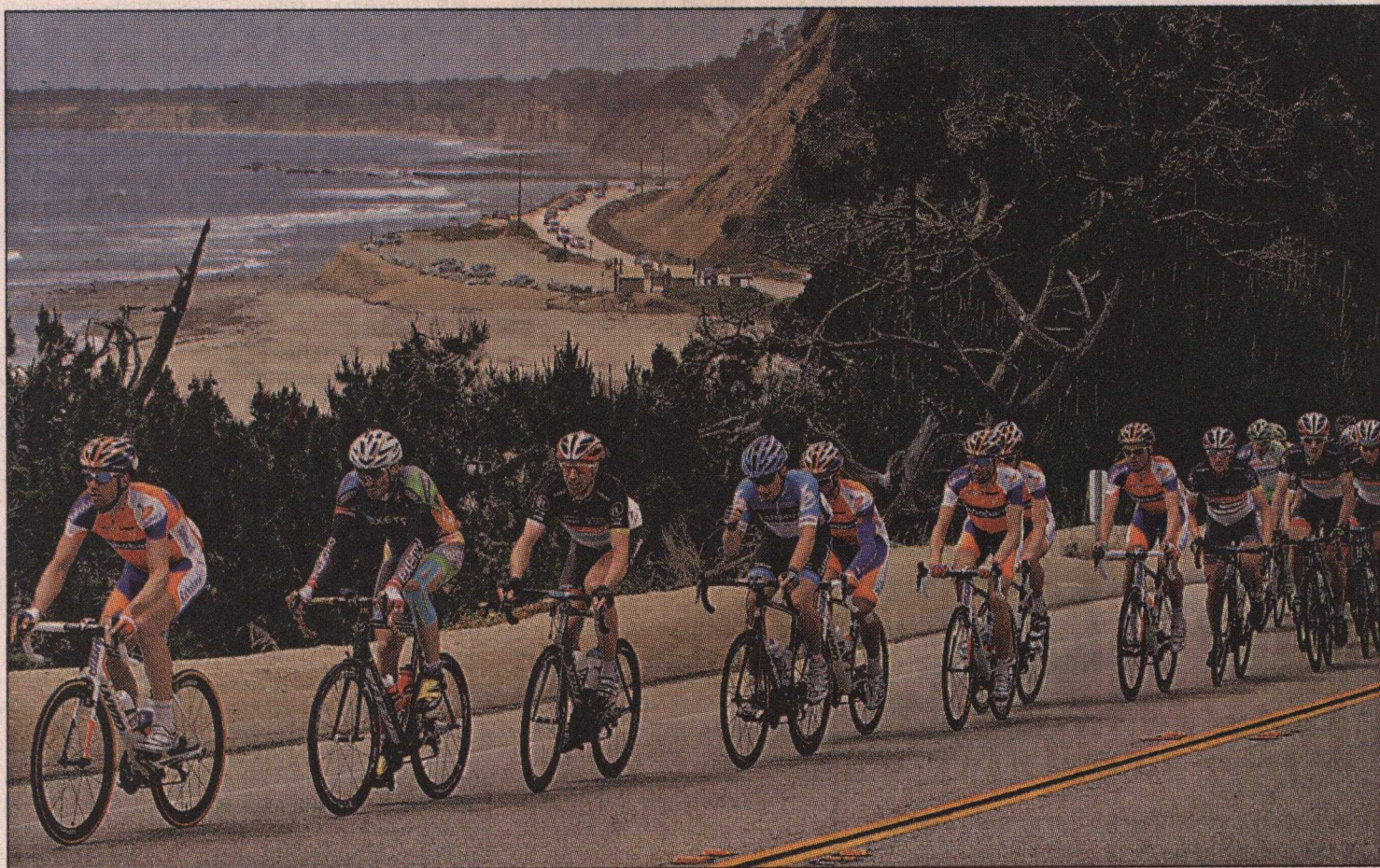


A World-Class Affair



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Tour of California riders make the climb along Highway 1 out of Waddell Creek shortly after entering Santa Cruz County on Monday.

