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I SEE A TREND brewing in our sport and it does concern me. I speak with dozens of event organizers and we've all noticed that a lot more young folks are signing up for competitive events that might include bike races and triathlons, however fewer young cyclists are signing up for the non-competitive events, day bike rides or multi-day tours.

Many folks enter this sport for various reasons. For me and many others who really got into bicycling decades ago, it was the opportunity to get out and explore places under our own power. I remember going on weekend long bike touring events sometimes carrying my own camping gear. Living on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., at least once a year I'd load up my bike, head over to Union Station, and catch an overnight train to someplace in Vermont, or New Hampshire. I'd spend two or three days wandering the mountains and valleys of New England and catch a night train back to DC from another train stop. I'd alight Union Station early Monday morning, just in time for a quick shower and then off to work.

In today's rush, rush world it seems fewer cyclists take the leisure time to, in the words of the Travelocity gnome "stop and smell the roses."

At the Tour de Frederick bicycling weekend, August 14-15, which my wife and I started with the Boys &

Girls Club of Frederick County some six years ago, we decided to make registration very appealing to young riders. We lowered the registration fee to a nominal 5 bucks. However event director Carole Heine told me a couple of days ago that of the hundreds who have registered for this year's weekend NOT ONE young person has registered. I hear similar stories from other event organizers and that worries me.

Trust me when I tell you there is little else as pleasurable in life than spending time with your kid riding a bike with no pressure to be anywhere anytime soon. It's time for you to learn about your kids, listen to them talk about nothing or everything. Sometimes it's the absolute most meaningless conversations with them that stand out most.

Don't blow it. Get your kids on their bikes and spend some time listening to them. You'll never regret it.

Happy trails,



Neil Sandler
Editor & Publisher

ON THE COVER

The Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay, offers cyclists in the mid-Atlantic some of the finest, quietest roadways to enjoy. Read why our Baltimore author Ron Cassie escapes there as often as possible in this month's cover story.

page 6



SUMMER 2015

Touring • Racing • Off-Road
Recreation • Triathlon • Commuting

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BLUE HIGHWAYS, HISTORY, AND HERONS

Dorchester County isn't far, but much of it's from another time

by **RON CASSIE**

I'm a daily bike commuter in Baltimore and love exploring Charm City, and other cities, on two wheels. I also enjoy riding out in the horse country of northern Baltimore County with the Baltimore Bicycling Club on weekends, look forward to the Civil War Century, and have twice tackled the C&O Canal and Great Allegheny Passage from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh. I even tackle a little mountain biking once and awhile.



BUT IF I FIND MYSELF in need of a genuine yet quick escape—I toss my bike into the back of my pick up and sneak away for a couple of days on the Eastern Shore.

Specifically, I head to Dorchester County whenever possible. From where I live, it's less than a two-hour drive (about the same from Washington, D.C.) to Cambridge, the county seat. It's just enough of a drive to put some distance between me and the daily grind, but not too far that I'm beat by the time I reach Cambridge. Chesapeake Bay nature and wildlife remains alive down there, as does the county's incredible history—it was formed in 1669—and most importantly, the traditional culture carries on among its rivers, vast farm and marshlands, and working oyster and crabbing boats.

Like a lot folks in the Maryland, D.C. and Northern Virginia area, I imagine, once I'm across the Bay Bridge, with the workweek in my rear view mirror, I can practically feel my cortisol levels dropping. And there are tons of great biking options as soon as you get over the bridge—Kent Island, for example, now has 28 miles of bike trails mapped out. The Baltimore Bicycle Club also hosts a very popular Kent

County Spring Fling weekend every year and heading south, Talbot County offers a myriad of terrific rides as well, from St. Michael's to Tilghman Island, plus treks around Easton and Oxford.

Dorchester County is one of my favorite escapes. It's quiet. For one thing: Dorchester County is the second or third-largest county in the state in terms of land mass—depending on what source you believe—but only has a population of 32,000. You can easily disappear down its rural roads and bay byways and just spend a day looking out for deer and great blue herons.

My two favorite rides actually start at the same place—the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge visitor's center. There is parking and bathrooms there, which is a plus, of course, but that's only part of it. The first route is as simple as gets, just a three-turn, 45-mile, round-trip loop down to Hooper's Island. It's a step back in time riding to Hooper's Island, with just a few historic churches, a classic general store, and a beloved local restaurant—Old Salty's—along the way.

