

# OH Bike Mini-Newsletter – August 2023

## CONTENTS

Message from the President

Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board June Meeting Minutes

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

2023 Watermelon Ride

Empire State Hudson Valley Tour

### Message from the President



[ohbike.org](http://ohbike.org)

There have been many club rides this past month now that the weather has become warm and comfortable. But now we are experiencing really hot temperatures which caused Ron A to change the Friday start time for the weekly IHTR Ride to 9:30am to try to beat the heat a little. There have also been rainy days and unhealthy air alert days from the wild fire smoke drifting down from Canada which caused us to cancel a few of our scheduled rides.

We were finally able to ride our “Annual Bob’s Birthday Watermelon Ride” this past Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>. A little history: Bob McMaster was an old-time member of our club. He was very active in leading “C” rides and in scouting and mapping many of the rides we still use today. He was also very generous with his time and skills to fix and repair members’ bicycles. Bob celebrated his birthday every year with a ride the first Sunday after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July (weather permitting or shortly thereafter) and treated all who rode with him to a watermelon feast. Bob died (of melanoma) in 1999 at the age of 83. One of Bob’s admonitions was “use sun screen and wear a hat (or helmet).” We had over two dozen riders and the weather was threatening at the ride start. I led the IHTR portion with five riders and we got wet on the return leg from the White Plains rest stop. I could not have gotten wetter had I gotten under a shower with my clothes on but the watermelon was still delicious at the end.

Stay “tuned” we have many great plans for the future and see you on the trail or road.

Rabbi Randy, President

---

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

<b>Date/Time</b>	June 19, 2023 7:00 PM
<b>Attendance</b>	Board members present: Randy Schoch, Walt Roscello, Diane Harris, Joan Oppel, Steve Palincsar, Dan Donahue, Jim Hudnall. Members present: Wally Huie, Sherwood Byers, Jane Hudnall
<b>Absent</b>	Board members absent: Ellen Goodwin

President Schoch called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

### **Approval of Minutes**

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

### **Treasurer's Report – Walt Roscello**

Walt discussed various components of this month's treasurer's report: Rural Legacy registration income and its associated expenses, including credit card processing fees, donations, reimbursement for rest stop supplies, picnic, porta-potty invoice. We also took in \$805 in sales of Oxon Hill jerseys.

Ending checking account balance for May 31=\$15, 959.13 Total funds available=\$63,000

For the Rural Legacy:

444 people registered, and 336 checked in, approximately 76%. That is similar to historic attrition for day of ride.

Total paid registration=\$17,180

Total expenses=\$12,566

A motion was made and approved to make the following donations from the Rural Legacy proceeds, as has been done in the past.

- Patuxent River Park: \$2,000
- Merkle Wildlife Center: \$1,000
- Town of Eagle Harbor to support Eagle Harbor Day: \$750

Joan and Jessica expressed special thanks to Jim and Jane Hudnall, who freely offered time for phone calls, Zooms, instructional classes, and a trove of corporate knowledge, memory, and advice.

### **Membership Report – Jim Hudnall**

During May, 14 members lapsed, and the club gained 8 new members.

**Watermelon Ride update** – The ride will take place on July 9. Steve will set up the ride listing on the website and confirm the routes. Diane will call the Accokeek Fire House.

These are the volunteers for leading various class rides:

AB: Diane

B: Walt

C: Dan Donahue

CC long: Joan

Short CC: Steve will recruit a leader.

Watermelon: Jackie/Randy

Social Media and email advertising: Jessica

**Discussion: Old website still active and attracting new members** - The old website at “ohbike.org” appears first in web searches for Oxon Hill bike club. That website home page makes it appear that the club has no active rides and events. This information initiated a discussion about how to increase membership, ride participation and ride leaders and that topic should be an agenda item at a future meeting.

As one helpful item, Jessica will increase posting of rides and ride reports on Facebook and Instagram.

**Advocacy Report – Diane Harris and Walt Roscello** - Walt announced that he is relinquishing the title of Advocacy Chair, and, with Diane’s prior consent, he is nominating her to become Advocacy Chair. Diane accepted and the Board approved her new role (in addition to her position as member-at-large).

