

BIG's News Letter – 2009.02

English Version

Edito: Peakbagging...

Have you ever heard of this word? Here is the description taken from Wikipedia: *“Peak bagging is an activity in which hillwalkers and mountaineers attempt to reach the summit of some collection of peaks, usually those above some height in a particular region, or having a particular feature.”* Well, there you go. In fact you are a Peakbagger as you are collecting summits and the particular feature is that they are in the Super list of the challenge BIG! So keep on bagging the BIG peaks my friends as you are on a mission it seems. A mission impossible? NO! Slowly but surely you can make your way up to the summit of the classification: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/members/classification.htm>

1. TOP5 BIG news.

TOP 1: Zone 12

On this point, much news. First of all the appointment of a manager validating the ascents declared in Zone 12. The name is familiar to you, it is Etienne Mayeur, leader of the classification of the BIG Challenge. Any new claim must be sent to him at this address: zone12@challenge-big.eu.

Secondly the rules for claims in Zone 12 has been changed:

Point. 3.2

The 50 climbs of the zone 12, called outside Europe, will never be determined by the Selection Committee of the BIG, but at the discretion of the member. The following restrictions are applicable though :

- a) Among those 50 climbs, you need to find 10 in Asia, 10 in Africa, 10 in Oceania, 10 in North or Central America, and finally 10 in South America.
- b) The average slopes (altitude difference between the top and the height of the foot) should be at least 500m per number of ascents per continent (a total of 5,000m by continent and minimum of 25,000m for the zone 12).
- c) The member declaring a number of 951 to 1000 (zone 12) has therefore imperatively to accompany this declaration with the following information: the name of the continent, the country, the name of the top reached, the height of this top, the name of the foot where the start was, the elevation of the foot, the year of completion and send it to the manager of the zone 12 for acceptance (zone12@challenge-big.eu)

* Exceptions are allowed for climbs claimed before 2009 and following former regulations.

I'll highlight the differences compared to the previous rules:

- 1) New rules state in a) North or Central America where the previous rules stated just North America.
- 2) The new rules state that a total of 5,000m must be reached per continent. Whereas the previous rules just stated 25,000m in total for Zone 12.
- 3) The new rules now also ask to accompany the claim with the following information:
 - a. Name of the continent (new).
 - b. Name of the country (new).
 - c. Name of the top instead of the name of the ascent.
 - d. Height of the top (new).
 - e. Elevation of the foot (new).
 - f. Year of completion (new).

These rules can of course also be found on our website: www.challenge-big.eu/rules.htm

TOP 2: Meetings

BIG day 21st of March 2010

Next year the BIG will celebrate it's 25th birthday! We want to organise a special event for this occasion. So here is what we have come up with. The plan is that members will meet in the country where they live at the top of a BIG at the same time. We hope we will be able to share this moment in some way together by using web cams or mobiles. The day is set to the 21st of March 2010. We'll keep you posted on the place to be and how we will all "join".

As this newsletter is read by quite some members (That's at least what we hope!) I will not bother the majority with details about the upcoming meeting and crossroad and just mention them briefly and refer to the relevant website.

Official BIG meeting 2009

From the 3rd to the 7th of July we will of course have our official BIG meeting in Sonthofen. It's unfortunately too late now to register yourself for this event. But for the ones that are coming I'll mention the website once more where you can find on what dates and times we meet and what trips we offer and the BIG's these trips include:

<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/bayern.htm>

Liguria crossroad

The crossroad in Liguria from the 8th till the 15th of September is gathering interest also! You can see who is coming and what program is offered on the website for this Crossroad:

<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/liguria.htm>. And it is for sure an interesting program. Go and have a look.

