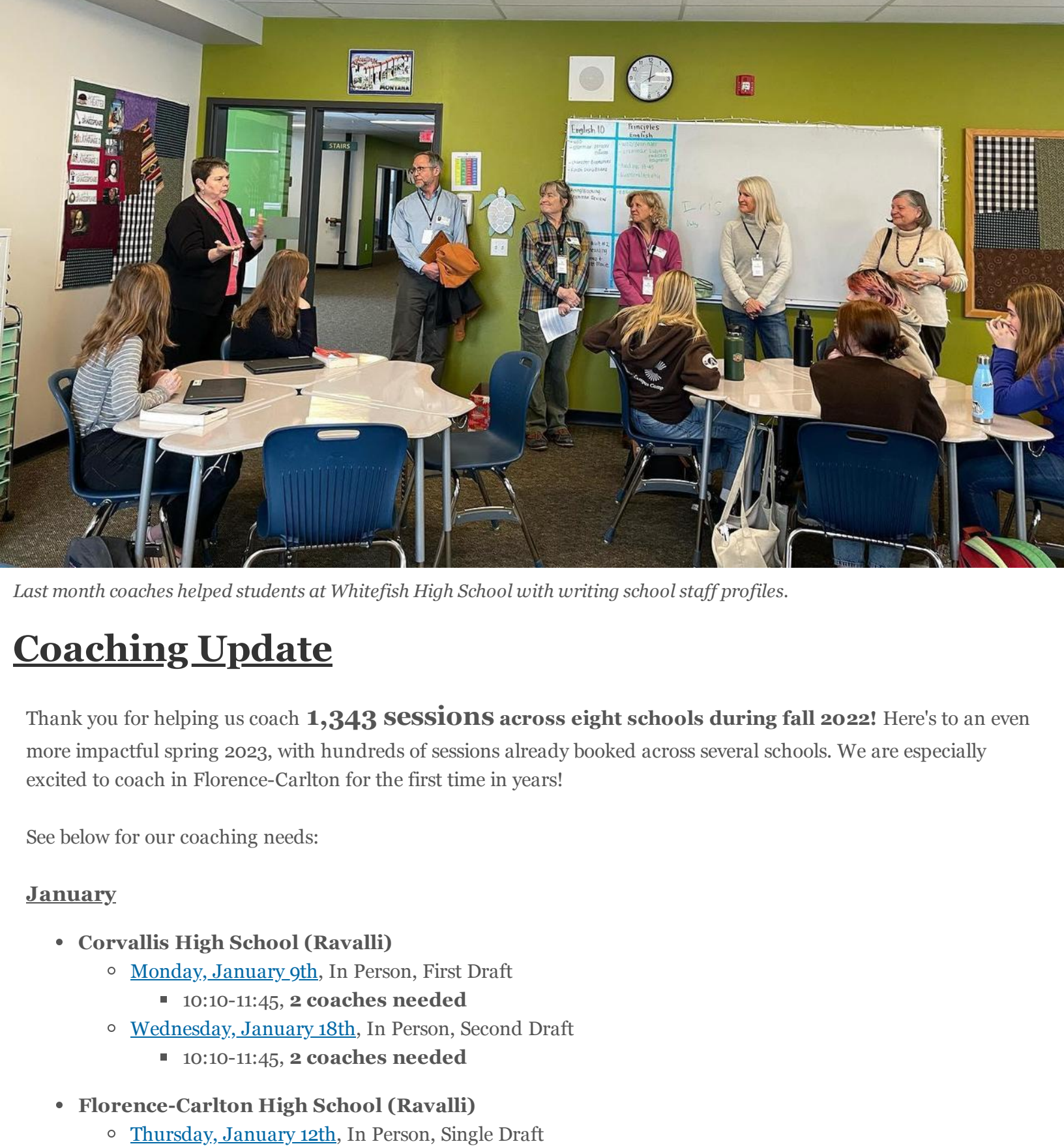


January 2023 Newsletter

In this newsletter:

New coach training structure; February jewelry fundraiser; Spring '23 volunteer meet-ups; Special coach blog post & WCM team member blog post



Last month coaches helped students at Whitefish High School with writing school staff profiles.

