



the Wheel



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Letter From The Chair



RBC Club members,

We have had official group rides rolling for several weeks now. I want to extend special thanks to ride leaders Chip Magrogan for organizing and leading Sunday tour rides, Jamey Lees for his leadership out of Fox Mill for a regular group 2 ride twice a week, Lisa Mackem, Kelly Westenhoff and Laura Robinson for setting up and leading inclusive and friendly women's rides on Monday evenings and James Ruffin and Maria Nicchitta for kicking off the Saturday C ride this past weekend. This week kicks off our regular season with even more regular official rides during the week and destination rides on Saturday and Sunday, not to mention the long-standing Saturday ride from Herndon with ride levels A, B and C. We will not be overloading you with email by sending announcements for rides, so please check the RBC events calendar

each week to see what is offered. If you feel like there is a category of ride under-represented on our calendar, talk to a board member and we will try to do something about it. Also, we need ride leaders. If you have an idea for a ride and are willing to organize it, we can get that ride set up and posted to the events calendar. Just let me know at RBCTrout@gmail.com

It may be obvious from our calendar, but we are spreading out rides at different locations and different times to avoid large gatherings. This is something we will continue even past the pandemic. The club has gotten quite large and our 2019 Tuesday/Thursday groups had frankly become too big for our own good. Let's spread the love by spreading rides around and adding new ones to the calendar. The benefits having more rides on the calendar will be smaller, safer and more manageable groups and more variety. My desire is to have something for everyone in our club, from extremely social to extremely competitive riders and everyone in between.

In addition to spreading the love, I want everyone to spread the message of safety and good riding etiquette. I hope that many people read and took to heart my message emailed on Saturday April 10th about reminders for this season. If you have not seen it, please check your email and take a moment to read it. Please reflect on your own riding habits and what you can do to be a good example for others.

Happy Riding!

Kathryn

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REMINDER: Sign the 2021 Liability Waiver

Club rides have started! We already have over 380 people who have signed waivers to ride with us this year. *You only have to do this once and you are good for the entire year.*

If you are looking for club ride insurance information, there's a link at the bottom of the newsletter in the Chain Links section.

[Link to Liability Waiver](#)

Training Corner

This month's focus is everyone's favorite topic: How to get better at hills.

Short answer: Ride hills more often.

Oh, you want more? Here are a few tips to improve your climbing.

1. RELAX. Many riders get so anxious about climbing that they tense up. Try to stay loose and relaxed while climbing by doing the following.
 - Don't forget to BREATHE. Take nice long breaths from your belly. To practice belly breathing, lie on the floor flat on your back with a heavy book on your belly. Inhale for a count of 4, hold the breath for 1 second, and then exhale slowly and controlled for a count of 6. You want to make that heavy book go up and down when you breathe.
 - Keep your hands relaxed by periodically wiggling your fingers. The same goes for your arms. Flop your elbows around a little once in a while to make sure you are not carrying a lot of tension in your arms. The idea is to reduce tension in your upper body and not have a death grip on the handlebars. On long sustained climbs, you can change your hand position once in a while to help stay relaxed and use different muscles.
 - And, this may sound really odd, but SMILE. Smiling relaxes your face and reminds you that you do this for fun. You do this for fun, right?

- If you are doing long climbs somewhere scenic, look around and take in the scenery. This takes you out of the suffering inside your head and can have a soothing effect.
2. Pace yourself. Settle into an effort level you can maintain for the entire climb. If you really drill it and over-extend yourself, you will pay later. Consider starting a little easier than you think you should so you can finish strong.
 3. Keep your pedal stroke nice and even. Focus on making nice smooth circles. Find the gearing that lets you spin as close to your normal cadence as possible rather than mashing along in a gear that is too heavy which will fatigue your muscles and suck up a lot of stored glycogen.
 4. Improve your power to weight ratio. This is hard advice to give, harder to follow. You can drop weight or increase power. Neither of these things happens overnight and both require diligent, hard work.
 5. Lastly, embrace the pain and incorporate a set of hill repeats to your weekly schedule. Done regularly, this is the best way to improve your climbing.

A Tale of Two James's

James Stroud is our ride leader for the "1"s. He has been chasing, racing and training for a long time. James Ruffin has come to cycling later in life and wants fitness, finishing and fun cycling. This column is your chance to ask the James's a question and receive two perspectives, both valid, but perhaps different.

This month, we received the following question:

"James's, How do you shake the rust off at the beginning of the season? My legs and lungs are burning trying to keep up with the pack!"

[Click Here to Ask the James's](#)



James Stroud

First off, don't let this get you down. This happens to just about everyone. There is no easy way to replicate the stress on your body from a group ride - it is always harder than what you expect.

A few things that can help:

1) If you notice you are struggling, obviously don't take a pull, but also don't ride 2nd or 3rd wheel. Ride about 7th wheel or later in the pack. The benefit of drafting improves as you have more bodies in front of you. Also try not to ride behind the smallest rider to help get a better draft.

2) Look ahead and, if you see a hill coming, make sure you pedaling before the hill starts so you don't have to push as hard at the beginning of the hill.

3) If I'm on a downhill and see incline immediately after the downhill, I push it on the downhill so I can go easier on the uphill.

