

DANNY CHEW'S 2004 RAAM PREVIEW & PICKS

98 riders in all categories make the 2004 RAAM the biggest starting field ever. The largest solo field was 39 in 1988, but only 14 of them finished. Today, a larger % of riders finish because in 2000 the old 48 hours behind the winner rule was replaced with a new flat time limit of 12 days, 2 hours for official finisher status.

Solo:

Twelve of the 20 men on the solo-starting roster are American. Thirteen are solo rookies, and three are former winners. Only four finishers from last year are back. Russ Godwin and Tracy McKay are making the bold transition from 2-person team to solo. I am very happy to see two former Chew Crew members: Bob Rich (2000) and James Rosar (1998) on the starting line. Unfortunately, no women are entered. In 2001, Cassie Lowe was the last woman to finish; she finished just behind me. The San Diego, CA to Atlantic City, NJ course is basically the same as last year, but with that nightmarish traffic section around York, PA eliminated.

Three time champion and six time finisher Wolfgang Fasching is going for an unprecedented men's fourth win (Kish is also eligible for this). I am the only person to beat Fasching twice, and both times the desert heat was a huge factor, though he did beat me in a hot 1997 RAAM. His last two wins (2000 & 2002) were relatively easy as the cool start in the Northwest and more climbing allowed him to open up huge time margins, which he held to the end. After bulking up to climb Mt. Everest in 2001, he started the 2002 RAAM ten pounds heavier than in 2000, which led to a much slower time on the same course. It will be interesting to see what bodyweight he shows up this year. I pick Fasching to win his third consecutive RAAM.

Second place will be a two-man battle between last year's winner Allen Larsen and last year's Rookie-of-the-Year Slovenian Jure Robic. Using 18-time finisher and three time winner Rob Kish for comparison, since Robic was able to beat Kish as a rookie and as a rookie Larsen finished behind Kish, I give the edge to Robic. Also, Robic finishing second as a rookie last year was the highest placed rookie finish since Jonathan (Jock) Boyer won in 1985. As rookies, Fasching, Tatrai, and Larsen finished third and I finished fourth. After finishing second as a rookie in 1983, Pete Penseyres came back to win the next year. Larsen now has the confidence knowing he can win, but on the other hand, he is the defending champion – putting a lot of pressure on him to repeat and perhaps making him a little less hungry than Robic. Only three times in the history of the men's race have back-to-back victories occurred: Haldeman (1982 and 1983), Fourney (1990 and 1991), and Kish (1994 and 1995).

Although all racers leave San Diego together, the field gets spread out so far that often the riders' main competition is against themselves or maybe one or two other riders near the end of the race. Last year, Robic won his epic battle against Kish the last night, and in 2002, Larsen beat out Stefan Lau on the final night. Larsen won by a huge margin last year, but having to race against Fasching this year, I doubt that same strategy will work this year. Nearly all of the top contenders don't waste time trying to sleep on the first night, and Larsen had to ride well into the second night before he was tired enough to sleep. Except for the last night or two of RAAM, I think it is a big mistake to allow other riders to dictate your sleeping pattern. Last year Mark Patten's idea of trying to see how far he could make it (mid-race) without sleeping backfired and led to a DNF. Robic told me he only slept a Fasching-like total of 10 hours last year, which I could never do. On both of his RAAMs, Larsen's neck has failed at about mid-race – forcing him to wear

that brace or 'Medieval Torture Device' as he calls it. If it is a close race towards the end, time lost from that brace could be the deciding factor. If Robic has a mechanic on his crew this year, it should be a big help as he lost a lot of time last year with bike troubles.

I think that the weather (especially favorable tailwinds) rather than the course has more to do with whether Penseyres' all time 15.4 mph average speed record can be broken. To break this single crowning accomplishment of RAAM, you have to not just be a RAAM winner, but also a RAAM legend, and fast. I tried for eight years, and the closest I could come was 14.7 mph, which is also Fasching's best. In 18 RAAMs, Kish's fastest in 14.9mph. While Fasching might have a shot at the record, I don't believe Larsen or Robic are in that league yet. It may be that Larsen's neck troubles will never allow him to achieve it, but I think the nuisance having to wear his neck brace the second half of the race is still well worth a RAAM victory or even "just a finish".

While Rob Kish has had his wife Brenda along on all 18 of his RAAM finishes, Allen Larsen's wife Teresa had to watch her husband's journey across America via photos, videos, and the Internet for the first two years, although she was there at the start and finish. This year, however, Teresa will see her husband's glories and agonies firsthand on his crew.

If Fasching, Robic and Larsen all have bad luck, three time champion Kish could win again, though at age 49 he is finally starting to slow down. With Fabio Biasiolo and Patten not returning from last year, Kish has few RAAM veterans to compete against. His amazing 18 finishes dwarf the eleven finishes the rest of the combined roster has! Last year's sixth place finisher Dino Nico Valsesia is back and has potential to finish in the top three. Andrew Otto is back to avenge a 2000 DNF in Colorado. He had the nicest Energizer Bunny logo I have ever seen on both of his minivans. Too bad he couldn't live up to the bunnies slogan of going and going forever in 2000. At last year's pre-race interviews, I remember Kish saying that second time RAAM riders should expect to take about 12 hours off of their rookie finishing times. Aside from coming back from a DNF, Secret (1986) and Fourney (1990), the lowest place from which a rider has come back to win from is fourth place: Tatrai (1998), myself (1999), and Clvadetscher (2001).

After winning the dramatic 2-person team race last year on Team Rieper/Goodwin, Russ Goodwin is stepping up to the solo plate. Similarly, Tracy McKay comes to the solo race after finishing second on Team Millennium/IRSA in the 2002 2-person race. The transition from the 2-person RAAM to the solo RAAM can be very difficult as Brazil's Ricardo Arap found out in the solo 2002 RAAM. In 1998, Team Gustavo RMO FRANCA [Arap and Alexandre Ribeiro] finished in 7d 9h 56m (setting a record at the time) over a full day ahead of solo winner Gerry Tatrai. In 2002 Arap dropped out 2,032 miles into the race with an average speed of 9.12mph a far cry from the 16.33mph he was able to average on a 2-person team!

Rookie-of-the-Year honors will be fought between ultra marathon runner turned cyclist Michael Trevino and Slovenian Pro road racer and Olympian Valter Bonca who will prevail. At 29 years old, Trevino is the youngest starter and although he only started cycling last year, he has proved that his mental toughness from ultra-running carries over onto the bike. He won the UMCA 24-Hour Championship in Iowa last year with 463 miles, and more recently won the Davis, CA 24-Hour Challenge – setting the new course record of 463 miles. Training huge amounts of miles, this guy reminds me a lot of myself so I hope he does well. Trevino will have to face a very tough opponent in Valter Bonca whose years of suffering in the Pro peloton should pay off in RAAM. He raced in the 1988 and 1992 Olympics, placed 13th in two stages of the Giro d'Italia, and won the Race Across Austria twice. I love the quote on Bonca's website, "Every man is the architect of his own fortune!" Another rookie to watch is Andrew Lapkass who has mental toughness from climbing Mt. Everest three times and Mt. McKinley many times. He has also finished five Ironman

triathlons including a sub 9-hour. Fasching once said that RAAM was tougher than climbing Mt. Everest. I hope that Lapkass finishes RAAM so he can also compare. Three-time RAAM winner Fasching may only be an average Mt. Everest climber.

57-year-old Peter Holy of Germany is the oldest rider, and he will face three other 52 year olds: Bob Rich, Guus Moonon, and Randy Van Zee. Holland's Moonon is back after a DNF in 2001 and eighth place in 2002. Since oldest RAAM winner Penseyres set the all time average speed record at age 43 in 1986, you are not considered "old" in RAAM until you are 50, which Kish turns next year.

Living on the bike for years as a pro gives you great balance and bike handling skills — allowing you to change clothes, wipe off sweat and grime with a wet towel, eat with both hands, urinate, and apply sunscreen and suave/ointments while riding. This can add up to hours of saved time over the course of 8-10 long RAAM days. RAAM is a unique sporting event in which riders with full time jobs can go head to head with seasoned pros. RAAM average speed (15.4mph) record holder Pete Penseyres had to train around his family and full time job as a nuclear engineer, yet his scientific approach and meticulous methods to eliminate wasted time coupled with his ability to ride fast on just 90 minutes of sleep per night made him a Pro RAAM rider. Rob Kish hasn't let his full time job as a land surveyor keep him from finishing (including 3 wins) 18 RAAMs.

Frank Day and PowerCrank are offering \$5,000 to the first person who can ride the entire race on them, and \$20,000 to anyone who can win on them.

Four-Person Team:

The 4-person team race will pit two-time winners Team Royal Air Force (2000 & 2002) & Team Action Sports (1995 & 1998) against 2001 winner Team Vail which had to drop out (while leading) last year after Brett Malin was killed. Leading Team Action Sports will be Kerry Ryan who was on both winning teams and placed 2nd in 1996 with a sizzling time of 5:08:12. However, Ryan will be without Joe Peterson who has won the most (3) Team RAAM's and powerhouse Tim LaFromboise. 2000 and 2002 Team RAF's Dave Green and 2002 RAF's Steve Wilcox and Keith Jackson return this year with 53 year old Johnny Warman. The 2001 and 2003 Team Vail – Go Fast riders Zach Bigham, Jim Mortensen, and Adam Palmer will replace Malin with Mike Janelle. Although Action Sports have posted faster times, they were done on faster courses than Royal Air Force won on. Since Ryan is the only rider on Action Sports with RAAM experience, I am going to pick Royal Air Force as the winner.

Brazil's Team Extra Distance is headed by Michel Bogli and Jose Pinto Filho both of Team Discover Ceara/Powerbar which set the 2-person team record of 7d 0h 55m in 2001. Bogli has finished three other 4-person Team RAAMs on Team Brazil: third (1994), second (1995), and third (1997). If their other two teammates are as fast as they are, their team should do very well.

Team Grand PAC Masters average age is 70. Ron Bell has solo and team RAAM experience; Lee Mitchell is a RAAM crew guru and finished the 1995 RAAM on Team PAC Masters (along with Bell). Chris Stauffer is a sponsor of Calvin's 12 Hour Challenge where he set his age group record of 192 miles last year. 2003 Team Hydro Charge's Dianette Strange leads the 4 person mixed Team Klein-Reve. There are two 4 person women's teams.

1990 and 1991 solo winner Bob Fourney is part of the 4 man HPV Team ALS Lightning. The first Team RAAM was 4 man HPV teams in 1989. Fourney's Team Lightning/Tim Brummer (Michael Coles and Pete

and Jim Penseyres were also on the team) won, blazing across the country at over 24 mph (time of 5d 1h 8m). This category was discontinued when Michael Shermer (on another HPV team that year which DNFed) deemed it too dangerous. Four-person Team RAAM on conventional bikes began in 1992. Fourney is out to break his own team HPV record. In the 1998 RAAM, Fourney only made it a third of the way across the country in his solo HPV which got too hot.

Two-Person Team:

The 2 Person Teams will be shooting to break the average speed record of 17.7 mph (set in 2001), which would net a sub seven day crossing. Three 2-man teams are entered including one Canadian team fundraising for Lance Armstrong's fight against cancer.

Hopefully, at least one of the two mixed teams can finish and break the DNF jinx in this category. Team VeloWEAR/Co-Motion is George Thomas and Terri Gooch who finished the 2002 RAAM on a tandem despite having to walk sections because of brutal crosswinds. The 2-person race should be easier, since one person can be resting/sleeping while the other is riding. One person may be more of a night owl and the other more of a day person or one person may be more of a climber while the other is better on the flats which can all be accommodated in the 2-person race. Race Across Oregon director George Thomas may be the most versatile RAAM rider in that he began with the 4-person team winning on Team PacificCare-Trek in 1993 and placing fifth on Team PacificCare in 1994. He finished eighth in the men's solo RAAM in 1995. Thomas and Katie Lindquist finished the 2000 RAAM on a tandem. So this will be George's sixth RAAM and his fourth different division. The only divisions he hasn't done are the HPV, team tandems, and new 8-person teams. I pick Thomas and Gooch over the mixed Team No Limits from Germany.

Eight-Person Corporate Challenge:

Three 8-person teams should make for an exciting race this year. Last year's winner Team Insight is back with half of their members (Trish O'Keefe, John Olson, Peter Reblitz, and Richard Daggett). Team R2R – Kaiser Permanente is back with three returning members (Andy Blumenfeld, Tom Paluch, and Warren James). Defending champ Insight has been taunting R2R (Ride to Remember) with the comment "Remember to Ride". Neither seems worried about the third team Rim 2 Rim Cycling from Arizona.

This year's winner will receive the Corporate Challenge trophy, a cycling sculpture that the winning team keeps for the year. It is a unique piece commissioned by RAAM from nationally recognized sculptor, Tom Wiper, in Tucson that fits the significance of winning this division of RAAM.

Because Team Insight has the most RAAM experience with four returning riders from last year, I pick them to repeat.

| Pete | Penseyres' | 1986 | solo | RAAM | stats | | | Avg. Cum. | Actual |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|---------|-----------|--------|
| Day | On Bike Time | Mileage | Cum. Mi. | onbikeavs | AVS | onbikecum | cum avs | Daily Mi. | Sleep |
| 1 | 23:56:55 | 448.7 | 448.7 | 18.7 | 18.7 | 18.7 | 18.7 | 448.7 | 0 |
| 2 | 21:22:40 | 370.8 | 819.5 | 17.3 | 15.4 | 18.1 | 17.1 | 409.8 | 2:00 |
| 3 | 21:48:02 | 390.3 | 1209.8 | 17.9 | 16.3 | 18.0 | 16.8 | 403.3 | 1:40 |
| 4 | 21:57:40 | 362.7 | 1572.5 | 16.5 | 15.1 | 17.7 | 16.4 | 393.1 | 1:30 |
| 5 | 21:48:13 | 358.0 | 1930.5 | 16.4 | 14.9 | 17.4 | 16.1 | 386.1 | 1:30 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|------|-------------|------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| 6 | 21:50:15 | 349.8 | 2280.3 | 16.0 | 14.6 | 17.2 | 15.8 | 380.0 | 1:20 |
| 7 | 21:52:25 | 344.7 | 2625.0 | 15.8 | 14.4 | 17.0 | 15.6 | 375.0 | 1:30 |
| 8 | 21:27:10 | 328.9 | 2953.9 | 15.3 | 13.7 | 16.8 | 15.4 | 369.2 | 2:00 |
| (8.408) 9 | 9:29:40out of 9:47 | 153.1 | 3107.0 | 16.1 | 15.6 | 16.8 | 15.4 | 369.5 | 0:00 |
| Totals | 185.544 out of 201.783 hours | 3107.0 | 3107.0 | 16.8 | 15.4 | | | | 11:30 |

Notes: Pete was riding his bike 92% of his total finishing time.

Of the 16.233 hours he was off his bike, Pete had 11.5 hours of actual sleep or 71% of this time.

After my rookie RAAM in 1994, I wrote to Pete Penseyres and asked him all sorts of questions concerning his amazing 1986 RAAM win. He wrote back and sent me all sorts of data and stats on that ride. I now want to share these with you as a means of explaining just why that was such an amazing achievement on a very long 3,107 mile course, and what needs to be done to beat it.