Coaching Update

Thank you for helping us coach **1,343 sessions across eight schools during fall 2022!** Here's to an even more impactful spring 2023, with hundreds of sessions already booked across several schools. We are especially excited to coach in Florence-Carlton for the first time in years!

See below for our coaching needs:

January

- **Corvallis High School (Ravalli)**
 - **Monday, January 9th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:10-11:45, **2 coaches needed**
 - **Wednesday, January 18th**, In Person, Second Draft
 - 10:10-11:45, **2 coaches needed**
- **Florence-Carlton High School (Ravalli)**
 - **Thursday, January 12th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 8:10-9:03, Honors American Literature, **2 coaches needed**
 - **Thursday, January 19th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:04-10:57, English 10, **1 coach needed**
 - 11:01-11:54, Careers & College Prep, **2 coaches needed**
 - 1:30 - 2:15, English 10, **7 coaches needed**
- **Whitefish Middle School (Flathead)**
 - **Thursday, January 12th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 8:53 - 9:40, **2 coaches needed**
 - 9:44 - 10:31, **2 coaches needed**
 - 11:26 - 12:13, **3 coaches needed**
 - 1:01 - 1:48, **4 coaches needed**
 - 1:52 - 2:39, **4 coaches needed**
 - 2:43 - 3:30, **3 coaches needed**
 - **Friday, January 13th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 11:26 - 12:13, **6 coaches needed**
 - 1:01 - 1:48, **3 coaches needed**
- **CS Porter Middle School (Missoula)**
 - **Monday, January 9th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, **1 coach needed**
 - **Tuesday, January 10th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, **6 coaches needed**
 - **Wednesday, January 11th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, **4 coaches needed**
 - **Tuesday, January 17th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, **5 coaches needed**
 - **Wednesday, January 18th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, **7 coaches needed**
 - **Friday, January 20th**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 10:08-10:58, **4 coaches needed**

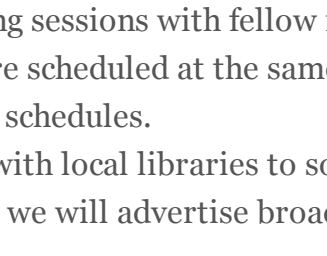
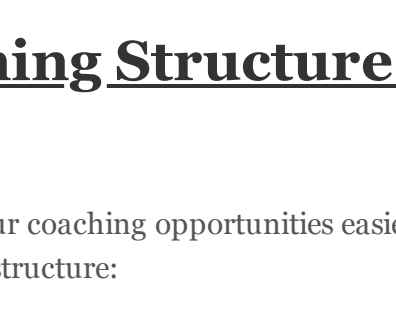
February

- **Hamilton High School (Ravalli)**
 - **Thursday, February 23**, In Person, Single Draft
 - 12:20-1:50, **16 coaches needed**

All session details and registrations can be accessed through our [coaching calendar](#).

Questions regarding sessions can be directed to Flathead Coordinator (jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org) or Missoula/Ravalli Coordinator (kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org).

[CHECK OUT COACHING CALENDAR](#)



New Volunteer Training Structure: More Accessible and Flexible!

WCM is always looking for ways to make our coaching opportunities easier for community members to access. In that spirit, we updated our new coach training structure:

