



# PERSPECTIVES

Vol 27 Issue 3 ♦ Fall 2015

## The future GMBC

by Kevin Bessett

For me, and for too many years, time has existed in a bucket with an unhurried and constant drip, the effects of which have gone mostly unnoticed because of my busy and fast-paced life. Moreover, this pace is getting faster and faster, which brings me a vision of a runaway train. Lately, as I have peered more often into this bucket of time, it has become clear to me that there has been a grand illusion happening before my eyes, and that the bucket that seemed somewhat full is actually not.

Nearly two and one-half decades ago I began my “career” with GMBC. It began with the time trial series, then a few years later I added the task of handling membership. A year after that I found myself as VP, and then added web-master to my resume. In 2004 I became president. All of which (minus the VP status) are still on my plate, which is by choice. While all of this has kept me very busy, the experience has been rewarding, both on a personal and professional level, and has allowed me to grow as an individual.



**GMBC presidents, past and present. From left: Spencer Knapp, Kevin Bessett and Ben Haydock.** (Photo courtesy of Bobby Bailey).

Others who help run GMBC have been at it for years, too. We know that the health of an organization is ultimately dependent upon new energy and ideas, but maintaining the status-quo can be easier, especially when that unhurried dripping bucket is not on the radar often, and keeps quietly dripping away.

Founded during the winter of 1970/'71 (which is four years after my birth), GMBC is one of the oldest bike clubs in the U.S., and it


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## THANKS & HELLO

by Kevin Bessett

After 14 years of sending out solicitations for newsletter submissions, organizing the puzzle of submissions into newsletter formats, sending the softcopies and mailing lists to the printer, and distributing newsletters to some area businesses, Scott Decker has turned over the editor's red pen to Jane Dunbar.

I would like to thank Scott for his years of dedication to the club. Many eyes have looked at his work through the years, as the newsletter is a source of schedules, news, and interesting articles. I will miss his desert-dry humor in his email solicitations, and the friendly discussions we've had about some of my submissions. Not sure if he's made me a more better writer, but I constantly ask myself, “What will Scott think?”

The changing of the virtual red pen brings Jane Dunbar into the club officer ranks. She is going to fit in very nicely and has hit the ground running. My only concern with Jane is that my writing style (or lack thereof) will be front and center. Please have pity on me, Jane! 

# FROM THE VP's DESK ...

by John Williams

**“We are committed to expanding Richard Tom’s legacy by hosting events that reflect his passion and spirit of fun.”**

Without dwelling too much on this, we all know that this cycling year in our area was punctured by triple tragedies. One of them, in particular, struck close to home and to the heart. In early April, Richard Tom and I agreed to meet at the Upper Deck Pub for shared burgers (my buy) and beer (Richard’s buy).

Richard was at a crossroads, having recently left Earl’s Cyclery and Fitness to take on his new position at VBT. And, as always, Richard’s grace shined like a radiant beam of optimism during our brief time together at the Upper Deck Pub. Our conversation, of course, centered on cycling but also on prior occupations, new occupations, and future hopes and dreams.

Fewer than two weeks following our time at the Upper Deck Pub, Richard was taken from all of us in a gut-wrenching way. Frustration, anger, and sadness are the primary emotions that still resonate with me when reflecting upon all of this. If anything positive is to come of this, it will be illuminated by the Richard Tom Foundation.

We (the Board of Directors) are committed to expanding his legacy by hosting events that reflect the passion and the spirit of fun that were Richard. In addition, we will work with other groups such as Local Motion, GMBC, and driver education programs to advocate for safe

roads and safe driving practices. Recently we formed an alliance with Little Bellas, whereby we will offer scholarships to young girls to expose them to a program that develops cycling and life skills. Richard was very in tune with the Little Bellas program (I’m hoping that we also to find some Little Fellas to support!).

In addition, we will be bringing Richard’s Ride to the cycling community in 2016. More information, a photo gallery, and event updates can be viewed at [www.richardtomfoundation.com](http://www.richardtomfoundation.com). And yes, we seek contributions to help support all of the above (tax deductible!).

## **SEGUE TO OUR OTHERWISE WONDERFUL RIDE SEASON:**

### **Wednesday Rides**

The Wednesday ride series began on March 11 when Ben Clements and I set out for an “Early Edition” ride on a warm evening along the Cochran Road. The Wednesday series concluded on Tuesday, October 27, a few days prior to the one-hour reversal of clocks.

Six riders took part in the “Tour de Pint” which consisted of a short ride highlighted by KOM and QOM challenges up Irish Hill. Sandy Dupuis, our resident mountain goat, won QOM uncontested. Stephen Znamierowski won KOM by a bike length in a hotly contested sprint up the hill.

Following the Tour part we assembled at the Upper Deck

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## From the VP's Desk

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Pub for the Pint part—where we wrestled tables and chairs from other guests, because GMBC showed up in force with 15 of us to celebrate the season. Your VP was treated to dinner, a couple of beers and a card of thanks signed by all.

And at this point, I want to thank all of the Wednesday riders for what was a safe season (no collisions or injuries that I am aware of) and a fun season. Preceding each ride, there was a pre-ride talk with small reminders about safe riding practices and ways to maximize road-share aspects of riding.

We did have an incident with a horse and rider, which frightened not only some in our riding group but also the horseback rider, her dog and most importantly, the horse. All was smoothed over through follow up communications with the rider and with stable managers.

Beyond that we filled every week with Wednesday rides (sometimes on alternate nights if weather inclement). While only a few hardy riders typically appeared early in the season, the numbers swelled with warming evenings up to about 40 riders during summer. Groups of A, B+, B-, and C were released at intervals on big nights. Moving into fall, although we had an extended period of glorious evenings with cooling days and nights, the numbers of riders predictably tapered off. Once again, thanks to all for a great Wednesday night series!

## The Future GMBC

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astounds me that I have been involved in the club for close to half of its existence. That is a long time, and a question I constantly ask myself is, “Am I becoming stale?” In the last five years my answers have been: “No, I’m not stale,” “well, maybe a little bit,” “gosh, I’m moving faster in that direction,” and finally, “I’d not be enjoyed if I were a cracker.”

It is no secret that my energy level ebbs and flows in the club, and I am sure is the same for some others on the staff, too.

There will be a concerted effort to inject new energy and ideas (i.e., people) into the “staff” ranks, and it has already begun. In future weeks, there will be meetings to discuss the future of the club. If you have a desire to be involved in steering different aspects of the club, please reach out to me. I think that this will be an exciting time for GMBC. If you have grown used to people like Phyl, Tom, John B., and myself, do not worry, we are not splitting town just yet!

### VP Rides

The VP ride series was also highly successful. We managed to visit gaps, notches, and summits with sustained climbs. We even had a few “flat” rides in the mix. A core group of 6-7 strong riders appeared for each ride. VP rides will be scheduled through November, after which I’ll be occupied at Smugglers Notch on weekends.