The bridge to lower Hooper's Island is surrounded by water on both sides and most likely you'll run



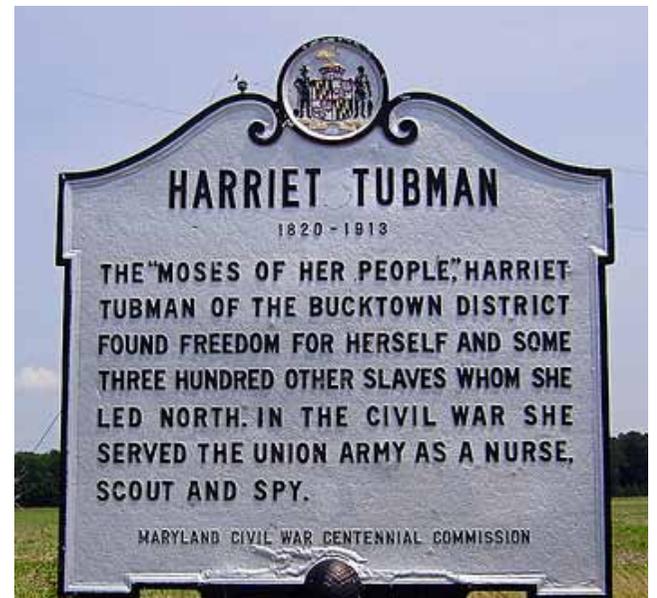
across a few fisherman, but little else. It's often windy, sure, so what? If you catch the sun setting in the west, you won't ever want to turn back.

My second favorite ride is the 25-mile paved loop around the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. The roads in and around Blackwater Refuge are flat and near sea level, covering a unique marsh setting. After a heavy rain, water may accumulate on some local roads, so it's good to be aware of the weather, and also bring insect repellent during the summer. I've only tackled the bike loop in the spring and fall—dry weather and no bugs—and both experiences have proved memorable.

From both the upstairs viewing areas in the visitor's center, and from the bike saddle, Blackwater is an amazing bird-watching opportunity. It's acclaimed as one of the best spots for seeing bald eagles in the Mid-Atlantic region and I saw about 10 on my last visit, not to mention a dozen blue herons, several ospreys, and a flock or more than 60 pelicans. Unless you're pushing for a hard-core workout, I'd suggest putting a pair of binoculars in a backpack for this trip.

Like most of the counties today on the Eastern Shore, Dorchester County has put together an excellent cycling guide, featuring eight rides, which can be ordered by mail or picked up at the visitor's center in Cambridge.

I have to give a shout out to two other routes, too, both included on the county's cycling map. The





first is the 57.5-mile Eagleman Ironman Triathlon course—a gorgeous ride that starts along the Choptank River and follows the western coast of the county before turning inwards and circling back north. The second is the 32-mile Hurlock to East New Market loop, which starts at North Dorchester High School. It's a comfortable, counter-clockwise, three-

turn journey that doesn't look much on the map, but in person is full of pleasant surprises—like the small towns of Secretary and Hurlock, and the pleasant roads named Cabin Creek, Old Stage Coach, and Suicide Bridge.

I've also got to add that the riding and proximity to the water and wildlife—while the major reasons I visit

Dorchester County—aren't the only reasons I keep returning. The other thing that keeps bringing me back is Cambridge's emerging downtown. Whether you stay at the local resort hotel, the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay, a motel, campground, or B&B—and there are several to choose from—I always make time for a walk downtown during the day.



VIDEO OUTLINES STATE OF CYCLING IN ARLINGTON

by CHARLES PEKOW

If your community is taking large strides – or pedal strokes – to become a great place to ride, why not document it on film? Upload it to the Internet. Show it at theaters and conventions. Arlington, Virginia has done just that. It produced a half-hour video called BikeSwell, documenting in very clear pictures the state of bicycling in the county.



NEAR THE BEGINNING, it states that officials “decided to become the premier city on the East Coast for biking.” (The film continually refers to Arlington as a city, which is technically inaccurate – it’s a county.)

The BikeSwell name, explains Bike Arlington Program Manager Chris Eatough, plays on “groundswell.” Arlington has seen a bikeswell of support for riding. The film premiered at a sold-out night at the Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse and was shown at the Bike Summit in March in D.C. sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). If you missed those showings, you can find the documentary on YouTube.

“Our chief of commuter services is always telling us we should document the good things we are doing,” Eatough, who also writes a periodic column on bike commuting for SPOKES Magazine, explained in an interview. “Video is a great way to tell that story and bring in people and emotions.” The project cost the county about \$30,000.

In addition to showing riders on the trails, children learning to ride and drivers asked for their perspectives, the story shows how everyone from the County Board on down needs to get involved to make a community bike-friendly, particularly in a place like Arlington with no room to build more roads.

The three-person county Bike Arlington office deals

with non-infrastructure ways to promote cycling, through marketing and outreach. But all government agencies, businesses and community groups need to participate.