TOP 3: Maria Canins

We have in the mean time welcomed our 2000th member. And again we have found a wellknown cyclist to take this place. She was the great opponent and friend of our nr 1,500, Jeannie Longo. She has also been a great world champion in skiing as well as in cycling. It's Maria Canins from Italy. She was called the flying mother, because she also had children. And she is one of the few women who won the Tour de France as well as de Giro d'Italia. We are proud that she was willing to take this position and the fact that she was honoured by our asking. After 2 male VIP's (Kurt van der Wouwer and Michael Boogerd) we now also have 2 female VIP's: Jeanie Longo and Maria Canins. She's a great asset to our dear challenge.

For more information on Maria Canins look on:

<http://www.procyclingwomen.com/Maria-Canins.html>

To the right you can see Maria Canins with UIC and BIG member and newsletter team member Piero ROTA (320) on the Passo di Sella (BIG 712)



TOP 4: Malga Palazzo the final stage?

As we have no news that cyclists are allowed again on Malga Palazzo by the Mayor of Besenello we have decided to remove Malga Palazzo from our list and to replace it by Passo Coe. So BIG 742 is now called Passo Coe. You can lookup the details of this new BIG on: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/list/743.htm>

Does it mean your claim of Malga Palazzo is no longer valid? No! Our rules state you claim BIG 743 independent if it was Monte Isola, Malga Palazzo in the past.

Does it mean that Malga Palazzo is removed from the BIG list forever? No! In case the Mayor of Besenello allows cyclists again on Malga Palazzo we will consider again to replace Passo Coe by Malga Palazzo. We'll keep you informed of course on the Malga Palazzo saga. But for now BIG 743 is called: Passo Coe.

TOP 5: BIG Descriptions

We have informed you on the fact that José Bruffaerts has been adding links in the description pages of the BIGs. By now he has moved into zone 7 (Switzerland and Austria). But we have great plans for the description page of each BIG. Have a look at BIG 1: Hrafnseyrarheiði (<http://www.challenge-big.eu/list/1-.htm> for instance.

There we visualize:

- The difficulty of the BIG by showing 10 bullets for the Europoints and depending on the amount of Europoints these bullets are filled. The first set of 5 bullets represent 100 Europoints per bullet and the second set of 5 bullets represent 200 Europoints per bullet. So if the first 7 bullets are filled then you know the amount of Europoints lie between 700-899. You can see the amount of Europoints for each side also.
- The difficulty of the BIG by showing 10 bullets for the Bombs or Euroflash as we also call them. Depending on the amount of Bombs/Euroflash these bullets are filled. Each bullet represent 5 Bomb/Euroflash points with a maximum of 50. You can see the amount of Bomb/Euroflash points for each side also.
- The touristic attraction of a BIG. Bullets are filled for instance for a museum or a monument. Or is there is a restaurant or if it is the highest road. Etc.
- The media attention it receives. Which wellknown cycling events have this BIG in there program.

Finally some math is applied on the above mentioned values to calculate a quality figure. For the diehards: It's close to 4 times the bullets of the Europoints + 2 times the bullets of the three other criteria (Euroflash, Eurotour and Euromedia). The small deviation arises from the fact that the calculation is not based on the actual bullets but on the figures that determine how many bullets are filled. Based on this figure the ranking of that BIG for the zone it is in and an overall ranking is determined and displayed.

We also are working slowly but surely on another feature in the Description page but to learn of that feature you are advised to read the next chapter.

2 . GPS !

Amongst the committee members we have a GPS manager: Marnix van Hecke. When you are checking the information of the BIGs on our website and look at the map where you can see the feet and summit of the BIGs then this is the work of Marnix.

And knowing where the foot and summit is located is handy information. You can even program your GPS device so you can see if you are indeed at the correct place to start the ascent. It can happen of course that there is a fault in our DataBase and in that case please let us know that the coordinates are incorrect by sending a mail to: list1000-problem@challenge-big.eu. It's a general email address that also can be used to generate other inconsistencies that you find.

