the medallion indicating the southern most point of the Delaware Canal on the bank of the Delaware River.

After stopping for a few photographs to prove that we actually made it to the end, we backtracked the two miles to the WaWa where we took about a half hour rest break. Other than a few short bathroom breaks along the way, we really hadn't stopped to stretch or cool down at all. We had been eating small snacks along the way, but we did this while riding, and nothing substantial. I ate a Snickers ice cream bar and a little more than half of a ten inch Italian hoagie. I wrapped up the rest of the hoagie and put it in my jersey pocket to save it for later. After refilling my Camelbak bladder with water, and two bottles with an electrolyte mix, I estimated that I had drank about three quarts of fluid since leaving home - a good gauge that I have been properly hydrating. I put some lubrication on my bike chain, which had been starting to squeak from all of the dry dust accumulation. I also changed lenses in my sunglasses, as we figured it would be getting darker as we approached Easton, our next planned long rest break. At this point we both still felt physically great, and we were at least a half hour ahead of my originally planned schedule.

In the mile stretch between our bypasses at Tyburn Road and the railroad tracks, we saw a whitetail deer on the trail. As it started running away from us, I decided to try to take a video of it, and began to give chase. It stayed in front of us for at least a half mile before stopping completely when it saw people coming from the other direction, then quickly turned into the woods.

The trail conditions had been great up to this point. Since we were riding the opposite direction on the trail we had just ridden on earlier in the day, we knew it would be near-perfect conditions all the way back to Easton. At one point Scott remarked, "this gravel is smooth. Almost too smooth." We both had to laugh out loud, because we knew from a previous scouting trip that some of the sections on our route going north would not be as nice, and we would be hitting them when it was dark.

Other than slowing to navigate the same obstacles we had already encountered on our way south, we pretty much rode north non-stop until we got to the bridge construction site near Stockton. There we decided to take a ten minute break, since we were about half way back to our starting point in Easton. We were 90 miles into the "official" D&L Trail ride, but since we had both ridden from home, our odometers were reading a little over 100 miles, and this seemed like an obvious stopping point, about one-third of what we figured our total mileage would be at the finish sometime tomorrow. We had completed a century, which used to be a benchmark of a good, hard ride. It almost seemed insane that we were planning on completing yet two more of these, consecutively, and without sleeping.

We pushed on. Somewhere along the way I reached into my jersey pocket to pull out the remainder of my Italian sub, and finished eating it as we rode. Part of our discussion turned to how to handle our next longer rest stop. My dad was going to meet me in Easton, but Scott had planned on meeting his wife at his house in Bethlehem. Rather than make both stops in such close proximity, which

would take entirely too long and allow us to cool down too much, we decided we would part ways in Easton, and rejoin further down the trail. The sun had begun to go down, which made the temperature perfect for riding. It had reached the mid 80's in the afternoon, and it had dropped into the low 70's.

I made the stop in Easton at a little before 8:30, and Scott didn't even slow down, he continued on to meet his wife in Bethlehem. We didn't realize there was a festival going on in downtown Easton, and the Forks of the Delaware Park, including the parking lot, was officially closed, as the fire department was soon going to be launching fireworks from that location. My dad managed to convince the fire department to let him in after explaining what we were trying to accomplish, and promising them that we would vacate the area before the fireworks commenced. Curt had also returned to check up on our progress, and somehow managed to sweet-talk his way in as well. I rested for close to half an hour, refilled my fluids, ate a small snack, oiled my chain, installed clear lenses in my glasses, prepared my lights for night riding, and continued on a little before 9:00, over an hour ahead of my original plan.

As I headed out I made a phone call to Dave Koehl, who had earlier expressed interest in riding through part of the night with me. He was ready to leave his house, and planned on meeting me at the southern end of Farmersville Road. The next five miles of trail, from Easton to the public boat launch, are paved, which made for a smooth ride. The next mile after that, from the boat launch to the private boat club, the trail turns to a non-technical singletrack, then it turns back into a two-track gravel trail for quite some time.

About a mile and a half past the boat club is where Farmersville Road ends at the D&L Trail. As I rolled to a stop to wait for Dave, I immediately saw his headlight coming down the hill, as it had then become dark. Perfect timing! I was glad to have Dave along, as I would not be meeting Scott until we got to the far side of Northampton, at Cementon, and I was starting to feel a bit tired. It was good to have someone to talk to and help keep me awake.

