Congratulations to Jackie and Randy Schoch

The Dorothy Hodges Ride Leader Award was presented to Randy and Jackie Schoch at the Annual meeting on February 22. Randy and Jackie have been members of the club for 47 years and have led rides almost every year since they joined. During the past year, they led and reported on 21 rides – one every other week on the Indian Head Rail Trail – even during the winter months. The descriptions they post on the ride schedule let those who plan to come know what to expect. They make everyone feel welcome. Their trail rides allow beginning cyclists to learn from more experienced cyclists and become more comfortable riding with a group. They exemplify the best qualities of OHBTC ride leaders.

OHBTC Supported Rides

OHBTC members sponsor two supported rides each year – the Patuxent River Rural Legacy Ride on June 13 and the Indian Head 100 on Labor Day, September 7. Your help is needed to make these events successful. Mark your calendar and help mark the route, check in riders, serve food at rest stops, drive SAG vehicles or help at the end-of-the-ride picnic. Funds from these events benefit nonprofits in the area and local, state and national bicycle advocacy organizations.

March Board Meeting

Sunday, March 8, 4:00 pm

Members are always welcome to attend board meetings and share their ideas for making the club better. Come help plan events for the club. Join us at Grace Lutheran Church, 10928 Indian Head Hwy. Fort Washington, MD 20744.

Featured in this Issue

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Welcome, New Members
Tracie Cebrzenski  White Plains MD
Alexa Schriempf  Alexandria VA  C, CC

Sign Up for These Four Rides in Southern Maryland

End Hunger in Calvert County Ride
Saturday, April 25
16, 35, 48 or 63 miles from the Chesapeake Church, 6201 Solomons Island Road in Huntingtown, MD. For more information, go to https://endhungercalvert.org/bike.

SMECO 75 Bike Ride
Saturday, June 6
29, 47 or 75 miles from the SMECO headquarters on Oliver Shop Road, Hughesville, MD. More information at https://www.smeco.coop/community/smeco75

Patuxent River Rural Legacy Metric
Saturday, June 13
22, 35, 44 or 64 miles from the picnic pavilion in Patuxent River Park’s Jug Bay Natural Area. This is OHBTC’s 20th annual ride through Prince George’s County’s Patuxent River Rural Legacy Area. Information and registration at https://ohbike.memberlodge.org/event-3710184.

Indian Head 100
Labor Day, Monday, September 7
17, 24, 40, 56, 70 or 100 miles from the Indian Head Village Green. Registration at https://ohbike.memberlodge.org/event-3723030.

Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Board of Directors
President  Don Gardner  DonaroGardner@gmail.com
Vice Pres.  Janell Saunders  nell7285@gmail.com
Secretary  Jane Hudnall  janehudnall@gmail.com
Treasurer  Ron Altemus  surlykm29er@yahoo.com
Road Captain  Barbara Haney  haneybcl@verizon.net
Member-at-Large  Alan Kurzweil  adkurzweil@comcast.net
Member-at-Large  George Martin  georgeoh46@yahoo.com
Member-at-Large  Joan Oppel  oppeljs@gmail.com
Member-at-Large  Walt Roscello  wroscello@gmail.com

Ride Coordinators
Class AA  Brad Francisco  francisco_family@verizon.net
Class A  Pete Czapiewski  czapmk@verizon.net
Class B  Michael Saizan  mpsaizan@verizon.net
Class CC  Steve Palincsar  palincss@his.com
Class C  Randy Schoch  rabbirandy42@gmail.com
Class D  Charles Williams  chawjr@msn.com
Mountain Bike  Barry Howard  howard.barry383@gmail.com
Overnighters  Steve Palincsar  palincss@his.com

Committee Chairs
Program  George Martin  georgeoh46@yahoo.com
Advocacy  Walt Roscello  wroscello@gmail.com
Safety/Ed  open
Communications  Joan Oppel  oppeljs@gmail.com
Jerseys  Janell Saunders  nell7285@gmail.com
Website  Jim Hudnall  jimhudnall@gmail.com
Newsletter  Jane Hudnall  janehudnall@gmail.com

Handy Telephone Numbers
SHA MD Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
24-hr tape  800-252-8776
M-NCPPC Trails and Bikeways Information
Fred Shaffer  301-952-3661
Pothole Repair Hot Lines:
Alexandria  703-838-4488
Calvert County  410-535-0905
Charles County  301-932-3450
Prince George’s County  301-499-8520
St. Mary’s County  301-863-8400
Washington, DC Call Center - 311
http://marylandsha.force.com/customercare/request_for_service
Prez Sez by Donaro Gardner

Another year has come and gone. I truly enjoyed seeing everyone at the annual meeting last week. It’s great when we can come together for the love of cycling. I want to thank everyone for attending, participating and bringing your great food dishes!

