



February 2020

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www.RestonBikeClub.org

Chairman's Letter



As of this writing, we have approximately 7 weeks until the week of April 6th when our 2020 weekday rides begin. This winter has been pretty tolerable and downright balmy here and there. We don't even need Punxsutawney Phil to tell us that we will have an early spring – daffodils are blooming, it's already here.

On the subject of spring rides, I am thrilled to share with you that downtown Herndon will remain our home for the Thursday evening rides. Herndon Vice Mayor Sheila Olem and Council Member (and RBC member) Cesar del Aguilar took RBC Board members on a walk-through of site to be developed and pointed out ample parking which will be available to us during the demolition and construction, meaning impact to our Thursday night launch will be minimal. During the walk-through, Sheila and Cesar impressed upon us that the Town of Herndon very much wants us to keep our rides starting from downtown Herndon. We are feeling the love from Herndon. Thank you Sheila and Cesar!

After our rides officially begin, RBC will have its third annual Season Launch party, scheduled this year for Saturday April 25th. Beer and food trucks will be involved, so save the date! More details to follow.

As you get excited for the 2020 season, consider that now is the perfect time to get your machine tuned up. I bring my bike in for an annual tune up to avoid easily preventable mechanicals. I've seen all kinds of crazy stuff on rides – cables snapping, handlebars breaking, brakes failing – all avoidable with regular main-tenance. I recommend setting a goal of getting your bike tuned up before April. Bike shops will get busier as the weather warms and days get longer, so why not do it now? This is also a good time to check your chain for stretch and inspect your tires.

While your road machine is in the hands of your favorite mechanic, it's a great time to take out your gravel bike (if you have one, if not, borrow one) to explore our area's beautiful and not much traveled gravel roads. Thanks to some experienced gravel riders who heeded my call for help, RBC now has a small collection of tried and true routes soon to be uploaded to our Ride with GPS route library.

Whether you're out on the road, tearing up some gnarly gravel or grinding out an indoor training plan, happy riding to you!

Temporary Closure and Detour of W&OD Trail at Idylwood Park Starting On or About Feb. 24

Closure necessary for utility work for Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project

FAIRFAX – The Washington & Old Dominion Trail (W&OD Trail) will close for about one week on or about Feb. 24 near Idylwood Park (between Virginia Lane and the trail bridge over I-495) for utility work for the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project. The [Link](#) for more information.

Mark your **calendars**:

April 6, 2020

First week of evening rides is April 6, 2020.

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 |

Riding
Season
Starts!

Season Launch Party, April 25

Great News: Cycling Skills Clinics are Back

RBC will offer bike skills training in April and May. There will be four basic sessions and two advanced sessions. The clinics will be taught by Hefler Performance Coaching's Sue Hefler and Nick Clarke from FC ProBike. Details on the advanced Group Riding Skills will be announced in the March newsletter. Current ride leaders get first choice as to sessions then the training will be open to all CURRENT members (dues paid).

Basic Group Riding Skills - Nick Clarke
April 5, 9am - 1pm
April 5, 1pm - 4pm

Location: Reston/Herndon, TBD
Basic Group Riding Skills - Sue Hefler
April 18, 9am - 1pm
April 18, 1pm - 4pm

Location: Revolutions by Maverick Community Bicycle Shop, 34 Catocin Circle, Leesburg

Save the dates for Advanced Group Riding Skills: April 19 and May 9

Interested in a discount for the class? Contact [Kelley Westenhoff](#).

Get Ahead of the Riding Season!

Prepare for the riding season by signing your 2020 Liability Waiver. New year, new waiver. Two minutes and you're done. Follow the green button; also available on RBC homepage.

[Annual Liability Waiver - - - 2020](#)

Gravel, My Friend

Gravel riding is a fast-growing discipline within cycling, and while it may be considered the current trend, it is more like going back in time. Gravel roads in Loudoun County take us back to a time when the area was agricultural and the unpaved roads were the arteries that enabled people to get goods of Loudoun to market. Thus, Loudoun County over 200 years ago already had a robust network of roads, which fortunately for us remain largely unpaved today. We live near one of the nation's best areas for gravel riding, with approximately 300 miles of unpaved roads just in Loudoun County. So let's step back in time have some gravel adventures.

Appreciating history through riding gravel is not the only reason to ditch the smooth tarmac. Personally, I got my gravel bike after some of my favorite rides on smooth pavement got so busy with traffic that I felt a lot less safe. One encounters far fewer cars on gravel roads. When you do encounter cars, they tend to be going slower because they too are being careful to avoid potholes and ruts. Instead of cars, you may encounter horses, even entire fox hunts. Besides allowing you to avoid roads with many fast moving cars, gravel is simply fun and our bucolic Virginia landscape is beautiful in all seasons.

RBC will soon be adding a handful of gravel routes to our Ride with GPS route library. We hope to lead a gravel ride here and there as well. If you have a good route and want company on a ride, please consider organizing a gravel ride on the RBC Facebook page. If you are not experienced in gravel, please keep a few caveats in mind before trying out any of these routes. These tips were shared with me by gravel hard-man Mike McCarley.



Photo by Brent DeRobertis

Be aware that road conditions are very changeable. Pot-holes, washboard surfaces, ruts and debris can develop quickly.

Road maintenance is unpredictable and can drastically alter surface conditions. Road are occasionally updated with a fresh layer of deep, loose gravel. When roads have fresh gravel, you definitely don't want to be on them.



Photo by Michal Gnatek

If you don't know a route, it's a good idea to visit a local bike shop and ask about road conditions. Bicycles & Coffee in Purcellville and Plum Grove Cyclery in Leesburg emphasize gravel rides and sometimes lead rides from their shops.