We crossed Main Street in Bethlehem at Sand Island, and continued along the gravel two-track to Canal Park at the edge of Allentown. This is another place where trail navigation can be confusing without prior experience. The trail ends at Canal Park, and it is necessary to follow Albert Street until just after the Hamilton Street bridge. At this point, the D&L Trail picks up again as a paved path, up and over a small hill, but only for a half mile before ending at Bradford Street. In about another half mile, Bradford Street ends, and the route continues to the left on Dauphin Street. In about another mile, there are options. It is possible to navigate the city streets from here, but I had decided to take the "secret back way," a mildly technical singletrack trail through the woods, that runs parallel to the rail bed. This was another reason for Scott and I briefly parting ways. His riding experience comes primarily from road biking on skinny tires, and he was not comfortable riding trails with any kind of technical aspect, especially at night, after already riding nearly 150 miles.

The singletrack is difficult to give directions on, one really needs to be shown the ins and outs of how to navigate it through the woods, including a short hike along the railbed itself, and one hike-a-bike section through a badly eroded water drainage. This trail seems to be in a constant state of flux as storms often knock down trees. Sometimes these trees get removed, or sometimes the locals alter the trail to go around them. On this particular evening, there was a tree that had fallen and was at just the right height that I nearly clothes lined myself on it after rounding a corner and not seeing it until the last second. Dave seemed to get a good chuckle over this. So did I - near misses with a positive outcome always seem to be slightly humorous, and the slight adrenaline rush from having to react quickly seemed to briefly snap me into a wide awake state.

The trail winds its way through Catasauqua eventually ending up at the south end of Canal Street Park in Northampton. Although there is a trail through Canal Street Park, it is not legal to ride a bicycle on it, so it is necessary to follow Canal Street for about a mile before turning left on Northampton's West 21st Street (route 329). After crossing the bridge on the sidewalks, over the Lehigh River, route 329 becomes Cementon's Main Street, which you must cross to pick up the D&L Trail at the Cementon trailhead.

As we pulled into the Cementon trailhead, we noticed another cyclist waiting there for us, but it was not Scott. Ryan Close had been following my GPS tracker, and had also decided to join us for a bit of the night ride. I was glad for two reasons - we had another companion to help maintain the sanity level of riding into the night after 150 miles, and Scott was not here yet, which meant I had another chance to rest up a bit. That singletrack experience took a lot out of me, so I took the opportunity to eat a few snacks and hydrate while we waited.

While we were waiting for Scott to arrive, I got a phone call from my mom. She was following my GPS tracker, and had noticed that the last several pins were all on the same spot on the map, she was checking to see that everything was OK. I phoned Scott to check his status, he was about a quarter mile away. He would have arrived at about the same time we had, but he gotten stuck behind a train at the rail crossing at Albert Street in Allentown! While taking a break at his house in Bethlehem he had taken a quick shower and changed kits - clean shorts, socks, and bike jersey.

Dave and Ryan stuck with us for the next 16 miles - ten miles to Slatington, then another six miles through Lehigh Gap to Bowmanstown, where they decided they would turn around and head home. Having people to talk with definitely helped take our minds off any pain we were feeling, and helped keep us awake, as the time was approaching midnight.

The obstacles we had to be aware of on the stretch between Cementon and Slatington were the gates. There are several metal gates designed to keep vehicles off the trail, with a narrow opening on one side or the other to allow for bicycles and pedestrians to pass through easily enough. Since it was late, dark, and we were tired from all of the miles we had already put in, we made sure to always

give a verbal announcement upon the arrival of each gate, and which side the opening would allow safe passage.

As we approached Bowmanstown the trail dumped us out onto Riverview Road. After saying good-byes to Dave and Ryan, we made a left on route 895, right on North Kittatinny Road, immediately followed by another right on Bowmans Road, which dead ends into a cul-de-sac. The trail picks up again to the left where we continued on the three miles to Lehighton. This is another one of those confusing sections that is not clearly marked. At Lehighton, the trail becomes Lehigh drive, which looks as though it will continue to the north, but it eventually dead-ends. Here it is necessary to break off to the west, and briefly double back to cross the Lehigh River on Bridge Street to Weissport. In less than a half mile the trail continues on the left all the way up to Jim Thorpe.

At one point in the evening a groundhog ran out onto the trail. Scott was out in front and it looked as though it would pass behind him and in front of me. Unfortunately for the groundhog, it was moving faster than we thought. It ran into Scott's rear wheel, bounced off, and scurried back off the trail in the same direction from where it came.

