

Note: *This article was originally written by Jim Ellis in November of 2020 and updated by Jim in February 2022.*

One of the least known features of the CVOTC is its recognition of its members who have made an impact on Trials. This resulted in forming the CVOTC Hall OF Fame many years ago. The first inductee was Pate Keen, a nationally ranked rider who enthusiastically helped many local organizers put on their earliest events. Pate competed somewhere nearly every weekend for decades and was still winning our Advanced Class in his seventies. Not flashy but very smooth and precise. In 1994, 1995, and 1996 he was the National Champion in the Senior 60 Class.

The second honoree was Jim Ellis. In February 1989, tired of driving long distances to STRA events, he decided we needed a local club. Two months later, with Don Wrenn's help, about six or seven riders met at a trials site on Poplar Tent Road near Concord, NC to create the club. The club name was chosen as well as the first officers. The entry fee would be \$5 and colored ribbons would take the place of trophies. Peer scoring was chosen to make organizing events easier. Jim offered his property and organized 50 events in the club's first 25 years. He also served as a Club officer several times.

In 2020, we revived the CVOTC Hall of Fame. Two members were nominated for their dedication and impact on Trials: Garry and Maddie Hoover.

Garry has always been a highly competitive athlete. At NC State he was an All American wrestler and an Atlantic Coast Conference Champion between 1969 and 1973. He liked to be different, played handball and took up surfing. Around 1977 or 78 he tried Trials on a borrowed TL125 Honda and entered an event organized by the Raleigh Plonkers shortly before that club expired.

Quite enthused, Garry drove to northern Pennsylvania in June 1978 to witness several World Championships and the best Americans in the combined National and World Championship Rounds organized by Jerry Young at Roaring Branch. By Raleigh Standards it was a different world. Three thousand spectators lined the banks of Cascade Run, a mountain stream gaining almost 800 feet of elevation as it tumbled over dozens of ledges and waterfalls.

Garry was so impressed by Mick Andrews, Martin Lampkin and Malcolm Rothwell of Great Britain, Yrjo Vesterinen of Finland, Uif Karlson of Sweden, Charles Coutard of France and Bernie Schreiber from California riding sections straight up Cascade Run that he promptly purchased his first trials bike, a 247 Montesa. Embarking on several decades of Nationals plus the full STRA schedule and other events, Garry was competing about 40 times a year.

Around 1985 he organized an STRA event held at his practice area along US 1 between Wake Forest and Raleigh. He was so serious about Trials that he studied local topographical maps looking for steep terrain, and then drove out to investigate prospective areas.

Garry's frequent competition continued after Maddie was born, with the whole family often travelling together. Thus she became aware of trials at an early age, seeing not only the men but also the best women riders such as Debbie Evans Leavitt of California, Kerry and Christie Wilhams from Canada and Louise Forsley of Massachusetts. Soon Maddie and the young friends she met at the Nationals, such as Madison Leigh and Kylee Sweeten, began competing.

Trials was only one of Maddie's many athletic interests. Gymnastics and coaching youngsters in that sport took a lot of her time. So did her High School lacrosse and extreme cheerleading teams.

In the CVOTC Maddie progressed rapidly with her intense focus and determination. At first it seemed like she was just another Intermediate with superior turning skills. Then suddenly she was showing all the Sportsmen the way, specifically at Axton in about 2013. At the awards presentation Rusty mentioned that he had not seen another rider improve so quickly.

Soon Maddie was competing in Nationals in addition to nearly all the STRA events. Marin Belair helped get the 15 year old invited to Europe to compete on 125s. Before she graduated from High School she started winning the Women's National Championship and rode on several Trials des Nations Teams representing the U.S. in Europe.

Completing High School, Maddie chose to train in Europe at a Norwegian Trials School and was essentially "adopted" by the Norwegian Women's National Team. As winter progressed, the entire team relocated to Spain.

Maddie started her World Championship experience in the Women's Trial 2 class travelling throughout Europe and to Japan. She also competed in various European National Championships. Sometimes Garry flew over to support her and be her minder. After the 2018 season Maddie, who finished second in Trial 2, was invited by the FIM to enter the Women's GP (Grand Prix) Class, limited to 15 riders. She could then compete directly with the top women including World Champion Emma Bristow of Britain.

To put all this in perspective, in the late 1970's and early 1980's Bernie Schreiber moved to Europe to train and contest the World Championship, which he won in 1979. Since then our CVOTC Expert, Maddie Hoover, has been the one and only American competing regularly in the World Championship! This is remarkable, historic, and a proud moment for all of us!

The Super Trial Series in Luckenbach, Texas plus the new California Trial Invitational sponsored by GasGas and KTM, and the 50+ year old Ute Cup, a spectacular 2-day at 7,000 to 12,000' elevation hosted by the Rocky Mountain Trials Association, are other major events on her schedule. Besides competing, Maddie has often used her talents to instruct students at the TTC's Trials Training Days. In July 2018 and December 2021 she held Trials Schools in Bunn.

With World Rounds, European Championships, U.S. Nationals, STRA events, and special events on her GasGas sponsorship calendar, it's a rare day when she makes a CVOTC event. In one of our January "Gate Trials" organized by David Webster, Maddie's skill, determination and fitness were obvious as she attempted to weave and hop an intricate path through every single gate in every section.

Sabrina, her mom, is a key supporter. Garry's determined support continues behind the scenes such as his numerous calls in 2020 to get Spain to allow her in during the pandemic. How fitting we recognize Garry and Maddie together for our Hall of Fame!