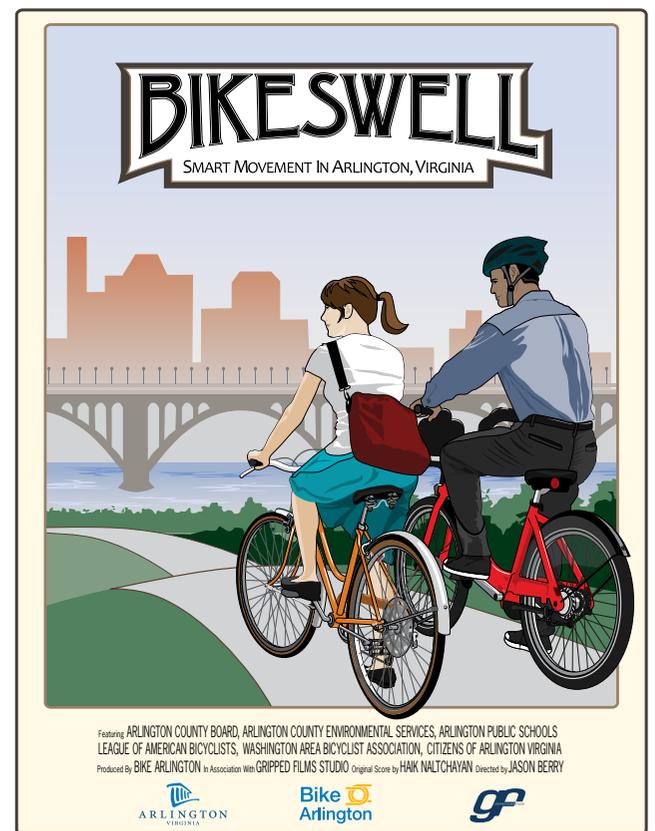
“Our philosophy is that everyone has a part to play and you don’t have to have the word ‘bike’ in your job description to get involved,” Eatough told SPOKES.

Even a spokesperson for the AAA is interviewed to say “it is not as though we have divergent needs and views that don’t ever come together.”

BikeSwell takes a look at an ongoing controversy about placing a bikepath along Washington Boulevard that would require taking down some trees in a county with not many wooded areas left.

Other than that, while the documentary makes the case for bicycling, it does not get into a lot of specifics about the future. It paints a sunny picture of riders on streets and trails but almost all during daylight hours. Only one brief snippet shows rain. And no snow. Why? It was filmed last year and unlike the latest go-round, “we didn’t have much snow that winter,” Eatough explains.

So, how is Arlington doing in achieving its goals? In 2011, LAB awarded it a silver rank as a bicycle friendly community (a rank below gold, platinum and the nascent diamond category that no one has yet achieved).



LAB judges were impressed with the diverse (parks, transportation, bike shops, etc.) make-up of the bicycle advisory committee, the complete streets plan, local advocacy and training about bicycling for county engineers and planning. LAB also liked the requirement that all new development include bike parking and the quality and quantity of parking around the county. The judges were also impressed with the large number of on- and off-road bikepaths, as well as the Safe Routes to School (SRS) program.

But to get a higher rank, the county needs to further implement its bike plan and add more bike lanes on arterial streets, LAB’s evaluation says. LAB also wants Arlington to increase its education both for adults and for children by offering SRS in all elementary, middle and high schools. It also wants it to expand Bikeshare and increase the percentage of people who bike to work, noting that figures show more people commute by bike across the river in Washington than in Arlington.

“We’ve done quite a bit since 2011,” Eatough responds. “We take their feedback to heart and are working on all those elements.” The county is rolling out protected bike lanes (cycletracks) and adding bike lanes to arterial streets. Last fall, it hired a fulltime SRS coordinator. All schools participate in biannual bike/ped events, though they don’t all yet feature SRS. And a new committee is working on improving biking and walking to school.

As to biking to work, Eatough questions the reliability of data (as have others). “There are some very general national surveys that the league can use. But they are filled with flaws and errors,” he says. While the surveys may ask people who live or work in a community if they commute by bike, they don’t give the county credit for people who ride to their jobs through Arlington (such as from Fairfax County to Washington via the Custis Trail), Eatough notes.

While the county does some education, a problem the county and its citizens need to address not settled by the documentary concerns cyclists’ behavior. “They run red lights and cross where they are not supposed to cross and that makes it hard on drivers,” says Jenna Billingsley, a marketing account manager and cyclist who lives in Arlington. She adds that “drivers have to be more aware of bike lanes and there has to be more bike lanes. It works both ways.”

Billingsley says “I spent some time in Denmark. There are very strict rules and everybody follows them. They stop at red lights. It makes sense but it is not quite here yet.”

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NORTHWEST LANCASTER COUNTY RIVER TRAIL

by JEFFREY HEIL photos by DIRCK HARRIS

My cycling friend Dirck is also a rail fan (a railway enthusiast that drives miles to experience railroad trains). Rail trails are very popular with him, but he especially likes rail trails that have active railroads nearby.



WHEN DIRCK DISCOVERED that the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail ran along a Norfolk Southern rail line, I knew that we would soon be heading there. This trail runs along the Susquehanna River between Columbia and Falmouth, Pennsylvania. It is a 14-mile long, multi-use, public recreation trail that goes through several interesting river towns. While the trail is not completely asphalted, it provided an interesting ride on a warm fall day.

According to the trails website (<http://www.nwrt.info/>), "The trail follows the route of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and uses some of the original towpath that remains along the corridor. This provides ample opportunities to interpret the numerous industrial archaeological remains such as abandoned canal locks; the iron furnaces at Chickies Rock; and the old quarry operation at Billmeyer." While the whole trail is walkable from Columbia to Falmouth, we found that some sections are not quite ready for cyclists.