The trail reaches another "endpoint" at the wastewater treatment facility in Jim Thorpe. Here we had to walk with our bikes up a steep incline to our right, up to the railroad bed, where we followed the rail service road into the parking lot of the Jim Thorpe Market. After exiting the parking lot, we turned left on River Street, crossed the Lehigh River yet again, and made another left on Lehigh Avenue. We would pick up the Lehigh Gorge section of the D&L Trail from the railyard parking lot on our left, but not before going a few blocks out of our way to stop at the Turkey Hill Minit Market to refuel with some food. Eventually there will be a bridge connecting the end of the trail at the wastewater treatment plant to the Lehigh Gorge trailhead, but construction on that project will not begin until later this year.

I bought an egg salad sandwich and a cup of coffee. The first sandwich went down so easy that I went back in for a second. I don't think I bothered refilling my hydration, since I knew we would be meeting my mom in White Haven, in just another 25 miles. I also had not been drinking as much as I had been during the heat of the day, as the temperature was significantly lower. I put on a thin, wool, long sleeved base layer beneath my cycling jersey, because I was actually beginning to get a chill. At this point we had ridden about 180 miles, and it was after 1:00am. We were both obviously tired, but still in good spirits. I phoned my mom, informed her that I would call her after we had covered another ten miles, which would be when we were about an hour from our meet-up point in White Haven, and we got back on our bikes.

The Lehigh Gorge is usually one of the most beautiful sections of the D&L Trail to ride. At night, we could only see the gravel trail ahead of us, and the tunnel of greenery surrounding us created by the glow of our headlights. We could tell there was a steep rock wall to our left, and we could hear the water of the Lehigh River flowing over the rocks below, to our right. Scott commented about a

confusing moment he had when he thought the sound of the water in the river was raindrops, and couldn't understand how we were not getting wet. We saw a porcupine scurry along the trail next to us, quills in the air as though it expected us to attack.

We had ridden just over 11 miles when I decided to phone my mom to let her know to leave her house to meet us in White Haven, which would be a 45 minute to an hour drive. Unfortunately, we had forgotten to account for the lack of cellular reception, being in somewhat of a canyon created by the Lehigh River. We tried sending a text instead, hoping it would go through as we travelled further ahead, and figured she would be watching my GPS tracker and know that we were getting close. In the worst case, we could call her from White Haven, and just take a much longer break - neither of us were opposed to a longer break, the night riding was definitely starting to take a toll on both of us.

When we arrived at White Haven, my mother, along with two of her sisters, my aunts Cindy and Sue, were already there waiting for us. They had brought plenty of water, food, and other refreshments. By my own request, there was a Chipotle burrito and a Jimmy Johns turkey sub, because Scott and I figured that at this point in the ride we would be starving. Ironically, neither of us was able to eat much of anything at all. I had some chocolate milk and an orange flavored sparkling water, and decided to put the Jimmy Johns sub in my jersey pocket for later. I refilled my Camelbak and bottles of electrolyte mix, and changed my clothes. Putting on clean socks, shorts, and a fresh jersey felt great. I decided to leave the base layer on, as the temperature had continued to drop even lower. Our break lasted about 25 minutes. I was glad my mom had company, because staying awake while driving at that time of night can be hard. At least with riding a bike there is physical activity to keep your heart rate up, which makes it easier to stay awake.

We briefly followed Main Street through the town of White Haven, and again picked up the trail heading north. The first two miles are a little rough, being a less improved section of the trail. At Middleburg Road we made a left turn, crossed the railroad tracks, then immediately turned left, back onto the trail. During the day it is easier to see the paint markings on the pavement indicating where to go, but at night, previous experience was the only guidance we had.

The next nine miles was a slow grind. While the trail looks relatively flat, the grade had gotten slightly steeper, and it was definitely effecting our cruising speed. While earlier in the day we were able to maintain speeds up to 17mph, we were now struggling to maintain 12-13mph. We saw lights approaching from up ahead. A set of three of them seeming to hover and float down the trail. Were we about to be abducted by aliens? No, it was a mountain biker with a set of three lights across his handlebars, the rocking motion back and forth from him pedalling made it appear like a plane, or ship of some sort approaching from a distance. I joked to Scott, "who in their right mind is out riding a bike at 3:30 in the morning that isn't us?" His reply was, "that guy is most likely thinking the same exact thing!"