Advocacy items discussed:

- A new Chesapeake Bay Bridge crossing is under discussion and advocates are meeting to support adding a bike/pedestrian path to any new span.
- An employee of Proteus Bike Shop is advocating for a bike trail along Greenbelt Road.
- The WABA (Washington Area Bicyclist Association) website as an ACT link which describes a number of items in the planning stages in the metro area.

**Social Media Update – Jessica Hirschhorn** - Jessica has been actively maintaining the club’s presence on social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), keeping the club visible on other clubs’ Facebook pages as well as other sites. She will add Thursday posts highlighting club rides/events for the coming week.

The meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

**York PA overnight trip** – Sherwood Byers reported on the successful June trip with sixteen members from Hunt Valley Maryland to York Pennsylvania. He will send a report to Leslie for the next newsletter.

**Next Meeting:** July- 12, 2023, 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

---

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

<b>Date/Time</b>	July 17, 2023 7:00 PM
<b>Attendance</b>	Board members present: Joan Oppel, Jim Hudnall, Randy Schoch, Diane Harris, Walt Roscello, Jessica Hirschhorn, Ellen Goodwin, Steve Palincsar, Dan Donahue, Leslie Tierstein
	Members: Jane Hudnall, Diana Donahue, Sherwood Byers, Catherine Ade, Wally Huie, Jackie Schoch
<b>Absent</b>	Board members absent: None

President Schoch called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

### Approval of Minutes

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

### Treasurer’s Report – Walt Roscello

Walt presented the Treasurer’s report showing the club’s finances are healthy. Year to date income has exceeded expenses. The monthly ending balance of the checking account is approximately \$15,000 with the club’s total funds exceeding \$62,000.

## **Membership Report – Jim Hudnall**

Jim reported that the club added seven new members in the last month, with total membership around 400 members.

**Advocacy Report – Diane Harris** – Diane noted that the Capital Trails Coalition reported that a regional partnership of entities has received \$25 million Federal grant for a massive investment in local trail network. Ron Altemus noted that funding of \$23 million been provided from the Federal Infrastructure legislation for a shared use trail on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

**Social Media Update – Jessica Hirschhorn** - Jessica reported that she continues to post Oxon Hill ride news frequently on both Instagram and Facebook.

**Club Growth** – Dan Donahue raised the issue that the board discussed at the previous meeting of how to grow the club and get new ride leaders. The board discussed and decided that there should be a dedicated meeting for this topic.

## **Eagle Harbor Day— Walt Roscello**

Walt mentioned that the club has had an invitation to join Eagle Harbor Day on August 5<sup>th</sup>. There is a parade and celebration of the town on that day, and the board discussed planning a club ride to intersect with the event.

## **Road Captain Report – Steve Palincsar**

Steve raised the question of whether to have an all class ride out of Friendship Farm Park in August and a date of August 12 was chosen. Steve will proceed with planning for the ride.

The Watermelon All-Class Ride, postponed for weather conditions, took place on July 16, and was again affected by the weather. Prediction for rain diminished the rider turnout; 82 were registered and only 24 arrived at the start. About two-thirds of the riders got caught in the rain, with many taking shelter on the porch at Goose Bay Marina, where the owner was very welcoming. And the board noted special thanks to Jackie Schoch and Sonya Newman, who waited at the Indian Head pavilion for all riders to return and to serve them watermelon, fruit salad and pastries.

Jackie recounted the history of the ride. Bob McMasters was a ride leader with the club, and he would have a ride after July 4<sup>th</sup> for his birthday. He always provided watermelon at the end of the ride. Jackie mentioned that Bob lived until 83 and would be 107 if he were with us today. Randy noted the history of the ride should be publicized – as it was in the ride posting and which will be repeated in the newsletter article.

The board went on to discuss donations that the club has made in the past as a thank you for riders' use of various facilities such as rest stops (water, bathrooms specifically). The donations have been to area businesses, parks, fire departments, even a church in order to generate good will between the club and the community. For example, the owner of the Nanjemoy Store has made clear that she doesn't want a donation to the store, but last year accepted our offer to make a donation to the Volunteer Fire Department in Nanjemoy in her name. Joan noted that the owner of the Goose Bay Marina asked that we not give a donation, but instead give Goose Bay a good review on Google reviews.