Due to the nature of RAAM, a riders cumulative average speed (Cum. AVS) slowly drops throughout nearly the entire race. Because of this, a rider needs to get their Cum. AVS up very high the first couple of days in order to have a high value by the end of RAAM. After his 3rd day in 1986, Pete was still averaging over 400 miles per day. Although Allen Larsen had a good start in the 2003 RAAM (393 miles the first day, 324 miles the second day, & 384 miles the third day), he was already well behind Pete's 1986 shadow. In the 2000 RAAM, Fasching had an awesome start (480 miles, 397 miles, & 325 miles) still averaging over 400 miles per day after 3 days, but his Cum. AVS had dropped below 15.4 mph two thirds of the way across and ended at 14.7 mph - still damn good on a course with so much climbing that most riders are close to a full day slower on compared to a faster Southern route.

Looking more closely at Pete's stats (I have enclosed them as an Excel spreadsheet so that the rows & columns line up nicely), Pete was only off his bike for 16.233 hours or an amazing 8% of the time. Of those 16.233 hours, he squeezed in a phenomenal 11.5 hours of quality sleep. 71% of the time he was not riding was spent sleeping. These percentages mean EVERYTHING in establishing a high average speed! Most RAAM riders (myself included) waste/spend entirely too much time off of the bike, but not sleeping. I think most riders probably only spend about 50% of their off bike time sleeping. Looking at Pete's fast on the bike AVS also plays a crucial factor, as Kish spends very little time off his bike, but tends to have a slower on the bike AVS than todays fastest riders. Also, Kish sleeps more than Pete, although I should mention Kish did blaze across the country at AVS: 14.9 mph in winning the 1992 RAAM. Fasching, Clavadetscher, & Robic can get by on as little sleep as Pete, but their on the bike AVS suffer from it. Since I needed to sleep 3 hours per night, I still wasn't able to ride fast enough to make back the lost time on Pete's legendary shadow. I found out firsthand (finishing 8 consecutive solo RAAMs and getting as close as 14.7 mph in 1999) that saying you were going to beat the AVS record and actually beating it are two entirely different situations, as Fasching (2000) and Larsen (2003) also discovered. Will the \$10,000 prize bonus for breaking the record this year be enough incentive? Where were such bonuses during my RAAM years (the big bonus money was \$25,000 if Seana Hogan could beat all of the men), though I doubt it would have made much difference. Lon Haldeman once said you can't pay him enough money to ride or even win RAAM.

If Fasching, Larsen, or Robic are to have a chance at staying ahead of Pete's shadow this year, they have to know and respect Pete's stats. I urge these riders' crew chiefs to save and print out this e-mail to keep their riders ahead of Pete's menacing shadow. Favorable tailwinds are also necessary. A very close race can also spur on riders to dig deeper into reserves they thought they never had. Pete's record is all the more remarkable since his closest competition Michael Secret crashed out with a broken collarbone over 700 miles from the finish line. Pete used Jonathan "Jock" Boyer's shadow from the previous RAAM to help him stay focused and motivated. Best of luck to beating Penseyres' shadow which has yet to be equaled in 18 years. Records are meant to be broken, but if riders keep ignoring the stats/data which make up these records, how can they expect to establish new ones?

SOLO VIDEO INTERVIEWS

On Friday and Saturday at the Holiday Inn on the Bay hotel in San Diego, Stephen Auerbach and I interviewed the solo riders as cameraman Peter Levermann shot. Allen Larsen's last minute withdrawal seemed to be the hot topic in the air. Of the 19 solo men, Holland's Guus Moonen has the biggest support crew with 12 people in 3 vehicles, and rookies David Haase, Tracy McKay, Alessandro Colo, & Scott Dakus have the smallest crews with 5 people in 2 vehicles. After neck problems caused Moonen to drop out of the 2001 RAAM after just 1,200 miles, he found a solution by moving his arms farther apart on the aerobars and raising his stem which led to an 8th place finish in 2002. He told Allen Larsen about this before the 2003 race, but evidently Larsen didn't seem to listen as he once again had to ride the second half of the race wearing his trademark neck holder. Moonen said the first 100 miles is the most difficult part of his race. He stressed the importance of positive mental outlook. When the mind is strong, the body will have to listen.

3 riders have climbed Mount Everest. Andrew Lapkass has reached the summit 3 times out of 7 attempts. He looks forward to comparing RAAM to Everest and says it doesn't matter if he finishes RAAM or not as long as he knows he's put forth his best possible effort. He has lost all 10 of his toes and the balls of his feet from frostbite mountain climbing. He sees ultra events consisting of 3 components: they have an unknown outcome, are self-imposed, and have a challenge involved. He proposed to his wife on top of Mt. Everest. Although Trevino only made it up to 23,000 feet, he was honored by the Chinese/Tibetan government for a clean-up expedition on the North Face. Living only 15 miles away from the start of RAAM, he has trained a lot in the desert heat. At age 29, he doesn't even think about being the youngest rider. He much prefers continuous ultra races (running or cycling) to events that require mandatory sleep/rest periods such as the Tour de France or the running Race Across America. Actually RAAM is not a single stage event since no rider has ever ridden the whole thing without any sleep. It is a stage race where the riders determine how long their stages are between their sleep stops, also self imposed. Mike said he needs to train more intensely for ultra running races than ultra cycling races. Instead of riding RAAM between his 2000 & 2002 RAAM wins, Wolfgang Fasching opted to climb Mt. Everest after which he said RAAM was tougher.

I was surprised at how modest both pre-race favorites came across in the interviews. Fasching said that winning was not his primary goal, rather do his best is. He has no preset sleep strategy, and doesn't care about breaking Pete Penseyres 15.4 mph average speed record because it places a too disturbing factor in his head. He will only be racing against himself, and therefore doesn't want to know where the other riders are. He will be talking to his 12-year-old daughter Simone during the race. His longest training distance is 240 kilometers. As a young boy, he played soccer for 10 years but did not fit in well with the team so started to bicycle ride. Although confident he can win, Jure Robic didn't come off sounding arrogant or cocky. He told me about his 2003 rookie RAAM last year in which he finished 2nd. He had to ride 600 miles on his spare

bike that was too small, which caused him to lose about 6 hours. He also had many hallucinations such as mailboxes alongside the road were people (strangers) attacking him. Once he even stopped and grabbed these monsters (mailboxes). He said he was physically recovered from RAAM in one week, but it took him 6 months to recover mentally. This year he has 4 returning crew members from last year. Although he also had the goal of winning last year, he feels much more realistic about it this year. Robic is good friends with Fasching who told him he could win RAAM and has helped him out a lot. Unlike Fasching, Robic wants to know where Fasching and the other riders are. Robic feels he can beat Fasching if he stays close to him the whole way across the country. Robic has beaten Fasching in 3-4 shorter than RAAM races. Robic's wife is currently pregnant with their first child. Robic was very surprised to hear of Larsen's withdrawal and was looking forward to racing against him. I was surprised at what good English Robic speaks.

Andrew Otto told me what caused his 2000 RAAM DNF in Colorado. He made the mistake of changing his cleats before the start of the race which caused knee troubles. His crew chief is Ish Maak and his 10 year old nephew is on his crew. Also on his crew is his wife Carol Clarke. Their relationship is definitely a genuine RAAM love affair. They met in the parking lot at the start of the 2000 RAAM in Portland, OR. Carol was on Cassie Lowe's crew in 2000 & 2001, and on Kish's Krew in 2003 along with Andrew. He was also on Kish's Krew in 2001 ? the same year he proposed to her at the pre-race meeting. They were married in July, 2002. Watching RAAM master Kish for two years should give Otto much insight as to what is need to finish. A graphic designer, Otto designed the 2000 & 2001 RAAM starter jersey, and the 2000-2003 finisher jersey.

Italian rookie Enrico DeAngeli is a good friend with Fabio Biasiolo who he has known for 5 years. He met Fabio at a race where Fabio still had his RAAM number on. Fabio suggested he ride Race Across Oregon before RAAM. DeAngelo is thrilled to have the same RAAM number as Fabio had. James Rosar is hoping his crew experience (Hogan in 1997, Chew in 1998, & Tatrai in 1999) will get him to the finish line in Atlantic City despite his Ulcerative Colitis. Jim is largely financing his RAAM from the estate he and his 2 brothers inherited after his mother died. He lives by the statement, "The faster I age my bike, the slower I age. He calls his self supported cycling trips credit card touring. Less than 2 weeks ago he qualified for RAAM by finishing 8th overall at the Race Across Oregon. Alessandro Colo also finished the RAO.

Randy Van Zee is a couch potato turned RAAM rider. He will draw on the same strength and willpower he used to quit smoking and lose 100 pounds many years ago to finish RAAM. He gets up at 4 am to ride before work and enjoys riding solo since he is his own best friend. He will also use the 32 years of marriage he has endured to not give in when the going gets tough. Reed Finfrock and former RAAM announcer Scott Johnson are on Rob Kish's Krew. Switzerland's Pius Achermann owns a bike shop and is pretty much paying for the whole thing himself. In 1997, he set the then world record of 610 miles in a 24 hour drafting race. That is an average speed of 25.4 mph! German triathlete Peter Holy contacted Rainer Klaus on the Internet and then rode a Paris-Brest-Paris qualifier with him. He came across as very confident about finishing. He has a strong imagination to focus on goals. He can only see the Atlantic City finish. He has had his deep and REM sleep checked in a laboratory. He has had 4 operations on his right knee.

Like Allen Larsen, Tracy McKay is also a very religious man. Bob Rich believes ultracycling events causes him to open his heart and gain energy from his surroundings. The competition is with himself and not with other riders. His night shift work as a state trooper will help him deal with the lack of sleep. Training on PowerCrank, he discovered his left leg was weaker than his right leg. He feels they have greatly improved his hill climbing. He predicts Armstrong will win the Tour this year by at least 5 minutes. Dino Nico Valsesia is only 1 of 3 riders (others are Robic & Kish) returning from last years race.

Scott Dakus is a firefighter from Nevada. He is 6'4" tall and has the nicknames (11 year old Bug, 9 year old

Pineapple, & 8 year old Bear) of his children on his jersey. Wayne Gretsky (who he has met several times) is his sports hero because he handled success better than anybody. He told me this about RAAM. All superficial aspects of personality will be stripped away, leaving only a person's core.? Similar to Andrew Otto's quote, RAAM is a unique arena that is much like a filter, reducing you along the way to your very core.

At the pre-race banquet on Saturday evening, 15.4 mph solo average speed record holder Pete Penseyres brother Jim Penseyres spoke and gave a slide show. Losing the lower part of one leg in Vietnam could not stop him from finishing 3 solo RAAM's in 1985, 1987, & 1990). Even though his finishing times (11:22:50, 11:09:37, & 10:17:46) kept getting less, his places (9th, 13th, & 16th) kept getting higher. He was also on the fastest transcontinental team crossing in 1989 with his brother Pete and Bob Fourney (he is also on a 4 person HPV this year called ALS Lightning). The 4 man HPV team blazed across America in 5:01:08 for an average speed of 24 mph. I couldn't resist the temptation to ask Pete the following question. When the two of you were growing up, who was the superior athlete? Is it possible that if Jim was able to ride solo RAAM with two good legs, could he have done an average speed of say 15.7 mph? Pete's reply was Jim was the better athlete.

TEAM VIDEO INTERVIEWS

On Saturday at the Holiday Inn on the Bay hotel in San Diego, Stephen Auerbach and I interviewed 5 teams. The 2 person mixed Team No Limits consists of Jutta Kleinschmidt of Monaco and Joey Kelly of Germany. Jutta is a cross country rally driver and has raced all over the world. She has driven up to 300 kph so RAAM (her first bicycle race) will be quite a change riding at 25 kph. When I asked her about her competition, she said she is not here to beat other people. Joey has a triathlete background and has finished two person Team RAAM in 2001 and 4 person mixed Team RAAM in 2002.

The 4 person HPV Team ALS Lightning consists of Bob Fourney, James Kern, Sam Whittingham, and Timothy Wouldenberg. Fourney is a two time solo winner and current 4 person HPV Team record holder – having ridden the fastest Team crossing ever (5:01:08) in 1989 on Team Lightning/Tim Brunner with Michael Coles and the legendary RAAM Penseyres brothers. Kern's Aunt died of ALS other wise known as Lou Gerhrig's Disease. He trains on road & mountain bikes half of the time and recumbents and tandems the other half. Wouldenberg has the lightest HPV at 19 pounds. He met Kern on a PBP qualifier in CA. The team will use 3 fully enclosed HPVs and 3 unenclosed HPVs.

The 4 person over 70 Team Grand PAC Masters consists of Lee Mitchell, Ronald Bell, Robert Kash, & Chris Stauffer. Crewing on 16 RAAMs and 16 Furnace Creek 508s gives Mitchell a special appreciation of his crew this year. He said he is here to race with an 18 person team, but only 4 are riding. He is a professor of Geology, Geography, Oceanography, Anthropology, & Ecology. The first ride over 30 miles Mitchell ever rode was the Davis Double Century in 1975 with his sons. My first double century was two years before that at age 10. Having written out crew guidelines for anybody to benefit from, Mitchell doesn't demand that the riders he crews for win. Bell has done solo RAAM and two 4 person Team RAAMs. Given that his 102 year old mother is still alive, Bell has many more good RAAM years in him. He loves looking at the scenery. Kash says riding is pure pleasure and no pain. He said real pain is seeing a loved one die. He has psoriasis on both knees. A while back he accepted that he could not do solo RAAM. Stauffer is attempting his first RAAM. He likes being the oldest guy on group rides. He was raised in an Amish family until age 14 when he dropped out of school and began working. He likes how the better-

educated people on his team treat him as an equal. He comes from an overweight family. For the past 4 years Stauffer Homes has been a sponsor of Calvin's 12 Hour Challenge in Springfield, OH which by the way the RAAM route will pass very close to, so make sure you are riding then Chris. He stressed that safety will be the #1 focus of the team.

The 4 person mixed Team Just Sweat – NO Tears consists of Brian Welsh, Russell Carter, Kevin May, & Helen Wootton. Team leader Welsh was part of an 8 person team which raced 9000 miles around Australia. It was there that he decided to put together a RAAM team. So this idea of 8 person team distance races may have existed before the Corporate Challenge category of RAAM began last year. 100 kilogram Carter will gain from the "can't give up" attitude he has acquired from cave diving and rock climbing. Architect Wootton told me she has beaten some of her teammates so they will expect her to pull her own weight. She feels bad about not being able to grow a beard like so many RAAM riders she has seen.

The 4 man Team Extra Distance consists of 2 person team record holders Michel Bogli & Jose Coreia Pinto Filho, and Cassio Brandao, & 55 year old Marcio Milan. Team leader Bogli who has also done three 4 person Team RAAMs told me his team is not competing against any specific teams. He wants to one day ride solo RAAM. A training and motivational coach, he will get the chance to encourage his team the entire way across America. He did admit that his 2 person Team RAAM was tougher than his 4 person Teams. He gets a thrill out of catching solo riders and seeing them try to keep up with his him such as I did in the 2001 RAAM in which we rode thru McAllister, OK together.

I am sorry I did not get to interview more of the teams. I did however speak to Team Vail – Go Fast's Zach Bingham about what his team might do when they come upon the spot in New Mexico where Brett Malin was killed. They may stop for a moment of silence in memory of their former teammate.