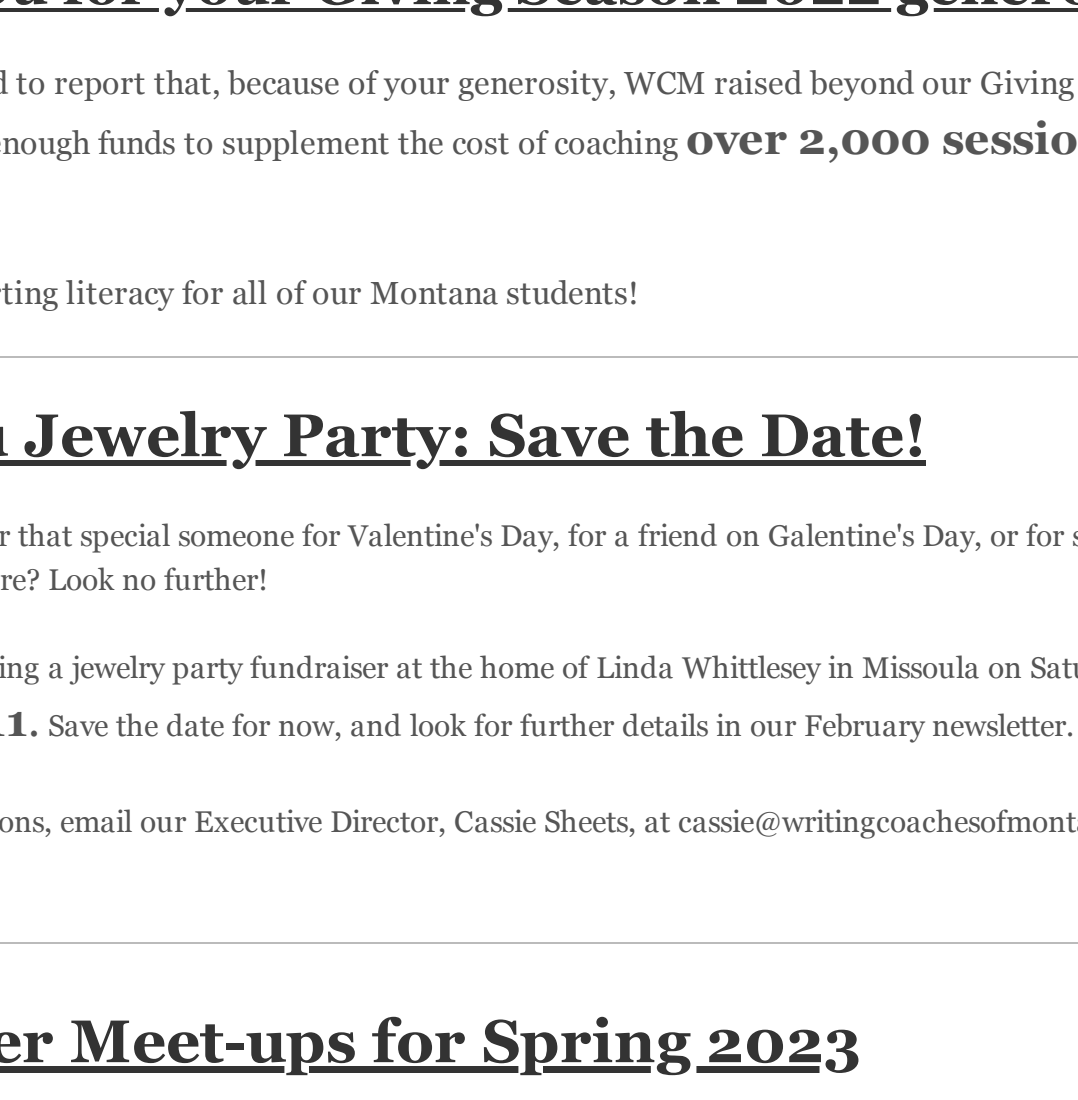
- New coaches watch a training **video on their own time** with a viewing guide;
- Then they attend one of our **regularly scheduled monthly in-person workshops** with their local coordinator to practice mock coaching sessions with fellow new coaches.
 - These interactive workshops are scheduled at the same time every month so that prospective coaches can plan ahead in their schedules.
- We are in the middle of discussions with local libraries to solidify a regular training schedule. As soon as these dates and times are confirmed, we will advertise broadly!

This new training structure is kicking off with our first in-person training this upcoming **Thursday, January 12th at Missoula Public Library, 3:30-5:30pm**. If you're interested in attending, register through the link or email Missoula/Ravalli Coordinator, Kat Jackson, at kat@writingcoachesofmontana.org.

For future Flathead training inquiries, questions can be directed to Flathead Coordinator, Jeanne Wdowin, at jeanne@writingcoachesofmontana.org.

Thanks to the libraries partnering with us to host our workshops: Bitterroot Public Library, Missoula Public Library, and Flathead Valley Community College's Broussard Library. We love building community partnerships with vital literacy organizations!

[REGISTER FOR NEW COACH WORKSHOP: MISSOULA, JANUARY 12](#)



Thank you for your Giving Season 2022 generosity!