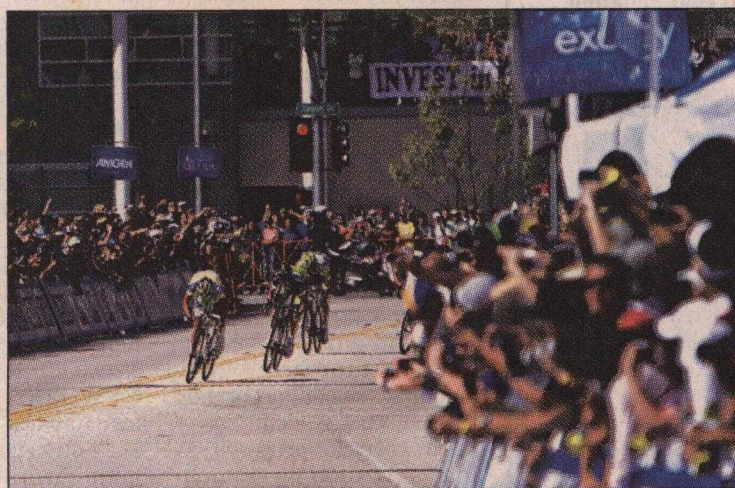
Bicycle Races Race returns to county for the third time

By J.M. BROWN

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APTOS — The Amgen Tour of California made its third, lightning-fast ride through Santa Cruz County on Monday, as world-class riders swung down picturesque Highway 1 and muscled their way up two treacherous climbs before crossing the Summit and roaring toward a breakneck finish at Cabrillo College.

The race's overall frontrunner, Peter Sagan, the Slovakian rider for Liquigas-Cannondale, held on to the coveted lead by reaching the Stage 2 finish line in Aptos just seconds ahead of competitors Heinrich Haussler of Australia and Jeffry Louder of the U.S. After an afternoon of endurance-testing grinds up narrow, moun-



PRESCOTT WATSON/SENTINEL

The lead riders sprint the final 150 meters of Monday's race. Peter Sagan of team Liquigas/Cannondale ended up claiming the yellow jersey.

tainous roads, the riders received cheers from thousands assembled to watch the final seconds unfold on Soquel Drive.

Even before the riders entered the county on Monday's 117-mile journey from below the Golden Gate Bridge to sunny, sublime

Aptos, thousands of spectators had lined the race route from Davenport to Soquel Village. They populated turnouts and driveways in Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek and the Summit — clapping, honking

SEE AMGEN ON A8

Jacques-Maynes takes a hit, but keeps rolling

By JULIE JAG

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APTOS — Fifty miles into the 117-mile Stage 2 of the Amgen Tour of California, Corralitos cyclist Ben Jacques-Maynes dropped to the back of the pack to pick up a couple of water bottles and have a confab with Bissell Pro Cycling Team Director Omer Kem.

"You're going to win the sprint into Santa Cruz, right?" Kem asked.

"Either me or Patty," replied Jacques-Maynes, referring to teammate Patrick Bevin of New Zealand.

It was a confident answer from a man who hasn't been

SEE JACQUES-MAYNES ON A6

JACQUES-MAYNES

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sure of much lately.

Since breaking his collarbone a year ago during Stage 5 of the 2011 Tour of California, Jacques-Maynes has received a landslide of setbacks, including a potentially life- and career-threatening bone infection that only got a thumbs up from his doctors three weeks ago.

Now, it seems he has finally turned down the road to recovery. That is evidenced — more than by his fifth-place finish in the opening stage of the 2012 TOC on Sunday in Santa Rosa and his strong finish in the main pack at Cabrillo College on Monday — by the fact that he got caught up in his first crash since that fateful one last year, and persevered.

“To be competitive at this level to be able to finish with this front group after riding the breakaway yesterday, it’s telling me there’s something special going on, that I’ll be able to have a good tour, I think,” said Jacques-Maynes, who placed 34th Monday and is sixth in the general classification.

“Getting through this race and feeling good about it is a good step back,” he said. “I feel like the weight’s lifted a little bit. If I’m not back, I’m on my way back.”

The urgent call of “Rider down!” went out near Bonny Doon Elementary, halfway through the biggest climb of the stage and 23 miles after Jacques-Maynes made his bold statement. At once, the tension in the Bissell aid car ratcheted up a few notches. The team’s lead mechanic grabbed a couple spare wheels and scrambled out the door of the car while it was still moving.

The collision involved yellow-jersey-clad Peter Sagan, a Liquigas rider from Slovakia who won Stage 1 and would go on to win Stage 2. About a dozen other riders also hit the pavement, but who they were wasn’t immediately clear.

Jacques-Maynes was among them.

“He was on the ground next to me, holding his shoulder, and I thought, ‘Ooh, that might be it for this guy,’” Jacques-Maynes recalled of Sagan.

Sagan recovered and Jacques-Maynes escaped with just some road rash on his elbow and knee. Yet, he couldn’t help but think what would have happened if he was the one to land on his shoulder.