*Some VP Ride highlights:*

On **April 18**, we kicked off the VP ride series when Kevin Bessett, Linus Owens, and I rode about 50 miles finishing in the rain. I forget where we went!

During **May** we challenged ourselves with Ap Gap, then Baby Gap/Ap, then Brandon & Middlebury Gaps, and Smugglers Notch.

**June** was a rainy month, but we managed to find flatter

rides in the form of the Bike for the Lakes Century, and a ride from Charlotte to Essex, NY—returning on the ferry on a gorgeous, sunny and calm day. I was away a couple of weekends in June (Whiteface Hill Climb Bicycle Race and Vermont Gran Fondo), but the VP group somehow managed to get in a few good rides without me!

It was back to work with more climbs in **July**—including Moretown & Roxbury Gaps, Jeffersonville to Jay Peak and return, and Double Ap Gap (both sides) ride.

Climbing continued in a big way in **August** with an epic Whiteface area ride followed by the climb to the summit (average 8% over 7 miles). Bolton Notch was also visited. A day of flat fun was provided by the Vermont Senior Games which drew many of ages 50 or more years young.

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# 2015 Practice Criterium Series

by Andre Sturm

For 2015, we had planned 6 events at the Colchester Watertower Hill location. Unfortunately, the first two events had to be cancelled due to inclement weather, and the third fell victim to a paving project on Watertower Circle. Maybe it was due to this late start that the numbers of participants for the remaining races were down a little compared to previous years.


But first I would like to thank again the volunteers who made this possible, in particular Dorothy Pumo as referee and John Witmer, but also Kim Simonds, Michael Hopwood, Steve Gaydos, Michel Gray and Sharon Sturm.

New this year was the format of a points race for the B and A groups instead of the road race

style with finish sprint. (The C race remained the introductory beginner's race of 10 minutes fast pace group ride, and 10 minutes race with finish sprint). Every fifth lap was a sprint for points, with the finish sprint having double points. The winner of the race is the rider with the most points. The goal was threefold: to reward race activity, to create a high intensity interval workout, and to gain race awareness by keeping track of your own and your competitors' points.

Based on what we saw, this format certainly created a very high intensity workout! The B race typically focused on the sprint laps, but for the As, all stops were removed, and riders saw impressive normalized power numbers. This new format was made possible by the GMBC purchasing a nice lap counter for 99 laps, which we also used at the Burlington Crit on Labor Day organized by the GMBC.

I think next year we will have a mixture of points race and crit race format.

Skirack has been a great supporter of the GMBC for many years. This year they were also the official supplier for the 1k2go race teams. For the Practice Crits, Skirack did step up and matched the prize money for the top three competitors in the B and A races, so they were competing for \$20 gift cards to Skirack! I think this was a nice win-win situation for both the racers and Skirack. 

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## DISCOUNTS AT SYNERGY FITNESS!

by Kevin Bessett

If you're looking for a gym to join, and are a GMBC member, check out Synergy Fitness in Williston ([synergyfitness.com](http://synergyfitness.com)). The facility is super clean, and has a friendly and inviting atmosphere. Moreover, as a club member, you will receive a nice discount on either 3- or 6-month, or annual memberships. Synergy Fitness is just off Industrial Avenue.

GMBC prices: 3-month is \$195; 6-month is \$340; and the annual is \$599 (this includes one personal training session). All must be prepaid, except for the annual option, for which you can use EFT each month.

I've had the pleasure of taking spin classes and working out at Synergy Fitness for a number of years. It feels nice just walking in the door because of its warm atmosphere. You can check out Synergy for a week at no charge, too. Call Jan at 802.881.0553 for more info.


## From the VP's Desk

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We wrapped up the month when 15 of us resurrected the Mad River Century Ride route. This was a great day, with many averaging 20 mph and higher over the distance. We will do this one again next year!

Subsequent to the GMBC Century Day in **September**, we had a ride from Essex to Bakersfield and tacked on a Smugglers' Notch climb. We also did a flat ride out on the islands—a great ride from Jasper Mine Road out to North Hero and back, where we didn't shy from long dirt sections along the shore in South Hero.

In **October**, the Cochran's Metric Century attracted many GMBC riders out for a great ride supporting a good cause on a rather chilly day. Later in the month, we headed north to Enosburg Falls to catch Little Jay and Big Jay climbs and descents. This was yet another stellar ride for our memory bank.

Thanks to all who came out for the VP rides, and also for the many pulls that I received to help me re-join the group. I think we can all agree that we had a really good season filled with challenging yet fun rides. Stay in shape & have a great winter. Maybe I'll see you on snow! 

## Downshifting

by Cathy Ryan

The first time I couldn't breathe, I was swimming in deep water in Lake Dunmore, doing my first triathlon. I was gasping for air, and every time I put my head under water to swim, my body tried to breathe in. Which is a bad idea when your face is underwater. So I swam three quarters of the swim with my head above water. As I exited the water, I said to my husband, "I did terribly; I can't breathe!" Then I got on my bike and kept going, finishing 34<sup>th</sup> out of 50 women.

I was a little disappointed, but looked forward to trying again in August. My disaster in the water sapped me of energy, both mentally and physically. But I'm a natural in the water. I was swimming in the ocean in water over my head by the time

I was eight. I played water polo in college. I knew I could do better... if I could just figure out what went wrong in the water...

Two days later, I was short of breath walking up a minor hill near work. Later that day I was short of breath walking home from the bus. I Googled it (of course) and started worrying about a blood clot in my lungs (pulmonary embolism), since I had been temporarily taking birth control pills (to avoid having my period during our upcoming European vacation – to Amsterdam! Cycling mecca of the world!). But I was absolutely fine, not out of breath, unless I was going up the stairs. So I went to bed. I woke at 2 a.m., and as I got up to go to the bathroom,

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# The touring season's second half

by Phyl Newbeck

Heat and rain were definitely the themes for this summer, with the latter completely washing out the Jaunt from Jasper Mines on June 28.

The following week, the rain finally ended for the Double Ferry South ride. Six riders did the social version and 18 did the regular ride which for the second year in a row was done backwards, starting with the ferry from Burlington to Plattsburgh, heading down to Essex and then taking that ferry over to Charlotte before heading back up to Burlington. Doing it in this direction relieves the stress of worrying about catching the Burlington/Port Kent ferry which runs infrequently. The only downside to the day was the haze from fires in western Canada

which limited the views but also kept the sun from beating down too harshly on the cyclists. Only nine riders headed to Greensboro on a hot July 12 for the new Orleans Outing. Five cyclists did the long route and four did the medium version. The riders were surprised by a brief burst of rain right before the start but the skies cleared and the temperature rose into the mid 80s—perfect for a dip in Lake Caspian after the ride.