Day 1: June 20 (10:14 am EST) – June 21 (10:14 am EST)

The 2004 Insight solo Race Across America began in San Diego on a cool cloudy Sunday morning sending 19 very brave men on their journey East to the Atlantic Ocean. Pete and Jim Penseyres were among the many riders who accompanied the pack through the 13 mile parade route out to the real start where Jure Robic just took off. Soon the skies cleared and the temperatures soared as Slovenian Jure Robic hammered to the first time station (53 miles) 11 minutes ahead of rookie Mike Trevino, and 16 minutes faster than he took to get there last year, but he received a 15 minute penalty because his crew left their RV parked on the freeway after official Lon Haldeman gave them a warning to remove it. The last placed rider Alessandro Colo arrived 58 minutes after Robic did. Thanks to Mark Wolfe for manning this time station. Peter Holy earned a 15 minute penalty for riding (running) a stop sign. Dino Nico Valsesia got a 15 minute penalty because he didn't get off and get right back onto Interstate 8. A camera crew caught Tracy McKay cutting his fingernails on his bike. Robic arrived at the second time station in El Centro 43 minutes faster than his 2003 time, and 22 minutes before Trevino. Thanks to Barclay Brown for manning this time station. By the time the last rider (Colo again) got to El Central, he was 2:04 behind. While he was stopped for 15 minutes inside the store at the time station, James Rosar told me he had a slow speed crash while he was without his crew. Guus Moonen stopped at the time station inside his RV for 15 minutes.

The temperature in the shade peaked out at 106 degrees, but it was about 113 degrees on the black pavement. By time station #3 in Glamis, Robic increased his lead over Trevino to 32 minutes and was 1:29

faster than 2003 leader Baloh. Valsesia was in third 16 minutes behind Trevino. Making it well into AZ before sunset, Robic rode 243 miles in his first 12 hours – 40 more miles than 2003 leader Baloh covered. After this near Hope is where Larsen took the lead from Baloh last year and increased it most of the way across the country. I stopped for a few hours of sleep at time station # 6 in Congress which Robic got to 54 minutes ahead of Trevino. 1:11 behind Trevino, Valsesia was holding onto 3rd place. At Congress, Robic was 2:19 ahead of 2003 leader Larsen. We can only speculate where Larsen would have been this year.

I observed a fair amount of stopping activity at time station #7 at the county courthouse in Prescott. Leader Robic arrived just before sunrise 1:12 ahead of Trevino who was 1:36 ahead of Valsesia. The big news was that Kish came from as far back as 16th place early in the race and moved up to 4th. I talked to 6th place David Haase in Prescott where he stopped to eat breakfast. He slept for an hour overnight, and had a low speed crash on a turn just before he got to Prescott. Leading the over 50 division, Peter Holy arrived in Prescott in 8th place, and stopped for a 40 minute break in his RV.

Making it just short of time station #8 in Camp Verde, Robic rode a very impressive 436 miles in his first 24 hours which is 43 more miles than 2003 leader and winner Larsen covered. Robic slept on the first night last year and rode about 356 miles his first 24 hours, thus he is 80 miles ahead of himself last year, which has to be very encouraging. One of the nice things RAAM veterans can do is compare/contrast the RAAM they are currently riding with previous RAAMs. Memories both good and bad are triggered especially when routes are so very similar. Kish must often get flooded with such memories considering he has 18 past RAAMs to draw upon.

Day 2: June 21 (10:14 am EST) – June 22 (10:14 am EST)

Solo:

After the breathe taking 12 mile descent thru classic Jerome, AZ, firefighter Scott Dakus arrived in 13th place at time station #8 in Camp Verde with knee trouble. Little did he know his fire department buddies at home in Henderson, NV had called up the Camp Verde fire department, which came out in full force to cheer Scott on. Things like this can make all the difference in the world to a tired/injured RAAM rider. The high temperature on the 2nd day peaked out at about 90 degrees F.

After the first 24 hours, the time spread between the first and last rider was over 20 hours. Leaders Robic & Trevino continued to build their lead on the rest of the field. After holding 3rd place for 6 time stations since the middle of CA, Dino Nico Valsesia took an afternoon sleep stop, which dropped him to 7th place. I hung out at time station #11 in Show Low, AZ for quite a while. Gerry Goode and his friend manned it. Last place Bob Rich trained with Gerry this spring in AZ. While out riding one day, Bob came upon the scene of Gerry & his wife who were out riding their tandem and had just gotten hit and seriously injured by a vehicle. Having to spend time at the hospital with them, Bob missed several days of training. At the time station Gerry looked good to me and told me he is able to ride an indoor trainer now, but his wife is still in a rehab center. I also saw John Hughes & woman friend Carol there, and talked with 12 year Kish Krew veteran David Olds who told me he is one of 4 people who never gets into the follow minivan with Brenda (she stays in it all the time Rob is riding).

Pius Achermann slept 1.5 hours each night the first two nights. Peter Holy had 3 one hour sleeps in the first

48 hours. Robic was running about 2 hours ahead of Trevino and he increased that lead to 3 hours in the wee hours of the morning before going down for a long sleep break. Having not slept yet, Trevino caught and passed Robic just after time station #12 in Springerville, AZ. Once he was "awake", Robic easily rode away from tired Trevino. This pass did not show up in the time station data, and I do not call it a valid pass because the only reason Trevino caught Robic was because he chose to sleep later. Muffy Ritz used to catch/pass Seana Hogan this way. After Trevino took a short sleep break, Robic had a 90 minute lead on Trevino.

Robic's follow minivan flattened, and Trevino's follow minivan flattened twice. We stopped at time station #13 in Pie Town, NM close to the Continental Divide near where Brett Malin was killed last year. The Pie-o-Neer store was closed for remodeling, but owners Kathy Knapp, Stanley King, & Niels Mandoe opened their doors for us and helped us put out Brett Malin Memorial sign out on their front porch.

Riding very well in 4th place, David Haase froze in the early morning when the low temperature dipped down to 35 degrees F around Springerville, AZ. Near Datil, NM, we ran into official John Ellis who was out in disguise on his bicycle. Robic & Trevino were both drug tested. Robic rode 338 miles in his 2nd 24 hours giving him a 774 mile 48 hour total. This is 57 more miles than Larsen rode last year, and 146 miles more than Robic rode last year. Robic has now fallen behind the over 400 miles per day average which Pete Penseyres cranked out the first 3 days of the 1986 RAAM to set the all time average speed record of 15.4 mph.

Teams:

31 hours after the solo riders started, 18 teams started in 7 different categories. In 4 person, Action Sports was the first team to the first time station in Pine Valley 4 minutes ahead of Vail – Go Fast and 14 minutes ahead of Royal Air Force.

In 4 person women's, Vail B2B Divas beat Frauleins by 15 minutes.

All the climbing must have slowed down 4 person HPV ALS Lightning, which was the 8th team to get to Pine Valley. They were 28 minutes behind Action Sports.

In 2 person, Coast to Coast beat TBW by 17 minutes, and No Limits by 57 minutes.

In 2 person mixed, VeloWear/Co-Motion beat No Limits 21 minutes.

In 8 person Corporate, Ride to Remember – Kaiser Permanente beat Rim to Rim by 7 minutes, and Insight by 15 minutes.

Action Sports rode 545 miles their first 24 hours. They led thru all 9 time stations.

Day 3: June 22 (10:14 am EST) – June 23 (10:14 am EST)

Teams Catch Solo Riders

The lead teams average speed is more than twice as fast as the tail enders in the solo race. Less than 24 hours into their race, the leading team Action Sports caught last place solo rider Bob Rich (56 hours into his race) before time station #10 in Heber, AZ. This is about 100 kilometers sooner along the route than it happened last year. It can take the lead teams 2 days to move through the entire solo field.

The 545 miles that Team Action Sports rode the first 24 hours is 60 miles farther than 2003 leader Team Vail – Go Fast covered. Fueled by the energy of their fallen comrade Brett Malin, Vail – Go Fast took the lead (before time station #12 in Springerville) from Action Sports who had it for the first 12 time stations. Brett Malin's father Jim and brother Jaime are back on the crew this year. When Vail –Go Fast came upon the scene of Brett's accident, Jim & Angus McGilpin secured a sign which RAAM people signed last year at the post race banquet/awards in Atlantic City. The riders were so caught up in increasing their lead over Action Sports that they did not stop.

Team Vail – Go Fast's motto is "Safety First, Team work second". In 2003, Toph (Christopher Leonard) replaced Jimmy Mortenson who had become a pro mountain bike racer. This year Jimmy Mortenson is a rider and Toph is a crewmember. Freelance photographer Mark Ridenour is on his second Team Vail. Adam Palmer's father Wayne is the only person to be on all 3 Team Vail crews. Having survived Vietnam, Wayne can exist on very little sleep making him the ideal crew member.

By TS#20 in Dalhart, TX, Vail – Go Fast had increased their lead over Action Sports to 36 minutes. Vail rode 1,123 miles in their first 48 hours. By the end of the 3rd day in the solo race, the lead 3 teams had passed all but the 3 lead solo riders. The top two 4 person teams were ahead of the average speed record of 23.04 mph, but the HPV team was behind the average speed record of over 24 mph.

In other team races, 4 women Team B2B have increased their lead over Frauleins to over 8 hours. In the 2 person races, Team Coast to Coast has stretched it's lead over TBW to 8 hours and over No Limits to 12 hours. In the 2 person mixed races, VeloWear/Co-Motion now leads No Limits by over 5 hours. In the 8 person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember – KP still leads.

While driving our minivan Eastward along the route in Datil, NM, Perry Stone, Robert Walker, & I came along John Ellis who was out riding the route in reverse direction as an 'undercover' official. At TS# 10 in Heber, AZ 553 miles in, solo rider Russ Goodwin became the races first casualty. After sleeping only 1.5 hours the first two days, he asked to go down and his inexperienced crew prevented him from sleeping. Climbing out of Strawberry, AZ, a driver fell asleep and drove over Russ from the rear. His bike got mangled as he went under the vehicle, but he was OK. After this he only rode a little bit farther before he realized his crew and him were not a good enough fit to go on. He dropped out within 300 miles of his Sierra Vista, AZ home.

Race leader Jure Robic rode 1,129 miles for the first 72 hours. This is down to only 28 more miles than leader Larsen rode last year, but Robic has ridden 165 miles more than he rode for the first 3 days last year. Leaders Robic & Trevino are within an hour of each other. Fasching is in 3rd place 4-5 hours behind Trevino. 1-2 hours behind Fasching is a cluster of 4 riders: David Haas, Rob Kish, Pius Achermann, & Dino Nico Valsesia all within 3 hours of each other.

Solo riders in the front half of the race had sunny weather in the morning followed by cloudiness and threatening skies which unleashed a dazzling array of heat lightning. Thunderstorms with hail nailed Valsesia.

Day 4: June 23 (10:14 am EST) – June 24 (10:14 am EST)

Solo:

Unless Wolfgang Fasching can get going, the solo race is shaping up to be a two man battle between 2003 rookie-of-the-year Slovenian Jure Robic and RAAM rookie ultra marathon runner and American hopeful Michael Trevino. The only time a rookie has ever won RAAM was way back in 1985 when America professional Jonathan “Jock” Boyer held good to his word. Before Armstrong and LeMond, Boyer was a pioneer going over to Europe to race on a European team. I think he was the first America ever to ride the Tour de France placing as high as 12th in GC. He also placed 5th in the 1980 PRO World Road Race on a course so tough that only a dozen or so riders finished the race won by Bernard Hinault in Sallanches, France. He won the Coors Classic (formerly Red Zinger) stage race. He was a mentor on the 7-Eleven Team that was the first American team to ever ride the Tour de France. So Boyer was hardly a rookie cyclist when he showed up on the 1985 RAAM starting line.

Can Trevino’s ultra marathon background be enough experience to allow him to win RAAM? Even though his ultra running races were never long enough to require sleep, they were far more punishing on his body that the two 24 hour bike races he won last year riding 463 miles at both. Mike told me he eats 1,000 calories per hour in running races, but has ‘only’ had to consume 800 per hour in RAAM. Sounds like a very scientific guy. At time station #28 in Fort Scott, KS, Mike’s father Tito (from Iowa) and his other sister Angela (sister Maria is on his crew) showed up in a minivan to cheer Mike on.

Robic crewmember Matjaz told me in the RAAM last year, Jure threw his too small spare bike (his primary bike had bottom bracket troubles) into the weeds, but Matjaz got the bike out of the ditch and refused to let Jure quit. Jure’s crew writes e-mails from his website guestbook (gets over 1,000 hits per day) onto the side of his follow minivan. We saw a message on the vehicle from his wife Petra, which read, “Tell Jure that if he will keep kicking like his unborn baby, he will win.” Robic’s mother Milena died of cancer at age 54 in 1997. He will dedicate this race to her.

Trevino finally caught Robic in the middle of the night, and they rode together talking about the race and life. Trevino stopped to sleep giving Robic back the lead. Robic ended his 4th day of RAAM with a 43 minute lead on Trevino. Robic rode 1,538 miles the first 4 days. This is 67 more miles than Larsen did last year, and 287 more miles than Robic rode himself last year. Robic rode an amazing 409 miles on his 4th day. Perhaps both him and Trevino still have a shot at breaking Penseyres’ 15.4 mph average speed record. Here are the stats for Robic versus Penseyres:

| | Robic | Penseyres |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Day 1 | 436 miles | 449 miles |
| Day 2 | 338 | 371 |
| Day 3 | 355 | 390 |
| Day 4 | 409 | 363 |
| TOTALS | 1538 | 1573 |

It looks like starting on the second night, they have been averaging about one hour of sleep per night. Most riders who sleep 2 or more hours – it is easy to see this on the time station speed splits because speeds drop below 10 mph, but Trevino has none of these and Robic only has one. I thought that Penseyres only

sleeping 90 minutes per night was crazy, but Robic and Trevino are redefining sleep deprivation extremes. Only time will tell if they can keep up this schedule. It might only be a matter of time before Robic's mailmen monsters begin attacking him again, and I wonder what sort of hallucinations Trevino will experience?

3rd place Fasching is some 8 hours behind Robic & Trevino. 3 hours behind Fasching are David Haase and Rob Kish. Rookie Haase must be thrilled to be riding so close to RAAM legend Kish nearly halfway into the race. In what other sporting event does a novice get to go head to head against one of the very best? It would be like category 3 racer getting to race against Lance Armstrong in the Tour de France.

Three riders dropped out. At time station #13 in Pie Town, NM, firefighter Scott Dakus called it quits with a knee problem. He had been riding in 14th place. At time station #15 in Mountainair, NM, a strained quad forced Tracy McKay out of the race. Finally, at time station #20 in Dalhart, TX, Switzerland's Pius Achermann dropped out with saddle sores after going to a hospital. Riding in 6th place at the time of his DNF, Pius had been as high as 4th place. A similar story to what happened to Marko Baloh last year, but he made it all the way to West Virginia.

Teams:

The big news in the Teams races is that after starting out slow in the mountains, the ALS Lightning human powered vehicles Team kicked it into warp drive (posting four 30+ mph time station splits), and passing 2nd place team Action Sports in Texas, and passing 1st place team Vail – Go Fast close to the OK/KS state line. They rode a phenomenal 635 miles their third day, and finally got their cumulative average speed above the 24.02 RAAM speed record. Vail – Go Fast and Action Sports have also managed to get their cumulative average speed above Kern Wheelmen's 23.04 record, but keep in mind they will have to get this speed well above the record since the steep hills of Southeastern Ohio, WV, MD, and PA will drop it. Vail – Go Fast told me as long as their lead over Action Sports is less than one hour, they are not comfortably in the lead.

I talked with Royal Air Forces team manager Steve Masters who told me his team found 3:30 marathon runner, 53 year old musician Johnny Waughman who trained with the team for 2 months, but was withdrawn from the team because of safety issues. Johnny was going to be featured in a BBC observational documentary called "The Challenge" an 8 part series about 8 different sports. Steve wanted to say hello to his wife Adele, and 3 boys: Dominic, Harry, & Max.

