

January 21, 2009

BRAG 2009 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT SHOULD I BRING ON BRAG?

BRAG veterans have developed the following checklist over several years. Use this suggested checklist while packing to make sure you have everything you'll need.

Bicycle Stuff

Helmet (Mandatory)
Bike lock & cable
Handlebar/Seat Bag
Frame-mounted pump
Spare tube, patch kit
Tire tool, allen wrenches
2 large water bottles
Cycling shoes
Rear view mirror
Sunglasses
Bicycle (of course)
Computer
Bicycle Tag (if pre-registered)
Wrist Band (if pre-registered)

Clothing

Cycling shorts
Cycling jerseys
Cycling gloves
Walking shorts
T-shirts
Underwear, socks
Bandannas
Off-bike shoes, sandals
Hat, visor
Sunglasses
Swimwear
Rain gear/jacket

Toiletries

Towels, wash cloth
Sunscreen, lip balm
Soap, shampoo
Toothbrush/paste
Floss
Brush, comb
Deodorant
Razor
Mirror
Nail clippers
Lotion
Kleenex packs
Shower bag
Chamois cream

Miscellaneous

Insect-gnat-tick repellent
First aid kit
Driver's License/Identification
Medical Insurance Card
Medication/Advil
Camera, batteries, charger
Zip-lock bags to keep clothes dry
Toilet paper
Cell phone, charger
Money
More money
Credit card - spare check
Sense of Humor
Patience
Flashlight, fresh batteries
Clothesline & clothes pins
Battery operated fan

Sleeping Stuff

Air mattress/sleeping pad
Lightweight sleeping bag
Sheets and pillow
Foam ear plugs
Tent & ground cloth, if camping
Rechargeable electric inflator

Optional Items:

Plastic seat cover	Warm-up suit
Flip-flops/shower shoes	Alarm clock
Small screwdriver	Hand cleaner/rags
Emergency food	Extra bicycle/clip screws
Notebook & pencil	Bicycle serial number
Spare pair of glasses	Sweatband
Something to read	Fanny pack
Sewing kit	Alarm clock
Plastic tape	Map
Stamps/postcards	Name of next of kin
Large plastic bag/poncho	Address cards

Small American Flag, (June 14 is Flag Day). In recognition of our Armed Services Veterans, June 12, Friday is Military Jersey Day. Wear a Military or USA-type jersey in their honor!

Baggage – distinctively labeled or painted. You want to line your baggage with a trash bag to keep your clothes dry in case of rain!

WHAT SHOULD I LEAVE AT HOME?

Lawn chairs, trunks, mattresses, coolers, cots, flammable fuels, stoves, and extra bikes are not permitted and will not be allowed on the baggage trucks. (Uninflated air mattresses are permitted.) Also, leave at home your cares and worries, your job, and your big-city, in-a-hurry attitude.

HOW DO I TRANSPORT MY BIKE IF I AM USING THE BRAG BUS SERVICE?

Our most frequently asked question concerns the transporting of bicycles in connection with the buses. Yes, we will transport your bike if you are riding one of the BRAG buses. You will need to remove the pedals and lower and turn the handlebars to get your bike loaded. Please bring appropriate tools to do this. You or a BRAG volunteer will load your bike in a BRAG truck and separate the bikes with cardboard which BRAG will furnish. Your bike may not get to the destination as fast as the bus. **Prior to the ride, buses will be available** on Saturday morning to transport riders, bicycles, and their luggage from the week-long parking location (Elijah Clarke State Park) to the beginning of the ride (Hiawassee). Upon completing the weekly ride, **buses are also available at the end of the ride** (Savannah Lakes Resort) to the beginning of the ride (Hiawassee), Atlanta, and the layover town, (Athens, for BRAG LITE riders) in order for participants to retrieve their cars. The cost of transporting your bike and gear is included in the bus fee. If you are flying to Atlanta, you may send your bike by UPS to Cycleworks and retrieve it at the beginning of the ride. You may also make arrangements with them to ship your bike home after the ride. Email Mark@Cycleworksinc.com or call 770-476-4949 for details and cost. Register early because the buses and bike shipping services will fill up quickly.

WHAT IS THE COST OF FOOD THIS YEAR?

If you buy the BRAG meals, count on \$20 to \$25 a day for meals. You may also eat at restaurants along the way and most overnight sites will have snack bars set up.

WHAT DOES THE FEE COVER?

The weekly fee entitles you to maps, entrance to campsites (tent camping or gym camping), nightly entertainment, hot showers, extra porta-potties at overnight sites, rest stops every 10 - 15 miles (with cookies, PowerAde, a variety of fruit, porta-potties), sag wagon support, bike repair support (for a fee), baggage transportation to the overnight campsites, access to medical team, security team, communications team, End-Of-The-Road Meal, medals for kids 15 and under and seniors 70 and older, and lots more.