Steve agreed to make a list of the parks that the club uses a lot, and he will try to identify contact persons at the parks to determine if some sort of donation would be possible. It was noted that this year (and in all past years) Rural Legacy proceeds were donated to Patuxent River Park and Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Empire State Trail overnight trip** – Sherwood Byers reported that even though there were adverse weather conditions at times for this eight-day excursion, the group was cohesive and everyone enjoyed the trip.

**Next Meeting:** August 14, 2023, 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

---

## 2023 Watermelon Ride

The Watermelon Ride is in memory of Bob McMaster, a club member who passed away years ago (1999). For his birthday, he would lead a ride with mileage corresponding to his age, until the numbers got to where kilometers were more doable. After the ride Bob would provide ice cold watermelon for the riders. Since his passing, on the first weekend after July 4th, the club hosts a Watermelon Ride in memory of Bob.

The original date the ride was scheduled (July 9), rain was predicted as almost certain (70-80%), so the ride was postponed one week (and we should note that it did not rain at all on the scheduled day).

### Watermelon Ride Class A/B 49

*By Diane Harris*

**Leaders:** Diane Harris and Steve Perakis

This rescheduled day started out overcast but after ~ 1 1/2 hours the rain came. Lots of rain. Steve and I opted not to go to Goose Bay and instead took a shortcut back to the start -- but not before getting completely soaked, pelted by raindrops, and stinging eyes. Along the way, we came across a tree that had fallen across both traffic lanes and shoulders but fortunately there was enough room on the shoulder of the opposite lane for us to get around it.



In spite of the rain, for some reason, riding on the wet pavement was so smooth and fast, it really felt good! Because Steve had ridden to the start from his home, he opted to skip the watermelon and headed directly back. I got back to the Indian Head Green without incident and totally enjoyed the cold watermelon waiting for me at the end!

### Watermelon Ride Class C/CC

*By Dan Donahue*

**Leaders:** Dan Donahue, Randy Schoch (trail ride)

**Members:** Stephen Pipkin, Diana Donahue, Noreen Dahl, Debbie Lane

**Mechanicals:** None

**Weather:** Steamy & overcast

The **Bob's** Watermelon ride 25 mile C/CC route had 15 members sign up prior to the event. Four showed up for the ride, but two switched to Randy's IHRT ride before departure. The "mutineers," Debbie and Noreen, started a subtle dynamic that resulted in the remainder of the riders jumping ship to Randy's trail ride before we reached the Rt. 225 crossing. So, technically, the C/CC ride distance was about 1 1/4 mi. Could this ride distance have set the record for the shortest ride in the 52-year history of OHBTC? Note: I chose to skip taking the stance of Capt. Bligh. Instead of hounding the mutineers, I joined the trail ride.

Unlike the other Watermelon rides on Sunday, the abbreviated C/CC ride did not get any rain. Although such a short ride didn't allow much social interaction, it turned out later that Diana, Debbie, Noreen and Stephen had some very interesting cycling stories. Noreen and Debbie inspired me to consider leading a multi-day ride on the GAP for 20 or so club members during the fall foliage season.

Wildlife seen on the trail included a black snake, turtle, four deer and the usual array of birds and squirrels. Oops, the majority of conversations and wildlife sightings occurred during Randy's ride, so officially I can't claim them in my ride report.

## **Wet Watermelon Ride 40 & 49 Mile Route - Yes, It Happened** *By Joan Oppel*

**Leaders:** Joan Oppel, Ellen Goodwin

**Members:** Linda Blackman, Marc Blackman, Holly Carr, Ken Fugate, Paul Hamilton, Kristen Hull, Victoria Hutter, Rob Klein, Steve Palincsar, Steve Perakis, Janet Shipko, Rita Zeidner, Harold Datz, Leslie Tierstein

*We know that the 40/49 group riders were checked in and started with the group but because it rained, hard at times, starting about 10:00, splits occurred.*

**Route:** There were three different routes and a trail ride.

**Weather:** Very cloudy at start, humid, but according to the weather report we had a chance of doing the ride without rain (30% rain chance). Sprinkles started when riders were somewhere along Poorhouse or Route 6, about 15-16 miles in.