In other team races, 4 women Team B2B have increased their lead over Frauleins to over 10 hours. In the 2 person races, Team Coast to Coast has stretched its lead over TBW to 14 hours and over No Limits to 18 hours. Between time stations 14 and 15 in New Mexico, Team Coast to Coast had an accident. While parked on the side of the road, their minivan follow vehicle was hit by another vehicle, but their minivan follow vehicle was still usable. The team lost between 35 minutes and one hour. Averaging 19.6 mph, Coast to Coast is well above the 17.66 average speed record.

In the 2 person mixed races, VeloWear/Co-Motion now leads No Limits by over 9 hours. In the 8 person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember – KP still leads Insight and the time gap is 1:20, and Insight still leads Rim to Rim Cycling and the time gap is 1:05

Day 5: June 24 (10:14 am EST) – June 25 (10:14 am EST)

Solo:

Trying to get by on only one hour of sleep per night finally caught up with leaders Robic and Trevino. I was at time station #31 in Jefferson City, MO when Robic arrived looking wiped out at 1:30am race time. His total stop time of just less than 3 hours was the first long sleep he has had almost 1,800 miles into the race. Trevino had two consecutive two hour sleep breaks, which show up on his time station splits (#30 in Camdenton & #31 in Jefferson City, MO) both below 10 mph for the first time in the race. If you try to go too long without getting enough sleep in RAAM, sooner or later your body will pay the price either forcing you to crawl along at a snails pace or forcing you to sleep. Once they were both up and riding, Robic was 3 hours ahead of Trevino. Trevino should have been closing on Robic since he slept longer, but just the opposite happened. Robic's 5th day mileage was 323 miles, so it seems unlikely he will be able to break the 15.4 mph average speed record. Riding 1,861 miles on his first 5 days, Robic has 96 more miles than Larsen last year, and is 311 miles ahead of his own pace last year. Fasching is in isolation - 7 hours behind Trevino and 9 hours ahead of Kish. I talked to Fasching's crew who told me they only inform him of where the other riders are when he asks them. If he is quickly catching another rider, they will tell him about. So no news is bad news for Fasching.

Most time stations are unmanned, but #31 in Jefferson City, MO had at least a dozen people there headed by Dan Miller.

4 more solo riders have dropped out. 30-40 mph headwinds near the NM/TX state line making it impossible for Bob Rich to increase his cumulative average speed to over 10 mph (to make the 12 Day 2 Hour time limit) forced him to abandon. After Tracy McKay dropped out yesterday, he picked up two Bob Rich crewmembers and is acting as a neutral crew all the way across the country to Atlantic City. After Bob Rich broke the cage on his rear derailleur, Tracy gave him a new chain and derailleur. Saddle sores caused Italian Alessandro Colo to drop out at Guymon, OK. Back spasms forced Everest mountain climber Andrew Lapkass out of RAAM in Eastern NM. Exhaustion got the best of James Rosar in OK. So far 8 of the 19 starters have DNFed.

On Thursday night just after the KS/MS state line, officials Johnny Boswell (ran an awesome time station in Kosciusko, MS on the Portland to Pensacola RAAM route) and Karl Schlederer came upon the scene of a fiery traffic accident which closed the road for about 1.75 hours. 3 young kids in a car collided with a woman in a pick-up truck. A 3 mile dirt road detour was set up which Teams Coast to Coast & Insight, and Fasching were shuttled on. They only missed riding a mile of the RAAM route, but had to spend about 8 minutes on the detour.

Also on Thursday evening at time station # 27 in Yates Center, KS, Team Insight flatted their follow van. The town sheriff was talking with the locals and called it in. The fire chief heard it on the scanner, came over to Insight's van and fixed it on the spot for free.

Teams:

The ALS Lightning HPV Team continues to pull away from all other teams, and is still on target to break that speed record of 24.02. After leading in CA and AZ, Action Sports fell as much as an hour behind Vail – Go Fast because they were down to using just 3 riders for 2 full days when Shawn and then Bill were

each sick and out of rotation. Kerry Ryan crashed. By time station #41 in London, Ohio, Actions Sports retook the lead from Vail – Go Fast. Both of these teams are still on pace to break Kern Wheelmen's record average speed of 23.04 set in 1996.

In other team races, 4 women Team B2B have increased their lead over Frauleins to over 17 hours. In the 2 the person races, Team Coast to Coast has stretched its lead over TBW to 27 hours and over New England by 28 hours.

In the 2 person mixed races, VeloWear/Co-Motion now leads No Limits by over 13 hours. In the 8 person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember – KP still leads Insight and the time gap is 2 hours, and Insight still leads Rim to Rim Cycling and the time gap is one hour.

Day 6: June 25 (10:14 am EST) – June 26 (10:14 am EST)

Solo:

Slovenian Jure Robic increased his lead over rookie sensation Michael Trevino to over 6 hours. Robic rode 2,212 miles his first 6 days. This is 135 miles more than Larsen last year, and 386 miles ahead of Robic's 2003 pace. Here is a mileage comparison chart of 2003 Larsen versus 2004 Robic:

| 2003 Larsen | miles/Cum miles | 2004 Robic | miles/Cum miles |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1st day | 393 / 393 | 436 | 436 |
| 2 nd day | 324 / 717 | 338 | 774 |
| 3 rd day | 384 / 1101 | 355 | 1129 |
| 4 th day | 370 / 1471 | 409 | 1538 |
| 5 th day | 294 / 1765 | 323 | 1861 |
| 6 th day | 312 / 2077 | 351 | 2212 |

Fasching remains in 3rd place isolated from other solo riders. Wolfgang has only finished as low as 3rd place once in 1996 his rookie year. David Haase, Dino Nico Valsesia, Rob Kish, & Fabio Biasiolo's friend Enrico DeAngeli are within a few hours of each other all within reach of 4th place. Riding isolated in 8th place, the Energizer Bunny Andrew Otto has already made it farther than his 2000 RAAM DNF. Going for the over 50 division are the last 3 riders (Guus Moonen, Randy Van Zee, & Peter Holy) out on the RAAM course. To be official finishers, they will have to finish in 12 days & 2 hours by Noon on Friday, July 2nd. They will have to average at least 10.20 mph on the 2,958.5 mile course to do this. If riders get lost and ride bonus miles, their average speed will have to be even higher.

In order to break Pete Penseyres' 1986 solo average speed record of 15.40 mph, a time of 8:00:08 would have to be ridden on the 2,958.5 course.

In order to break Tom Davies, Jr.'s 50+ 1995 average speed record of 11.83 mph, a time of 10:10:05 would have to be ridden.

In order to break Bob Breedlove's 50+ 2002 average speed record of 12.26 mph, a time of 10:01:19 would

have to be ridden. Note: This record was done outside of RAAM, and therefore can't be a RAAM record.

Teams:

The 24 hour splits for the leaders (Action Sports, Vail – Go Fast, & ALS Lightning HPV) in the Team RAAM are the following:

- 1st day 545 miles (Action Sports was leading)
- 2nd day 578 miles (Vail – Go Fast was leading)
- 3rd day 635 miles (ALS Lightning was leading)
- 4th day 559 miles (ALS Lightning was leading)
- 5th day 489 miles (ALS Lightning was leading)

In order to break Team Lightning/Tim Brummer's 1989 Four person HPV Team average speed record of 24.02 mph, a time of 5:03:10 would have to be ridden on the 2,958.5 course of the 2004 RAAM.

In order to break Team Kern Wheelmen's 1996 Four person Team average speed record of 23.04 mph, a time of 5:08:24 would have to be ridden.

In order to break Team Florida RAAM's 1996 Four person Women's Team average speed record of 18.57 mph, a time of 6:15:19 would have to be ridden.

In order to break Team Ideo/Fat Cities 1994 Four person Mixed Team average speed record of 19.51 mph, a time of 6:07:38 would have to be ridden.

In order to break Team Secure Horizons' 1999 Four Men's 70+ Team average speed record of 14.60 mph, a time of 8:10:38 would have to be ridden.

In order to break Team Discover Ceara/PowerBar's 2001 Two person Team average speed record of 17.64 mph, a time of 6:23:43 would have to be ridden. To get the bonus prize money, the team has to average 19.5 mph, a time of 6:07:43 would have to be ridden.

In the 4 man team race, the steep hills of Southeastern Ohio and mountains of West Virginia and Maryland slowed the ALS Lightning Team down so much that their cumulative average speed has dropped below 24 mph and their hopes of getting the speed record. Action Sports caught Vail – Go Fast, and the two teams rode through time station #40 in Troy, OH together. However, looking at time station data, one would not know this since their crews reported their times into headquarters two minutes apart. Two time solo RAAM finisher Matt Bond is manning that station which has had up to 30 RAAM vans at once. I met Lou Vetter & Claire Lea there. Merry Vander Linden & Claudio were there on their bikes.

In other team races, 4 women Team B2B have increased their lead over Frauleins to over 21 hours. In the 2 person races, Team Coast to Coast is just burning up the pavement. They now have a two day lead over their competition. I talked to Dr. Pat of Team Coast to Coast and he is all about heart rate monitors. Riders are taking two hour shifts all the way across the country. Before and after their shifts, Jeff Rushton & Kevin Wallace use stationary trainers to warm-up and cool-down on. Their average speed of over 19 mph will destroy the old 17.64 mph record. When I asked Jeff if he thought he could increase their average speed to

over 19.5 mph by the end of the race (bonus prize \$\$\$ offered for this), he sounded doubtful. However, Dr. Pat felt confident that they could do it.

In the 2 person mixed race, VeloWear/Co-Motion (George Thomas & Terri Gooch) now lead No Limits by over 15 hours. It looks like there will finally be finishers in this category, which seems to be jinxed.

In the 8 person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember – Kaiser Permanente continue to increase their lead on Insight – nearly 3 hours now. Insight might have to start looking behind them since Rim to Rim Cycling has closed what was once an hour gap down to just 36 minutes now

Of the 10 RAAMs I have been involved with, this one has been the coolest and driest so far. Already in West Virginia, Perry Stone, Robert Walker, & I have yet to see any precipitation, and the high temperatures the last couple of days have only been in the low 70's. There have been some cold nights, but still not as cold as on the old Portland to Pensacola route. Riders have complained about headwinds, but they have also gotten some nice tailwinds.

Day 7: June 26 (10:14 am EST) – June 27 (10:14 am EST)

Teams:

After leading all categories of RAAM, and opening up a 4 hour lead over the top two 4 person teams in the flat Midwest, ALS Lightning HPV Team had to climb the hills of Southeastern Ohio and the mountains of West Virginia & Maryland which slowed their average speed down too much to set a new record. ALS was almost caught as a fierce battle was going on between Action Sports & Vail – Go Fast. Action Sports led the first day. Vail – Go Fast built up a descent lead in the Rocky Mountains, but Action Sports never gave up (even with only 3 man rotations at times due to losing a rider from sickness) and retook the lead in Ohio after it went back and forth until Action Sports was finally able to pull away for good in the Maryland mountains. Although ALS won, their average speed was slower than the team Bob Fourney also led in 1989. Action Sports won the 4 man conventional bikes division (a more established division than the HPV) beating Vail – Go Fast by over two hours. Action Sports just barely (by 7 minutes) established a new average speed record of 23.06 mph winning \$25,000 for it. Having won his 3rd team RAAM, Kerry Ryan is in that prestigious category along with Joe Peterson. Team Royal Air Force (my pre-race pick) finished 3rd some 10 hours behind.

In the 2 person mixed race, VeloWear/Co-Motion (George Thomas & Terri Gooch who both promote/run Race Across Oregon) now lead No Limits by 17 hours. George told me he absolutely loves night riding on RAAM and will sleep in the afternoons which are toughest on him. It looks like there will finally be finishers in this category, which seems to have been jinxed in past years.

In the 8 person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember – Kaiser Permanente have a 2.5 hour lead on Insight. Rim to Rim Cycling has closed what was once an hour gap down to just 25 minutes, but they are quickly running out of America to catch/pass Insight in.

Solo:

With less than 500 miles to go, Slovenian Jure Robic increased his lead over rookie sensation Michael Trevino to 8 hours. A general rule in RAAM is that you can only catch a rider if they are within 10% of the remaining distance. At 15 mph, 8 hours corresponds to 120 miles, so Trevino would need 1,200 miles left to close a 120 mile gap. Unless Robic has some sort of catastrophe, there is simply not enough of America left for Trevino to catch Robic. Robic rode 2,490 miles his first 7 days (week). This is 142 miles more than Larsen last year, and 379 miles ahead of Robic's 2003 pace. Here is a mileage comparison chart of 2003 Larsen versus 2004 Robic:

| 2003 Larsen | miles/Cum miles | 2004 Robic | miles/Cum miles |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1st day | 393 / 393 | 436 | / 436 |
| 2 nd day | 324 / 717 | 338 | / 774 |
| 3 rd day | 384 / 1101 | 355 | / 1129 |
| 4 th day | 370 / 1471 | 409 | / 1538 |
| 5 th day | 294 / 1765 | 323 | / 1861 |
| 6 th day | 312 / 2077 | 351 | / 2212 |
| 7 th day | 271 / 2348 | 278 | / 2490 |

Fasching has closed the once 8 hour gap between him and Trevino to 4 hours. If Faschings crew is feeding him info on Trevino, he can smell 2nd place like he did back in 1998 when Tatrai won. 2nd place is not a win, but it is better than 3rd. 4th place Enrico DeAngeli has made a very impressive surge to break out of the pack of 4 riders he was in. To open up a 5-hour gap on Kish, he went two nights in a row without any significant sleep. A person usually can't do this in the middle of RAAM without paying a big price for it down the road. Kish is in 5th place close to David Haase who is having the ride of his life. Valsesia is in 7th place within striking distance of 4th place. Andrew Otto continues to ride in Shermerland – too far behind to catch the rider ahead of him, and too far ahead to be caught by the rider behind him. This makes for a relaxing RAAM for both Otto and his crew. When last position (11th place) oldest (57) rider Peter Holy dropped out at time station # 29 in MO from saddle sores, Randy Van Zee inherited last place taking pressure off him from another rider breathing down his back. However, he has to worry about his average speed staying over 10.2 mph at the finish to be an official finisher. Good thing he is currently a high 10 mph average to allow for decay over the Appalachian Mountains towards the end.

Notes: On late Friday night/early Saturday morning in Indiana at his sleep stop, Mike Trevino traded his cycling shoes for running shoes and went for a short run with his girlfriend Amanda. An observer noticed that Mike put his bike down and was maybe going to drop out, until Amanda was smart enough to use running (Mike's primary sport) to get his mind back in the right place to finish RAAM. I would like to thank Mike's crew for doing such a terrific job keeping him motivated and on his bike.

Day 8: June 27 (10:14 am EST) – June 28 (10:14 am EST)

Solo:

Robic rode 2,826 miles his first 8 days. This is 226 miles more than Larsen last year, and 437 miles ahead of Robic's 2003 pace. Here is a mileage comparison chart of 2003 Larsen versus 2004 Robic:

| | 2003 Larsen miles/Cum miles | 2004 Robic miles/Cum miles |
|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1st day | 393 / 393 | 436 / 436 |
| 2nd day | 324 / 717 | 338 / 774 |
| 3rd day | 384 / 1101 | 355 / 1129 |
| 4th day | 370 / 1471 | 409 / 1538 |
| 5th day | 294 / 1765 | 323 / 1861 |
| 6th day | 312 / 2077 | 351 / 2212 |
| 7th day | 271 / 2348 | 278 / 2490 |
| 8th day | 252 / 2600 | 336 / 2826 |

Robic is about to win his first RAAM. Like Larsen last year, Robic has such a big time margin over 2nd place that his crew might go into relaxation mode (sleep a lot the final night) once they no longer care about going for the 15.4 mph average speed record. When Robic & Trevino were close together at the halfway point in El Dorado, KS, I thought we were going to have a close, exciting race, but once Trevino started dropping back, it turned into another huge time margin victory just like the past 4 solo RAAMs. Fasching is still isolated in 3rd place. Trevino would have to have a major meltdown now for Fasching to catch him.