A day after his crash in 2011, doctors told him he could never injure his collarbone again if he wanted to be able to use it. That was before the bone in it completely deteriorated and before doctors inserted a



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Corralitos cyclist Ben Jacques-Maynes sign autographs in San Francisco before the start of Stage 2 on Monday.

bone shard, a metal plate and eight screws to try to rebuild that part of his skeleton. That was before he started getting monthly X-rays and blood tests to monitor his body’s healing.

“It’s the first crash I’ve had in exactly a year. I was told to make a habit of not crashing,” he said, noting he was happy he was traveling just 15 mph when the spill happened. “I have been freaked out about it, but I have to jump that hurdle.”

There wasn’t much time to linger on it. If he wanted to have that hero’s homecoming — moreover, if he wanted to win the stage in which his wife, Goldi, was a jersey presenter — he had to clip back in and start cranking.

In no time, Jacques-Maynes rejoined the peloton. He led it through a screaming, 45 mph descent of Jamison Creek Road and enjoyed a relaxed climb to the top of Bear Creek Road, where fans showered riders in flower petals and men running in Speedos raced the cyclists to the top. Along the way, he noticed his name written in chalk on the blacktop and fans screaming his name — though not always to him.

“I got called your name a few times, actually,” lanky Bissell teammate Jeremy Vennell, winner of the Most Courageous Rider jersey, told Jacques-Maynes in the post-race press conference.

It all seemed to be setting Jacques-Maynes up perfectly for a spectacular stage finish. Then, as the riders were nearing Soquel High and gaining speed as they chugged toward the finish line, the call

went out again: Riders down. This time, Jacques-Maynes’ body slipped through unscathed, but his psyche took a hit.

“I laid a big skid right through the middle of it, right through the dirt. That wasn’t fun, either,” he said. “It took the wind out of my sails. I started thinking about crashing a little bit.”

The fatigue from his valiant ride a day earlier in Santa Rosa — when he participated in a breakaway for all but about three miles of the 115.9-mile stage — also started setting in, and Jacques-Maynes decided it was time to pull back.

“You can always live to fight the next day,” he reasoned, “because there will be a next day.”

Today is that next day for Jacques-Maynes. He will be among the 128 riders lined up in San Jose to begin the 115.3-mile ride into Livermore. He said he is willing to take his turn in the breakaway for a Bissell team that has competed in six Tour of Californias and built a reputation for challenging the field. And as a former San Jose resident and Cal student, he knows those roads better than almost anyone.

But even if he find success there, or in any other part of the eight-day, 750-mile race, which wraps up in Los Angeles on Sunday, Jacques-Maynes is not quite ready to declare he’s out of the redwoods. Not after all the curves life has thrown at him since this time last year.

“I’ve had so many corners to turn, I’m not sure I’ve turned the last corner yet,” he said.

AMGEN

Continued from A1

horns and ringing cowbells.

If they didn't already know it, the 100-plus riders quickly learned Santa Cruz County is cycling country. And it's kind of beautiful, too.

Rich White, 55, of Capitola had a little more insight into the race than some fans. He rode his bike nine miles from home up Soquel-San Jose Road to catch the action.

"It's mind-boggling what they do on a daily basis," White said. "To ride from San Francisco to Santa Cruz is a feat in itself and they do (rides of that length) day after day. It's pretty amazing."

A GRASSROOTS RETURN

Local amateur cyclist Maura Noel spearheaded a grassroots effort by racing fans to bring the eight-day tour back to Santa Cruz County this year after the city of Santa Cruz passed on hosting it in 2011. The city hosted the 2009 and 2010 contests, but amid lackluster impacts to local businesses and a tough fundraising campaign,

the city decided to forgo a bid this year and last.

After Noel and other volunteers vowed to raise the \$200,000 required for local organizing committees to host a stage finish. She's still adding up donations, but said the months of planning were worth it.

"From here at the finish line, everyone seems super stoked and super energized," Noel said.

The county didn't outlay any money to bring the tour back, but did help with logistics such as road closures.

Supervisor Ellen Pirie, who represents Aptos and was tasked with handing flowers to second-place finisher Haussler, said the event is worth the effort and brings in added spending at hotels and restaurants.

"It's such good exposure for the county," Pirie said.

Soquel High switched to a half day Monday to avoid conflict with the event and other schools along the race route let children watch from the sidelines. Although Cabrillo College held classes as normal, some professors canceled classes anyway.

There were several crashes among the riders, but no other problems were reported along the route or at the finish line.

CABRILLO CENTER OF IT ALL

Race day started early at Cabrillo College, where the western part of campus was the bustling scene of a massive tent city.