Keep in mind that riding gravel is more taxing than riding smooth pavement. You'll want to think about your gravel rides in terms of hours, not miles. A 40 mile gravel ride is not equivalent to a 40 mile pavement ride. It's

harder and slower going. On our local roads, typical miles-to-elevation is a 10 to 1000 ratio – for every ten miles, you will climb about 1000 feet.

Prepare to be more self-sufficient. Because of the rural nature of these unpaved roads, some routes won't have a store to stop at. Bring ample water and snacks. Have fun – plan a pretty picnic spot mid-ride to enjoy your snacks and snap a photo or two.

And, a note from Mike about how to behave around horses: "It's not unusual to encounter horses. Horses startle easily so be careful not to surprise them and always pass slowly with as much distance as possible. My practice is to make eye contact with the rider and ask if it's ok to pass. That means slowing, or stop if necessary, with some distance from the horse. The rider knows the horse's temperament and what's best. Often they direct the horse off to the side of the road to let you pass. As you say, being polite goes a long way."

So, take it easy and enjoy our local gravel paradise. Please send us photos of your gravel adventures and help keep us all updated on current conditions.

Save the Date!

The 38th Annual Reston Century will be August 23, 2020
Reston Town Center

Member Featured

Words from Group 5 Ride Leader: Mike Dinsmore

I have lived in Northern Virginia my whole life and work as a customer service representative for a national tool rental company in Tysons Corner. I discovered cycling about 20 years ago as a way to reduce stress and get fit. Early on, I spent my effort on getting faster and riding longer distances, but I soon discovered shorter rides are easier with a busier lifestyle. I really enjoy being a ride leader for the 5 group as it is plenty of distance and intensity and provides a great social outlet as well. My customer service experience serves me well welcoming new riders to the club and practicing group riding skills as many new riders start out in the five group.

One of my favorite cycling memories was my sister

and I decorating our bikes for the grand opening of the W & OD trail through Vienna and getting our picture on the front page of the local paper. That was around 1980 and little did I know then how many miles I would ride that trail. Ride safe!



RBC Fabulous 2020 Classified Ads

The Club does not work without you.

ISO: Recon Riders: Tis the season for reworking RBC routes in the library. The club needs a person or two to help pre-ride routes before the season starts to assess whether road changes have created issues for re-route. If you are that person and like to do this, contact Chip Magrogan @ his [email](#).

Database/Web Gardener? RBC **still** needs additional folks to understand the workings of our website and membership database. Have a spare hour a week to support our software? Reply to this [email](#), please.

Spring Training? The club **still** needs a person or two to help plan the spring training skills clinics. Time commitment - perhaps 2-3 hours total. Advantage - you can ensure you get a place in this very popular opportunity. If you would like to do this, contact Kelley Westenhoff @ her [email](#).

Century Helpers: If you are a planner and would like to ride the Century but could contribute on these chilly days, contact Laura Robinson @ her [email](#). We have event flyers to create, survey results to review, a search for a different lunch caterer, or assistance in creating a Century playbook.

[Events Calendar](#)

[Ashburn Saturday](#), 7:00 am, February 22

[Ashburn Saturday](#), 9:00 am, February 22

[Saturday, A/B Ride](#), 10:00 am, February 22, Herndon ArtSpace

[Saturday, C-Level](#), 10:00 am, February 22, Herndon ArtSpace

[Last Weekend Brunch Adventure](#), 10:00 am, February 23

[RBC Board Meeting](#), 7:00 pm, March 4, Reston Community Center

[Ride Leader Training Committee](#), 7:00 pm, March 5, North County Gov't Ctr

Let's Ride!

Got rides for *the Wheel*? Reply to this newsletter and they will be published!

Icicle Ride, [April 4](#), Elkton, MD

Cycle Zydeco, [April 15-19](#), Lafayette, LA, A party on wheels!

Ocean to Bay Bike Tour, [April 24-25](#), Fenwick, DE

Tour de Cookie, [May 2](#), Rockville, MD

Six Pillars Century Blackwater Tour, [May 2](#), Cambridge, MD

Cap2Cap, [May 9](#), Richmond/Williamsburg, VA

DC Bike Ride, [May 16](#), Washington, DC

Storming of Thunder Ridge, [May 17](#), Lynchburg, VA

Kent County Spring Fling, [May 22-25](#), Chestertown, MD

The Baltimore Bicycling Club's 38th annual Kent County Spring Fling, Chestertown, MD, is a great cycling event for all ages and abilities. Routes range from 11 to 100 miles on low traffic, flat terrain and pass through scenic places such as Chestertown, Betterton Beach, and Rock Hall. Both riders and non-riders can also enjoy historic Chestertown's annual Tea Party festival - living history, parade, music, food, artisan crafts and crazy boat race.

Virginia Cycling Resources

Check out this link for [Cycling Virginia!](#) 2020 will be the 2nd year of this website and it is pretty smooth.

- [Virginia is for Lovers](#)
- [Bicycling in Virginia \(VDOT\)](#)
- [Virginia Bicycling Federation](#)
- [Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling](#)

RBC Chain Links

- [Board Members](#)
- [Check My Membership](#)
- [Ride with GPS](#)
- [Borrow a Travel Case](#)
- [Board Minutes](#)
- [Past issues of *the Wheel!*](#)

DONATE BIKES

Donate your old bikes, bike parts, tubes, tires, or bike accessories and you could help change someone's life.

March 21, 9 am to 1 pm

St Anne's Episcopal Church, Welcoming • Diverse • Progressive
1700 Wainwright Drive
Reston, VA 2019

BikesfortheWorld.org
703.740.7856

Address: PO Box 3389, Reston, VA 20195
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