Enrico DeAngeli continues to hold onto a solid 4th place some 8 hours behind Fasching and 4-5 hours ahead of Kish. Only time will tell if he will pay for going two consecutive nights without any significant sleep. Looking at his time station splits, Enrico finally got 3 hours of sleep in Ohio. If he can pull it off all the power to him, but I myself could never do such a thing. I tried to catch Kish late in the 1995 RAAM by forgoing sleep the final night, but it backfired on me and I had to stop and sleep for 2.5 hours with just 25 miles to go. Gerry Tatrai almost caught me for second place.

6th place David Haase has dropped 8-9 hours behind Kish, and is 6-7 hours ahead of Otto. Otto is 17 hours ahead of Guus Moonen who is 3 hours ahead of Randy Van Zee. The big news of the day is Dino Nico Valsesia dropping out from exhaustion while in 7th place at time station #42 in Laurelville, OH. I would not be surprised to see him re-enter the race after getting a full night's sleep. At the time he quit, he still had 4.25 days left to ride the remaining 581 miles for an official finish. It is very difficult for Kish and I to understand why people DNF especially when they have plenty of time left to finish officially. Mark Patten pulled a similar stunt in the 1999 RAAM when he dropped out while still ahead of Kish with just 150 miles remaining. Perhaps Furnace Creek 508 winner Catharina Berge can shed some light on this when she completes her online questionnaire about why people drop out of RAAM. Valsesia's RAAM exit bumps Otto, Moonen, & Van Zee all up a place. I can't believe there are now 10 DNFs out of 19 starters in a RAAM with very favorable weather conditions.

Teams:

In the 8 person Corporate Challenge, Team Ride to Remember got sweat revenge on last year's winner Team Insight. Last year's race was an exciting battle, which kept going back and forth. This year, Ride to Remember - Kaiser Permanente must have lived up to their slogan "Remember to Ride" as they lead the entire race by as much as 3.5 hours. Battling for 2nd place, rookie Team Rim to Rim Cycling started out ahead of Insight, but Insight passed Rim to Rim before the CA/AZ state line and had up to an hour lead on them, though this was brought down to 22 seconds by the end of the race.

In the 2-man team race, Team Coast to Coast Against Cancer rode away from their competition breaking the old average speed record by more than a full mile. Because this is a relatively new category, the winning team had to average over 19.5 mph for the bonus prize money. Although their average speed was over this at the half way point of the race, it dropped to 18.71 mph by the finish line in Atlantic City.

In the 2 person mixed race, VeloWear/Co-Motion (George Thomas & Terri Gooch who both promote/run Race Across Oregon) have lead Team No Limits all the way across the country, and will win with a huge time margin. I spoke with George today. They've gotten lost 3 times losing a total of about 19 minutes. They take 2 hour pulls until night owl Thomas does a 4-4.5 hour pull in the wee hours of the morning to allow Terri to get some descent sleep. They have had perfect weather, and George has new respect for the two-person race. George estimates he has been riding 55% of the total time.

Day 9: June 28 (10:14 am EST) – June 29 (10:14 am EST)

Traveling in the media crew minivan with writer Perry Stone and camera man Robert Walker, we got a motel room in Bridgeport, WV on US Rt. 50 on Sunday night with hopes of seeing the middle of the solo field, but when 4th place Enrico de Angeli still hadn't passed by our room by early Monday morning, we decided to jump on Interstate highways to catch back up with leader Jure Robic. We caught up with 4 person Team Extra Distance (from Brazil) who had two riders on the road at once drafting each other on beautiful PA roads. Shortly later, we caught solo leader Jure Robic before the rider shuttle across the Delaware River on the Commodore Barry Bridge into NJ. We drove ahead to Atlantic City where 11 teams had already finished.

Team Extra Distance finished 5th in the 4 person team race. I teased team captain Michel Bogli about their speed being slower than his two-man record set in 2001. He was happy that Coast-to-Coast beat their old record. I presented him with a Danny Chew Million Mile Man t-shirt since he gave me a Team Extra Distance jersey in San Diego. Bogli had a great RAAM with no flats and perfect weather. In the wee hours of the morning in IL, Bogli caught and rode with Kish for 10 minutes. Kish remembered Bogli who wrote to Kish and asked him for advice on solo RAAM.

On Monday evening, Slovenian soldier Jure Robic won his first RAAM in 8 Days, 9 Hours, 51 Minutes (8:09:51). His 14.66 mph average speed ranks 8th on the list of fastest solo Transcontinental bicycle crossings of the USA. He becomes the 14th man to win RAAM and the 16th man to finish in less than 9 days. On the victory stage with his crew, Robic took a call from his wife Petra who is pregnant with their first child who will be named Neza if a girl. Jure said "The race is crazy, but in a positive way." Robic theorized that if 2003 RAAM winner Allen Larsen was here, Larsen would have finished a few hours behind him. I love that fact that Robic is a high mileage-training machine. In the past year, he has ridden over 45,000 kilometers. He lost 6 Kgm in the first two days. He had two slow speed crashes at night. He is currently on his 3rd year of a 5-year contract with the Slovenian Army, which allows him to train/race full time. Proof of his amazing recovery is that less than a week after he finished RAAM last year, he won a 180 Km road race in Europe. He is disappointed he will miss this year's race because of a date conflict with RAAM. He was able to get by on even less sleep (8 hours compared with 10 last year) this year because of sleep deprivation training. For 6 times before RAAM once a month he would stay awake for 48 continuous hours while riding 10 hour shifts. When I asked him what advice he has for fellow Slovenian Marko Baloh who dropped out of the 2003 RAAM, he said, "Marko must train longer and harder to win RAAM."

On Monday morning, Michael Trevino finished 2nd and won Rookie-of-the-Year. 11 hours & 15 minutes behind Robic, Trevino's time was 8:21:06 for an average speed of 13.88 mph which ranks 3rd among rookie's (In 1985 Boyer rode 14.31 & in 1996 Fasching rode 14.07). Sleeping very little, Trevino had many hallucinations including sign and mailbox people. He only wore his heart rate monitor on the first day. He tried to sleep the first night, but he couldn't because he kept hearing the wind. His daily calorie intake was 8-10,000 per day – much less than he uses in ultra running events. Since RAAM is a time trial, he thinks ideally a steady speed the whole way across the country would be best (like Cassie Lowe) but very difficult to do mentally – getting so far behind the other riders early in the race. His first few days of RAAM were easier than training because of his support crew. He still doesn't know the exact approach to take with RAAM. It was an exciting and humbling event.

In the middle part of the race, Robic's spy vehicle stalked Trevino for 3 consecutive nights. Trevino & crew never played those sorts of mind games with Robic & crew. In fact, Mike walked over to the Robic crew and introduced himself. The Robic crew gave him a tiger mascot. On Friday evening before dark just after time station #34 in Greenville, IL, Stone, Walker, and I came upon the Robic spy vehicle and stopped beside them. Fon Bostjan (a Slovenian journalist) jumped out of the vehicle raving at us that he had proof of Trevino cheating and that if we didn't do anything about it, he would write about what a joke the Race Across America is in Slovenian online newspapers. He would pull his rider Robic out of the race in protest. He showed us a bunch of photos he took showing Trevino in his motorhome/RV. With stones on the road, he showed us exactly how Trevino was being shuttled up the road in his RV with the minivan covering it up. The photos proved nothing. We were totally blindsided by this. I called race director Jim Pitre who deputized me as an official to get to the bottom of these allegations. Our vehicle drove up alongside Trevino, and I asked him if he had heard of allegations that he was cheating from the Robic crew to which Mike was very surprised. He said he was flattered by it, and that he would take more drug tests and even a lie detector test to prove his innocence. We got all of this on videotape. It was after this time that Mike began to lose time on Robic, which I figured had to be because I told him of the cheating allegations against him. That same night, officials Johnny Boswell & Karl Schlederer relieved me from my official status, but it was too late. The physiological/mental damage had already been done to Mike, and I felt terrible about it. This whole incident understandably created a wall between our media crew vehicle and Team Trevino the rest of the race. I tried to talk to Team Trevino crewmembers at the Indianapolis time station, but got the silent treatment. About a day later, I asked Robic if he knew anything about a crew member of his making allegations against Mike, to which he said he didn't know. Robic told me he has a lot of respect for Mike, and didn't think Trevino was capable of cheating.

I decided not to write about until after the race was over. After Perry Stone starting receiving anti-America hate e-mails (Fon Bostjan bashed RAAM on a Slovenian website), he became very emotional over the incident, and scolded out Robic crewmember Fon Bostjan saying he ruined the race with false allegations against Trevino. We talked to Jim Pitre who stated a rule, which prevents trash-talking RAAM. Perry & I showed Fon the rule in the rulebook, and threatened to have Jure Robic disqualified if Fon didn't remove his article from the website. Fon did remove his article, and Perry Stone even started receiving apology letters, which nearly brought him to emotional tears. I was anxious to see Mike Trevino at the finish line to apologize for my part in all this. Before RAAM, I had exchanged many e-mails with Mike consulting with him about training and strategy. I hope this incident doesn't end my friendship with him.

As Mike got up onto the finish line stage in Atlantic City, he said his biggest emotion was a sense of relief that the race was finally over. At perhaps his lowest point of the race, the night he heard about the allegations against him, he was about to quit when his girlfriend Amanda went running with him and reminded him of all the lousy, cold, wet weather he had trained through to get to this point in RAAM. This

made Mike want to continue on racing. The allegations against him soured him towards RAAM, and he thought the press violated the rule of observation technique.

At the finish line, I greeted Mike by saying handshake or punch (as I ducked) to which he shook my hand and said he would kick my ass on the bike someday. I apologized to him for my behavior, which he accepted, and began interviewing him. All throughout RAAM, Mike has shown me what a classy athlete he is, and how much respect he has for the event and riders who do it. When I saw Robic at the finish line earlier, I pointed out his crewmember that made these allegations, and Robic said he would talk to him about it. Neither Trevino or Robic knowing anything about the allegations drives home just how protective crews are of their riders not wanting to tell them anything which might distract them from their RAAM mode mindset. When asked if he will ever ride RAAM again on the finishing stage, Trevino replied "One Day at a Time."

The rest of the solo riders are holding their isolated positions. I hope there is at least one close together pair arriving in Atlantic City just to remind fans they are following the Race Across America as apposed to the Ride Across America.

On Tuesday morning, Grand PAC Masters finished in 7:16:31 to establish a new 70+ Four Person Team average speed record of 16.03 mph crushing the old record of 14.6 mph. Of the 3 category records broken this year, this one shaved off the most time – an amazing 18 hours & 7 minutes faster. When I asked Lee Mitchell how he was able to smash the record by so much, he said because he had a better crew this year. Crewmember Patty Jo said Lee is more fun to be around as a rider than a crewmember. Lee hit the fastest speed (49 mph) he has gone in 20 years in the dark. The team's low point of the trip was having to battle 45 mph headwinds in KS for a few hours. They had a headwind stretch which lasted about 20 hours. Ron Bell crashed on railroad tracks (despite a warning about them in the route book) outside of Liberal, KS at 4:30 am in the morning. Bell loved catching and passing 3-time RAAM winner Wolfgang Fasching at 2:30 am.

Notes:

In Bridgeport, WV, a mudslide closed a section of the RAAM route causing a hilly detour, which added 3 miles onto race distance. Robic & crew didn't take the detour – they blew through construction barrels. Team Extra Distance took the detour. Trevino got there just as the original route road was opening back up.

DNF James Rosar was at the finish line. He told me his Ulcerative Colitis was worse on the 2nd and 3rd days. He had the same sort of misfortune Bob Rich had. On the day officials were checking his riding speed, 30 mph winds hammered him. He has now satisfied his curiosity about RAAM, and doubts he will ever come back.

I talked with some riders from the corporate 8-person Team Rim to Rim Cycling. Sean Chance told me they closed to within 20 minutes of Team Insight the final day, but got lost in PA – getting on a freeway they were supposed to go under. They had 3 problems with their support crew vehicles. 1. Their driver almost missed an exit ramp, overcorrected and the van ended up with both back wheels off the ground. They had to get towed out. 2. The last day in PA, their RV muffler separated and hung sounding very loud. They solved this problem with electrical tape, a bungee cord, and a wet towel. 3. In Amish county, their vehicle pulled off in soft mud on the shoulder and the right wheels got stuck in deep mud. The guy's house they were in front of towed their vehicle out of the mud with his pick-up truck. However, they lost no time because of these 3 incidents. Mary Jo told me that Team Insight pulled away from them in AZ with a fresh crew. 100 kilogram Ben Smith was nicknamed "King of Gravity" because of how fast he descended. He

was also known as Benny Bonknot because he would never bonk (run out of energy). He has a very slow cadence of 65 rpm. Ben and Mary Jo told me they would consider riding on a 4-person team. Mary's longest ride is 70 miles, and Dale Rogers longest ride is 55 miles. Kristen Olander kept a detailed diary of the team's entire trip across the country. Rim-to-Rim lost about 40 minutes from navigational errors. In Pratt, KS, the Pizza Hut restaurant opened an hour early and gave them a 50% discount.

I talked with Team Royal Air Force's Steve Wilcox who also did RAAM on RAF in 2002. He was the first rider to start this year. Action Sports took off while Team Vail – Go Fast's rider dropped a chain. On a low budget, RAF had no spare bikes. They had 10 flat tires. Once they fell behind more than two hours, they lost their spirit and were only riding and not racing across America. They were discouraged that Action Sports had such amazing equipment. Action Sports riders had two bikes each. The ALS Lightning HPV Team blew past Keith Jackson (doing 30 mph himself) at 55 mph on the flats. The HPV Team rode through such heavy rain in WV they had to go slow up and downhills.

I talked with Mixed 4 person Team Just Sweat – No Tears. 100 kilogram Russell Carter crashed into a car at an intersection. He dislocated his little finger and put it back in himself. He took the side mirror off the car and dented the door before he flew up into the air. The crew took photos of the damaged car. Kevin May rode the most miles with 884. Helen Wootton enjoyed catching solo riders David Haas and Dino Nico Valsesia and saying hello to them.

The winning 4-person Women's Team Vail B2B Divas rode for a charity: Border-to-Border USA – raising money and awareness for Pediatric AIDS. Kerry White is on the Team Vail – Go Fast mountain bike team, and knows everybody on the RAAM Team Vail – Go Fast Team including the late Brett Malin. All 4 women stopped in Pie Town, NM to pay tribute to Brett at the new memorial sign. Kerry lives by Brett's favorite phrase by Robert Cormier, "I am away, I am away with the wind and sun, I am the bike and the bike is me". Kerry has done eleven 24 hour mountain bike races, and says they beat her up worse than the 4-person team RAAM did this year. B2B battled against Just Sweat – No Tears for the last two days.