Alas, heavy rain and thunder and lightning caused our fourth rain-out of the season as Not Quite Quebec was another casualty to wet weather. There was no rain on July 26 but a dismal forecast meant that only nine riders showed up for Willsboro Wanderer; three doing the long ride, three for the short

and three for the Social Ride. Co-leader Holly Creeks swears that no more than 15 cars overtook her group on the short ride. The day was hot and humid with threatening-looking clouds but none of the predicted showers and thunderstorms arrived, although they did fall in Paris where a Pinarello (yes, I had to get that in) was once again the bicycle of choice for the winner of the Tour de France.

On August 1, we joined members of the Charles River Wheelmen for our annual Upper Valley Weekend. Ten cyclists met in South Royalton for the new Horse Country Ride which is a variation of a previous route. All the cyclists did the long (53-mile)

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## Trying Terrific Tuesdays

by Sandy Dupuis

There were three different Tuesday bike events that I have been wanting to try for a while now. This year I finally got up the courage to try all three.

I rode Kevin Bessett's Tuesday evening training ride first. I showed up at the Round Church in Richmond in May. There was a group of about 8 to 10 people collecting, no Kevin this particular week. As advertised the pace did get really fast at different points. This group ride will slow down and allow stragglers who get dropped to catch back on. What that means is a weaker rider (like me) will have the opportunity to ride as hard as they can, blow up and get dropped multiple times! The route chosen by the group took us to a neighborhood with a hill that we looped around multiple times. It was a great ride.

For years Andre Sturm, Scott Decker and Chad Phillips have suggested I try a practice Crit. So for some unknown reason, I decided this was the year to do it. Andre puts on a great practice Crit series during the summer. This year between uncooperative weather and road

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## Touring season, part 2

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version which has some serious hills. There were some big black clouds and distant thunder as we returned to our cars but no rain fell. Afterwards, most riders cooled off in various bodies of water ranging from Pat and Tom's pond to Silver Lake and the White River. In the evening we headed to the Worthy Burger where two of us sampled the newest in health food—deep fried bacon in caramel sauce. The burgers were followed by ice cream at Sandy's in Sharon where we were treated to the story of one of the Massachusetts rider's Everest expedition. We later discovered that she is the first Chinese woman and the first Asian-American to have climbed the Seven Summits (the highest point on each continent) and skied to both the North and South Pole.

The following day was cooler for Woodstock Wandering. One rider left us but we were still nine strong with one cyclist doing the long ride and the rest of us sticking to the 42-mile route which, while hilly, had nothing as steep as we experienced the day before. We all enjoyed our stop at the Brownsville General Store which has a really cool train set with a sustainability theme. At the end of the weekend, one of the Massachusetts riders announced that she wanted to move to Vermont. The roads on the Upper Valley rides were in great shape and traffic was minimal. We didn't hear a single car honk their horn over the course of two days.

Also on August 2, Lou Bresee revived the old Monkton Ridge Ride. Twenty-two cyclists attended, six of whom had surnames that started with C. A stiff south wind greeted the cyclists as they headed out but it turned into a tail wind for the return trip which made the hills easier to deal with. All cyclists, including the social riders, did the long route.

On August 9, 14 riders took part in the Triple Ferry Ride (although two opted for a longer route with only two ferries). While this ride didn't feature any live critter sightings, we did see a T-Rex sculpture in New York and a Champ sculpture in South Hero. The path leading to the Causeway in South Hero isn't in great shape but the rest of it is perfectly fine for skinny tires. Although West Shore Road suffered from some washboard surfaces, the view of the lake and the huge multi-colored birdhouse collection made it worthwhile. Several other GMBCers joined us afterwards for a picnic at Auer's Boathouse in Burlington. Sal made delicious burgers with a variety of toppings including bacon, shredded steak, cheese, cooked onions and mushrooms, lettuce, tomatoes and more bacon. Various other club members brought sumptuous desserts and delicious salads. Only one rider (that would be me) took advantage of the water for a dip in Lake Champlain. Personally, I think all rides should end with bacon, Matt's chocolate chip cookies, and swimming.

On a hot and steamy August 16, 14 riders convened in Jeffersonville for the Covered Bridges of Franklin and Lamoille

County. This ride has had some issues in the past and I confess that we had a few again. One of the five cyclists on the long (54-mile) route got two flats early in the ride and two of the nine on the 42-mile loop fell off their bikes: one in the parking lot at our break stop and one while rounding a curve at the very end of the route. Thankfully nobody was injured. This is also a ride where we have occasionally had issues with cycle-phobic residents. That trend continued but thankfully the pick-up truck that rolled coal at us did so from an exhaust pipe rather than a vertical exhaust stack and the verbal abuse we received ("ride single file," "get out of the road" [expletives deleted]) was not hollered from a vehicle but from the porch of a house, despite the fact that we were on a stretch of road with great sight lines that was completely devoid of cars in either direction. We worried the jerk would get in his vehicle and chase us but he was apparently too lazy to do so. When I pre-rode the route in July I encountered a couple walking while pulling a red wagon with potted plants who told me they were taking their tomatoes for a walk. There were no ambulatory vegetables on this ride, but we did see a small bear cross the road between Belvidere and Eden. Most riders jumped in the Lamoille River at the end of the ride and many followed that up with carnivorous treats at the Burger Barn in Jeffersonville.

August 23 started out relatively cool but the heat soon built up for the 15 cyclists embarking on

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***Thanks for your support!***

### Touring season, part 2

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Buck Hollow and Beyond. This was the ride of forgetfulness with one rider forgetting water bottles, another leaving her food in her car and a third leaving a helmet and shoes at home (and then leaving). The heat was enough that when two riders stopped at a closed store looking for additional liquids and saw people at the window of an apartment above, they ended up requesting (and receiving) much needed tap water. Snacks in St. Albans (some healthy, most not) and much needed Gatorade were enjoyed by everyone at the midway point and a number of cyclists changed the end of the route to avoid having to go up Ballard Hill in the heat.

On Saturday, August 29, eight riders convened in Island Pond for Moose Country Meandering on a day that started cool enough for many to wear long sleeves. We had heard rumors of bad pavement on Route 102 but it must have been repaved a few days before we got there.

Not only that, but there was a beautiful two-foot shoulder. Add that to the lack of cars and it was quite glorious. The day heated up a bit and we had a headwind for the last part of the ride but a stop at the Silvio Conte Visitors Center gave us a break before the home stretch. We altered the ending of the ride which put us over 70 miles for the day but eliminated the only part of the route which normally has traffic. The only sour note was a flat tire on a side trip to New Hampshire for food, proving that unless you're a presidential candidate you should stay on the Green Mountain side of the Connecticut River (although the Rendezvous bakery is quite impressive). Afterwards, some went for a swim in Island Pond while others went to the Tiki Bar in Burke, followed by a wonderful pot luck at Pat and Tom's house.