IS BRAG APPROPRIATE FOR NEW RIDERS, FAMILIES, AND/OR CHILDREN?

Yes, definitely. BRAG is designed to make new riders feel safe and welcomed. We also cater to families and children. We have a NEW RIDERS meeting at on-site registration @ 5:00 pm

to go over the dynamics of riding in a group and a children's safety discussion at 5:30 pm. We have quiet time from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. We also have afternoon movies for small children, plus various games/activities for the older kids. Some of the children on BRAG enter the Talent Show.

DOES A PERSON NEED A ROAD BIKE, OR DO SOME RIDERS USE MOUNTAIN, HYBRID, RECUMBENT OR TANDEM BIKES?

We see more and more recumbents and tandems every year. My personal opinion is that BRAG is easier if you use a road bike with skinny tires because it has less road resistance. Also, road bikes tend to be lighter weight than fat-tire bikes. Those with mountain bikes may want to put slicks on their bikes.

WHAT IF A PERSON DOESN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE WHO IS RIDING BRAG? IS THERE A WAY TO MEET OTHER BRAG RIDERS PRIOR TO THIS EVENT? HOW EASY IS IT TO MEET OTHER RIDERS DURING THIS EVENT?

You will never ride alone on BRAG. There will always be someone riding at or near your pace. If you are the least bit outgoing, you will meet lots of new friends on BRAG - on the road, at the rest stops, and in the shower line, potty line, and food line.

I WANT TO STAY IN A MOTEL. HOW DO I GET MY BAGGAGE FROM THE BAGGAGE TRUCK TO THE MOTEL?

There's an easy way and a hard way. **Here's the easy way:** Check out Larry Black's web page, www.lablack49.home.comcast.net or email him at BroJohnSag@comcast.net or call him at 770-314-2400, and he will transport your baggage for you to and from approved hotels/motels for a fee. Larry Black's web page has a link to BRAG's web site for a list of motels. Many are full now. Please check soon.

Here's the hard way: Find your baggage each afternoon. It will be spread out behind the baggage trucks. Pick out what you need for the night and put it in a backpack. Put your baggage back in the truck, all the way to the front and on top of the pile. Go to the motel on your bike. In the morning, come back and put your backpack on the truck. Repeat as required.

HOW DO I GET MYSELF TO THE MOTELS? ARE THERE SHUTTLE BUSES?

You are responsible for your own transportation to and from the motels. Many people ride their bikes. Host towns are encouraged to run shuttle buses from the campsites to restaurants, shopping areas, entertainment, etc. We recommend that they include the motels on their routes. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. If you hop on a shuttle to take you to your motel and leave your bike locked at the camp site, you will be in for a major shock the next morning when you realize you and your bike are separated by several miles. Check the "Schedule of Events" list which you will be given at on-site registration and which will be included on the map for each day. This list will tell you about any shuttle buses which will run the following morning from motels back to camp.

WILL MY BAGGAGE BE SAFE?

BRAG does not guarantee the safety of your baggage, bicycle, or other equipment. Thefts of baggage are rare. The usual culprit is someone who mistakenly picks up a bag thinking it is his or hers. Your bags should be distinctively painted or decorated with ribbons and your name so that you can find them easily.

IS BRAG SAFE FOR CHILDREN?

Children are the future of our sport. Unlike some other statewide rides, BRAG is family-oriented and encourages children to participate.

On a recent BRAG, we had 166 children on our ride 12 years of age and younger. The youngest child was 1-year old, riding on his/her parent's bicycle, in a child carrier seat or trailer. In our 30 years of cross-state bicycle rides, we have never had a serious injury to a child 12 years of age or younger. BRAG strongly emphasizes safety on all of its rides. Item 12 on the BRAG Safety Pledge states: "I will provide immediate adult supervision to my bicycling children under age 16." When children ride with responsible adults, BRAG is a safe bicycling event. One of the prime advantages of a large ride like BRAG is that the motorists are forced to pay attention to us. We do not have many problems with motorists. Accidents on BRAG are usually caused by bicycles running into other bicycles. With a responsible adult nearby, the probability of a child having a cycling accident is minimized. We will have several SAG wagons. We will have rest stops every 10 to 15 miles with refreshments and water and PowerAde. We will have approximately 15 doctors and nurses on our Medical Team. We will have medical support at BRAG Headquarters each afternoon, staffed by medical volunteers working under the supervision of our Medical Director. We will have the Georgia State Patrol with us all week. We will notify all police jurisdictions along our route. We will also notify the Georgia Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) along the route. If any parent has any additional concerns or questions about the safety of a child on BRAG, please contact the Ride Director at Vicki@brag.org, or call 770-498-5153.

THE RIDE APPLICATION SAYS THAT HOT SHOWERS ARE PROVIDED EVERY NIGHT. IS THIS A JOKE?

NO! The overnight sites may run out of hot water, but the shower truck uses propane-heated water that is heated as it is used. It will not run out of hot water.