The winter weather may have slowed many of us from riding this season. However, the good news is that spring is soon on the way and we can begin to ride more.

There are a number of things we can do to prepare our bikes for the spring,

Here are seven that are a must for your bicycle:

1. Clean your bike: A clean bike extends the life of all the components. Clean your bike such as the chain, frame, chain ring, cassette, derailleurs, pedals brakes and seat. Use a toothbrush, towel and biodegradable cleaner such as Simple Green. If you take your seat off to clean, use bicycle grease when you reattach it. This grease will last longer than oil and be a barrier against rust.

2. Inspect your brake system: This is important because the brakes control the speed you travel and reduce the likelihood of you being in an accident. Brakes also allow you to maneuver while turning, going up and down hills, avoid debris and other obstacles.

3. Watch your wheels: Your tires are held by your rims; they provide stability and smoothness when riding. Rims allow constant contact between the tire and road surface. Check for cracks, wobble and dents.

4. Check the tires: Tires provide friction, comfort and allow travel over various surfaces such as pavement, dirt and gravel.

5. Inspect the drive train: The drivetrain is important because it transfers the power from the legs to the rear wheel. This transfer of power moves the bike. The drivetrain includes the pedals, chain, chain ring, derailleur and rear wheel cassette.

6. Check the cables: Cables are tightly coiled metal wire surrounded in plastic housing. Cables connect shifters and brakes on the handlebars to the derailleur and brake pads. Cables connected to the shifters assist with moving the chain from one gear to another via the derailleur, while those connected to the brakes aid in stopping the bike when the lever on the handlebars is used.

7. Add lubricant: Oil lubricant coats the chain and other components of the drivetrain, helping them last longer and work more efficiently. Lube also reduces the accumulation of dirt and grime, which helps increase performance of the moving parts.

Until next time, Happy Cycling!
Road Captain’s Report by Barbara Haney

The season approaches!

Earlier this month, we had the good news from Punxsutawney Phil, who did NOT see his shadow, meaning we can count on a timely arrival of spring. He says you can soon put your Polar Bear gear away, although this year there’s been very little need for it.

Whether you buy into the Groundhog Day legend or not, it is DEFINITELY true that a mere two weeks from my writing this, we’ll be celebrating one of the cyclist’s favorite seasonal events, the arrival of Daylight Savings Time: once again we’ll be able to ride after work and start putting in the miles in anticipation of summer.

With more daylight, we’ll also welcome the return of some of our favorite long-running weekly rides, the Tour d’Accokeek and the Casey Jones Express, and hopefully also relative newcomer Starbucks Express. Check the Ride Schedule for exact starting dates.

We can use the mild weather Phil predicts for March to gear up for our first All Class event April 4 at Indian Head Village Green, the Start the Season Right ride. Come on out and get the winter cobwebs cleared out!

Big news also for our second All Class event, the May Metric: after many years starting at Cosca Park, we now have a NEW and much-improved starting point, Mechanicsville Elementary School. Although it’s a bit longer drive for many of us, it’s definitely worth it. The roads in St. Mary’s County are fantastic, and the start is adjacent to the Three Notch Trail, finally allowing all riders to start from the same place while offering great riding to those C and D riders who prefer to stay off the road. Stay tuned for the new routes and we’ll see you out there!

Mark your Calendar for These All-Class Rides and Club Events

Saturday, April 4 – Start the Season Right Ride, Village Green in Indian Head, MD
Saturday, May 2 – May Metric, Mechanicsville Elementary School
Saturday, June 13 – The Patuxent River Rural Legacy Ride Volunteer to help!
Sunday, July 5 – Bob’s Birthday Watermelon Ride, Accokeek Fire Station
Saturday, August 8 – Annual Picnic, Linda Molesworth’s Fresh Meadow Farm
Monday, Labor Day, September 7 – The Indian Head 100 Volunteer to help!
OHBTC’s 48th Annual Meeting

This year’s annual meeting started with a glitch! A funeral at St. John’s Episcopal Church meant moving the location of the meeting to Grace Lutheran Church. With emails, text messages, telephone calls and signs at St. John’s, everyone found the new location.