Day 10: June 29 (10:14 am EST) – June 30 (10:14 am EST)

On Tuesday morning, VeloWear/Co-Motion became the first Two-Person Mixed Team to finish RAAM. Consisting of Race Across Oregon (RAO) promoters George Thomas & his fiancé Terri Gooch, VeloWear/Co-Motion finished in 7:18:05 with an average speed of 15.90 mph. It's about time RAAM had a finisher in this category, and I can't think of any couple more deserving of this title than George & Terri. Mr. RAAM versatility, George has now finished 6 RAAMs including 4 different categories. George & Terri's meeting is another RAAM love story like Andrew Otto & Carol Clarke. George met Terri at Lon Haldeman's desert PAC Tour in 2001 in Arizona. He was there to demo 8 tandems. Terri asked George to ride tandem with her and they did their first ride (110 miles) together with George captaining. They rode tandem again that same week, and later rode a 400-kilometer ride in Davis, CA. All they wanted to do was ride tandem together. Within 6 weeks, Terri moved from her San Diego home to George's Corvallis, OR home so they could keep riding tandem. In 2001, Terri raced in George's RAO placing 3rd overall and qualifying for RAAM, and she began helping George run the event. In 2002, they finished tandem RAAM, and plan on getting married this October. The tough thing about training for 2-person RAAM this year is that they had to do it on single bikes – not on tandems – their first love.

I guess George got the maximum performance out of his body since he crashed while carrying his bicycle

up onto the finish line stage. George said, "I was able to merge together 6 years of RAAM experience for the perfect race." When asked what she was going to do now that her RAAM was over, Terri replied, "That's kind of a vacuum because all I've been thinking about the last 7 days is getting to the finish line." In comparing tandem (George & her finished tandem RAAM in 2002) Terri said, "Tandem was more difficult because it was more like solo RAAM." George said the tandem with Terri was tougher than his solo RAAM in 1995. The first 5 days were OK, but after that they rarely felt good at the same time. The old saying, "You're only as strong as your weakest link" really rings true in tandem RAAM.

Since they beat their competition Team No Limits by such a huge time margin (over 18 hours) VeloWear/Co-Motion focused on other teams such as Grand PAC Masters, which they lead all the way into Ohio, and then closed to within 3 minutes of towards the end of the race. Riding close to Grand PAC Masters Lee Mitchell was special for George since Lee crewed for George's 2000 tandem crossing with Katie Lindquist. George and Terri gave each other periodic rewards for riding well – kisses during exchanges. Unlike on tandem RAAM, George & Terri saw very little of each other except on rider exchanges. They periodically rewarded each other with kisses during trade-offs. Once George got into the follow minivan to bring Terri out of a funk, but only did this once, as he wanted to stay focused on his riding. George's longest pull was 102 miles one night. George tells me he prefers night riding over day on RAAM. Unlike in tandem and solo RAAMs in which George suffered neck problems, in the 2-person race this year he never had to use his Co-Motion chin rest. RAAM veterans start the race with all sorts of remedies for possible things that could go wrong. Hopefully they won't need to use them, but better to have them and not use them than need them and not have them.

George & Terri were happy to have former Race Across Oregon (RAO) and RAAM winner Allen Larsen ride the first part of their RAO this year which was just two weeks before the start of RAAM. George totally respects Larsen's decision to withdraw from RAAM this year at the last minute because of strong religious beliefs. I have been calling Allen nearly every day to talk about RAAM, analyze stats, and tell Allen how much I miss him. He has been doing short 50 mile rides, and is sorting out just exactly how big of a role bike riding/racing will play in his future. Promoting RAO got in the way of George's RAAM training, and thinks that RAO is too tough of a race to do just 2 weeks before RAAM unless you are Jure Robic. Alessandro Colo & James Rosar both finished RAO this year, and both have dropped out of RAAM already. George even refused to take Colo's entry fee into RAO. Terri told me while she was promoting RAO, she never wanted to be out riding. Terri can relate to how RAAM director Jim Pitre must feel seeing riders finish RAAM, as she felt responsible for the safe finish of all RAO riders. She gave the analogy that it was like caring for your tandem partner. George also has a lot of respect for Pitre's commitment to RAAM.

Tuesday afternoon 3 time solo RAAM winner Wolfgang Fasching finished his 7th RAAM in 9:02:45 over 5 hours behind Rookie-of-the-Year Trevino (first time a rookie has ever beaten Wolfgang) and almost 17 hours behind winner Robic. Fasching proved what a classy rider he is graciously accepting defeat. He climbed up onto the finish stage very fit looking and the skin on his upper arms was peeling off. He said he had no real problems other than the heat on the first day, and not riding fast enough. He said he felt the best at the finish line this year out of all 7 RAAMs he has done. He said he doesn't do specific sleep deprivation training like Robic does. If he didn't have heat trouble on the first day in the desert, he would have finished 2nd. Except for his wife Doris (on his 2002 crew), he had pretty much a new crew this year. Doris said she can't feel emotionally for Wolfgang during the race. Without anybody on his crew telling him how he was doing, he knew he was in 3rd place and was OK with it. He realizes that winning might not come that easily to him anymore. He might come back. In sports it is said that you should quit while on top (like John Elway did winning two Super Bowls with the Denver Broncos), but how does a person know their best

years are behind them unless they start declining in performance.

Fasching helped Robic prepare for the RAAM a lot this year, but he doesn't have time to train with Robic in Europe. Wolfgang only began training for RAAM in April which was not enough time. When I asked Fasching if he thought 2001 RAAM winner Andre Clavadetscher could have won RAAM this year, Wolfgang said Andre only cares about beating him in RAAM. Fasching hopes that more American riders start racing in European ultra races. He said once a rider gets so far ahead or behind you in RAAM, time differences become unimportant. Wolfgang says he doesn't care about being called the best ultracyclist in the world. He still has a lot of respect for Kish. He is writing books and marketing himself well in Austria.

Having the same race number (182) as his buddy RAAM legend Fabio Biasiolo, Enrico DeAngeli finished 4th in RAAM on Tuesday evening to a huge crowd on the boardwalk including a group of children who sang on stage. Sandwiched between two ultracycling legends, his finishing time of 9:09:08 was over 6 hours behind Fasching and over 13 hours ahead of Kish. After going 2 consecutive nights without any significant sleep in the middle of the race, I thought Enrico might have some sort of meltdown, but I was totally wrong. I learned that he took 3-4 ten-minute powernaps per every 24 hours. The worst times of the day for him to stay awake were at 5 am and in the afternoon. A highlight of the race for him was riding with David Haase, Rob Kish, & Dino Nico Valsesia all at the same time in the morning in the middle of the country with a tailwind, and he just took off dropping them all. Enrico has been training long distances for RAAM since 1999. He began cycling at age 8. George Thomas & Terri Gooch embraced their RAO buddy Enrico.

On Tuesday night, the 2nd place 4 person Women's Team Frauleins from Germany finished with an average speed of 15.04 mph. Members from their competition Team B2B Divas filtered into the finish line stage area to congratulate them for finishing. B2B had more than 29 hours to shower, eat, and get some real sleep in Atlantic City before Frauleins arrived.

On Wednesday morning, two-person mixed Team No Limits from Germany finished. About an hour and a half later, the two-person Team TBV from Brazil arrived. I wonder what they thought as they rode through the small town of Brazil, Indiana? The final team to finish was two-person Team New England. They missed their original goal of breaking 8 days by almost 16 hours because Mark Longwell told me they had near constant headwinds through TX, OK, and KS. His longest pulls were 60 miles. He had knee trouble on the final day. Originally wanting to use 2-person team RAAM as a stepping stone to the solo race, he no longer wants to do solo, but this answer has to be taken with a grain of salt since he said it on the RAAM finish line. He saw tons of deer alongside US Rt. 50 in West Virginia. His 5-year-old daughter Grace on the cell phone said, "Daddy I haven't seen you in 15 days."

Solo winner Jure Robic had a higher average speed than the last 3 two-person teams. Though the last 3 teams finished within 3 hours of each other on Wednesday morning, the real news of the day was 3 time solo winner LEGENDARY 49 year old Rob Kish finishing his 19th RAAM in 5th place with a time of 9:22:22 with an average speed of 12.41 mph. He finished over 13 hours behind 4th place Enrico, and over 36 hours after winner Robic. Having become synonymous with RAAM, Rob Kish commands more respect and integrity than any other person involved with RAAM! The only thing that seems to remain constant in RAAM is Kish finishing. New people win, direct the race, and officiate, but Kish and his loyal wife Brenda embody all the elements of RAAM.

Upon climbing up onto the finish line stage barefoot, Kish said, "Just another year I guess. The hills were a

little bit steeper and longer, and I was a little slower.” Kish introduced the most experienced Krew members who came up onto stage. An emotional woman in tears, Brenda said, “We cheated death over and over again. I have to speak out about the dangers of RAAM finishing in the Northeast.” After seeing a dog get hit (killed?) along the route, Brenda felt like she had to speak out (something she has never done before) against horrible traffic in the Northeast. In my interview with my former archrival Kish, he said, “I used to be able to tear up the flats, but this year I never was really able to do that. Every time I had a chance to race against somebody, they’d drop out.” Rookie David Haase tried to get to every time station before Kish. When I asked him about so many people dropping out this year and there being such huge time gaps between riders, he said, “If I ever came across the line first, I wouldn’t care about the other time gaps.” Brenda said the changed course to avoid heavy traffic near York, PA was better than last year, but still very dangerous. The Kish Krew only tells Rob where other riders are when he asks them.

If Kish finally calls it quits next year after 20 finishes, it will leave a huge irreplaceable void in RAAM history. He will finally be eligible for the over 50 category which he should be able to break. Both remaining 50+ riders (Guus Moonen & Randy Van Zee) still in the solo race have fallen off the 11.83 mph average speed record set by Tom Davies Jr. in the 1995 RAAM. Kish would probably also like to break Bob Breedlove’s 50+ transcontinental record of 12.26 mph done in 2002 outside of RAAM.

Considering what near perfect weather most riders faced, I am surprised that only 3 category speed records were broken, and that so many riders (10 out of 19 starters) have dropped out of the solo race.

Notes:

The remaining 4 solo riders are spread out over 451 miles, and have until Noon on Friday to make the 12 Day, 2 Hour time limit. While in 6th place, David Hasse suffers from over-hydration/bloating and had to check into a hospital near time station #45 in Smithburg, WV. Having checked into that station at 9:29 pm on Monday evening, over 24 hours have passed without him checking into the next time station, but no DNF has been reported. Having ridden such a terrific first 2,500 miles of the race, he still has plenty of time left to ride the last 451 miles into Atlantic City as an official finisher. 6th place Andrew Otto is expected to finish on Wednesday evening either during or after the awards banquet.

DNF Tracy McKay was at the finish line along with his crew and two of Bob Rich’s crew on Tuesday evening to watch riders finish.

Day 11: June 30 (10:14 am EST) – July 1 (10:14 am EST)

After spending 36 hours in a hospital in West Virginia for over-hydration/bloating, David Hasse mounted his bicycle and headed East, but his body would take him no farther. He became the 11th solo rider to drop out. At the awards banquet on Wednesday evening, only 5 solo riders had finished, but many of those who dropped out were brought up onto stage. They included Tracy McKay, Andrew Lapkass, Pius Achermann, James Rosar, Alessandro Colo, and Peter Holy. Kerry White of the winning 4-person women’s Team Vail B2B Divas won the Ian Sandbach award for having the masseuse on her team help out solo rider Tracy McKay in Pie Town, NM. RAAM PR man Paul Skilbeck told this story on stage. The big money winners were 4-person Team Action Sports which won \$25,000 for breaking the average speed record (by just 7 minutes), and solo winner Jure Robic who won \$10,000.

The first night time solo finisher was Energizer Bunny sponsored Andrew Otto who finished 6th place in 10:10:42 with an average speed of 11.80. He finished over 12 hours behind his hero Rob Kish, and just missed making it in within 48 hours behind winner Robic by 51 minutes. Before 2000, riders had to finish within 2 days of the winner to be an official finisher. Today, they have to finish in under 12 days & 2 hours to be official. Andrew staggered onto the finishing stage looking drunk, but he had just accomplished his dream of finishing RAAM. T was very sweet for Otto who only made it 1,326 miles into Colorado in the 2000 RAAM. On stage Otto said, "The body degrades from start to finish." His follow minivan lost an oil can which caused a 2-3 hour sleep break to turn into 6 hours. He celebrated 1,326 miles into the race, and never considered dropping out as an option this year. More than halfway into the race in Jefferson City, MO, the same knee that caused him to DNF in 2000 acted up again just an inch away from where it did in 2000. Taking so many anti-inflammatories shut his kidneys down. In RAAM, today's solutions can cause tomorrow's problems. Luck must have been with his, as a wall of blackness thunderstorm just behind him in Texas never overtook him. The last solo rider Otto saw was Enrico DeAngeli in Kansas. He consistently slept 1.5 hours each night. Crewing for his hero Rob Kish in 2001 & 2003, he saw exactly what he had to do to finish RAAM which he did only one place behind his role model.

About 2 hours after Otto finished, David Hasse (DNF after 2,508 miles) walked up onto stage with swollen legs and ankles. This probably wasn't the way he envisioned getting to the finish line. He got tired of Kish vehicles being around him. Two mule deer ran out in front of him in New Mexico. In Texas, a guy from his home state of Wisconsin gave \$300 to his support crew.

I talked to mountain climber Andrew Lapkass about his DNF 1,074 miles into the race. He dropped out because a doctor said he had damaged liver and kidneys, and to keep riding could have caused permanent damage. Sounds like he had a similar problem to David Hasse's over-hydrated/bloating as Andrew gained 20 pounds on RAAM.

Over 50 year olds Guus Moonen and Randy Van Zee are still out on the course and have plenty of time left for official finishes before the Noon Friday deadline. I can't believe how many DNFs there were this year considering how nice the weather was.

Day 12: July 1 (10:14 am EST) – July 2 (10:14 am EST)

The final two solo finishers in the Insight 2004 Race Across America were both over 50 years old. The fact that 50% of the four 50+ riders finished and only 40% of the 15 under 50 riders finished proves that RAAM is more mental than physical. On Thursday evening, Holland's Guus Moonen finished in 7th place with a time of 11:08:09 or over 21 hours behind 6th place Andrew Otto. Moonen's crew of 12 (biggest in solo race) got him to the finish line in good spirits. Winning 2-person mixed Team VeloWear/Co-Motion's George Thomas interviewed (on the PA) Moonon on the Boardwalk. Unlike most of the solo finishers, Guus was cleanly shaven and told me that he shaved everyday. He had a photo of his 12-year-old daughter Trisha taped onto his stem. He had 6 flat tires, and said this year was harder than his 2002 finish. 3 of his crewmembers this year came back from his 2002 crew. He said he will not do another RAAM. He ate all sorts of solid food. Because of living in Holland, he likes flat terrain better than climbing. He didn't have much wind (head, tail, or side) the whole trip. This year, he is organizing a continuous 2,500 mile event called LeTourDirect.org

The last finisher in the solo race was 52 year old Randy Van Zee of Sheldon, Iowa. He finished in 8th place

(2nd night time solo finisher) on Friday morning at 2:40 am with a time of 11:16:26 over 8 hours behind Moonen, but still with over 9 hours to spare before the Noon deadline. He had the classic solo RAAM finish – exhausted with failed neck muscles and terribly SWOLLEN feet and ankles; he had to be helped off his bicycle by crewmembers. Having an all rookie crew with just two minivans, he slept on cement at times. Waking up at 4 am to ride before work everyday in training finally payed off, though he said, “I never trained enough for RAAM.” When his neck gave out on him in New Mexico, he had to start wearing an Allen Larsen neck brace (His friends in Sheldon, Iowa made it after they watched Larsen’s RAAM videotape). Two ladies he works with brought him this device and adjusted it on him. When Van Zee could no longer get into his aerobars in KS, he threw his bike down in frustration. He crashed and injured his groin in Ohio.