Team sponsor flags flew high above the parking lot, while guys wearing tool belts bolted together the frame of the finish line. A health and wellness festival also was set up.

James Williams, owner of the Santa Cruz bike shop Recycled Bikes, lives on Soquel-San Jose Road but chose to be at the finish line because he thought the riders would be too fast coming down Soquel-San Jose Road to see them.

"I'm in the business, so I wanted to see the race in person," he said. "I'm a big promoter of human-powered motion."

Pebble Beach resident Ally Wenzel took time off work Monday to watch the start in San Francisco. After racers got under way, Wenzel and her husband Phil drove to Aptos, where they hung out at Cabrillo College.

The couple enjoys cycling themselves, often planning vacations around bike tours.

"We don't race, but we tour a lot in Europe," Ally Wenzel said. "It's a good way to see the world on a bicycle. When we get away, we ride. That's what we do."

Derek Lockyer, 29, pedaled his bicycle to Cabrillo College from Saratoga on Monday. The ride took nearly three hours, Lockyer said.

"I like to watch the pros, just to see them finish is cool," Lockyer said.

A trio of friends rode their bikes to join the thousands of fans cheering tour participants as they sped down Soquel Drive and turned right onto the campus for the straightaway.

"It was just exciting to be right here as the group swooshed by," said Maryanne Gilbert of Santa Cruz. "The energy was palpable."

Gilbert's friend Roberta Valdez of Corralitos, an avid cyclist, is a former volunteer for the Amgen tour.

"I'm really, really proud to have the race here again," Valdez said.

MOUNTAIN VIEWS

On Bonny Doon Road, the excitement was just as palpable as riders banged a left turn from Highway 1 to begin the famed Bonny Doon climb. Fans tailgated as they awaited the arrival of the lead riders and the peloton.

North Carolina residents Noel and Trish Biacuci were camped out, waiting to get a glimpse of the riders. They are spending six days in California, and after a visit to Yosemite on Sunday, decided to catch the cycling action Monday.

"I'm a big rider," Noel Biacuci said. "I always wanted to see this."

"We had a plan to go to Mexico, but we bagged it to come here," Trish Biacuci said.

After the riders climbed Bonny Doon and Empire Grade, they traversed the serpentine turns of Jamison Creek Road before tackling Bear Creek Road and reach-



JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

Riders descend Point Lobos Road as they pass the Cliff House in San Francisco on their way to Santa Cruz County during stage two of the 2012 Amgen Tour of California Monday.

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watched the last Tour of California from the corner of Bay and Mission in Santa Cruz, and would have liked to see it closer to home again.

"It's sad it didn't come through Santa Cruz," McLaren said. "But I understood the economics."

Miles below, a few hundred spectators gathered to watch the race in Soquel Village, lining the sidewalk from Porter Street down Soquel Drive, and clamoring around the blockades just outside the Ugly Mug Café. Inside, baristas worked full speed serving lattes and gelato to the growing crowd.

"I think it's the most exciting event we've had in some time in this community," said Lou Tuosto, an insurance salesman whose office is on Soquel Drive. "To cheer on our racers and bring them back year after year, I think it's great."

"It's always exciting to see something with first-class athletes, so when I have the opportunity, I decided to come down," John Aboytes said as he stood on a corner in the village.

Aboytes, who lives on Old San Jose Road, said he used to be into cycling when he was younger, but he hasn't done much of it in recent years. He'd like to get into it again, he said.

"Maybe this will be the inspiration to get back into it," he said.

As for Noel, the local tour organizer, she had had enough inspiration by end of the day. After months of planning and fundraising, she helped to break down the tent city at Cabrillo and then was off to celebrate.

"We're going to friend's house in Rio del Mar to watch the sunset and drink some beers," Noel said.

The race resumes this morning for a ride to Livermore, with the culmination of the race in Los Angeles on Sunday.

Staff writers Jason Hoppin, Donna Jones, Shanna McCord, Jessica Pasko, Stephen Baxter and correspondent Bonnie Horgos contributed to this report.