IS INDOOR CAMPING AVAILABLE?

Yes. Every site has indoor camping. It may get crowded in a gym. If it is raining outside, or air conditioned inside, it will get very crowded. We request air conditioning at each stop, but it is not always available.

I AM GOING WITH A GROUP OF 3. I HAVE A POP-UP CAMPER. WE ARE GOING TO TAKE TURNS DRIVING. IS THIS ALLOWED?

Yes, but you will have to register the vehicle and pay for a private vehicle permit (\$30). You will also have to agree to stay off our bicycle route. You will be furnished a set of separate private vehicle route maps which will keep you off the bicycle route.

I'M NOT EXACTLY IN GREAT SHAPE. DO YOU THINK I CAN STILL DO BRAG?

If you are not in shape when you get to BRAG, you will be when you leave. Seriously, BRAG is a strenuous ride. It consists of seven days averaging 60 miles per day. There is a layover day on Wednesday; you can ride or not ride as you choose on the layover day. You should get in the best shape you can prior to the ride. You must start riding between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM. Most people are out of camp by 7:30 AM. The earlier you start, the cooler the weather, and the easier your day will be. But remember, it does not get light until 6:00 AM, and it's against Georgia law to ride before daylight without adequate lights. Each day the route closes 1 hour after the last rest stop closes. This gives you 8 to 10 hours to complete your day's ride at an average speed as low as 8-10 mph. Sag wagons will sweep the route prior to closing. If you are physically unable to complete the day's ride, stop a sag vehicle and request assistance. Remember sag wagons are provided to assist riders in serious trouble and are not taxicabs for tired riders. If you cannot ride any more, you will be transported to the next rest stop and put to work. The sag wagons will take you into camp at the end of their workday.

RIDERS UNDER AGE 16 MUST HAVE IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION BY AN ADULT. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Immediate supervision means that you ride with the child and that you control his or her movements on the bike. Children are very unpredictable on bicycles. They tend to be unaware of the dangers of cyclists and cars all around them. Always ride immediately behind and slightly to the left of your child. Never ride anywhere near a child who is not yours. Minors 16 and 17 years old with a valid driver's license can drive their vehicle (bike) on the roads alone. ALL minors (those under age 18) must have an accompanying adult with them for the week.

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE MY CAR FOR BRAG TO USE AS A SAG WAGON DURING THE WEEK. HOW CAN I DO THIS?

We can only use your car if you have a driver to go with it. We need volunteers with cars to be sag wagon drivers. If you are interested, please check off the sag wagon volunteer box on your BRAG registration form or send an email to Vicki@brag.org or call 770-498-5153 to volunteer.

SIXTY MILES A DAY IS A LONG WAY. WHAT IF I HAVE TO USE THE BATHROOM ON THE RIDE?

BRAG and Special Olympics Georgia will have rest stops set up every 10 to 15 miles along the route. Each rest stop will have several porta-potties. If you can't wait till the next rest stop, go in the bushes. Just watch out for poison ivy and snakes.

I'VE HEARD THAT I MAY HAVE TO STAND IN LINES ON BRAG. IS THAT TRUE?

Only if you need to use the porta-potties on the route. Oh, and sometimes the food lines get kind of long. We tell the food providers to hurry it up, but sometimes they don't listen. And then sometimes there is a line at the shower during peak times. Remember what we said about leaving your "in-a-hurry" attitude at home. Think of lines as linear socialization opportunities. Use line time to get to know the person in front of you and the person behind you. We have people on this ride from all over the United States and Canada and from all walks of life. Approach the ride as an adventure and as an opportunity to make new friends. Also, use your time in line to put on more sun screen.

HOW DO I GET IN THE BRAG TALENT SHOW?

Practice, practice, practice. The Talent Show is usually held mid-week. There will be applications for the Talent Show at on-site registration and daily thereafter at BRAG HQ. You may also send your name and a description of your act to Vicki@brag.org, and we'll get the information to our Talent Show Coordinator. Remember: this is a family show.

DO YOU TAKE VISA OR MASTERCARD?

Yes.

MAY I BUY BRAG T-SHIRTS AND OTHER MERCHANDISE DURING THE RIDE?

Yes, until we sell out. T-shirts and other merchandise will be for sale every afternoon during BRAG at BRAG HQ. BRAG t-shirts will be \$15.00 each. They are \$13.00 each if you order them in advance with your registration form. We take VISA and Mastercard for on-site merchandise, and cash or checks.

DOES BRAG ALLOW CHILD CARRIERS OR TRAILERS? I WOULD LOVE TO PARTICIPATE WITH MY 5 YEAR OLD.

Yes, some folks even put their dogs or goats in trailers. Just remember your child needs to wear a helmet. Your dog or goat does not.

YOU MEAN BRAG ALLOWS DOGS?

Yes, under these three conditions. No one wants to hear a dog barking. No one wants to step in dog doo. Most buildings will not allow animals inside.