**Mechanicals/Mishaps:** Two flat tires on Bumpy Oak - there was glass on the Indian Head Trail and two riders acquired some. Not raining yet, thankfully. One rider had eye issues and got a ride back from a good Samaritan just after leaving Goose Bay. [Editor's Note: See [story below](#).]

82 riders registered - 24 arrived at the start. The 40- and 49-mile route riders started together. The two flats at mile 6.5 caused a split in the groups, with riders now spread out quite a bit.

Two A/B class riders skipped Goose Bay due to the rain as well as two more from the CC 40 group. It poured hard for 7 or 8 miles on some of the group. A crew of 13 eventually gathered on the Goose Bay porch - with bikes out of the rain and with the company of the marina owner. Most of us were soaked by the time we arrived. The Goose Bay marina owner kindly allowed us to use his personal bathroom inside the store, rather than sending us out into the pouring rain to the regular bathrooms.

After about 45 minutes, the rain became just a steady drip, and 11 riders took off into it. Rain continued for another 10 miles until just becoming mist and then stopping completely. Since it was "just misting" we stopped for a picture at the bike graveyard on Bicknell Rd.



About 13 of us completed the 40 mile route, wet and very happy we got to ride today. And - at the end, Jackie Schoch had waited on the porch of the pavilion with - sliced watermelon!! Sonya Newman was there as well with pastries and fruit salad. What a great unexpected treat for them to hang out so long to wait for us.



Thank you to all who rode and served watermelon!

### Thank you from Rita and Harold

From: Rita Zeidner

To: Sonja Newman, Jackie Schoch

Dear Sonja and Jackie –

Thank you so much for hanging out and cheering us at our finish. We never expected anyone to be there and thought we'd have to wait until we got home to have our watermelon. We were delighted to see you at the parking lot. We are often stragglers and in this instance we were way behind the group because we opted to wait out the rain at the rest stop. But we were further delayed when we stopped to help some riders dealing with a medical emergency. In



Sonya Newman, Randy Schoch, Jackie Schoch

the end, everything worked out. A kind driver stopped to offer assistance and ended up driving the temporarily disabled rider back to Indian Head. The rider's wife, who didn't know the area, rode her bike back with us. Seeing you there with watermelon (and even some cake) was a nice ending to our day and a reminder that it takes a village to run a successful bike club.

Thanks again!

Rita Zeidner and Harold Datz

---

## Empire State Hudson Valley Tour

*By Sherwood Byers, Sr.*

Linda Bankerd, Robin Garnett, Janell Saunders, Gene Villiva, Leslie Tierstein, and Ron Altemus joined me, Sherwood Byers (ride leader, second from right) on this tour.



**Day 1: Dobbs Ferry to Brewster.** All met and were ready and eager to get started after the group photo at the staging point in Dobbs Ferry. It was a good ride although some hiccups occurred with the weather. After lunch, 22 miles into the ride, there were torrential downpours with 2 to 4 feet of flooding in an underpass just as it passed through Carmel (washed out). There we had to walk our loaded bikes through a 100' tunnel. (Except Janell. She rode her bike through.) One rider took a ride to the hotel after lunch, and another took an Uber before the flood to the hotel. Otherwise the trail is excellent. Part of trail near the end was closed, and it appears to have been closed for quite a while. We were lucky enough to be able to reroute and continue to the hotel. No mishaps or mechanicals were reported today.

**Day 2 Brewster to New Paltz.** Day 2 of this tour, like yesterday, had its own version of floods and wash outs. One section of the Dutchess County Trail washed out was in the middle of no man's land with no bypass route. We took a chance and walked on the railroad tracks. After getting around the washed out section, we ran into another obstacle (fallen tree) where we pulled out branches and passed the bikes through to the other side. There were many snakes on the trail and in the railroad tracks. All of the



impediments that we encountered did not stop us from continuing our ride over the "Walkway Over The Hudson Bridge", one of the highlights of the tour.