Randy’s daughter Rachel lives in Germany and flew to Atlantic City from South Dakota to see her father finish. Her husband Chris (serving the USA in Iraq) will have to wait for an e-mail to learn of Randy’s finish. Standing very proud on the Boardwalk, Randy said, “If you can do RAAM, you can do anything.” So how can a 52-year old, full time worker and Grandfather finish RAAM while other much younger men training full time have to drop out? The difference has to be in attitude. Van Zee had an iron-willed desire to make it to the finish line regardless of whatever obstacles were thrown into his way. When his neck muscles gave out in New Mexico, he could have thrown in the towel. When his feet and ankles became painfully swollen, he could have checked into some hospital and had a doctor tell him things will only get worse if he keeps riding, but he didn’t.

Perhaps Van Zee knowing the limitations of his 52 year old body, went out at a much slower speed than the younger favorites who went out fast, held high positions in the race, and were crushed once they had to slow down and lose places. When riders start setting other goals (like a certain place or finishing time) ahead of finishing, not meeting these goals can deflate them so badly they don’t care about finishing. Did 3-time winner Fasching quit because he spent most of the race in 3rd position? What about 3-time winner Kish having to ride behind rookies Trevino, Hasse, and Enrico? My biggest surprise off all 11 people who dropped out was Dino Nico Valsesia. Riding as high as 3rd place in CA & AZ, Dino dropped back to 6th place in the middle of the race, and I can’t help but think a ‘been there done that’ (he finished 6th last year) attitude may have led to his DNF. I was unable to call him because European phone numbers didn’t work on my cell phone. We have to have working cell phone numbers for ALL riders next year.

My vote for the Ian Sandbach inspiration award would have clearly gone to Randy Van Zee, but then the award couldn’t have been handed out at the awards banquet on Wednesday evening. So I hereby create a new award called Chew’s Most Tired Award given to the solo rider who finishes looking the most exhausted/beaten-up thus embodying the true spirit of RAAM. Few people got to see (many officials, media people, riders, and crew had already left for home) Randy finish in the wee hours of the morning that night, but those who did will forever remember Van Zee’s courageous/heroic finish. His neck muscles will heal and the swelling of his feet and ankles will go down, but his finish will never be forgotten. Randy became the 169th person (including unofficial finishers) to finish solo RAAM – a number far less than those people who have climbed to the top of Mt. Everest.

Notes:

At the awards banquet on Wednesday evening, RAAM director Jim Pitre unveiled the beautiful 8-person Corporate Challenge trophy which winner Team Ride to Remember – Kaiser Permanente will get to keep for an entire year. The trophy is a cycling sculpture designed by Tom Wiper of Tucson, AZ.

Post-Race Long Version

SOLO:

RAAM lived up to its reputation as the world's toughest race before it even got started. Two pre-race favorites withdrew at the last minute. 2003 winner Allen Larsen because his strong religious beliefs couldn't allow RAAM and training for it to dominate so much over his family and devotion to Jesus Christ, and rookie Slovenian Pro road racer Valter Bonca who suffered an injury at another race. However, there was still enough talent to insure an exciting race. After the 13 mile parade route from the San Diego Bay, 2003 Rookie-of-the-Year and second place Slovenian Juré Robic took off like it was a 100 mile road race, and made it to the first time station in Pine Valley 11 minutes ahead of the next rider: ultra marathon runner, RAAM rookie Mike Trevino of San Diego, and 58 minutes ahead of last place Alessandro Coló. Robic continued his fast pace well into Arizona and had increased his lead over second place Trevino to an hour after 24 sleepless hours during which time Robic covered 436 miles – 43 more miles than Larsen did last year, and 80 ahead of himself last year when he slept that first night. No longer a rookie, Robic came much better prepared this year. After vivid hallucinations of mailbox people attacking him last year, He decided to train for sleep deprivation. For Six times before RAAM, once a month he would stay awake for 48 continuous hours while riding 10 hour shifts. Robic crewmember Matjaz told me in the RAAM last year, Jure threw his too small spare bike (his primary bike had bottom bracket troubles) into the weeds, but Matjaz got the bike out of the ditch and refused to let Jure quit. Jure's crew wrote e-mails from his website guestbook (gets over 1,000 hits per day) onto the side of his follow minivan. I saw a message on the vehicle from his wife Petra, which read, "Tell Jure that if he will keep kicking like his unborn baby, he will win." Robic's mother Milena died of cancer at age 54 in 1997.

Staying about an hour apart, leaders Robic and Trevino kept pulling away from the field through New Mexico where Fasching settled into third place about five hours back, and 1-2 hours behind Fasching was a cluster of four riders: David Haase, Rob Kish, Pius Achermann, and Dino Nico Valsesia all within three hours of each other. Farther back, riders were starting to drop out: the first being Russ Goodwin after his all rookie crew got so fatigued that they drove over him in his support vehicle on the second night.

On their fourth night in Kansas, Trevino finally caught Robic and beat him to a time station by 12 minutes, but after both had slept, Robic led by an hour the next day. Taking

advantage of flat Kansas, Robic rode an amazing 409 miles his fourth day which was 287 miles ahead of his pace last year, and kept alive the possibility of breaking Pete Penseyres' 15.4 mph solo RAAM average speed record. Through the luscious green rolling hills of Missouri, Robic started to pull away from Trevino opening the gap to 3.5 hours at the Mississippi River near St. Louis, 1,918 miles into the race. Trevino's crew headed by Byron Reiper did an excellent job at keeping Mike going. At perhaps his lowest point of the race, Mike was about to quit when his girlfriend Amanda went running with him and reminded him of all the lousy, cold, wet weather he had trained through to get to this point in RAAM. Mike told me his daily calorie intake on RAAM was 8-10,000 per day – much less than he uses in ultra running events. Fasching drifted farther back, but still held onto a solid third place, and rookie David Haase in fourth was leading a pack containing Valsesia, Kish, and Enrico DeAngeli all within two hours of each other. Nine people had dropped out by the Mississippi River.

Through the flatlands of Illinois, Indiana, and Western Ohio, Robic increased his lead to over six hours on Trevino. Enrico DeAngeli, friend of RAAM veteran Fabio Biasiolo, went two consecutive nights without any significant sleep to break away from the Kish pack and establish a solid fourth place seven hours behind Fasching. In West Virginia, David Haase was the last of 11 riders to drop out. He suffered from over-hydration and bloating similar to what used to plague Seana Hogan.

Time gaps continued to increase all the way to Atlantic City where Juré Robic won in 8 Days 9 Hours 51 Minutes. His 14.66 mph average speed ranks 8th on the list of fastest solo Transcontinental bicycle crossings of the USA. He became the 14th man to win RAAM and the 16th man to finish in less than 9 days. On the victory stage with his crew, Robic took a call from his wife Petra who is pregnant with their first child who will be named Neza if a girl. Jure said "The race is crazy, but in a positive way." Robic theorized that if 2003 RAAM winner Allen Larsen was here, Larsen would have finished a few hours behind him. Robic is currently on his 3rd year of a 5-year contract with the Slovenian Army, which allows him to train/race full time. Proof of his amazing recovery is that less than a week after he finished RAAM last year, he won a 180 Km road race in Europe. He was able to get by on even less sleep (8 hours compared with 10 last year) this year because of sleep deprivation training.

Over 11 hours later, Trevino finished second and won Rookie-of-the-Year honors. He became the 17th man to finish in less than 9 days. Three-time winner Fasching was a gracious loser accepting third place. Having given him much advice on RAAM, Fasching was happy to see his buddy Robic win. DeAngeli was fourth and RAAM icon 49-year old

Rob Kish finished his 19th RAAM in 5th place over 36 hours behind winner Robic. An emotional woman in tears, Rob's wife Brenda (she's been on all 19 Kish Krews) said, "We cheated death over and over again. I have to speak out about the dangers of RAAM finishing in the Northeast." After seeing a dog get hit along the route, Brenda felt like she had to speak out (something she has never done before) against horrible traffic in the Northeast.

The first night time solo finisher was the Energizer Bunny sponsored Andrew Otto who finished sixth place in 10:10:42 with an average speed of 11.80 mph. He finished over 12 hours behind his hero Rob Kish. Andrew staggered onto the finishing stage looking drunk, but he had just accomplished his dream of finishing RAAM. T was very sweet for Otto who only made it 1,326 miles into Colorado in the 2000 RAAM. More than halfway into the race this year in Jefferson City, MO, the same knee that caused him to DNF in 2000 acted up again just an inch away from where it did in 2000. IN 2000 taking so many anti-inflammatories shut his kidneys down. In RAAM, today's solutions can cause tomorrow's problems. The last solo rider Otto saw was Enrico DeAngeli in Kansas. He consistently slept 1.5 hours each night. Crewing for his hero Rob Kish in 2001 and 2003, he saw exactly what he had to do to finish RAAM which he did only one place behind his role model.

PULLQUOTE: "50% of the four 50+ riders finished and only 40% of the 15 under 50 riders finished proves that RAAM is more mental than physical."

The final two solo finishers in the Insight 2004 Race Across America were both over 50 years old. The fact that 50% of the four 50+ riders finished and only 40% of the 15 under 50 riders finished proves that RAAM is more mental than physical. On Thursday evening, Holland's Guus Moonen finished in seventh place with a time of 11:08:09 or over 21 hours behind sixth place Andrew Otto. Moonen's crew of 12 (biggest in solo race) got him to the finish line in good spirits. He had a photo of his 12-year-old daughter Trisha taped onto his stem. The last finisher in the solo race was 52-year-old Randy Van Zee of Sheldon, IA. He finished in eighth place (second night time solo finisher) on Friday morning at 2:40 a.m. with a time of 11:16:26 over eight hours behind Moonen.

Riders have to finish in less than 12 days and 2 hours to be official, by Noon, Friday, July 2; Randy had over nine hours to spare. He had the classic solo RAAM finish – exhausted with failed neck muscles and terribly *swollen* feet and ankles; he had to be helped off his bicycle by crewmembers. Having an all rookie crew with just two minivans, he slept on cement at times. Waking up at 4 am to ride before work everyday in training finally paid off, though he said, "I never trained enough for RAAM." When his neck gave out on him

in New Mexico, he had to start wearing an Allen Larsen-inspired neck brace. His friends made it after they watched Larsen's RAAM videotape. Two ladies he works with brought him this device and adjusted it on him. When Van Zee could no longer get into his aerobars in KS, he threw his bike down in frustration. He crashed near Troy, OH, injured his groin and cracked his pelvis. Although he couldn't walk, he could still ride!

Randy's daughter Rachel lives in Germany and flew to Atlantic City to see her father finish. Her husband Chris (serving the USA in Iraq) learned by e-mail of Randy's finish. Standing very proudly on the Boardwalk, Randy said, "If you can do RAAM, you can do anything." So how can a 52-year old, full time worker and grandfather finish RAAM while other much younger men training full time have to drop out? The difference has to be in attitude. Van Zee had an iron-willed desire to make it to the finish line regardless of whatever obstacles were thrown into his way. When his neck muscles gave out in New Mexico, he could have thrown in the towel. When his feet and ankles became painfully swollen, he could have checked into some hospital and had a doctor tell him things will only get worse if he keeps riding, but he didn't. My vote for the Ian Sandbach inspiration award would have clearly gone to Randy Van Zee, but then the award couldn't have been handed out at the awards banquet on Wednesday evening. So I hereby create a new award called Chew's Most Tired Award given to the solo rider who finishes looking the most exhausted/beaten-up thus embodying the true spirit of RAAM. Few people got to see (many officials, media people, riders, and crew had already left for home) Randy finish in the wee hours of the morning that night, but those who did will forever remember Van Zee's courageous/heroic finish. His neck muscles will heal and the swelling of his feet and ankles will go down, but his finish will never be forgotten. Randy became the 169th person (including unofficial finishers) to finish solo RAAM – a number far less than those people who have climbed to the top of Mt. Everest.

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This year the closest time gap between finishers was 5 hours 39 minutes between Trevino and Fasching. Riders were so far spread out at the finish, it was almost as if the Race Across America had become the Ride Across America. Such a race can become very boring and drawn out for riders and crew. The biggest time gap was over 21 hours between Otto and Moonen. So much for my pre-race picks of Fasching winning. I had hoped for an exciting close finish, but Robic was possessed and Fasching had an off year. I still can't figure out why there were so many DNF's on one of the best weather RAAMs ever. The first day in the desert was relatively cool (high temp of only 106 degrees F.), there was no precipitation for the front half of the field, and unseasonably cool temperatures (highs only in the 70s) the last few days. Lon Haldeman and I got to talking

in Atlantic City as to why so many people dropped out. We think that perhaps people aren't training enough miles. I think that although it might conveniently fit into busy working people's lives, John Hughes' program of less miles ridden faster just may not be the ticket to finishing RAAM. The old Haldeman/Chew regimen of riding more and more miles gets you to the finish line. Consider that winner Robic rode 45,000 kilometers in the past year including 48-hour sleep deprivation sessions once a month for six months before RAAM. Also, Rookie-of-the-Year Trevino rode tons of miles before RAAM. A few weeks before RAAM, I got an e-mail from him saying that tapering sucks.

PULLQUOTE "Robic was possessed and Fasching had an off year."

TEAMS:

With eight different categories, Team RAAM has grown from the very first 4-person HPV team in 1989 to making up the majority of RAAM entries with 18 teams this year: Three 8-person teams, ten 4-person teams, and five 2-person teams. Leaving San Diego 31 hours after the solo riders, Team RAAMers missed the hottest part of that first day in the desert, which cooks the soloists. The big question was could the HPV 4-person team beat the other top 4-person teams to Atlantic City. The big climbs on the first two days saw the HPV Team ALS Lightning fall behind the lead 4-person teams. Team Action Sports was first to the first time station in Pine Valley four minutes ahead of Vail – Go Fast and 14 minutes ahead of Royal Air Force (RAF).

The 545 miles that the leading Team Action Sports rode the first 24 hours is 60 miles farther than 2003 leader Team Vail – Go Fast covered. Fueled by the energy of their fallen comrade Brett Malin, who was killed in RAAM '03, Vail – Go Fast took the lead (before time station #12 in Springerville, AZ) from Action Sports who had it for the first 12 time stations. Malin's father Jim and brother Jaime were back on the crew this year. When Vail–Go Fast came upon the scene of Brett's accident, Jim and Angus McGilpin put up a sign which RAAM people signed last year at the post race banquet/awards in Atlantic City. The riders were so caught up in increasing their lead over Action Sports that they did not stop. By TS#20 in Dalhart, TX, 1,121 miles into the race, Vail – Go Fast had increased their lead over Action Sports to 36 minutes. Leading Team Vail rode 1,123 miles in their first 48 hours. By the end of the third day in the solo race, the lead three teams had passed all but the three lead solo riders. The top two 4-person teams were ahead of the 4-person relay average speed record of 23.04 mph, but the ALS Lightning Human Powered Vehicle (HPV) team was behind the HPV average speed record of over 24 mph.