We are delighted to report that, because of your generosity, WCM raised beyond our Giving Season goal. You helped us raise enough funds to supplement the cost of coaching **over 2,000 sessions** in low-income schools!

Here's to supporting literacy for all of our Montana students!

LindaLu Jewelry Party: Save the Date!

Need a present for that special someone for Valentine's Day, for a friend on Galentine's Day, or for some much-needed wintertime self-care? Look no further!

WCM will be hosting a jewelry party fundraiser at the home of Linda Whittlesey in Missoula on Saturday,

February 11. Save the date for now, and look for further details in our February newsletter.

If you have questions, email our Executive Director, Cassie Sheets, at cassie@writingcoachesofmontana.org.

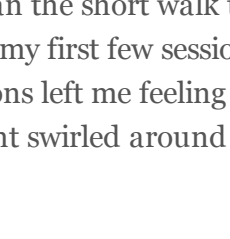
Volunteer Meet-ups for Spring 2023

Thursday, February 16, 5:30-6:30pm: WCM board member and Professor Emeritus of English at University of Montana, Dr. Bruce Chin, will facilitate a session on research strategies.

Thursday, March 6, 5:30-6:30pm: WCM intern, Julia Wynne, will hold a session discussing diverse representation in children's and young adult literature.

Save the dates—more details to come in future newsletters.

Corporate Sponsorship: Cover Three



Thank you to [Cover Three](#) for sponsoring WCM at the platinum level two years in a row! This family company's sponsorship has made a big difference in the level of support we can offer Flathead students.

Growth Mindset: A Coaches' Blog

We are delighted to present Coach Donovan's blog post. As you'll read, he's in a special position moving from Missoula County Public School student to college-aged coach. What an amazing journey he can share with younger students!

Coming Full Circle

As I walked up to Washington Middle School I was filled with a feeling of nostalgia looking at the signature tan and brown brick building. Confidence filled me as I approached the office where I had been signed in and out countless times. I tried the door and found it locked. That's when I remembered the office had been relocated during one of the many remodels that had taken place since I had attended about ten years ago. It was now an entirely new section built right next to the outer building, where music classes like band and orchestra were held when I attended years prior. No longer a student, I am here now ready to start a new adventure.

After signing in at the front office I met the other coaches and our coordinator Cassie: we chatted and enjoyed coffee as we waited until we were to meet with the students. I was busy taking in the new building and seeing all the new changes to the school. Wherever I looked there was something that had changed: the office had been moved, and the lunchroom had been moved into this new section as well.

Cassie led us to the classroom where we would be having our coaching session and so in a big line we started making our way through the hallways where I had roamed years prior. We passed by the door that I had tried to enter earlier. A wave of nostalgia flowed over me as we passed each room; that was the old choir room, that was my seventh-grade English teacher's room, and that was my eighth-grade history teacher's class. It seemed like yesterday I had attended those classes, and from that thought, some doubts began to form in my head. Was I ready to be coaching middle school students, had I not been a student in these halls less than a decade ago?

After being led to our rooms and getting settled in, I looked around at the teacher's room taking in the posters of the alphabet and various grammatical rules. Looking around I spotted the teacher who was sitting at her desk getting ready to leave her room for us to use for tutoring. I recognized her immediately.

"I know you," she said, with a smile forming on her face.

This was the room of my seventh-grade English and social studies teacher. We talked about me being a coach and how excited she was to see a former student-turned-coach. I told her about my goals of being an English teacher and she gave me some much needed advice and affirmation. We talked until students started to show up ready to meet with their writing coaches. Before she left, she gave me a smile and a wave and some of my worries melted away; I was ready to be a coach. Cassie divided students and introduced each of them to their coach. My first coaching session had begun, and I asked my first question as a writing coach.

"What do you like about your paper?"

A few weeks later I attended a coaching session at Sentinel High School, which was the high school I graduated from in 2017. I was excited as I locked my car and began the short walk to the main office of the school. Any doubts about my efficacy as a coach had been dispelled during my first few sessions at Washington Middle School. I was ready to take on another coaching session as the last sessions left me feeling extremely positive and hopeful. Truly, I had come full circle, I was now a writing coach. That thought swirled around in my head as I made my way into the schools to start my next coaching adventure.