We drove from Northern Virginia to Marietta, PA and parked in the Decatur Street trailhead parking lot (one of several trailhead parking areas along the trail). Since the trail heading up the river was paved, we chose to first cycle in that direction. One only needs to look at Google Maps to see that Norfolk

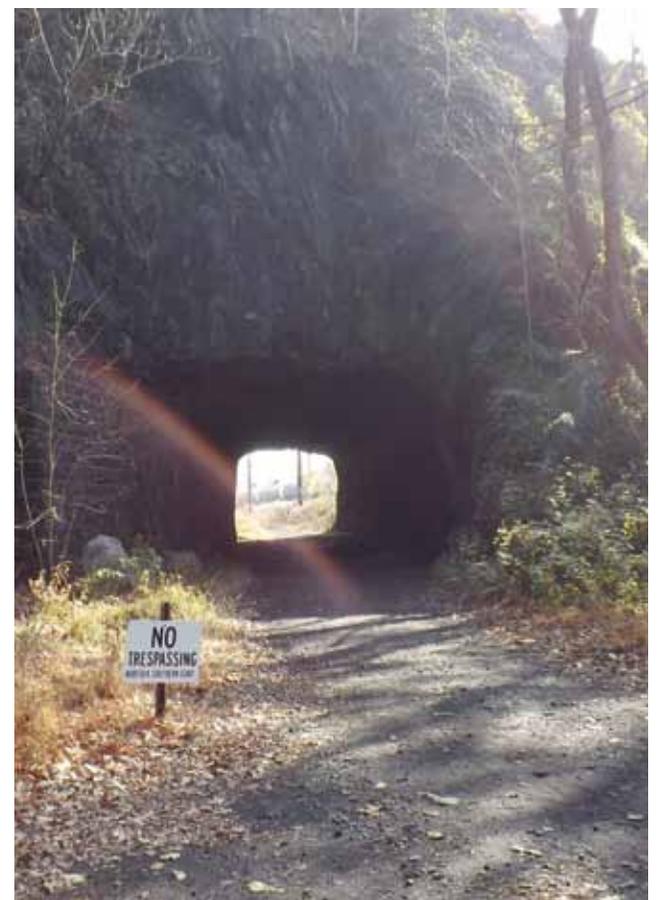
Southern has a main line along the trail and several railroad sidings, creating the potential for seeing trains. Dirck, was not disappointed. We soon passed a freight train waiting at a signal.

While I was focusing on the surrounding scenery, Dirck was checking out the train's engines.

Leaving the trackside (for only a short period), the trail took us along the river and by several farm fields that had recently been harvested. We soon arrived at Riverfront Park. We were told that the park is not only at the center of the trail but it is also a great meeting place for trail users, boaters, and picnickers.

Just past Riverfront Park we cycled under the Shocks Mill Bridge. This bridge carries railroad trains across the Susquehanna River and had to be rebuilt after Hurricane Agnes destroyed a large section in 1972. At this point, the trail deteriorated from its nice asphalt to rough gravel. Our bikes bounced and rattled as we cycled over this section. However, near the town of Bainbridge, (thankfully) the bouncing and rattling stopped. There the trail returned to a wonderful paved surface.

Bainbridge is a quaint river town. It has a restaurant just off the trail and easy access to the river's edge. The town also boasts a popular vineyard with summer



entertainment. Just a few miles away is the famous Three Mile Island electric power plant, site of the near nuclear meltdown in 1979.

Leaving Bainbridge we set out on the canal's embankment. Still clearly visible, the canal was built in the late 1700s to bypass the Conewago Falls on the Susquehanna River. This section of the trail is nearly four miles long and ends in Falmouth, PA, another river town. However, the trail is now only designated as a walking trail. Our ride on this section was cut short after we stopped to talk to a mountain biker. He was walking towards us pushing his full-suspension 29er bicycle. He said that the trail was too rough for him and that he had to walk most of the way. Since we were on road bikes, we decided to turn around. Cycling this section of the trail would have to wait for another day.

We retraced our route back to the town of Marietta, stopping only so Dirck could look at more railroad trains, check out some of the old railroad artifacts still visible along the way, and talk to other trail users. As it was getting warmer trail usage increased. Many of the users were from surrounding towns but, like us, several had driven miles to explore the River Trail.

Upon arriving back at the Marietta trailhead, we decided to cycle through the town rather than take the hiking trail that ran parallel along the river. We were heading southeast toward the trails other end at Columbia, PA.

Marietta is an interesting and historic town. It dates back to the early 1700. Many old homes have been restored and the river town continues its rich railroad history. While a small town, it has several interesting pubs and restaurants. Based on recommendations from a few town folks we stopped at McCleary's Irish Pub for lunch. Their draft beer choices were extensive and the food was excellent.

At the other end of town, we got back on the trail at Chickes Rock Park. The entrance to the park still has remnants of the old iron furnaces and rolling mills that used to be a major part of the town's economy. Initially the trail took us on park roads. Once the road ended, we cycled on a packed earth and mulch trail that meandered through a wooded area for several miles.

