

# OH Bike Mini-Newsletter – January 2024

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### Message from the President



We are now into the winter riding season. Riding is still possible, but attention to the temperature is very important, and dressing properly is also important. Jackie bought us fleece lined pants so we can stay warm. It reminds me of years ago when Dorothy and Malcolm Hodges would send out the paper newsletter by mail. She would always have the temperature limits somewhere in the newsletter. The “No Go” suggested limits were (and are) 40° - 90°, but it was still up the ride leader's discretion so always check with the ride leader. In the past we have had ride leaders who would ride below 40° and were termed the “Polar Bear Club”.

Ron, Jackie, and I are going to continue with the Friday All Class IHRT Ride 20-miler but we do adjust the starting times according to the daily weather and temperature in order to be more comfortable. Of course, most of our riders are retired but if you have the day off come join us.

The OHBTC board members are in the planning stages of offering the Rural Legacy Ride in early summer and the Indian Head Century on Labor Day in September. We have had many requests to do the Indian Head Century again. Both the Rural Legacy and the Indian Head 100 are very popular rides. These two rides draw many participants and require lots of volunteers from our membership. So, plan to volunteer to make these rides a success. I have already spoken to the Women's Group at St. James Episcopal Church and they are looking forward to working the picnic after the Labor Day Century ride. The Sha'are Shalom Congregation is on board for the rest stop at the Thomas Stone Historical Site.

I'll see you on the road/trail,  
Rabbi Randy, President

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## Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

<b>Date/Time</b>	December 11, 2023
<b>Attendance</b>	Board Members: Randy Schoch, Walt Roscello, Joan Oppel, Jessica Hirschhorn, Dan Donahue, Steve Palincsar, Jim Hudnall Members: Sherwood Byers, Jackie Schoch, Jane Hudnall, Harry Kidd
<b>Absent</b>	Board members: Diane Harris, Ellen Goodwin, Leslie Tierstein

President Schoch called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

### Minutes – Randy Schoch

A motion to approve the minutes from the November board meeting was made and seconded. Minutes were approved.

### Treasurer’s Report – Walt Roscello

Total income for November is \$554 (membership dues and interest income combined) and the yearly total to date is \$23,517 (a large portion of which is from the Rural Legacy). November expenses total \$21 (all related to credit card processing and bank fees). Total expenses to date are \$18,247. Total funds in checking and CD accounts equal \$58,332.

### Social Media – Jessica Hirschhorn

Jessica reported that she continues weekly posting/promoting of upcoming Oxon Hill rides to multiple local riding groups through their email lists and Facebook pages. She also occasionally posts leaders’ ride reports on Facebook.

### Membership Report- Jim Hudnall

The club currently has 375 active members, including 3 new members who joined in the past month. For 2023 to date, 58 new members have joined.

### Ride Captain’s Report – Steve Palincsar

Steve is working on compiling an annual report of number of ride leaders in 2023 and the number of rides they led. The data is not readily available, but he is working on a methodology using the list of ride reports. **[Editor’s Note: See articles immediately below.]**

### Indian Head 100 Planning – Joan Oppel

Joan led a discussion of whether the club should consider putting on the Indian Head 100 in 2024 and if so, how to accomplish it. In 2019, the last year that the IH100 was held (before the pandemic), 85 *club* volunteers worked on the event, in addition to the outside groups (church and synagogue) who managed four (of the five\*, see below) rest stops and the post-event picnic.

The discussion centered on how to divide management/oversight of the many tasks required to put on the ride and how to recruit enough club volunteers to handle those tasks.

### Action Items from the discussion:

- Form a planning committee to address oversight/management/volunteer recruitment. Committee members are: Sherwood Byers, Dan Donahue, Diana Donahue, Ellen Goodwin, Diane Harris, Jessica Hirschhorn, Joan Oppel, Steve Palincsar, Walt Roscello, Randy Schoch, Jackie Schoch, Leslie Tierstein.
- Reserve the Smallwood park pavilion for September 2024, to make sure we have the option of using it – Joan will handle.

- Contact the outside groups to ascertain their interest/willingness to participate – Jackie will handle.
- Create task list for the IH100, distribute to Planning Committee and schedule planning meeting for early January – Joan will handle.
- Determine how to recruit volunteers for the event. Suggestions included personally contacting every volunteer from the 2019 list, putting a “recruitment” notice in the club newsletter, sending a request to all members to add their names to a volunteer list of potential tasks.