On Sunday, we added four more riders for Willoughby Wanderings. The folks at the Kingdom Trails parking lot gave us weird looks as we arrived with

our skinny tires but they tolerated our presence. Willoughby Wanderings is a shorter ride (48 miles) and has a bit more traffic but you can't beat the scenery with views of Crystal Lake and Lake Willoughby. Again, we were treated to miles of fresh pavement although we were a little disappointed that the fog lines on Route 16 were painted approximately two inches from the edge of the road. Afterwards, a return visit to the Tiki Bar was in order and three riders included a dip in Joe's Pond as part of their drive home. Thankfully, the day stayed overcast so although it was humid, the heat wasn't too bad.

Also on August 29 we had 18 riders closer to home for the Kingsland Bay ride. A mix-up on the website led two riders to arrive at 9:45 instead of 8:45 so our thanks to Holly who waited at the start area to send them on their way on the short (35-mile) route. Four riders did the social version of the ride for 42 miles and three cyclists did the 65-mile route while the rest stuck to the 47-mile version which they extended a bit by substituting Tyler Bridge Road, State Prison Road and Route 116 for Silver Street.

Labor Day Weekend was hot again which probably explains why only 10 riders decided to head out on the Awesome Ausable ride. Six did the long ride while four did a shorter length so they could beat the heat and enjoy the falls at Ausable Chasm. Bagels were consumed in Lake Placid by all the long route riders before they blasted back down to Jay on what was the longest ride ever for one of the cyclists. Riders

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## Touring season, part 2

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**“The ferry had already tooted its horn as the rider crossed the railroad tracks just ahead of an approaching train. The captain had a change of heart and lowered the ramp ... while announcing the rider had to buy beer for the rest of the boat.”**

on the medium route saw a bald eagle but one had her left shifter lock up in a very low gear with only three miles to go. The ferry had already tooted its horn as she crossed the railroad tracks just ahead of an approaching train but the captain had a change of heart and lowered the ramp... while announcing that she had to buy beer for the rest of the boat.

The curse of rain struck again for Jericho Jubilee giving us a total of five rainouts for the season. Century Day was a cool one but the sun began to emerge at the end of the ride which was helpful since we were facing a stiff north wind. It was an odd Century Day since nobody did the regular century: three riders did the double gap and the remaining 18 did the metric century (one of those joined along the way but since he fixed flats for two of his fellow riders, we decided to count him). The first wave of metric riders was joined temporarily by another GMBCer and for a longer period of time by a couple from Canada. We saw a very cool mailbox which was balanced on a surfboard attached to a motorcycle. One sobering note was the fact that the metric century passed by ghost bikes in honor of Richard Tom and Kenneth Najarian: a reminder that our sport is not without its dangers. The good news is virtually all the drivers we encountered were polite and gave us wide berths.

On Saturday, September 26, seven riders set out on Meandres

et Beaux Villages on a sunny but chilly morning. There were some lumps in the roads in St. Armand but things flattened out through Phillipsburg, Mystic (where riders stopped for crepes) and Bedford. One cyclist shortened the ride after Bedford and was able to return to the start by making use of her high school French. The rest of the group carried on through Frelighsburg and up the hill to Pigeon Hill where they discovered that the Canadian border facility had closed at 4:00 p.m., 15 minutes earlier. Pushing the button would not open the big steel gate. Having no idea if the U.S. crossing was manned and not wanting to cause an international incident, they backtracked to St. Armand and were forced to ride the lumpy road to Phillipsburg and the border crossing at Highgate Springs. The group arrived at their cars in time for sunset. Along the way they witnessed a couple of teenagers on an ATV being pursued by sheriffs with blue lights flashing. John reported seeing a lot of cyclists in Quebec who were also enjoying the good road surfaces and low traffic.

The following day, four cyclists headed to the Mad River Valley for Waitsfield and Waterfalls. One rider turned back after the big hill which the riders were forced to take since the bridge that starts the ride was closed. From there it was a beautiful descent into Warren Village and a nice stop at the busy Warren Store where apple galette pastries were the pick of the day. There was a surprising lack of fall color for late September but all agreed it was still a beautiful ride.

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# 2015 Time Trial season summary

by Kevin Bessett

At just under 22 people per event this season, participation was up by about three over last year's average. That's in the right direction, but far below the all-time record

of nearly 30 per event in 2012. That may not sound like a big difference, but it is! There were no incidents with cars and/or rider-crashes to report, although I did have a bit of a scare caused

by a rider who was MIA at the closure of the Basin Harbor event in mid-May. He should have finished 30 minutes before the last rider did, and concern mounted because no one passed him along the way. Club treasurer and time trialist John Bertelsen and I set out in cars in separate directions to locate him; about 50 minutes later, just as twilight was fading, I found him. He hasn't gotten lost since, so my threat of a tracking collar has done its job. It ended well, so all is good.

A new course was used this season that ran on Rt. 108 from Jeffersonville to close to Bakersfield and back. Everyone loved it; it had perfect pavement, wide shoulders, and very little traffic. The series will likely make two visits to it next season.

Speaking of next season, I've reached a point where I need help setting up and tearing down courses (dealing w/the Caution signs and the turnaround cone/sign). Tom Moody hosted John Williams and me to talk about next season, and I think that we have a plan to encourage others to help. Stay tuned.

On the left are the final standings to the championship series. Here is how it works: a rider's fastest average speed at three different courses (Jonesville-Short, Westford, and Smuggler's Notch) are combined to determine an overall average speed, and the rider with the fastest overall average is the

## 2015 Time Trial Championship Series Standings

**Key:** dash (-) indicates not ridden, asterisk (\*), indicates fastest male/female. Bolded names indicate age group winners.