About mid-point between Marietta and Columbia we came to a large cliff of quartzite rock that a young man and woman were descending. While they had on

RIVER TRAIL continued on p.12



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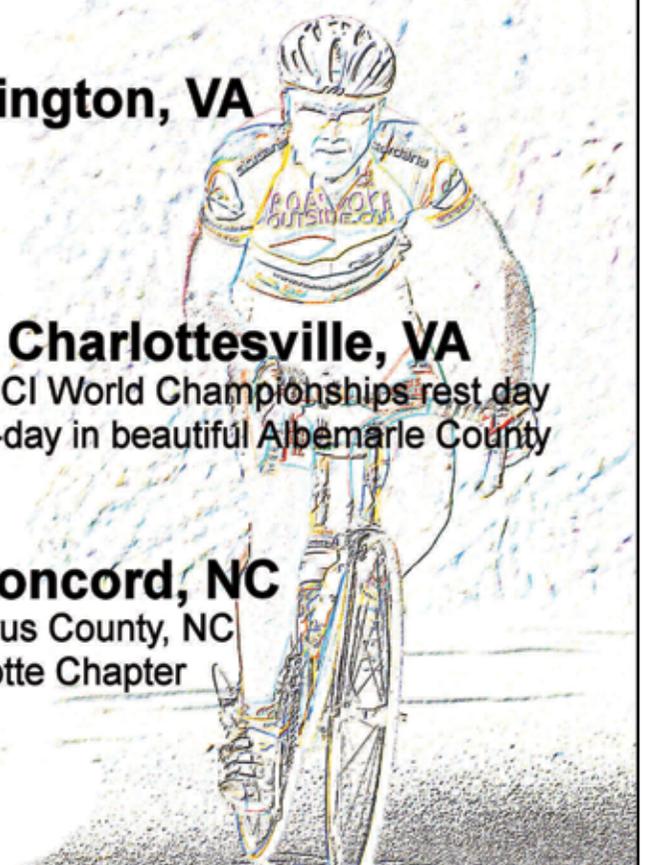
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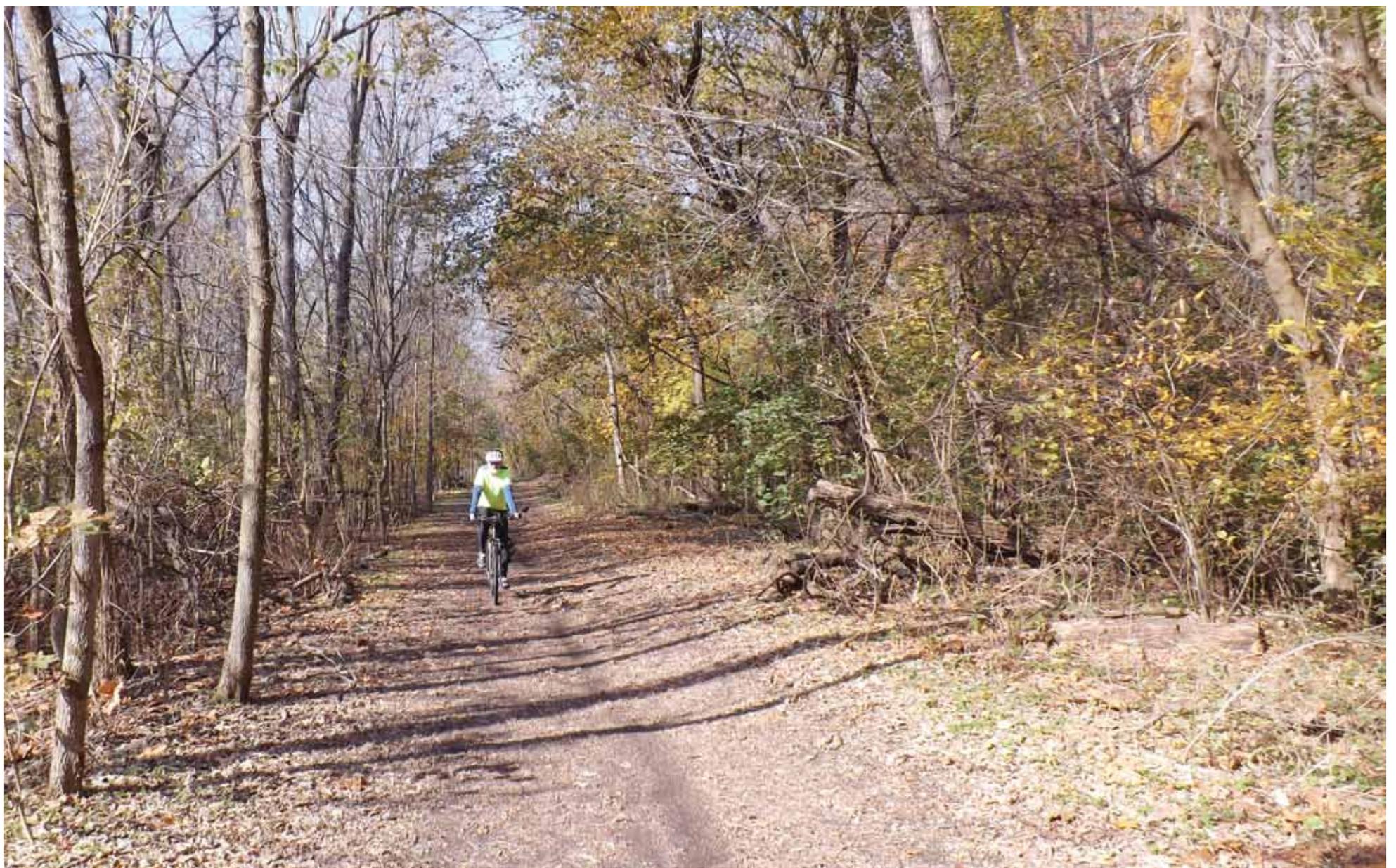
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RIVER TRAIL *continued from p.11*