(Rest stops: Smallwood State Park, handled by club volunteers. All others listed here handled by outside volunteers with a few club volunteers on site. Holly Springs Baptist Church, Durham Church, St Ignatius Catholic Church, Thomas Stone National Historic Site. Picnic at Indian Head Green at end of ride.)

**Next Meeting:** January , 2024 at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. (One item for the agenda is discussion of the club’s Annual Meeting.)

Submitted by Jessica Hirschhorn and Joan Oppel

## Half-a-Road Captain’s Report – Ride Reports and Statistics

*By Steve Palincsar*



One element of a ride leader’s job is to write a ride report. These ride reports are not only entertaining, giving everyone a sense of how the ride went, often including photographs, but they are also the public record of our rides and form the source material for compiling annual statistics. It’s the Road Captain’s job to compile those statistics. Those stats form the basis for rewarding ride leaders who have led six or more rides per year, and at times they’ve been the basis for awarding Wow awards for number of rides led.

### Standard Headings

Back in 2013 (yes, 10 years ago) we adopted a standard format for ride reports including the following headings:

- Leader:**
- Members:**
- Guests:**
- Route:**
- Weather:**
- AMS:**
- Mechanicals/Mishaps:**
- Report:**

These headings help to structure the report and make sure key items of information aren’t inadvertently omitted. They work pretty well, and most of the time ride leaders use these headings, although sometimes they don’t. **But there’s hidden value in using these headings – the Leader: heading in particular – to help compiling annual statistics: they can let a program identify the ride leader.**

One way to compile annual statistics is to go through the ride reports one by one, manually taking notes as to which ride was led, when and by whom. But that takes the patience of a saint, certainly more than I possess. Paging through the ride reports on the web site ( <https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports> ) is fine for reading the most current reports, but painfully tedious for compiling the record.

## RSS Feed Readers

Of course, there are other ways of viewing ride reports . You could view the Ride Reports' RSS feed <https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/RSS> identified by the RSS icon



You can get a good overview of the ride name, author, and date that way. I use Thunderbird as the feed reader, but there are many good ones that perform more or less the same).

Thunderbird also lets you filter postings by sender, subject and body fields, and also search full text. You can't do any of those things viewing the ride reports on the club web site. However, you can't extract data for analysis.

## Extracting the data

So I've taken a different approach, using programming to extract the data from the XML file that actually makes up the RSS feed.

It is, after all, much more fun to write a program than to do a lot of actual work. That's how I whiled away the cold snap at the end of November. If you're curious and want to see the program, email me at [palincss@his.com](mailto:palincss@his.com).

Here's a snippet of the code. (It's formatted as an XML document.) I've highlighted in yellow the sections of the item that contain the information we're looking for.

```
<pubDate>Tue, 28 Nov 2023 11:45:17 GMT</pubDate>
<lastBuildDate>Tue, 28 Nov 2023 11:45:17 GMT</lastBuildDate>
<item>
  <pubDate>Sat, 25 Nov 2023 15:00:00 GMT</pubDate>
  <title>Tour de Accokeek/Bryans Rd 33 miles</title>
  <description>&lt;P&gt;&lt;STRONG&gt;Leader:&lt;/STRONG&gt;& &
  nbsp;& & nbsp; Ron Altemus&lt;BR&gt;
```

It's easy to extract the ride date from the item's <pubDate> field and the name of the ride from the <title> field. A link to the ride report itself is also available as a tagged field, and it's useful to have this if you need to check something manually (all too often, as it turns out).

Identifying the ride leader can be more challenging. Although the XML contains a tagged field <dc.creator> containing the name of the author of the post, sometimes it is empty or contains "Anonymous" as the author. If the ride leader's name is included in the text of the entire ride report, it is in the <description> field, surrounded by a lot of XML markup and other text. But if you use the **Leader:** heading when you write the ride report, a program can easily capture the ride leader's name even if it's not available in the dc.creator metadata.

Having extracted all the data , the next step is to write it out in a format that can be read by a spreadsheet. In this case, I chose comma-separated values (CSV), a simple text format, and imported it into a spreadsheet for further manipulation.

## The Spreadsheet

Here's some extracted data, from 2022, loaded into a spreadsheet.