-Donovan J Rowe



Pictured: Coach Donovan ran into his previous English teacher-now Sentinel High School librarian, Kim Rott. She said, "It's wonderful to see him come back as a coach! It's inspiring to know someone I taught is going to become an English teacher."

East Coast Bicycle Tour—Manhattan Episode

Sometimes it's nice to meet the folks behind our "WCM team" signature. WCM board member, Rita Braun, took an amazing cycling adventure down the east coast during fall 2022. Here's a peek into her journey:

I once read that in order to survive a drive through Manhattan, one must be queen of her vehicle. So as my husband and I enter Queens en route to Manhattan on our vehicles of choice—bicycles—I anoint myself queen of my bike, then slip into my imaginary safety bubble. I tuck in behind my husband, inches away from his rear wheel, and commit to having a wild ride.

We road into Queens early morning on Indigenous Peoples Day. Surely many workers took the day off, but the streets bustled with vehicles of all kinds: not only motor cars, but an array of personal electric vehicles that included bicycles, skateboards, Segways, scooters, hoverboards, and unicycles.

Mostly driven by young people who likely never commuted by conventional bicycles, these e-travelers fled by with abandon and no bike etiquette. Not once did I hear the customary "Passing on your left!" But that is how New York e-travelers roll. I in my protective bubble remained steadfast in owning my space on the road while the Google Map lady dictated directions into my earbuds. It was the most alive I ever felt, and a highlight of our 2,400-mile bike tour down the east coast, from Brewer, Maine, to Key West, Florida.

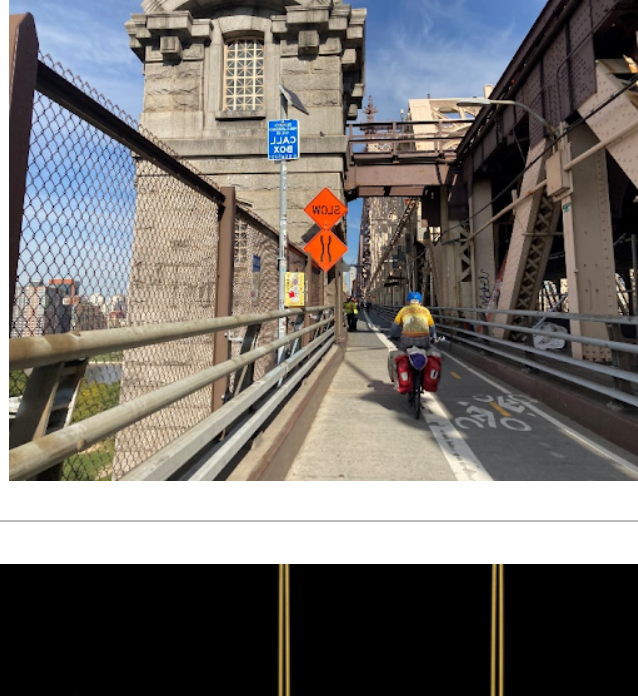
Our imminent destination: Penn Station at Madison Square Garden (in Manhattan), to catch a train south to Long Branch, New Jersey, the birthplace of Bruce Springsteen. His birth there didn't inspire this train ride, but the lack of a bicycle-friendly bridge across the Hudson Bay necessitated a ride on this train in order for us to get back on our bike tour south along the east coast.

So through Queens and Manhattan we flew. As we closed in on Penn Station, pedestrian and car traffic swelled, yet we arrived with just minutes to catch the next train to Long Branch. My husband dashed to the ticket counter. I took a breath of appreciation at the four national guard members keeping their eyes on the crowd of travelers.

Boarding the train required that we descend *two* escalators with our bikes, loaded with four fat panniers—escalators that seemed steeper and longer than memory served. My husband quickly descended the first escalator. I kind of shuffled toward it thinking, "I can't do this" while my husband yelled "Let's go!" from below. With much trepidation, I stepped onto the escalator and managed to keep both myself and my bike upright, likely with a look of terror, then grimaced and repeated all that for the second escalator down to the train platform.

Shortly after we got situated in a passenger compartment with our bikes—the train departed from the station, and we were off to Long Branch, the city that kicked off Bruce Springsteen's glory days, and one of the places on this tour that we celebrated ours.





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