Obituary Notices

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Shirley Jean Brown
Nov. 17, 1935-May 10, 2012
Resident of Valley Springs

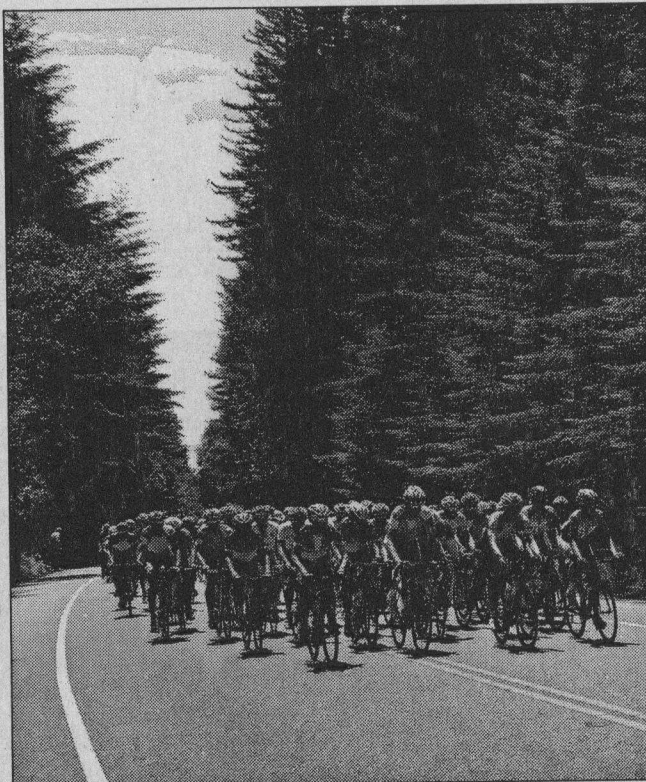
Shirley Jean Brown passed away on May 10, 2012 at Lodi Memorial Hospital. She was 76.

Shirley was born in Watsonville, California, one of three children born to Manuel M. Anecito and Connie (Victoria) Anecito. She grew up in Watsonville where she attended Watsonville High School. At an early age while attending a Portuguese celebration in Watsonville she met Marvin F. Brown. The couple later married in September of 1952 at St Josephs Catholic Church in Capitola.

Shirley was a long-time resident of Santa Cruz where she raised her family and also worked as a hair dresser. She and her husband retired to Calaveras County 20 years ago. She was a former member of St Josephs Catholic Church and was actively involved in many of the Portuguese organizations including C.P.D.E.S. Shirley regularly attended the annual Festas which took place at the C.P.D.E.S. Hall in Santa Cruz.

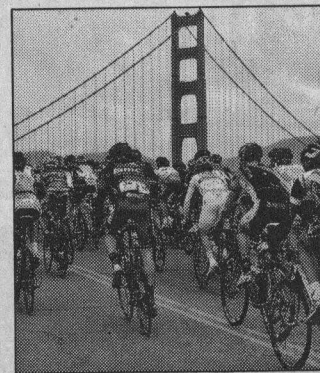
She was described by her family as a devoted wife and a loving and caring mother and grandmother. A generous person who would not hesitate to do anything for anyone.

She is survived by her husband of 59 years, Marvin F. Brown of Valley Springs; daughters, Melvina White



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Riders climb toward the Bonny Doon Road summit on Monday.



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

The south tower of the Golden Gate Bridge rises over Amgen Tour of California riders as they head out of San Francisco on Monday morning.

ing the Summit. The lead rider shot down Jamison Creek Road with speed that bordered on reckless, and easily was faster than any of the four-wheeled route escorts that preceded him.

They were followed minutes later by the peloton, squeezed narrow by the mountain roads. The whine of their brakes sounded like a NASCAR race, and the smell of burning rubber filled the air.

Race organizers were kind enough to post bright yellow "Dangerous Descent" signs at the top of Jamison Creek, perhaps the most remote part of Monday's stage. Several bike fans posed for pictures next to the signs, including San Car-

los resident Don Manke, 55. Manke and three friends met in San Francisco at the crack of dawn to follow the route, saying the opportunity was too good to pass up.

"This is why we live in California," Manke said.

Another fan who bikes all the way out to Jamison Creek was Michael Runeare, 49, of Santa Cruz. He whooped and hollered as the riders whizzed by.

"It's a pretty intimidating ride," Runeare said of Jamison Creek.

For local organizers, watching the riders stream down Jamison Creek Road was "our big stress point of the day," Noel said.

They were relieved when the peloton, or main group of riders, seemed to take it easy down the steep descent, which in Santa Cruz County is second only to Alba Road in pitch.

More than a hundred gathered along Soquel-San Jose and Summit roads.

SUMMIT TO THE VILLAGE

Santa Cruz resident Candice McLaren staked out a vantage point in a triangle of dried grass in the center of the intersection of Soquel-San Jose and Summit roads, hoping to catch a few good shots with her camera.

"It's a good spot," she said. But McLaren added she

Writing
an obituary
is a special
opportunity
to say
goodbye.