

OH Bike Mini-Newsletter – October 2023

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Message from the President



ohbike.org

We are now into the fall season with a little bit cooler temps which are much more encouraging for a bike ride. Thus our bike ride calendar is filling up with a variety of rides. If you can, take advantage of the great weather to get out for a ride.

Jackie and I took a two week vacation at the end of August and into September. This was our first real vacation since Covid hit. We flew to Washington State to meet up with my sister and her hubby. Then the four of us went and spent some time in Victoria, Canada. I had never been to Victoria so I wasn't aware that it is

on an island and you have to get there on a boat or ferry. I was surprised by the many cars on the island because it is an island and you can't drive very far. But many, many people ride bicycles of all kinds. There were sport bikes, neighborhood bikes, utility bikes, and cobbled together bikes of all styles. Another thing that surprised me about Victoria, which is a fairly large city, is that there are only two drug stores with limited hours. Thankfully, we didn't have any need for a drug store.

The High Holy days are occurring now (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) which I enjoy but they do cut into my ability to go bike riding on our club rides. Ron A, Jackie, and I are continuing with the Friday IHRT rides, and we have moved the start time back to 10am since the summer heat is pretty much over.

At its September meeting, the OHBTC board discussed the direction of our club. We focused on 1) membership, 2) monthly rides, and 3) the need for ride leaders. It was a good meeting with lots of input as to the direction of our efforts. We will welcome any of your (the members) input.

Be well and see you on the trail or road. Rabbi Randy

Half-a-Road Captain's Report

By Steve Palincsar



On Saturday September 30 we held the 2023 Charles & St Mary's Self-Supported Century, featuring routes of 100, 75, 63, and 50 miles. 25 people registered, 13 members and 12 non-members. On the day of the event 19 riders were checked in, and we know at least two rode but didn't registered, 13 of whom were members with 8 non-members. Ride reports can be found [here](#) for the unofficial 50 mile group and [here](#) for the unofficial 75 mile group.

This wasn't the first time Oxon Hill has had a self-supported century that started in Oak Ridge Park and rode through the Amish area in Charles County and into St Mary's County.

I well remember the one we did in 2013. It was a balmy, beautiful sunny day. A group of us were riding together. As we went south on Sandgates Rd, crossed the wooden bridge and passed the flood area sign, the road was flooded. We removed our socks and shoes and carried our bikes, wading through calf-high water of the Patuxent River for over 25 yards. We all remember the ride as a triathlon featuring cycling, wading, and power lifting.

We could do that route today, except for the end: traffic on Olivers Shop Road is even worse today than it was ten years ago, and now all rides from Oak Ridge Park avoid riding on Olivers Shop Road.

I found the cue sheet for that 2013 ride. The directions were listed on one sheet of paper, with boxed instructions such as "for 16 mile shortcut go to Option B" with Options A, B, C, and D listed on the back. Each option gave a set of directions and ended with something like *Continue cues at mi 84.7*.

Once you took a shortcut option, the mileage on your bicycle computer no longer agreed with the cue sheet (assuming it ever did to begin with) and when you rejoined the main route every turn from that point on required mental arithmetic to calculate the mileage, both the amount saved by the shortcut and the accumulating error. It's a wonder we ever managed to finish a ride without getting lost.

Today GPS devices and phone-based GPS apps are nearly universal, and the main purpose of a cue sheet is to provide an overview of the turns ahead and to act as a sanity check on your GPS device. Garmin's, for example, are notorious for not calling out a road that goes off tangentially while the main route makes a turn (for example, Martin Rd going straight while North Keys makes a left turn, or Pisgah Marbury going straight ahead while Bicknell turns right) and get confused by routes that loop back on themselves.

Instead of trying to cram routes for four different distances onto one cue sheet, today we make four different GPS routes, each with its own cue sheet. If you decide mid-route to change, your GPS device can find your location mid-route and continue the cues from there.

The annual Club Century has had a special place in the calendar since bicycles were first invented. When I first started riding with a bicycle club in 1972 the League of American Wheelmen (as the L.A.B. was then called, a revival of the national cyclists' organization that was first formed in the 19th century) encouraged member cycling clubs to host a century in September. The story was told then that shortly after bicycles – penny farthings or high-wheelers – were introduced, bicycle clubs were formed to hold rides, and at the end of their first year they held 100 mile rides as the climax of the riding season.



San Francisco Bicycle Club on a ride (California Historical Society photograph)

Bicycle clubs have changed since the 19th century, just as the bikes we ride and the clothing we wear have changed. It's amazing they were able to do 100 mile rides back then, considering the bikes they were riding, the clothes they were wearing, and the unpaved roads they were riding on. (Cyclists were at the forefront of the [Good Roads Movement](#) that was largely responsible for the improvement of the nation's roadways in the 19th century).

Putting on a fully supported century takes a lot of resources: people to staff rest stops; providing food, water and sanitary facilities; route marking; SAG services; sometimes even ride marshals to ride along with inexperienced riders to provide advice, encouragement, and assistance as required.

There are many areas that are support deserts with no stores, no sources of water, and no restroom facilities, where riders can't fend for themselves and absolutely need supported rest stops. But that's not the case in St Mary's and southern Charles counties. Stores and public parks including the Three Notch Trail are available and closely enough spaced, and the roads that connect those resources are scenic and delightful to ride.

And that's a good way to sum up this year's Charles & St Mary's Self-Supported Century: scenic roads that were a delight to ride.

Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time	Monday, September 18, 2023, 7:00 PM
Report	The September Meeting Minutes will be published in the next newsletter.