

## Team Swift Special Report

### Friends of Team Swift travel to the Tour de France By Sharron and Ron Bates

July, 2004

Ron and I decided 25 years ago to spend our 25th Anniversary in Paris having dinner on the Champs and since it coordinated with the Tour we decided to start with the Prologue in Liege (which was on my birthday and a great way to spend a birthday).

So we made our reservations for Liege on the day the Tour route was announced. We arrived in Liege about 3 p.m. on June 30th so we would have time to see the area and find a good place to view the prologue. We had booked a wonderful hotel on the edge of Liege and had joked about whether there would be any teams staying at our hotel. When we pulled up we saw the US Postal bus and truck, Phonak, Illes Balares and Ag2R. Ron got out to check in while I stayed with the car (the parking lot was full so we were illegally parked.). He came out and said I needed to go in because they said our reservation had been cancelled. I went in, complete with my notebook full of confirmations, etc. And was told the reservation had been cancelled (although they could not say by whom or when) but not to worry since they had made arrangements with USPS to move us to some extra rooms they had booked at a hotel in downtown Liege. The woman from USPS came over made a call, gave the other hotel our name and said it was taken care of we should just go and tell them we were the people USPS had called about. We then paid the 1st hotel our arrange price and found out they were paying the USPS team the \$200/ night difference that the new hotel was costing and left. We can't be sure but it appeared USPS wanted to change hotels and we were "cancelled". When we arrived at the new hotel we saw immediately why USPS couldn't stay there. It had an underground garage and they could not get their bus or vehicles in it.



It turned out our hotel was the hotel being occupied by the UCI and TdF officials, so there were official cars everywhere so like many other people we took turns taking our pictures with the #1 car which was JeanMarie LeBlanc's car. We were also able to get pictures with team cars since they were all there at various times checking in and for official pre race meetings. Our window overlooked the 1 km kite and was a great place to hang the American Flag and our "Go Levi" sign we made when we realized what a great place we had ended up with.

Team Swift has been one of our favorite teams to watch. We have really enjoyed how well the team members have grown and conducted themselves at the various events where we have watched them. We enjoyed watching Steven Cozza at the World's in Canada in 2003 and hope to eventually watch one of the Swifts at the Tour.

Sharron & Ron Bates

\*Sharron and Ron volunteer much time to helping make so many events possible in the Sonoma County area. They are usually the folks signing everyone in at the registration table for each Tuesday Night Criterium.