The meeting started with a wonderful potluck dinner. Who knew cyclists were such good cooks? The array of salads, trout, salmon, fried chicken, BBQ ribs, side dishes as well as cookies, pies and cakes meant everyone enjoyed a memorable meal.

Guest Speaker

Rocky Graves is the Charles County Department of Parks and Recreation manager of the Indian Head Rail Trail. He told us about his early days as a waterman on the Potomac and this his job with the Parks Department. In the future he will manage the new Pope’s Trail and Park as well as the IHRT. He brought plans for the new park on the Potomac and told about this new facility.

Election of Officers:

- President  Donaro Gardner
- Vice President  Janell Sanders
- Secretary  Jane Hudnall
- Treasurer  Ron Altemus
- Road Captain  Barbara Haney
- Board members at Large:  George Martin, Walter Roscello, Joan Oppel, Alan Kurzweil

Reports

Treasurer Ron Altemus gave a report on OHBTC’s finances and the proposed budget for 2020.

Walt Roscello talked about advocacy and Bike MD’s Symposium in Annapolis. The bicycle bills being pushed this year are the Safe Passing Bill and the Vulnerable Road User bill. (see page 9 for more on the bills.)

Joan Oppel talked about the Ride with GPS workshops that are being held to help members use this app to download routes and plan their rides.

Sherwood Byers described the planned Great Allegany Passage Tour that he will be leading in August.

Jim Hudnall listed the All-Class and Supported Rides planned for this year. Steve Palincsar told about the new May Metric route in St. Mary’s County starting from Mechanicsville Elementary School.

2019 OHBike Endomondo Challenge Awards

The Spoke’n’Word - the monthly newsletter of the Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club  March 2020

WOW Awards

The club recognized members who went out of their way during the past year to assist riders in need, organize week-end events, or fill-in for other ride leaders.

RON HANEY – assisted Sonja Newman when she hit a sink hole and fell.

Sonja wrote: “This past summer after I had a nasty fall off my bike, both Ron and Barbara were there to transport me to the hospital. It was Ron who, as I sat waiting patiently to be seen, without hesitation assisted me by removing my sweaty shoes and socks. I gestured by raising my hand as to take them off myself and I said to him, “I can take my shoes off.” He said nothing to me, but instead he smiled as he continued to remove both my shoes and my socks. I will always remember that gentle smile and his genuine willingness to help me without saying a word to me.”

A donation from the club will be made in Ron’s memory to an organization that Barbara chooses.

LARRY PEEDE AND MARY SCALA – Assisted Belinda Acre after a fall

Larry was at home on a Sunday afternoon when he got a call asking him to meet club member Belinda Acre at the LaPlata Hospital. Belinda was on her way in an ambulance after a fall and needed someone with her while she waited to be seen in the ER. Larry met her at the hospital and stayed with her until others arrived.

Mary described the events: “Loretta Troen was the first to realize Belinda needed professional help. I made the 911 call. Karen Morgan called club officers to find someone to meet Belinda at the hospital. Stuart Morgan, and another rider rode back and helped get her car ready, so Loretta and I could drive it to the hospital.”

Mary wrote: “Thank you so much for thinking of me and I very much appreciate the intent of the club to honor those who help one another. That is what distinguishes OHBTC from any other biking group I’ve ever been associated with — the easy, open friendship offered anyone who shows up to ride and the care the group takes to make sure everyone is included on the ride. Belinda’s event was somewhat dramatic, but I have many stories where I’ve watched club members come to the aid of others on their ride and have been rescued more than once myself.”

KEN MEREDITH – Helped Diana Donahue after bicycle crash.

Diana was out for a ride on the Three Notch Trail when a stick got stuck in her spokes. She fell and her bike landed on top of her. She was unable to move the bike. Ken was also out for a ride and happened to find Diana pinned under her bike. He moved the bike and then called 911 for an ambulance. When others came along and offered to stay with Diana, he rode back to the Senior Center where he had parked, got his truck and went back to wait with Diana for the ambulance. He fortunately had a blanket in his truck and that gave Diana some warmth and comfort. He then called Dan to meet Diana at the hospital and took her bike to the Senior Center for Dan to pick up. This was not a club ride – just a club member helping another club member.
Diane Harris – Assisted Sam Perry when he needed an ambulance.