the proper safety equipment and ropes, it still looked scary. I would rather exercise on a bicycle than hang from a rope off a cliff.

About a mile from Columbia, we had to get off our bikes and lift them over a large fallen tree that seemed to have been there for some time. Nearer to Columbia the trail abruptly stopped just before a tunnel that led into town. It appears that the railroad has not yet given over this last section of right-of-way for the trail. We were disappointed that we could not cycle through the tunnel and visit Columbia from the trail.

Reversing our direction, we stopped below the Breezyview Overlook, far above the trail. Getting to the overlook required a long climb up the side of the mountain on a switchback trail. However, we chose to get there by riding the long way around using the roads. Regardless of how you get there, the panorama of the Susquehanna River is worth the effort.

We eventually got to Columbia, which is the largest of the area's river towns. It has more than 10,000 residents with a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places...and more trains. Eventually, the trail will end here, at the town's riverfront park. This nice park has a great view of the river and some remaining Civil War era bridge piers.

Other great Columbia attractions include the National Watch and Clock Museum, featuring a collection of over 12,000 timepieces, the Columbia Historic Market House, and the First National Bank Museum.

After loading our bikes on top of the car, we headed back to Northern Virginia. Since Dirck was driving, our route took us by railroad sites in the Pennsylvania towns of York and Hanover, and the Maryland towns of Walkersville and Brunswick. While Dirck was enjoying the trains in these towns, I was fantasizing about how those railroad right-of-ways would make great rail trails.

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Progression Not Perfection

Dai Roberts laughs when he says he began running around Navy ships 31 years ago during his first military deployment and has been running ever since in one direction or another.

“It’s not like you could run that far,” he says. “I was mostly deployed on ships my first 13-15 years and I did what I could during that time, running in circles.”

That would be British Royal Navy ships, by the way.

The 54-year-old Roberts, who makes his home in the Virginia Beach area where he coaches runners, duathletes, and triathletes, grew up in the United Kingdom and graduated from high school north of Wales.

“I may have missed some good years, but it probably saved wear and tear on my legs,” Roberts adds with another laugh. “I’ve only had two injuries over the years—and one those was from hot yoga—so that’s pretty good.”

He’d run cross-country in high school, but as he points out, high school sports are not the competitive affair overseas that they are in the U.S. The bottom line is that Roberts didn’t start seriously running until his late 30s. Then, however, he took off.

Once he got his feet on the ground so to speak, Roberts won Great Britain’s national military cross country and London half-marathon titles. He captured bronze in the 10K at a World Masters track meet in Puerto Rico. He won 10K gold at a European



Dai Roberts (top center) with some students.

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Masters track championships in Poland. In 2002, he won the Disney Marathon outright and eventually earned second and third-place overall finishes at a pair Shamrock Marathons in Virginia Beach.

He also ran 2:38 at the 2008 Boston Marathon—and has run 13 other marathons under 2:35—with all of this coming after the age of 40. Oh yeah, in his first duathlon, he took home the bronze medal in the men’s 45-49 age group at the World Championships in 2007.

The Washington Runner recently labeled Roberts, who initially moved to Virginia as part of a working assignment with the U.S. Navy, as “the man for long distances.”

So here’s the thing. While Roberts jokes about running through this 40s and now 50s on “fresh” legs, the real catalyst for his success, he says, has been a thirst for knowledge, from efficient running technique to nutrition and goal setting and multi-sport planning.

“When I started running seriously for the first time in London, I found a guy who was a mentor and started training with a group. I could see right away the difference those things made,” Roberts says. He adds that the mid-90s was also about the time that new training tools, like heart-rate monitors, came to the market. “I took to all of it,” he says.

Interestingly, almost as soon as Roberts—a late

bloomer by circumstance, not by choice—finally got the chance to turn his attention to endurance racing, other athletes, witnessing his seemingly sudden success, began to turn to him for informal coaching.

He initially began advising others about their training more than a dozen years ago. Since then, he has coached runners, duathletes, and triathletes at levels from youth national competitors to Olympic and Ironman triathlon age group winners. He’s become qualified as a United Kingdom athletics distance coach, a USA Triathlon coach, and USA Cycling coach, and after retiring from the Royal Navy finally launched his full-time, multi-sport coaching career and company—the Dai Roberts Group—five years ago.