	C	D	E	F
1	Dec 30 2022	Randall Schoch	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13039539">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13039539</a>	
2	Dec 29 2022	Joan Oppel	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13038599">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13038599</a>	
3	Dec 28 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13037640">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13037640</a>	
4	Dec 21 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13034170">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13034170</a>	
5	Dec 21 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13032800">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13032800</a>	
6	Dec 17 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028819">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028819</a>	
7	Dec 16 2022	Randall Schoch	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028760">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028760</a>	
8	Dec 14 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13025760">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13025760</a>	
9	Dec 13 2022	Joan Oppel	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13027056">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13027056</a>	
10	Dec 10 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13021120">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13021120</a>	
11	Dec 09 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020377">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020377</a>	
12	Dec 09 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020312">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020312</a>	
13	Dec 08 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13019004">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13019004</a>	
14	Dec 05 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13014612">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13014612</a>	
15	Dec 04 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13013022">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13013022</a>	
16	Dec 02 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13011478">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13011478</a>	
17	Nov 29 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13007241">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13007241</a>	

It's not a perfect process. If the program can't identify the ride leader, it's necessary to review the original ride report and enter the leader's name manually. However, since the URL of the original report is available, it's not hard to look at the ride report to find the leader's name.

Once all the names are entered and the spreadsheet is done, calculating how many rides each leader led is fairly straightforward. Filter the ride leader names to eliminate duplicates, writing the list of unique names to a new column. All spreadsheets should have commands for doing this. I use LibreOffice to end up with a list of unique ride leader names in one column and the count of rides led by that person in a second column.

Then use the **countif** function, applied to every cell in the Leader column, to count how many times each unique leader name appeared. That counts how many rides each leader led that year. (It's not as much fun to write Excel functions as it is to write a program. If you're curious about this, email me.)

From there, all that's left is to sort the list of names and number of rides led in descending order on the count column, and you're done.

	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Dec 30 2022	Randall Schoch	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13039539">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13039539</a>		Randall Schoch		22
2	Dec 29 2022	Joan Oppel	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13038599">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13038599</a>		Joan Oppel		13
3	Dec 28 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13037640">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13037640</a>		Ron Altemus		46
4	Dec 21 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13034170">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13034170</a>		Stephen Palincsar		73
5	Dec 21 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13032800">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13032800</a>		Sherwood		4
6	Dec 17 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028819">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028819</a>		Janell Saunders		14
7	Dec 16 2022	Randall Schoch	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028760">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13028760</a>		Jessica Hirschhorn		9
8	Dec 14 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13025760">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13025760</a>		Harry Kidd		5
9	Dec 13 2022	Joan Oppel	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13027056">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13027056</a>		Tim Murphy		3
10	Dec 10 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13021120">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13021120</a>		Ellen Goodwin		2
11	Dec 09 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020377">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020377</a>		Walt Roscello		2
12	Dec 09 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020312">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13020312</a>		Diane Harris		1
13	Dec 08 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13019004">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13019004</a>		Rita Zeidner		2
14	Dec 05 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13014612">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13014612</a>				
15	Dec 04 2022	Stephen Palincsar	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13013022">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13013022</a>				
16	Dec 02 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13011478">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13011478</a>				
17	Nov 29 2022	Ron Altemus	<a href="https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13007241">https://ohbike1.wildapricot.org/reports/13007241</a>				

Well, almost done. What if the ride leaders typed in their names differently for some ride reports? It's clear to a human that "Randy Schoch" is the same person as "Randall Schoch". But to a computer these