4) Also try to make sure you are drafting even during the times when the ride is easy.

For 2 & 3 - you may have to go out of the draft and go the left of folks in front of you and pass a few people.



James Ruffin

Getting back into the swing of group riding again and shaking off the rust has been further compounded by a limited riding season last year.

To shake off the rust, I like to do more of my training rides outdoors to get acclimated with the feel of my bike (getting the feel of balancing and bike handling back) instead of just being used to the feel of my indoor trainer.

If I am just getting back to group riding, I may take a week or two to go with a slower group or take a slightly shorter route to help ease into the season and get my legs going again.

The most important thing is to keep coming out and riding each week. After a few weekends, I know I will be back up to full speed.

Group Riding Etiquette: Don't Be THAT Rider!

Welcome to the new RBC Wheel column on riding etiquette. Our theme for the coming months is "Don't Be THAT Rider".

Don't be that rider...who blows up the pace of the group.

You know the rider. They get to the front, feeling strong, take a long pull, then slow to a crawl but do not move over. You may not even know that's you. Here is a tell tale sign it is you: You've taken a pull and then the entire group is coming around on your left and pretty soon you are on your own. How to avoid this: Know your place. If you are not the strongest rider in the group, take shorter pulls, or no pulls. After your moment of glory on the front, make sure there is no upcoming traffic on your left, once it is clear, signal that you are pulling off with a little wiggle of the right elbow, and smoothly move to your left. The next rider should come through. After the entire group is just about to pass you, or a suitable gap comes up, move into the draft to recover but still remain in the group. Chris Carmichael, CEO/Head Coach of CTS describes this as "pull shorter, not slower".

The opposite of this is to get to the front and accelerate, breaking the pace of the group and making people behind you struggle to keep up. When it is your turn on the front, keep the pace what it was before and be nice and steady. A nice solid pull that was steady is usually rewarded with callouts of "nice pull" when you peel off and let the group come through to relieve you. As of above, know your place. If you are feeling strong, stay up front longer to help the group. Carmichael describes this as "pull longer, not harder".

Monthly Photo Challenge #rbcphotochallenge

Join the challenge! Each month, a new challenge will be posted on Facebook and *the Wheel*. Simply post a photo on the [Reston Bike Club - Members Only](#) Facebook page with the tag **#rbcphotochallenge** and the location of your post. You will be entered into a drawing to win a prize.

Fine print: Must be a current RBC Member to win. Multiple posts are allowed, encouraged and will increase your chances of winning!

March Photo Challenge Winner: [James Ruffin](#) (host of the [Pi Day ride](#)).

April Photo Challenge Theme:

Cherry Blossoms (and other flowering trees)

Let's see your photos with you/your bike and all those beautiful spring flowering trees! There are loads of Bradford Pear, Dogwood (the official tree of Virginia), magnolias, redbuds and many others that are currently or will be flowering later this month.

There's also the Art in Bloom exhibit that Kelley shared. If you venture out to explore the exhibits, be sure to tag your photos with **#rbcphotochallenge** and we'll include you in this month's contest!

Art in Bloom: <https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/art-in-bloom/>



Events Calendar

The monthly Events Calendar is filling up! Some of your regular favorites are back, including:

- The Monday Women's rides from The Bike Lane (w/ Kelley and Laura) and Green Lizard (w/ Lisa)
- Tue/Thu 2 Ride with Jamey Lees
- Mike D's "5's at 5"
- RBC 1 Ride led by James Stroud
- Saturday A/B/C Rides
- Chip's Sunday Tours
- Last Weekend Brunch Rides

There are also new rides being added every day, so check back often.

If you would like to lead a ride, reach out to us and we'll support you in setting it up!

Click the link above or download the Wild Apricot For Members app (links below) for updated events listings.

Let's Ride!

Share the rides your are interested in by replying to *the Wheel* or posting on the Reston Bike Club - Members Only Facebook page!

April 18: [The Ride to End ALZ Spring Challenge](#) virtual event

- *Participants are encouraged to create teams under the National Capital Area- Company or join Team Purple DC.*

May 8: [OFF THE CHAIN TURTLE Memorial Ride](#). Turtle was a much loved member of the local biking community. He passed away in 2020 in a mountain biking accident. His former teammates and friends set up this ride to honor him.

June 5-6: Bikes & Beers Frederick. Check out their [page](#) on Facebook.

June 11-12: [Phoenix Double Century Challenge](#) on Skyline Drive.

- *The first 5 RBC members who sign up will receive a discount. Email RBC for info how to obtain the discount.*

June 12: [Tour de Lebanon Valley](#)

Sept. 25: [21st Annual Cannonball Century](#)

Virginia Cycling Resources

Check out this link for [Cycling Virginia](#)! 2021 will be the 3rd 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](#)

Get the Wild Apricot for Members App

RBC Members can use the *Wild Apricot For Members* app to register for upcoming events. Get connected in 2 easy steps:

1. Download the app (links below)
2. Login using your RBC website credentials.



RBC Chain Links

[Board Members](#)

[Check My Membership](#)

[Ride with GPS](#)

[Borrow a Travel Case](#)

[Board Minutes](#)

[Past issues of *the Wheel*](#)

[RBC Insurance Information](#)

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