“I think the teaching is something that I took to because of my experience teaching in the Navy,” Roberts says. “That’s the background I brought with me. I taught in the Netherlands for a period and when you’re teaching people who are coming to you from a different country, from a different language and culture—the perspective is naturally different and then you have to look at things through their eyes. I think it’s that kind of empathy—an athlete-centered focus—that I bring to coaching.”

TRISPOKES continued on p.16



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- ☐ **JAMESTOWN GRAN FONDO** SATURDAY JUNE 6 | WILLIAMSBURG, VA
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- ☐ **BATH COUNTY TRIATHLON** SATURDAY JUNE 20 | WARM SPRINGS, VA
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- ☐ **COLONIAL BEACH INT** SUNDAY JULY 12 | COLONIAL BEACH, VA
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- ☐ **CULPEPER GRAN FONDO** SATURDAY AUGUST 1 | CULPEPER, VA
- ☐ **CULPEPER INT** SUNDAY AUGUST 2 | CULPEPER, VA
- ☐ **CULPEPER SPRINT** SUNDAY AUGUST 2 | CULPEPER, VA
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- ☐ **PATRIOT'S HALF** SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12 | WILLIAMSBURG, VA
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- ☐ **GIANT ACORN SPRINT** SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27 | LAKE ANNA STATE PARK, VA
- ☐ **WATERMAN'S HALF** SATURDAY OCTOBER 3 | ROCK HALL, MD
- ☐ **WATERMAN'S INT** SATURDAY OCTOBER 3 | ROCK HALL, MD
- ☐ **WATERMAN'S SPRINT** SUNDAY OCTOBER 4 | ROCK HALL, MD

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complete his goal—finishing Ironman Lake Placid. “His big goal initially was to finish, which meant 16 hours and 30 minutes. Which is the equivalent of continuously moving for two straight workdays,” Roberts says. “About 8-10 weeks in, he said that he wanted to update his goal and do it in 14:30. Which is great when that happens, it means the athlete is progressing better than expected. Ultimately, he came in at 14:50, which he was very pleased with. Of course, it’s rewarding from a coaching standpoint as well when that happens.”

Roberts says that while coaches provide motivation, it’s also necessary at times to reign people in. Particularly with youth and older athletes, Roberts says, it’s important to schedule in “easy” weeks into

Every multi-sport coach talks about being “athlete-centered,” as Roberts himself is quick to mention. For him, however, the concept has a specific outline. Most importantly, he says, it comes down to close listening to athletes. Whatever their fitness level and goals, he says, you have to meet them where they are, so to speak, and fit their training schedule around their life rather than forcing people to fit their life around their training schedule.

“We’re all busy,” Roberts says. “If the training schedule isn’t going to work around someone’s life schedule—it’s not going to work. Some people have Wednesday’s off and that’s the day they want to do their long run or long ride. Other people might work four night shifts in a row (at a hospital, for example) and you, as the coach, need to account for that. People can feel bad about a missed workout, but they need to sleep, too, and you need to tell them, “That’s okay, let’s go forward from here.”

While Roberts, whose first-hand athletic experience has mostly been in running and cycling, serves as “head coach” at the Dai Roberts Group, and he’s compiled a team of experienced certified swimming, running, cycling, and triathlon coaches, as well as two physical therapists. The company offers structured training programs that can be purchased online after personal interviews with coaches—who remain available for ongoing communication—but Roberts believes in face-to-face interaction with athletes. The company also helps organize training groups and clinics, but the core business model remains working with individual athletes over multiple weeks or months who have decided they want to complete a triathlon, qualify for a big event like the Boston Marathon, tackle a full Ironman, or simply finish their first marathon.

Roberts mentions taking one 260-pound man through a specifically tailored regimen that enabled him to



their training programs to help avoid injury and allow recovery time. “Build, build, build, then an easy week to rest. Build, build, build, then an easy week.”

One common problem for swimmers and cyclists who are adding serious running into their training for the first is developing the strength to take the pounding that running imparts over time. Roberts notes that an Ironman athlete doesn’t simply run a marathon at the end of the event, but a marathon after a 112-mile bike ride. Part of the method for building up successful triathlon runners, inevitably must include building stronger cyclists, he says.

On the other hand, he notes, for newbie runner whose goal may be to complete their first marathon, he sometimes includes cycling in their training to build strength while avoiding unnecessary pounding—particularly if the athlete is carrying any extra weight.

“For someone who wants to do their first marathon in 13.5 or 14-minute miles, it also sometimes makes more sense do incorporate some walking,” he says. “A lot goes into figuring out how steep the training curve



will be. There has to be time to tamper off, too.”

Overall, Roberts maintains a fairly simple philosophy for meeting goals—one that applies across the board to swimming, cycling, running and any combination of all three. “If you run a 4:00 or 4:30 marathon and want to qualify for Boston [which depending on your age and gender will vary], you’ve got to work out that pace and starting running miles at that pace,” Roberts says. “It’s not always comfortable, but that’s what you have to do. Maybe you run a couple of slower miles to start, but then you must start stringing distance together at that pace you need to meet your goal—it’s a progression. You keep adding distance at that pace.”