**Day 3 New Paltz to Hudson.** The weather was much improved over the last two days of riding. Temperatures were in the 90's with no rain. After lunch two riders opted to SAG to the hotel due to the heat. The Empire Trail routes you through Bard College and up a very intense climb, then on to Tivoli for lunch. Between Tivoli and Hudson there was a lot of riding on roads. The temperature was rising and beginning to wear on us. We stopped and rested on the steps of a church. Then a welcome sight was in our view, Stewart's, the local everything store. This is where another long climb met us before we got to Hudson. After arriving at the hotel we took showers before going to Camilla's for dinner. No mishaps or mechanicals reported today. One rider left the tour.

**Day 4 Hudson to Troy.** Today, Ron and I edited the return route to insert the detour around the washed out trail section that we passed through on the way to New Paltz.

**Day 5 Layover Day.** Another rider who did the first four days to Troy left the tour.

**Day 6 Troy to Hudson.** BY FAR Day 6 was the best day of riding/ touring to date. No storms, no rain, no floods, no obstacles, lots of sun. We started out at 7 AM to work with the weather/rain gods and everything just fell into place. After a short rest stop at Dunkin Donuts we continued to Jimmy's Lakeside Cafe for a short hello, thank you, and photo op with the owner (Shea). Then we continued to Bagel Time for lunch. With only 16 miles left, short stops were taken for photos. It was a wonderful ride and the kind of day we all have been waiting for.

**Day 7 Hudson to New Paltz.** Day 7 had its challenges. This portion of the route between Hudson and New Paltz, which is mainly on roads, is the most difficult section to ride. There were many, many long climbs starting after the first mile from the hotel. The respite at Stewart's, which is a family-owned and operated chain of convenience stores in New York and Vermont known for its ice cream, after the long climb into Kingston was a welcome relief. There were road closures due to fallen trees, which did not affect us as we were able to get through. There were threats of storms later in the day which never appeared. The sun was out, and the heat was turned up to high. Once we were able to return to the trail there was lots of shade. The temperature dropped about 10 degrees and when we rode along the

section of caves it was like going into a refrigerator -- the temperature was in the 50's. Yes, the last road leading to the hotel there was a long climb. On another note, Maryland could learn a bit about bridge building from New York. The Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge, which is almost 2 miles long and only 2 lanes wide, had 2 bike lanes and a pedestrian walkway. The bridge carries a lot of vehicular traffic which feeds the 4-lane route 199 in both directions.

**Day 8 New Paltz to Brewster.** Another "washout"! Rain and storms were predicted all day along with tornado warnings throughout Dutchess County (Stormville, NY), where all of the previous washouts had occurred. This is where we would be riding, so with safety in mind, and group brainstorming for the correct decision, this day of riding was cancelled. Suddenly, we were all scrambling to weave through the net of bad weather conditions and the necessity to stay on schedule.

No vehicle rentals were available. Thank you to Ron Altemus and Susan for ferrying the group to the next staging point.

**Day 9 Brewster to Dobbs Ferry.** Today's ride, the last day of the Empire State Hudson Valley Tour, could not have ended on a better day. No rain, no storms, no floods, no tornado warnings. Plenty of sun, heat and humidity. Just a good day to ride.

Before leaving the hotel to start the ride we took a final group photo. Then about 2 minutes after leaving the hotel parking lot and on the route, some of the riders witnessed a car crash right in front of their eyes. It happened in the opposite direction, and we continued on.

The 3-mile ride to the trail was hilly. Once on the trail, now off-road, all settled into their personal ride pace. Nothing eventful to see. The wildest animal to see were rabbits. We stopped about 12 miles into the ride to regroup and rest a minute. Then we continued to the Trailside Cafe for lunch. After lunch, the ride pace was casual and pleasant. There was a fire fighters memorial set up on the trail which I photographed. A cairn about a foot in height was started at the memorial and I placed another stone on it to keep it going.

There were no injuries, mishaps, or mechanicals reported to me during this adventurous tour. You can't control the weather. All in all, the Empire State Trail is very nice and well maintained.

I would especially like to thank Ron and Susan Altemus, Gene and Dani Villiva for their support as SAG providers to the group and Dani's delicious homemade cookies and zucchini bread.

I also thank all of the riders who joined me on this touring adventure.

**Editor's Note:** More photos are available in Sherwood's [ride report](#).