Age Grp	Name	Jsvl-Srt	WstFrd	Smugg	Avg Spd
F25-29	Packer, Ashley	-	-	11.91	
<b>F35-39</b>	<b>Miner, Amy</b>	25.07	24.47	12.88	<b>20.81*</b>
F35-39	Hall, Jessica	22.99	22.49	12.51	19.33
F45-49	Barbic, Dee	-	20.86	11.50	
<b>F55-59</b>	<b>Dupuis, Sandy</b>	21.84	21.37	13.00	<b>18.74</b>
<b>F60-64</b>	<b>Pumo, Dorothy</b>	-	18.68	-	
<b>M15-16</b>	<b>Noel, Sam</b>	24.35	23.31	13.85	<b>20.50</b>
M15-16	Kilburn, Gaelen	25.02	-	-	
M15-16	Moody, Will	-	-	13.13	
<b>M17-18</b>	<b>Willsey, Cooper</b>	26.43	26.67	16.14	<b>23.08</b>
<b>M19-24</b>	<b>Hyde, Paxton</b>	23.71	23.70	14.69	<b>20.70</b>
M30-34	Cochran, Eric	-	21.56	-	
M30-34	Oakley, James	22.78	-	14.14	
M30-34	Osler, Evan	-	-	13.68	
<b>M35-39</b>	<b>Bailey, Bobby</b>	28.26	27.98	16.07	<b>24.10</b>
M35-39	Hall, Oliver	26.40	25.77	16.20	22.79
<b>M40-44</b>	<b>Francisco, Steve</b>	28.49	28.40	16.72	<b>24.54*</b>
M40-44	Hanson, Whitney	25.30	24.67	14.10	21.36
<b>M45-49</b>	<b>Willsey, Jamie</b>	25.18	24.30	14.45	<b>21.31</b>
M45-49	Hammond, Marc	25.43	24.24	13.02	20.90
M45-49	Hubbard, Taylor	26.29	26.26	-	
M45-49	Duniho, Kevin	25.93	25.08	-	
M45-49	Bessett, Kevin	-	-	15.14	
M45-49	Noel, Tim	22.25	-	13.01	
M45-49	Orlando, John	21.09	21.40	-	
<b>M50-54</b>	<b>Znamierowski, Steve</b>	25.10	24.29	13.29	<b>20.89</b>
M50-54	Witmer, John	23.88	23.96	13.48	20.44
M50-54	Moody, Tom	22.83	-	12.68	
M50-54	Sturm, Andre	24.09	22.58	-	
M50-54	Oehmig, Dunbar	22.29	-	-	
M50-54	Settel, Tony	-	26.52	-	
<b>M55-59</b>	<b>Beliveau, Phil</b>	25.19	25.72	14.40	<b>21.77</b>
M55-59	Anderson, Brook	23.08	22.62	12.34	19.35
M55-59	Le Coz, Chris	21.63	21.26	11.36	18.08
M55-59	Cleveland, Tom	-	21.96	-	
M55-59	Messier, Steve	-	-	13.32	
M55-59	Gardner, Doug	23.67	-	14.74	
M55-59	Martell, Lary	-	-	11.79	
<b>M60-64</b>	<b>Lesage, Al</b>	23.50	23.41	13.10	<b>20.00</b>
M60-64	White, David	23.24	23.04	13.28	19.85
M60-64	Van Den Noort, Gordon	22.03	22.07	11.84	18.65
<b>M65-69</b>	<b>Rath, David</b>	25.04	24.35	13.81	<b>21.07</b>
M65-69	Bertelsen, John	21.48	20.45	10.14	17.36
<b>M70-74</b>	<b>Williams, John</b>	21.56	20.84	11.53	<b>17.98</b>
M70-74	Stuart, John	21.44	20.70	11.21	17.78
M70-74	Davies, Jordan	19.04	18.05	-	
T65-69	Belcher D, Tier D	14.96	-	4.65	

*continued on p. 11*

## Touring season, part 2

*continued from p. 9*


Our unofficial rides started on a brisk October 4. Seven cyclists headed from Williston to Waterbury via the Duxbury Road and a little bit of dirt, and on their return sampled some of the new pavement and wide shoulders of Route 2. The following week, 13 riders, including seven from the social group, headed from South Burlington to Charlotte on a chilly day and enjoyed the food and music that preceded the annual East Charlotte Tractor Parade. October 18 was a chilly day for cycling with 10 am temperatures in the low 30s and intermittent snow showers so riders decided the day was better suited for other activities. One week later, three hardy women gathered in South Burlington. Undeterred by a 15 mph south wind, we lowered our heads and pedaled furiously down to Charlotte via Hinesburg. Along the way, some brief glimpses of sunshine led us to hope we would remain dry but that was not the case. The south wind turned slightly west as we did and soon light sprinkles turned to

legitimate rain. The precipitation let up just in time for the wind to shift from west to northwest for the last stretch on Dorset Street although it wasn't as strong as the morning blasts. The three hardy souls—while questioning whether other less laudatory adjectives might be more appropriate—were glad they'd suited up.

This was not a good year for the touring section. Yes, we had some great rides. We had one completely new route and a few reworked old ones, as well as five new ride leaders. The continued addition of Social Rides made our club friendlier to those who prefer a more leisurely pace and made life easier for the “regular” ride leaders. We had a whopping five rain outs this year which I believe is a record, and a number of rides were held on very hot days. However, even on the days when the weather was good, our numbers were way down. We had only two rides with more than 30 people and only four with more than 20. The Century, which generally has a minimum of 40 riders, had only 21.

We're not sure why our rides weren't well attended this year. We think part of it may be due to the cycling deaths during the

**“Social rides average about 12 mph while the others range from 13-18. There's no reason why those who prefer a faster pace can't join us as well. If you have any thoughts about how to increase ridership, please let [Phyl] know!”**

early part of the season. Many of us knew Richard Tom and some knew Kenneth Najarian. We've also noted that we're not attracting younger riders to our touring rides and are hoping to find a way to remedy that situation; perhaps by using social media a bit more. There are definitely some misperceptions about our touring rides. Some don't join us because they think we're too slow while others think we're too fast. The truth is that the Social Rides average about 12 mph while the others range from 13 to 18 and there is no reason why those who prefer a faster pace can't join us, as well. If you have thoughts about how to increase ridership, please let me know. See you next season. 

## Time trials

*continued from p. 10*

winner of their age group. Non-club members can ride these courses, but only GMBC members can compete for the awards. Congratulations to all of the winners, and to Amy Miner and Steve Francisco for being the fastest overall.

With that concludes another season. I offer a hearty “good job” to everyone who raced in any time trials. You may not realize it, but you could have been home watching reruns of Friends episodes! Thanks to all who helped on event day; this series wouldn't happen without your help. Looking forward to seeing all next spring. Think snow.





# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SPINACH

**or is it the epo? how to wrangle a car tire when your preferred vehicle is a bike (hint: it takes some help)**

by Michael Coleman, Michael Gretkowski & John Williams

*John Williams organized a VP ride starting from the Georgia P&R (Exit 18) on October 24, 2015. The weather was cool and a bit blustery. The route was approximately 50 miles through the Fairfax & Fletcher Hills to Cambridge, Jeffersonville, and return. Prior to the ride, John stopped for coffee at Maplefields and also to add air to the front right tire (of his car!). Alas—the tire valve blew up and said tire was kaput!*

Nothing to do but to abandon my car and deal with it later, as ride time was imminent. So I pedaled over to the P&R, where five of us including Mike Coleman, Mike Gretkowski, Dave Havens, and new GMBC member Bill (in Swiss kit), layered up for the ride. I related my woes about the blown tire on my car. Soon we departed out on Rt. 104A (recently paved) and then into the pastoral beauty of Fairfax and beyond. As we crested the hills into Fletcher, the ridgelines of Mt. Mansfield and Smuggler's Notch became abundantly apparent and beautiful. My mind was not at all on my tire.