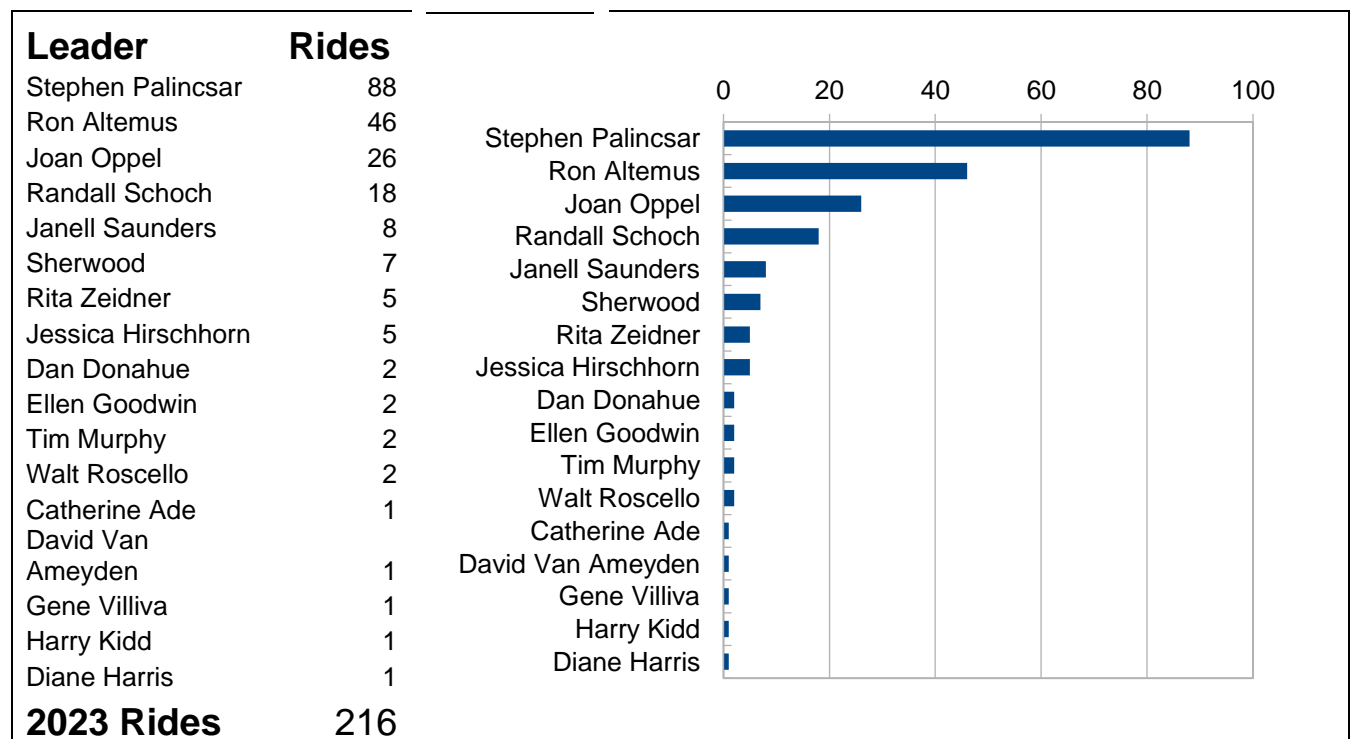
names are different, so a little tweaking may be required. Even though the process is imperfect and requires some massaging at a couple of points along the way, this approach is a thousand times better, at least for me, than doing it manually.