We made it! We had reached the Black Diamond Trailhead, the end of the completed sections of the D&L Trail. I'm told there are portions of trail further north that may be passable on foot or by

mountain bike, but those sections have not been completed or improved, so this marked the end of our northern journey. "It's all downhill from here," Scott chuckled. We were both pretty exhausted. I still wasn't hungry, but knew I had to force myself to eat at least half of that turkey sub, or there would be problems later. I also had to remind myself to drink, as I had not been hydrating much at all since the stop in White Haven. After about a ten minute break, we decided to head back south.

The first nine miles were fast! We were cruising on a slight downgrade, on gravel, in the dark, easily keeping a steady pace between 18-20mph. We crossed back over Middleburg Road, and the two miles of rougher trail, although slower, just seemed to disappear. We passed through White Haven, and with no reason to stop just kept pressing on into the Lehigh Gorge. This is when things started getting really hard for me. Although the first hint of dawn light could be seen on the horizon, my body was used to being asleep at 4:30 in the morning, and my mind began playing tricks on me. I was literally having hallucinations, seeing things on the trail that weren't actually there. I tried to keep most of those thoughts to myself, as I didn't want to freak Scott out, or give him anything negative to worry or think about.

After ten miles we stopped at Rockport, a place in the gorge with a restroom, where rafters often put in to the Lehigh River. Scott could tell I wasn't quite right, and convinced me to eat the rest of my sub, along with some sweet snacks to get my blood sugar up a little. I'm glad I had a partner at that point, because I was having some serious doubts about my ability to safely continue. Scott's positive attitude and expert advice got me through the toughest moments of this journey. Between the food, a little extra hydration, and the entire sky beginning to lighten up, I was getting a second wind.

I can't really remember the remainder of the Lehigh Gorge portion of the trail heading south. My body's autopilot must have taken over at that point, but by the time we got to Jim Thorpe, it was as if someone had hit my "reset button," I was feeling normal again. We stopped briefly at the bottom of the walk down from the rail bed to remove our warm clothing layers, and continued on to Weissport. Something about the sun being up must have tricked my body into believing that it was a brand new ride on an entirely different day. I was feeling great, and any doubts I had about completing this ride were entirely gone. I was positive that not only were we going to finish, but we were going to ride like champions while doing it!

We continued on, backtracking through all of the steps we had taken in the dark, all the way to Cementon. Here I decided to deviate from the course I took north the night before. Rather than riding through the singletrack, we decided to take the city streets through Northampton and Catasauqua to get to Allentown. My thoughts were that my map of the ride would now show two of the possible ways to navigate what is probably the trickiest section of the D&L trail system. Along the way, as we entered Allentown, Ron Frank, a fellow rider met up with us. He had also been following my GPS tracker, and wanted to ride with us all the way to the finish back in Easton.

We got back on the towpath between Allentown and Bethlehem, planning on keeping a more reasonable pace, around 15mph, as we were well ahead of schedule. Before we knew it we were pushing 17-19 mph consistently. As tired as we were, we both just wanted to get this ride done, so we let our habits from training take over and kept moving pretty fast.

My dad met us at Sand Island, to see if we needed anything. At that point, having previously ridden the remaining section of trail so often, we knew we could have finished without any food or water at all. Scott's plan was to only continue on for only a few more miles, just enough so that when he turned around to go back home he would have broken the 300 mile barrier. Since he had started from Bethlehem the previous morning, he had actually ridden the entire D&L Trail in both directions, meeting the requirements of the original intent of the ride. I still had several miles to go.

Ron continued to ride with me, and my mom met up with us on her bike at the public boat launch. The three of us continued at a rather fast pace all the way back to the Forks of the Delaware in Easton. I had done it! My dad, a few other family members, and some friends were there to greet me and take a few photos, but that memory is a little blurry. I was elated to have completed such a challenging goal, and my thoughts were concentrated on getting home, taking a shower, eating, and of course sleeping.

I couldn't allow myself to accept a ride in an automobile, so I retraced my route from the previous morning, over College Hill and Paxinosa, through Forks Township and Tatamy, then back to my house in Nazareth, on my bike. I ended up riding a total of 310 miles, with the official "D&L Trail" portion of my ride being 286 miles in about 22 hours.

I have big hopes and dreams of turning this ride into an annual event, perhaps with shorter options so that cyclists of all skill levels will have the ability to get involved. The D&L Trail system has enabled me to become a better rider, a more courteous, aware trail user, and a healthier person in general. I hope that an event such as this would encourage cyclists with any degree of experience to "Get Your Tail on the Trail!"