In Jeffersonville we decided not to do the Smuggs climb—several of us had pre-winter chores or other commitments to return to. And I had my flat tire to deal with. The return trip was good, although as the south wind increased, we experienced some exciting side-push. Dave exited the ride near his home in Milton

and the rest of us continued up the North Road, passing the Georgia Mt. wind turbines and scenic Lake Arrowhead. Back at the P&R we congratulated each other on the great ride and I returned to my awaiting flat tire. Mike G. and Mike C. indicated that they would stop by to see how I was doing. Lucky for me!

When I got back to my car, the tire was still flat. I had never changed a tire on my Mazda 3. I found the jack and the dinky little nut-removing wrench. I locked the wrench on to one of the tire nuts—and discovered there was no way I could have loosened any of the nuts with that tool. Soon Mike Coleman arrived with a cross bar he keeps in his car (he also gave me one he keeps as a spare!). While I watched, Mike was miraculously able to loosen all but one of the nuts. Mike Gretkowski soon arrived. We tried a two-man torque situation on each side of the bar wrench on the remaining unforgiving nut. It did not budge as the cross bar

flexed ominously! Then Mike Gretkowski and I realized there was a tire shop within view so we began walking in that direction to see whether we could get help there. As we walked away, we suddenly heard Mike Coleman exclaim: "I got it!" I don't know how in the world he did it, but here is the amusing dialogue that followed (by e-mail):

**JW:** *Guys: Thanks for the great ride today and especially thanks for the help getting my car back on the road (made it home okay!). I think Mike Coleman swallowed a can of spinach when we weren't looking because for that final nut he did a Popeye-esque effort to break it free. Or maybe it was the EPO! Awesome riding with you.*


**MC:** *John: You're quite welcome! I'm glad you made it home without the wheel falling off! Little known fact: after an investigation by Clean Animated Characters of America (CACA), it was found that Popeye's cans of spinach were indeed laced*

*continued on p. 13*

with EPO, as long suspected. Popeye is now under a lifetime ban from cartoon reruns and “Whack-A-Mole” competitions and is being sued for fraudulent cartoon activities. Devoted fans and readers of his book “It’s not about the Spinach” are heartbroken. His creators expressed extreme disappointment in Popeye’s turn to saving people in distress by dishonest means, something they never planned. He came clean on Oprah, but didn’t seem sincere. Wimpy, whose hamburgers have been found to be clean, has been vindicated after years of being looked down upon as the weakling in the long running series. He has been spotted together with Olive Oyl, winning her heart with his honest cartoon performances.

**JW:** Great story!

**MG:** “I keep telling everyone that Coleman is a renaissance man—add storyteller to the long list of super natural abilities! See you guys Wednesday.”

It’s great to have friends like these along on a VP Ride—with or without the spinach! We’ve had many spectacular rides this season. 



**VP Ride, top of Whiteface. A little spinach doesn’t hurt when making this climb, either!** (Photo courtesy of John Williams).

At home on the same old roads, it’s easy to turn your rides into heads-down timetrials, or a tour-of-the-rear-wheel-of-the-bike-in-front-of-you. But biking should be about seeing your surroundings. If not, then we might as well be on indoor trainers.

A big city may sound like biking dystopia, but as anyone on two wheels should know, biking is by far the best way to see an area, as it combines the mobility of a car with the freedom of a pedestrian. A car isolates you from your surroundings and takes you from one tourist spot to another. A bike integrates you with your surroundings and teaches that the best part of any city is all of the things between the tourist destinations.

We were staying at the conference hotel near the base of Mont Royal, which just happened to be housing two of the women’s World Cup soccer teams at the time. I was struck by the fact that women soccer players don’t have the exaggerated different-species dimensions of football or basketball players. They are normal in all directions. But they stand out with a distinct not-to-be-messed-with physicality that makes it clear that they could take care of themselves in a pinch.

*continued on p. 15*

## A “bike-about” in Montreal

by John Orlando

I’m listening to a guy talk about a cell phone app he created that takes a user’s music playlist, catalogues the songs according to beat, and then picks a song that matches their running effort. It draws from studies correlating ideal music beat with effort. Not surprisingly, ideal beat increases with effort, topping out at a surprising 156 beats per minute. I wonder how many songs even exist at that level.

The problem, I point out, is that it uses the runner’s ground speed, a poor proxy for effort; what happens if he or she runs uphill, or gets on a treadmill, or a bike? Why not use heart rate instead, which is more useful to bikers?

But the bigger issue is that this talk has nothing to do with distance education, which is ostensibly the topic of the conference. But that’s OK, since the conference is mostly an excuse for getting my family up to Montreal for some biking.

Montreal is a good opportunity for a “bike about,” a ride with no other purpose than to tour an area.

**“Montreal is a good opportunity for a ‘bike-about,’ a ride with no other purpose than to tour an area ... biking should be about seeing your surroundings.”**

my calf twinged just a little. This reminded me that for two days before the triathlon, my calf hurt quite a bit, which is a symptom of a blood clot in the leg. Middle-of-the-night panicky Googling of deadly medical conditions is rarely a good idea. But that's what I did, then woke my husband, and went to the ER.

Long story short(er), several hours later I was diagnosed with a blood clot in my leg and multiple blood clots in my lungs. I was started on a Heparin IV and admitted. Fuck. This was supposed to be my biking year. In addition to one or two triathlons, and biking in Amsterdam and Belgium with my husband, I was planning on doing some GMBC time trials, completing my first *and* second century rides as a fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and I was even considering trying a GMBC practice crit. All came to a screeching halt.

My first question was whether we could still go to Europe in 12 days. The doctor said maybe, but from the look in her eyes, I suspected that the answer was probably "no" (and I was right). My second question was whether I could ride my bike. People who have blood clots take blood thinner drugs, to prevent more clots and to help the body dissolve the clots that are already there. But people on blood thinners are at a higher risk of bleeding. External bleeding is no big deal—you see the blood, you stop the blood. The concern is internal bleeding, such as in the torso or head. A head injury

that would cause a concussion in most people could cause a deadly brain bleed in someone on blood thinners.

Pamphlets about blood thinners (a.k.a. Coumadin) weren't a great help. They said patients should protect themselves against injury, such as by wearing a helmet when riding a bike. But the accompanying photo showed an elderly couple happily riding cruiser bikes through a freakily perfect and abandoned subdivision. It wasn't clear what the medical opinion was on trying to break the speed limit on the Spear St. hill, or biking 100 miles in one day.