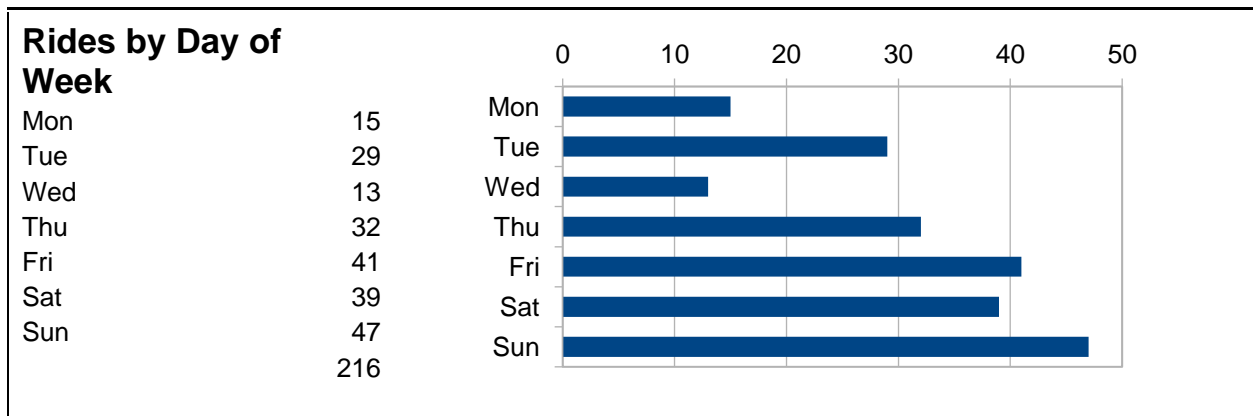
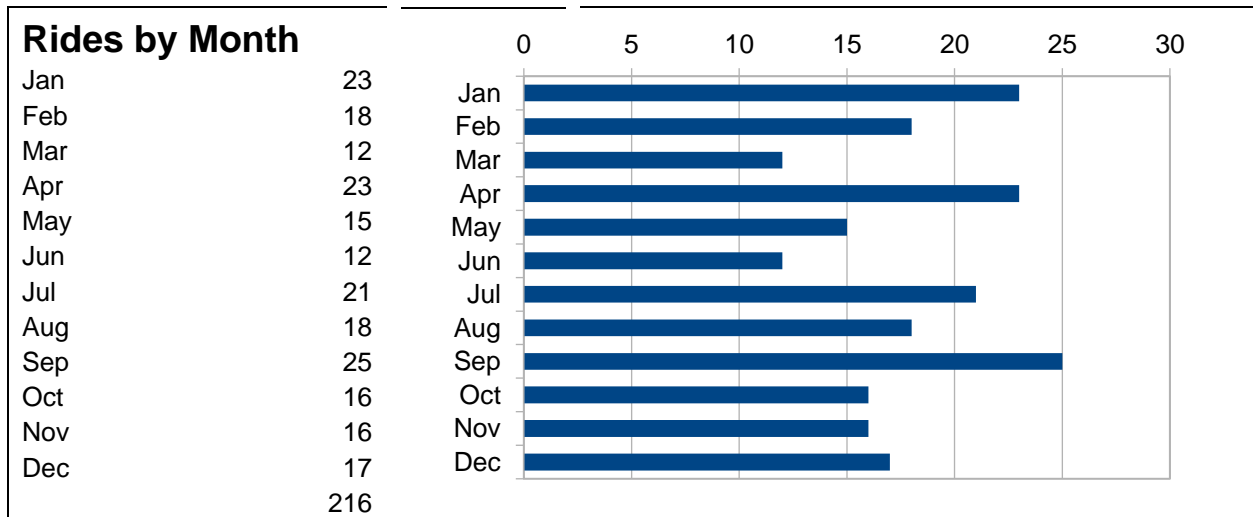
I've found some unanticipated benefits as well. The entire ride report XML file goes back to 2012, although the tagging that lets the program capture ride leaders was only implemented the following year. It only takes a second to extract the data for any given year. That makes it possible to create spreadsheets for each year back to 2012.

It's easy to see how many rides were led each year and see who the leaders were, and to go back and review individual ride reports. It has made for an interesting trip down Memory Lane for me, just fooling around learning how to create it and testing it.

## 2023 Rides – Summary

*Compiled by Steve Palincsar*





## History Matters Rides -2024 St. Mary’s County Edition

The following “History Matters Rides” have tentatively been scheduled for the 2024 riding season. Ride with GPS routes will be available.

### May 19: Strawberry Festival -- 25mi. C pace

The rest stop will be at the Strawberry Festival at Christ Church, Chaptico. Christ Church Chaptico was occupied by the British during the War of 1812. The British desecrated the church by stabling their horses inside the building. Some parish members also have family connections to Francis Scott Key, author of the Star Spangled Banner. Other OHBTC’ers are welcome to lead other rides at this event, to coincide with the Chaptico Church rest stop.

### June 22: Juneteenth - 32 mi. C pace

Riders depart from Callaway at the Weis shopping center. Highlights include a stop at the Drayden African-American schoolhouse. A rest stop will occur at the Piney Point Lighthouse museum. The return loop will travel to St. George Island, where the British invasion was fended off during the War of 1812. Longer rides (adding 10-12 miles) are available if someone wants to lead from Leonardtown Middle School.

### August 17: National Lighthouse Celebration—22 mi. C pace

Riders depart from Callaway at the Weis shopping center. There is an option to go longer and faster by starting at the Leonardtown Middle School or Leonardtown Library. This ride will go to the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum. Riders can tour the lighthouse and museum building.

## September or October (TBD: last Sunday in Sept. or 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Oct): Blessing of the Fleet

The location for 2024 is also to be determined. The ride coordinator will check with the county Department of Tourism to find out, and more info will be provided once the details about this ride are known.

## November 11: MD Veterans Facility Ride— length TBD, approximately 40 mi.

Riders will have some interaction with veterans at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, acknowledging their contributions to our country's security. After that, we'll have a ride that goes down the Three Notch Trail and takes in some of the more scenic back roads of St. Mary's county. before circling back to the start at the Northern Senior Activity Center.