Sam was doing one of Diane’s early morning hill repeats when he started feeling dizzy. Diane decided an ambulance was needed. Sam ended up in the hospital and after many tests found some damage to the left side of his heart. The problem can be controlled with medicine. Diane’s actions kept the problem from becoming worse and set Sam on the road to recovery.

Sherwood Byers and Linda Bankerd –
Led Richmond/Williamsburg tour.

Sherwood and Linda initiated the idea of a tour on the Virginia Capitol to Capitol Trail and coordinated planning duties among the participants. The tour took place in October and was very much enjoyed by seven participants. Sherwood is currently coordinating planning for a Great Allegheny Passage tour and may coordinate a repeat of the Virginia CAP to CAP Tour.

Jessica Hirschhorn – Pinch Hitter for Steve and Joan

Jessica continued the traditional Covered Bridges Weekend in August last year. When it became clear that Steve Palinscar wouldn't be able to lead the Covered Bridge Prelude ice-cream ride, Jessica volunteered to lead the C/CC contingent, even driving up to Lancaster County before the Covered Bridge weekend. With Steve Palinscar still in recovery, Jessica stepped in and managed the logistics, including the group dinner. We also want to thank Steve Palinscar for arranging the Covered Bridges Weekend in all the prior years. A few months later, when Joan Oppel was injured and couldn't lead the traditional New Year’s Day ride, Jessica stepped in to fill the void, once again saving the day.

Ron Altemus – Kept the ride schedule full.

Ron almost singlehandedly kept the ride schedule alive during the summer and beyond when a number of our regular ride leaders were indisposed for various reasons or on vacations. Ron led 56 rides in 2019.

Steve Palinscar – Amazing Recovery

Although Steve had to take time off for open heart surgery, as soon as was humanly possible he was back leading rides as frequently as ever. It didn’t matter that he had to adjust his pace to accommodate his prescribed physical limitations. He just picked up where he left off as if he’d never stopped. He led 47 rides and rode 4,300 miles in 2019.

The Dorothy Hodges Ride Leader Award

This annual award for outstanding ride leaders went to Jackie and Randy Schoch.
Great Allegheny Passage Tour

Sherwood Byers will lead a scenic 150 mile bike tour from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Cumberland, MD from August 21 – 24 on the Great Allegheny Passage. Riders meet in Cumberland on August 21, leave their cars and take a shuttle to Pittsburgh, PA where they spend the night. On August 22, they meet at Point State Park and head south on the Three Rivers Heritage Trail at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers through the region’s coke, coal, mining and steel-making corridor, over valleys, around mountains and alongside three rivers: the Casselman, Youghiogheny and Monongahela) to West Newton. The next day, cyclists ride through the 19,052-acer Ohiopyle State Park and spend the night in Ohiopyle. Then the tour continues through the Laurel Highlands and tops the Eastern Continental Divide at 2,392 feet to Myersdale. The last day, cyclists cross the Mason-Dixon Line, ride through the Cumberland Narrows and downhill to Cumberland.

This is a self-supported tour with each rider making his or her own hotel reservations, transporting their own gear and enjoying the company of twenty other cyclists. If you are interested in doing this tour, contact Sherwood Byers (sherwoodbyers@yahoo.com). For information on lodging, contact Polly Choate (scooterpea@yahoo.com). Some participants are planning to camp and that is also an option. Reservations for places to stay in West Newton, Ohiopyle and Myersdale must be made now before all of the rooms are taken. For insurance purposes, all riders must be club members.

OHBTC members Jackie and Randy Schoch were two of a group of seven cyclists who did a four-day bike ride from Pittsburgh to Cumberland in September 2018. One of the other riders, John Johnson, describes the problems as well as the delights and gives detailed descriptions of places to stay and eat. If you have never biked from Pittsburg to Cumberland on the Great Allegheny Passage, here is a guide that will help you plan your trip. Read the report in the November 2018 Spoke’n’Word (www.ohbike.org/newsletters/201811.pdf).