Back to GPS! Though knowing the foot and summit location is handy I found out last year when I cycled BIG 149: Birgerkraiz(S) that knowing the exact route from foot to summit is also good information. Can you believe it that I missed out a 300m long stretch of the ascent with >17% on average? Instead I cycled 900m with just 4.5% on average. The claim was perfectly valid of course as our rules state: "WHATEVER THE ROUTE CHOSEN (among the sides described in the Passacol), to a summit". But I did not have a good feeling that I missed out on the the fun part so to say ;-)

Sometimes the route from the foot to summit can be seen in the Topographic maps that contributing members can look at. But some topographic maps only show the last part of this route. Hence I have created a few GPS files that show in GoogleEarth how the route for this BIG runs from the foot to the top.

Creating these files manually is not the nicest job one can pass time with. So I am asking you for help. Please send me GPS tracks, in any format, that you have logged on your GPS device when you ascended one or more BIGs. Then I will create GoogleEarth tracks from these that we will publish on our website.

Have a look for instance on the description page of BIG 101: Posbank www.challenge-big.eu/list/101.htm#) There you can find GoogleEarth tracks for all the sides.

With your help, slowly but surely we will add this information so you wont need to miss out on the fun parts of our BIGs. You can mail your GPS tracks to: list1000-problem@challenge-big.eu.

Thanks for your help!

3. The BIG is online.

In this chapter, we are moving to the east. We are going to pay a visit to our Rumanian national manager: Claudiu Moga. He was the first Rumanian to join the Challenge in 2007 (see newsletter 01-2007). Since then there are 32 Rumanians altogether. Claudiu is 30 years old and lives in the town of Ineu in the Arad region (West Rumania). He has already climbed more than 70 passes in his country including of course our 10 Rumanian BIGs. He was awarded a diploma from the University of Sibiu and now works as a translator from Romanian to French or English (but find hard to have orders).



In this country where bike is not often practiced, Claudiu appears to be like the best “cyclotourist” of his country. He likes riding long tours all over Romania and Europe and he is such a good climber that he received the nickname of Pantani from the Carpathians.

On his blog, <http://claudiu-moga.blogspot.com/>: you will find his CV in English and many accounts in Romanian. The last one in French tells his 2007 bike tour in 47 days through Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Italy and France with many passes and BIGs.

You will also discover that Claudiu is a talented photographer and show us magnificent places in Europe that we are not used to visit.



You will have the opportunity to meet Claudiu if you join us in Sonthofen in a few days.



4. About BIGs and stickers:

As a BIG member, you may know that Ard OOSTRA took the responsibility of the " sticker " project. So what is this project about? It's consists of an army of volunteers who affix at the top of our dear summits the BIG brand:

For the appointed sticker guys, it is a big responsibility to find the ideal place: it clearly must be close to the summit but not on an illicit place where it has many chances to be torn away. For BIGgers it can be a new game: find the sticker. It is sometimes obvious, sometimes difficult, sometimes impossible (because it is not yet in place or has been torn away). If it is there, it is also the occasion to notice how it faces the insult of time and of weather.

Here is my personal collection:



My first sticker affixed by our secretary Helmuth Dekkers at the top of Cauberg together with Stan Nijsten.



That one is difficult to find: Cap Fréhel in Brittany →



Here, I did not find: Col du Sati ↑



That one is inevitable: Col d'Haussire
Can you find it? ↓





That one is easy to find but suffers from the climate of North Brittany (Menez Bré) ↑

One defeat: our sticker does not like stone (Mont de Sène), just affixed and so fast removed : →

On the other hand, the same sticker loved Signal de Cuiron: ↓



But BIG Challenge is tough, thus Ard insisted: ↓



Found in the bend of a (horse) wood: ↓



Regrettably on the occasion of his passage a few weeks later, Ard discovered that: ↓





Then I discovered that in France the war was declared if we stuck it on the panel. But be quiet Claudi (Montefusco). This Chevalard that you climbed, I stuck it again! ← ↓



The same event, the same reaction for l'Espinouse ↓



I thought a lot about you, Ard, who promised to deal with Galibier, the favourite BIG of our members : ↓



A big pleasure for me : those thirteen stickers affixed in 2 radiant days throughout Luxembourg. ↓



A

A tour in Catalonia showed me that even the Mediterranean climate is not a guarantee for the good health of our stickers: Turo de l'home: comparison between an old and a new one. Apparently our stickers badly support time and weather. ↓



This sticker was on Tour de France. ↓



Now you are trained, here is the **Sticker Quiz**
(there is an indication for each).