After starting out slow in the mountains, the HPV team kicked it into warp drive (posting four 30+ mph time station splits), and passing second place team Action Sports in Texas, and passing first place team Vail – Go Fast close to the Oklahoma/Kansas state line. They rode a phenomenal 635 miles their third day, and finally got their cumulative average speed above the 24.02 mph HPV RAAM speed record. Vail – Go Fast and Action Sports also managed to get their cumulative average speed above Kern Wheelmen's 23.04 mph record. Through the flatlands of Illinois, Indiana, and Western Ohio, the ALS Lightning HPV Team continued to pull away from all other teams. After leading in California and Arizona, Action Sports fell as much as an hour behind Vail – Go Fast because they were down to using just three riders for two full days when Sean Nealy and then another rider were each sick and out of rotation and Kerry Ryan crashed. By time station #41 in London, 2,329 miles into the race, Action Sports retook the lead from Vail – Go Fast. At the next time station, Vail – Go Fast was back in the lead and held it for four more time stations, but Action Sports finally pulled away for good on the long steep climbs of US Rt. 50 in West Virginia.

After leading all categories of RAAM, and opening up a four hour lead over the top two 4 person teams in the flat Midwest, the ALS Lightning HPV team had to climb the hills of Southeastern Ohio and the mountains of West Virginia and Maryland which slowed their average speed down too much to set a new record. ALS was the first team to arrive in Atlantic City, but their average speed was slower than the team Bob Fourney also led to victory in 1989. In addition to the winning HPV team in RAAM '89, FOURNEY won the solo race in 1990 and 1991. Success didn't come easy at first for Bob in the solo race as he dropped out in 1986 and 1988. He did however place fourth in 1987 and second to Kish in 1992. He tried to race HPV solo in 1998 but dropped out when he overheated badly inside the HPV.

Action Sports won the 4-man conventional bikes division (a more established division than the HPV) beating Vail – Go Fast by over two hours. Action Sports just barely (by seven minutes) established a new average speed record of 23.06 mph. They won \$25,000 made up of first place prize money and the bonus for breaking the record. Having won his third four-person team RAAM, Kerry Ryan is in that prestigious category along with Joe Peterson. Team Royal Air Force (my pre-race pick) finished third some 10 hours behind. In other 4-person team races, Team Swiss Canon finished in 6:02:09, only five hours behind RAF. Brazilian Team Extra Distance finished a day later in 7:02:30. I teased team captain Michel Bogli about their speed being slower than his two-man record set in 2001 with Jose Pinto Filho (also on Extra Distance) on Team Discover Ceara'/Powerbar. Bogli was happy that Team Coast-to-Coast beat his old record this year. I presented him with a

Danny Chew Million Mile Man t-shirt since he gave me a Team Extra Distance jersey in San Diego. Bogli had a great RAAM with no flats and perfect weather. In the wee hours of the morning in IL, Bogli caught and rode with Kish for 10 minutes. Kish remembered Bogli who wrote to Kish and asked him for advice on solo RAAM.

Grand PAC Masters finished in 7:16:31 to establish a new 70+ Four Person Team average speed record of 16.03 mph crushing the old record of 14.6 mph. Of the three category records broken this year, this one shaved off the most time: an amazing 18 hours and seven minutes faster. When I asked PAC Masters' racer Lee Mitchell how he was able to smash the record by so much, he said because he had a better crew this year.

Crewmember Patty Jo Struve, who'd crewed with Lee said he is more fun as a rider! Lee hit the fastest speed (49 mph) he has gone in 20 years one night. The team's low point of the trip was having to battle 45 mph headwinds in KS for a few hours. They had a headwind stretch which lasted about 20 hours. Ron Bell crashed on railroad tracks (despite a warning about them in the route book) outside of Liberal, KS at 4:30 a.m. in the morning. Bell loved catching and passing 3-time RAAM winner Wolfgang Fasching at 2:30 a.m.

The winning 4-person women's team Vail B2B Divas rode for a charity: Border-to-Border USA – raising money and awareness for Pediatric AIDS. Kerry White, on the B2B Divas, is also on the Team Vail – Go Fast mountain bike team, and knows everybody on the Vail – Go Fast Team including the late Brett Malin. All four women stopped in Pie Town, NM to pay tribute to Brett at the new memorial sign. Kerry lives by Brett's favorite phrase by Robert Cormier, "I am away, I am away with the wind and sun, I am the bike and the bike is me."

B2B battled against the only 4-person mixed Team Just Sweat – No Tears for the last two days. Just Sweat rider Russell Carter, who weighs 100 kilograms, crashed into a car at an intersection, dislocated his little finger and put it back in himself. Kevin May rode the most miles of the Just Sweat foursome with 884. Teammate Helen Wootton enjoyed catching solo riders David Haase and Dino Nico Valsesia and saying hello to them. Just Sweat – No Tears was the first to Atlantic City, finishing in 6:22:54. The Vail B2B Divas finished less than 30 minutes later! The other 4-person women's Team Fraulains finished in 8:04:40.

In 8-person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember – Kaiser Permanente beat Rim to Rim to the first time station by seven minutes, and Insight by 15 minutes. Ride to Remember led the entire race, but the battle for second place was hard fought. Somewhere in the middle of the first night, Insight passed Rim to Rim to move into second

place before Blythe, CA. On the second day in Arizona, Rim to Rim passed Insight and led through the next 4 time stations. On the second night in Eastern Arizona, Insight passed Rim to Rim again and never saw them again until Atlantic City. Ride to Remember beat Insight by over two hours, and Insight beat Rim to Rim by just 22 minutes.

PULLQUOTE “In the 2-person team race, Coast to Coast Against Cancer outclassed the other two teams, and also beat five 4-person teams.”

In the 2-person team race, Coast to Coast Against Cancer outclassed the other two teams, and also beat five 4-person teams. They rode away from their competition breaking the old two-man average speed record by more than a full mile per hour. Because this is a relatively new category, the winning team had to average over 19.5 mph to win \$10,000 bonus prize money; however, they were awarded \$1,500 for the record. Although their average speed was over 19.5 mph at the halfway point of the race, it dropped to 18.71 mph by the finish line in Atlantic City. Similar to the 8-person race, the exciting race was for second place. Although Team TBW from Brazil started out fast (were ahead of seven teams early in the race), they faded to next to last place by Kansas. By the Mississippi River Team New England had passed them and built up nearly a two-hour lead. TBW fought back and passed New England for good in the West Virginia Mountains, arriving in Atlantic City over 90 minutes ahead of New England.

In the 2-person mixed race, VeloWear/Co-Motion (George Thomas and his fiancé Terri Gooch who both promote the Race Across Oregon) pulled away from No Limits at the start and increased their lead to over 17 hours by Atlantic City, also beating a 4-person women's team and two 2-men teams. VeloWear/Co-Motion became the first two-person mixed team to finish RAAM. George told me he absolutely loved night riding on RAAM and slept in the afternoons which are toughest on him. Mr. RAAM versatility, George has now finished six RAAMs including four different categories. George and Terri's meeting is another RAAM love story like Andrew Otto and Carol Clarke. George met Terri at Lon Haldeman's Desert PAC Tour in 2001 in Arizona. He was there to demo tandems. Terri asked George to ride tandem with her and they did their first ride (110 miles) together with George captaining. All they wanted to do was ride tandem together. Within six weeks, Terri moved from her San Diego home to George's Corvallis, OR home so they could keep riding tandem. In 2002, they finished tandem RAAM, and plan on getting married this October. The tough thing about training for 2-person RAAM this year is that they had to do it on single bikes – not on tandems – their first love.

I guess George got the maximum performance out of his body since he crashed while

carrying his bicycle up onto the finish line stage. George said, "I was able to merge together six years of RAAM experience for the perfect race." When asked what she was going to do now that her RAAM was over, Terri replied, "That's kind of a vacuum because all I've been thinking about the last seven days is getting to the finish line." In comparing tandem and two-person relay Terri said, "Tandem was more difficult because it was more like solo RAAM." The first five days were OK, but after that they rarely felt good at the same time. The old saying, "You're only as strong as your weakest link" really rings true in tandem RAAM.

Terri and George were only about 30 minutes ahead of the Grand PAC Masters for the first 2,300 miles of the race to Ohio where PAC Masters passed them for good - beating them to Atlantic City by over 90 minutes. Riding close to Grand PAC Masters Lee Mitchell was special for George since Lee crewed for George's 2000 tandem crossing with Katie Lindquist. Unlike on tandem RAAM, George and Terri saw very little of each other except on rider exchanges, when they periodically rewarded each other with kisses during trade-offs.

So much for my pre-race picks of Fasching and Team Royal Air Force winning. I had hoped for exciting, close victories in most divisions, but except for the 4-men teams, I had to look outside the solo race and farther back places to find them. What started out as a two man Robic/Trevino duel in the solo race turned into one of the most spread apart finishes with the majority of starters dropping out despite one of the best weather RAAMs in history. Three average speed records were set, and for the first time, 2-person mixed teams finished. Team finishes far outnumbered soloists. While the solo women's race had no entrants this year, and hasn't had a finisher since Cassie Lowe in 2001, a record 14 women raced on teams this year. With 18 teams representing 8 categories, perhaps this was the year that Team RAAM surpassed solo RAAM, but it is always nice to see how much respect and admiration team RAAMers have for soloists. George Thomas who has now finished six RAAMs in four different (4-men team, solo, tandem, and 2-person mixed team) categories, still considers his 1995 solo finish his crown accomplishment.

Post-Race Short Version

The 2004 Insight Race Across America had one of the largest starting fields ever: 93 riders. On Sunday morning, June 20, 19 solo men left San Diego, pedaling toward Atlantic City, 2,958 miles and 14 states away. The next afternoon the 2-person, 4-person and 8-person corporate relay teams started turning the cranks.

Only eight solo riders finished. My vote for the most inspiring rider of 2004 goes to last place solo finisher Randy Van Zee. Van Zee, 52, of Sheldon, IA finished on Friday, July 2, at 2:40 a.m. with a time of 11 days 16 hours 26 minutes. Riders have to finish in less than 12 days and 2 hours to be official, i.e., by noon, Friday, July 2. Randy had over nine hours to spare.

He had the classic solo RAAM finish exhausted with failed neck muscles and terribly swollen feet and ankles; he had to be helped off his bicycle by crewmembers. Having an all rookie crew with just two minivans, he slept on cement at times. Waking up at 4 a.m. to ride before work every day in training finally paid off, though he said, "I never trained enough for RAAM."

When his neck gave out on him in New Mexico, he had to start wearing an Allen Larsen-inspired neck brace. His friends made it after they watched Larsen's RAAM videotape. Two ladies he works with brought him this device and adjusted it on him. He crashed near Troy, OH, injured his groin and cracked his pelvis. Although he couldn't walk, he could still ride!

Randy's daughter Rachel lives in Germany and flew to Atlantic City to see her father finish. Her husband Chris (serving the USA in Iraq) learned by e-mail of Randy's finish. Standing very proudly on the Boardwalk at the finish, Randy said, "If you can do RAAM, you can do anything."

So how can a 52-year old, full time worker and grandfather finish RAAM while other much younger men training full time have to drop out? The difference has to be in attitude. Van Zee had an iron-willed desire to make it to the finish line regardless of whatever obstacles were thrown into his way.

When his neck muscles gave out in New Mexico, he could have thrown in the towel. When his feet and ankles became painfully swollen, he could have checked into some hospital and had a doctor tell him things will only get worse if he keeps riding, but he didn't. I hereby create a new award called Chew's Most Tired Award given to the solo rider who finishes looking the most exhausted/beaten-up thus embodying the true spirit of RAAM.

Few people got to see Randy finish in the wee hours of the morning (many officials, media people, riders, and crew had already left for home), but those who did will forever remember Van Zee's courageous/heroic finish. His neck muscles will heal and the swelling of his feet and ankles will go down, but his finish will never be forgotten. Randy became the 169th person (including unofficial finishers) to finish solo RAAM a number far less than those people who have climbed to the top of Mt. Everest.

2003 Rookie-of-the-Year and second place Slovenian Juri Robic won the solo race in 8 days 9 hours 51 minutes. Robic led at 53 of the 54 time stations. In addition to riding thousands of kilometers, for mental training prior to the race, once a month he stayed awake for 48 hours.

Over 11 hours later, ultra runner and rookie RAAM racer Mike Trevino finished second and won Rookie-of-the-Year honors. Three-time winner Wolfgang Fasching was a gracious loser accepting third place over five hours behind Trevino.

Two of the four 50+ solo riders finished (50%) and only six of the 15 under 50 riders finished, (40%) demonstrating that RAAM is more mental than physical.

With eight different categories, Team RAAM has grown from the very first 4-person HPV team in 1989 to making up the majority of RAAM entries with 18 teams this year.

Team Action Sports won the 4-man relay division in 5d 8h 17m beating Vail - Go Fast by over two hours. Action Sports just barely (by seven minutes) established a new average speed record of 23.06 mph. They won \$25,000 made up of first place prize money and the bonus for breaking the record.

The Grand PAC Masters finished in 7:16:31 to establish a new 70+ four-person team average speed record of 16.03 mph, crushing the old record of 14.4 mph. Of the three category records broken this year, this one cut off the most time: over 17 hours.

The winning 4-person women's team Vail B2B battled against the only 4-person mixed team Just Sweat No Tears for the last two days. Just Sweat No Tears was the first to Atlantic City, finishing in 6:22:54. The Vail B2B Divas finished less than 30 minutes later!

In 8-person Corporate Challenge, Ride to Remember - Kaiser Permanente led Team Rim to Rim and Team Insight the entire race, but the battle for second place was hard fought.

Somewhere in the middle of the first night, Insight passed Rim to Rim to move into second place before Blythe, CA. On the second day in Arizona, Rim to Rim passed Insight and led through the next four time stations. On the second night in eastern Arizona, Insight passed Rim to Rim again and never saw them again until Atlantic City. Ride to Remember beat Insight by over two hours, and Insight beat Rim to Rim by just 22 minutes.

In the 2-person team race, Coast to Coast Against Cancer outclassed the other two 2-man teams, and also beat five 4-person teams. They rode away from their competition breaking the old two-man average speed record by more than a full mile per hour. Similar to the 8-person race, the exciting race was for second place. Although Team TBW from Brazil started out fast (were ahead of seven teams early in the race), they faded to next to last place by Kansas. By the Mississippi River Team New England had passed them and built up nearly a two-hour lead. TBW fought back and passed New England for good in the West Virginia Mountains, arriving in Atlantic City just 90 minutes ahead of New England.

In the 2-person mixed race, VeloWear/Co-Motion (George Thomas and his fiancé Terri Gooch who both promote the Race Across Oregon) pulled away from No Limits at the start and increased their lead to over 17 hours by Atlantic City, also beating a 4-person woman's team and two 2-men teams.

VeloWear/Co-Motion became the first two-person mixed team to finish RAAM.

I had hoped for exciting, close races in most divisions, but except for the 4-men teams, I had to look farther back in the field to find them. What started out as a two man Robic/Trevino duel in the solo race turned into one of the most spread apart finishes with the majority of starters dropping out despite one of the best weather RAAMs in history. Three average speed records were set, and for the first time, 2-person mixed teams finished. Team finishes far outnumbered soloists. While the solo women's race had no entrants this year, and hasn't had a finisher since Cassie Lowe in 2001, a record 14 women raced on teams this year. With 18 teams representing eight categories, perhaps this was the year that team RAAM surpassed solo RAAM. It is always nice to see how much respect and admiration team RAAMers have for soloists. George Thomas who has now finished six RAAMs in four different (4-men team, solo, tandem, and 2-person mixed team) categories still considers his 1995 solo finish his crowning accomplishment.