Everyone basically said, "You have to decide for yourself. If you do ride, be careful. Listen to your body." Well, which part of my body? As I began to feel better, and yearned to get back on my bike, my brain might recognize the risk of biking to work during rush hour, and tell me to just not ride for the 6 months I'm on blood thinners. But my heart screamed at me to ride. I agreed not to go "fast," so no more triathlons this year, no crits, no time trials. I originally agreed not to bike to work (since it's rush hour) and not to ride alone, but I abandoned those mostly-self-imposed restrictions fairly

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## Tuesdays *cont. from p. 6*

construction work, Andre had to cancel three of the six scheduled Crits. I was able to attend two of the three that were held. I'd like to thank all those who rode with the "C" group as coaches / mentors. I do recall Bobby Bailey, Marc Hammond and Chad Phillips riding beside me and providing much-needed coaching. I know there were many others. I'll always remember Bobby's advice as we navigated around the downhill left curve: "Sandy, no brakes."

Bobby Bailey scheduled two Tuesday Night Worlds (TNWs) prior to GMSR in my Training Peaks plan. I remember logging in to Training Peaks and seeing that TNW was scheduled and thinking, "oh, nooooooooo." Then I read Bobby's comments: "This will be demoralizing, but totally worth it." Well now, that was encouraging. Then I remembered that I have always wanted to give TNW a try. The benefit of TNW is you know that once you are dropped, you are out. This highly motivates a cyclist to put in multiple maximum efforts to stay with the group as

*continued on p. 15*



long as possible. Yes, I did get dropped in both TNW rides. The interesting part for me was on both occasions, once dropped I looked around and I was not alone—others had been dropped. We would form our own sub group and continue the ride.

I hope next year I will be able to participate in all three of these challenging Tuesday cycling events. These events were so worth it.

## Membership Renewals

*It's time!* The GMBC depends on the continued support of members like you. Now that it's 2016, please consider renewing today. Visit [thegmbc.com](http://thegmbc.com) and click "Join GMBC" for details.

We left the hotel and immediately climbed the gravel road on the east side of Mont Royal, which seemed preferable to the busy main road. This begins a network of hard-packed gravel roads that are easy to ride on road bikes. We made sure to hit the lookout at Chalet du Mont-Royal for the obligatory selfie, and then came back down to head east on the Rue Rachel bike lane to the Botanical Garden and Olympic Park. While the route brings frequent stops at corners, it took us through some hip neighborhoods worth seeing.

After riding through the Garden and Olympic Park, we headed south over the massive Pont Jacques-Cartier bridge to Ile Sainte-Helene island. This is a good place to park if you are just coming up for a day. From here you can tour the roads that wind through the park, making sure to hit the Biosphere. While the steel Biosphere doesn't seem to have much bio about it, there are some pretty cool photos in the front courtyard of various natural phenomena that are worth seeing.

From here we took a short bridge across to the sister island, where we found ourselves on a Formula One course! Yes, this course is open to bikes when not in use, and the bike path actually uses part of the course.

After years of insisting he was not a serious biker, my son suddenly drilled it and forced me to chase him through multiple high speed laps, diving in and out of corners and pit stops. The experience brought back memories of my criterium days,

sans the occasional sound akin to a dump truck unloading scrap metal, followed by empirical evidence that a bike will indeed track the same parabolic curve through the air expected of any ground-launched projectile.

We continued on the bike path to Pont Victoria Bridge, which took us back across the river. It is best to treat this tricky section like downtown Boston and just put your faith in the signs. Logic will only get you lost.

Once on the other side we followed the river up and down for miles, exploring the various inlets and outlets to tour dams, docks, parks, and other features. Remember that the journey is the point, not the destination. We stopped at the Science Center café on the water for lunch, then noodled around the streets of Old Montreal until eventually turning back towards the hotel.

Consider adding some "bike abouts" to your repertoire. 

quickly. Being overly-logical at times, I explained to my husband that having another person with me would only help in a set of extremely unlikely conditions:

- I'd have to crash. ~~I've never crashed.~~ I've only crashed once.
- I'd have to be injured so badly that I couldn't call 911 myself, with the phone I now carry in my jersey.
- I'd have **not** to be injured so badly that I'd die from my injuries anyway (because, remember, we're looking at instances where having another person there would **help**).
- It would have to be a crash that either didn't involve a car, or where the car driver didn't call for help (i.e. hit and run).
- It would have to be a crash where a driver didn't quickly see me lying on the road and come to my aid.

Now, don't get me wrong; I like riding with other people sometimes. But it can be tough to coordinate bike commutes. So after buying some higher-tread tires and a new rear-view mirror for my road bike, and a Road ID bracelet and a cool new high-viz jersey, I rode alone. And it was glorious.

Some people would play it safe and just not ride. Someone might say that I should just be happy to be alive (pulmonary embolisms are often deadly). I am happy to be alive. And so I want to live.


*“So, through headwinds, cold weather, flat tires and sore muscles, I ride ... because I can't not do this. I'm not the fastest, and this year I've learned that that's okay.”*

None of us knows how long we have left on this Earth to ride our bikes, so I want to ride. I crave it. Biking to work starts and ends my day right. As I wrote on Facebook after my first post-hospital ride, on the Stowe bike path, “I can't not do this.”

This will certainly sound cliché, but when something you love is taken away from you, it is even more beautiful when you get it back. After I started commuting alone again, I'd sometimes think, “I'm riding my *bike*! On the *road*! By *myself*! I'm such a badass.” For now, my priorities must change a little, from eagerly checking to see if I got any PRs on Strava, to just eagerly being on my bike, and soaking it all in.

I'm on the road (literally) to recovery. I did 60 miles of the charity ride in July, and plan on doing the full 104 miles in late November (the JDRF ride is part of the Tour de Tucson). My husband was worried about me doing my first century so soon after a major medical issue, and while I'm still taking blood thinners. So I asked my doctors. They said the distance isn't an issue—just don't crash. Two days later, I crashed, for the first time ever. We were doing the Tour de Farms with two other couples. One of the guys would occasionally

put a hand on his girlfriend's back to give her a boost on the hills. So my husband decided to do the same. But I had just gotten a new, big, rearview mirror, and he has bar ends, and he got too close, and over we went. We were going slowly, and luckily I landed on a grassy shoulder. No road rash, just a colorful fist-sized bruise on my thigh. This was a good reminder that I need to keep some space around me in the Tour de Tucson—an event that draws over 9,000 cyclists!

So, through headwinds, cold weather, flat tires, and sore muscles, I ride. Because there are also gorgeous views; the perfection of getting to work, getting a workout, and being outside all at the same time; the beautiful mechanical machine that is a bike; the feel of the wheels on the road; and the occasional PR on Strava reminding you that you are improving even if it doesn't feel like it. Because I can't not do this. I'm not the fastest, and this year I've learned that that's OK. What's important is that I *am*. I am alive, and I am a cyclist. 