Difficult: →



Voluntarily truncated: ↓



In the wind! ↓



Consecrated: ↑

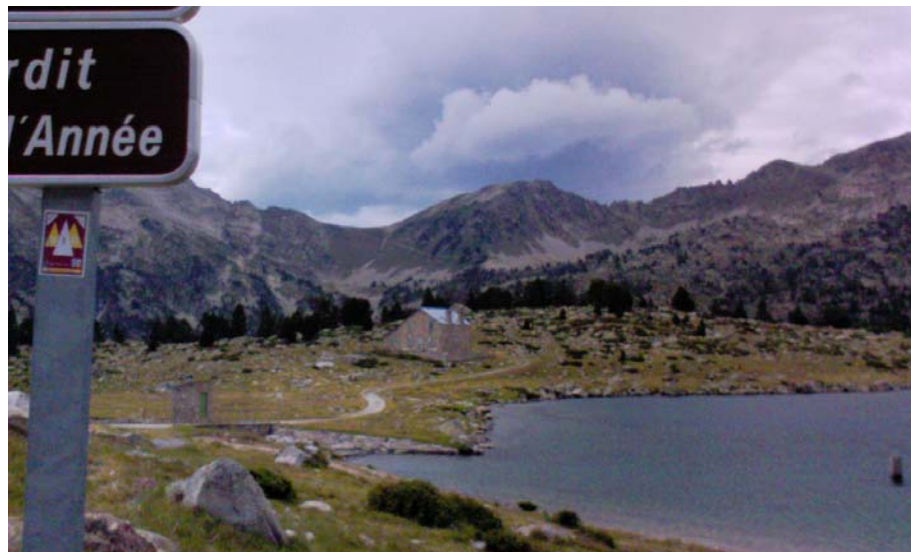
Another religious building: ↓



Easy because mythic: ↓



Lakeside this is
one is affixed by
Jean-Luc
Matte's:



Another lake in another
massif:



Cul de sac in a Principauté: ↓



Easy for the Sionists: ↓



No that is a masterpiece from Gaudi
but from Claudi: ↓



Here we are, that was no so easy but that was just for fun and thanks to the stickers army under Ard Oostra's command:

Kevin Speed

Meindert Brugman

Enrico Alberini

Daniel Gobert

Ard Oostra

Marc Desender

Xavier Cosials

Claudio Montefusco

Wim van Els

Helmuth Dekkers

Bernard Frogneux

Jean Noël Laporte

Martin Kool

Fabio Rezzonico

Rudy Dewez

John Timmermans

François Candau

Etienne Mayeur

Gabor Kreicsi

Jean-Luc Matte

The quiz answers are:

134 Baraque de Fraiture

137 Pied Monti

263 Chartreuse de Portes

148 Eoliennes de Pafebierg

596 Chapelle de Clausis

244 Puy de dôme

342 Lac d'Aumar

560 Lac de Zeusier

438 Els Cortals

573 Col de la Forclaz

434 Coll Formic

François CANDAU

5. Conclusion:

Congratulations, you've reached the end of this newsletter! and thanks for hanging in there and reading it. It's fortunately not as tough as reaching the summit of some of our BIGs though for some it might be the other way around 😊😊😊. That is if you don't like reading and prefer to be out there on your bike. Until we meet again in the next newsletter.

The newsletters team,

*François CANDAU
Helmuth DEKKERS
Joël & Jean GANGOLFF
Daniel GOBERT
Claudio MONTEFUSCO
Piero ROTA
Nico STAES*