For more information, see:

www.gaptrail.org/
www.traillink.com/trail/great-allegheny-passage/
bikewashington.org/trails/gap/index.htm
BIKE MARYLAND SYMPOSIUM

On February 19, OHBTC members Walt Roscello, Sam Perry, Monica Irmler, Leslie Tierstein and Jim and Jane Hudnall attended the 2020 Bike Maryland Symposium in Annapolis. This annual event is an opportunity to lobby state senators and delegates on bills that make the state safer for bicyclists and for all road users. The symposium is sponsored by Bike Maryland, the state-wide advocacy organization for people who ride bicycles, and by the Baltimore Bicycle Club.

During the morning session, speakers talked about two bicycling bills and two bills addressing climate change.

Jon Korin, President of Bicycle Advocates of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, talked about the Safe Pass Law. The present law requires motorists to provide at least 3 feet of space when safely passing a bicyclist on the road except when the road is too narrow to legally give 3 feet. Crossing a double yellow line is illegal. This bill would allow motorists to cross a double yellow line to pass a bicyclist with a clear sight line ahead and removes the ambiguity from the current law where sometimes 3 feet is required and sometime not.

Rachael Maney, Director of Bike Law National, discussed the Vulnerable Road User legislation that ensures that when a motorist injures or kills a vulnerable road user they, the motorist, will be subject to a court appearance and a larger collection of potential penalties, such as higher fines, license suspension, community service and driver education. This law would help make it safer for bicyclist but also for pedestrians, highway workers, police officers and anyone injured by a careless driver.

Patrick Wojahn, Mayor of College Park and the Director of Government Relations for Rails to Trails, talked about a bill that would set up a work group to look at land use as it relates to climate change and another bill that would put a cap on the amount of gasoline a wholesaler could sell with a fee charged for amount over that amount. Green house gasses from transportation are the leading cause of global warming. The bill would addresses that issue and would use the funds collected to promote alternative transportation options.

After lobbying training, advocates visited offices of legislators and asked delegates and senators to support the bills.

After lunch provided by Bike Maryland, Rachael Maney talked about influencing the conversation on bicycle safety. This organization is a network of bicycle crash attorneys. Bike Law National’s goal is “to be bicycle advocates as well a legal advocates and to pursue cycling justice.” Patrick Wajahn led a panel discussion about climate change and micromobility. Getting more people to bike or walk instead of driving more will promote health, reduce traffic, improve the environment and stimulate economic growth. To get more people to bike, they must feel safe and be safe. The best way to do that is with bike infrastructure like trails and bike lanes. Let your state senator and delegates know that you appreciate their support for legislation improving bicycling in the state. Learn who your representatives are and how to contact them by going to https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/.
New Bridge to Connect the Anacostia River Trail to the National Arboretum

A bridge across the Anacostia between the Arboretum and Kenilworth Gardens has been part of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail plan for ~20 years and is finally close to becoming a reality. Last May DDOT held a meeting in the midst to complaints from the boating community about the negative impacts they thought the bridge would have on their use of the river. Another meeting is planned for this spring with design to wrap this year and construction in 2021-2022.

On the east side of the river, the bridge will provide direct connection to Phase I of the existing Anacostia River Trail (ART). On the west side of the river, connecting the trail through the Arboretum is another segment in the moveDC plan. Funding is available to develop this segment and it is currently in the planning stage. DDOT has met with NPS, the National Arboretum, Federal City Council, and others to develop this segment which shall connect the trail to Maryland Avenue NE and allow access regardless of the Arboretum’s hours.

The NPS recreational land on the immediate west bank of the Anacostia at the proposed bridge location will be accessible during regular park operating times. The project includes an additional 1,000 feet of paved trail construction on the western bank of the river and will connect with an existing gravel service road that connects the National Arboretum and NPS property. It should be noted that the park and all trails within it are currently closed after dark.

Another DDOT project currently being examined, the New York Avenue NE Streetscape and Trail Concept, will improve pedestrian facilities, bicycle accommodations, and safety along New York Avenue NE between Florida Avenue NE and Bladensburg Road NE, connecting with the Metropolitan Branch Trail at NoMa-Gallaudet Metro Station and the Arboretum.

Additionally, the Lincoln Connector Trail project is in the planning stage. This will provide a trail from Bladensburg Road NE, through the Fort Lincoln neighborhood, and cross the Anacostia River to connect with the ART in the vicinity of the New York Avenue NE/US-50 bridge.