# RIDING THE RIDGE

**an end-to-end tour of the Blue Ridge Parkway with velo Girl Rides in September**

by Amy Otten

*With over 50,000 feet of climbing over less than 500 miles, the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina is on many cyclists' bucket lists. While sometimes overshadowed by more dramatic places, the relentless hills deliver beautiful scenery and a lasting sense of camaraderie among those who ride it together.*

What Eastern destination has over 50,000 feet of climbing in less than 500 miles? It's sometimes overshadowed by more dramatic places, but it's also on many folks' bucket list. That would be Blue Ridge Parkway, a 470-mile National Park in Virginia and North Carolina. Last spring, Ralph was perusing the internet and found at least two companies offering an end-to-end ride of the parkway. A little more research and a couple

of phone calls and we took the last two spots this September with Velo Girl Rides.

We spent the summer thinking we were getting ready for our trip—several 70+ mile days, back to back days, a self-contained trip climbing to Lake Placid and some notches or gaps. Ralph analyzed climbs—there were none more than 8%—so we knew we had some long climbs coming (10 and 13 miles). The trip turned

out to be much harder than we had anticipated.

At 6:30 am on a cool North Carolina morning, we met our guides and most of the other riders. Velo Girl Jen Billstrom and her husband David packed our bikes in the bike trailer and the rest of us climbed bleary eyed into the van to start the long drive back to Virginia and the start of

*continued on p. 18*



**The author, at one of many vistas.** (Photo courtesy of Amy Otten).



the Blue Ridge. Along the way, we picked up two more riders (for a total of 10) and had some lunch. But it was 2:30 before we were on our bikes and ready to ride 45 miles. Yes, it was a long day and the hills seemed harder than they usually might, but after a shower and an excellent dinner at a restaurant featuring local foods we felt much better.

Day 2, we rode south from where we started almost to Roanoke. This was our longest mileage day (70+) and it included a 13-mile climb in the middle. Riding along at 5 mph, we figured we wouldn't be done until about 7 pm. Fortunately, the day included more descending (9,000) than ascending (7,200), so the rest of the miles went a little faster. Whew! If the uphill is long, that makes the downhill long.

For the next couple of days, we climbed the hills a little easier and began to enjoy the camaraderie of the others, the weather and the great food. David loves to cook and has done research into what will keep cyclists healthy and moving. Every day was a lunch adventure as he fed us wraps, healthy snacks, salty things and lots to drink. This, while sitting in a chair under an awning. A little different than our usual touring group stop!

We spent the third and fourth nights in the amazing Virginia town of Floyd, known for having just one stoplight. The "amazing" part of Floyd is that every Friday evening the whole town turns into a bluegrass festival. A headline concert in a hall, but

also impromptu groups all over the little downtown. Tourists and locals come from all over to hear the local musicians, including an 8 year old and a banjo player with a "Bernie" button on his hat.


On the fifth day, we entered North Carolina and passed the half-way point (mile 235); as always, at the top of a hill. We talked to a group of local hawk-watchers, who were counting migration numbers and were happy to share their binoculars and scopes. We began to enjoy the company of the back of the pack, including Jim and Sally from South Carolina and Brick from New Jersey. Brick kept a humorous blog of his adventures and we began to look forward to reading it every day.

After a day of rest in Boone, NC, we were ready to tackle the hardest day of the trip—about 7,400 feet to climb in 60 miles and almost continuous climbing after lunch. We had beautiful weather, spectacular views, good food and great company. At the end of the 60 miles, we had an option to climb another 4 miles to the top Mt. Mitchell, the highest point in the East. We were exhausted, so we didn't do it, but the others did. That night we stayed high on the Blue Ridge in a resort town called Little Switzerland, with gorgeous views from our hotel window.

What goes up must come down and our next to last day included an almost 20 mile downhill to the Folk Art Center just outside of Asheville. The Folk Art Center is a collective of local and native artists. We didn't really have time to look at everything before it was time to be off, but

if we're ever in the area again, we'll go back. After a nice break, guess what? Back up to Mt. Pisgah—about 2,900 feet above us. We spent the night at a bed and breakfast owned by a couple who loves gourmet cooking. It was a bittersweet evening, partly because the weather forecast for the last day was pretty dismal.

We woke up to pouring rain, but everyone gamely put on their raingear and warm layers. We still had more than 55 miles to go, including the highest point on the Parkway. Riding in the rain isn't much fun, especially when it's cold and then gets very windy. More than one rider remarked about the water running uphill. The only way to stay warm was to ride uphill; the downhills were brutal and everyone got slower and slower as we got colder. Leader Jen had said she'd only called a ride once before, but she stopped us all at the high point and said it was simply too dangerous to stay out. We took turns changing in a tiny trailer and then got warm in the van. How disappointing! But everyone agreed it was the right call. So we have to go back for the last 38 miles someday.

We've had much more challenging single day rides (e.g., 77 miles straight into the wind in ND; loaded over the WV ridges) but this was overall the hardest trip we've ever done. The hills seem reasonable but they're relentless, with virtually no flat spot on the entire Parkway. Fortunately, Velo Girl Rides gave us great food, lodging and fun and we met others to share the experience. A big one for our bucket lists for sure. 


# Advocacy Update

by Viola Chu

I just wanted to update everyone on goings-on in the advocacy department. I recently met with Emily Boedecker, the energetic newish director of Local Motion, to discuss ways that GMBC can work with Local Motion to achieve common goals. Like all of us, Emily wants to see a world where walking and biking are safe and obvious choices. To get there, all of us who believe in non-motorized use of roadways need to band together.

As many of you know, the Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition, the statewide organization that advocated for bike/pedestrian legislation, merged with Local Motion about a year ago. This means that in addition to all of the advocacy and education programs and projects that Local Motion currently implements, Local Motion will also be the principal force behind bicycle and pedestrian related legislation.

Local Motion has set a number of legislative priorities for the rapidly upcoming legislative session and is working on the specifics of the bills to be introduced. We are fortunate that others are willing to mire themselves in legalese, but it does mean that when they are ready to introduce legislation to the state house, the rest of us should all be prepared to support the bills in any way possible. So yes, phone calls, emails, trips to the state house, attendance at public meetings, etc., to let those who make policy and laws know how

many of us really, really want a bike friendly community. I will try to let everyone know in timely fashion what is happening and how we can help. In the meanwhile, enjoy the rest of 2015 and let's hope for a safe and productive 2016. 

## Membership Renewals

*It's time!* The GMBC depends on the continued support of members like you. Now that it's 2016, please consider renewing today. Visit [thegmbc.com](http://thegmbc.com) and click "Join GMBC" for details.

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## Schedule of Publications and Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Approx. Drop Date
Winter 2016	January 22, 2016*	February 29, 2016
Spring 2016	May 1, 2016	May 31, 2016
Summer 2016	August 1, 2016	August 31, 2016
Fall 2016	November 1, 2016	November 30, 2016

*\*N.B. I will be out of the country from February 9 - 19th; hence the earlier-than-usual deadline!*



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