Ultimately, of course, this all goes back what multi-sport coaching means to Roberts—a personalized plan, face-to-face work, and a progression of goals and training. Inevitably, he says, life will throw monkey wrenches into mix—no plan is ever so perfect that it doesn’t require regular updates and changes. It’s something Roberts knows first-hand as coach.

Training with clients impacts his own training, of course, which he then must compensate for. And his own athletic goals continue to change as well. For example, he recently signed up for his first full Ironman.

“I’ve coached Ironman athletes. I’ve done the courses the day before the event—one bike and one run loop to help my athletes learn more about the race. But I’ve never done one [a full Ironman] myself, mostly because I’m not crazy about swimming,” he says. “I finally decided to do one so I could know better myself what that suffering is like. I want to have that experience to better empathize with them. I think there’s always room to grow, including for coaches.”

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Virginia's Report Card

Waiting for the annual League of American Bicyclists state rankings and report cards has become something of an annual obsession in recent years among bicycle advocates. It remains, however, a subjective process, as Virginia Bike Federation board member Allen Muchnick cautions.

With that in mind, there's good news and not so good news in the League's annual rankings and report cards for our two favorite mid-Atlantic states.

First, the good news: Virginia has climbed three spots in League's bike friendly ranking, up to No. 13 this year.

The not-so-good news: Maryland slipped three spots. Ultimately, however, the Old Line remained in the top 10—at No. 10 exactly.

Before going breaking down the local results, we should probably note that Washington state again took the No. 1 spot, followed by Minnesota at No. 2, and Delaware, our Mid-Atlantic neighbor, which continues to make big strides in bicycling infrastructure, at No. 3. Many of the expected states—Oregon, Colorado, California—round out the top 10, but New Jersey and Pennsylvania continue to make progress as well, coming in at No. 11 and No. 12, respectively.

Virginia dropped in the League's "Legislation and Enforcement" category but improved in the "Infrastructure and Funding" and "Education and Encouragement" categories, earning 47 out of a possible 100 possible. Virginia did receive credit for approving a new 3-foot passing law and a dedicated state funding mechanism. But the state also failed once again to pass a law that would put drivers who "door" bicyclists at fault or pass proposed legislation that would prohibit drivers from using cellphones while operating a vehicle unless the device was hands-free.

"The 3-foot law passed in Virginia last year has been in effect since July 1, 2014," explained Muchnick. He added that although he was disappointed in the state legislature's failure to pass the dooring and cellphone bills, there were two recent, significant legislative victories in Virginia this year, which may bode well for their report card score next year. One, was the adoption of a tailgating law, which says that the "driver of a motor vehicle shall not follow another vehicle [which includes bicycles], trailer, or semitrailer more closely than is reasonable and prudent." The other was the adoption of a "safe passing law," which says that a "motorist may cross the double yellow (or solid and broken) line in order to pass a bicycle or pedestrian provided such movement can be made safely."

While the ranking and state scores may be subjective each year, Muchnick does believe the "feedback" section on the League's annual report cards does offer some objective critiques on where each state can improve, in terms of bicycle friendliness. In Virginia, for example, Muchnick concurred with the League that the state needs to adopt a mode share goal for biking—and to accurately track those numbers—to encourage the integration of bicycle transportation needs into all transportation and land use policy and project decisions.

"That's absolutely necessary," Muchnick said. "If you don't set those goals and track them—you can't manage it. [Right now], the state doesn't even know how many miles of bikes lanes it has."

On a positive note, Muchnick said that overall, he's seen strides made across the state in bicycle friendliness work, not just in northern Virginia, in places like Alexandria and Arlington, but in Fairfax and the college town areas of Charlottesville, Blacksburg and Harrisonburg. Richmond, too, Muchnick said, is getting a once-in-a-lifetime bicycle infrastructure and road facelift with the UCI World Championships coming in September.

Maryland

RANKING # 10
REGIONAL RANKING >> EAST #3

GOVERNOR: Larry Hogan
 DOT COMMISSIONER: Pete K. Rahn
 BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COORDINATOR: Michael Jackson
 STATE ADVOCACY GROUP: Bike Maryland

OVERALL POINTS
49 of 100 2014: 53 of 100

FEEDBACK

- Amend Maryland's safe passing law which requires a minimum distance of 3 feet so that there are fewer exceptions to the minimum distance requirement.
- Expedite safe bicycle crossings of the Susquehanna River between Perryville and Havre de Grace to allow cross state bike trips.
- Implement a program to more accurately document bicycle traffic statewide and coordinate bicycle facility design with cyclist feedback to ensure quality facilities.
- Improve bicycle-related crash reporting. As highway safety plans are based on crash data, under-reporting of bike crashes has made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of Maryland's efforts to improve bike safety.
- Adopt performance measures, such as mode shift or a low percentage of exempted projects, to better track and support Complete Streets/Bike Accommodation Policy compliance. Conduct analysis of how Complete Streets approaches have improved roadway conditions so that the public and agency staff understands the importance of Complete Streets.
- Adopt a mode share goal for biking to encourage the integration of bicycle transportation needs into all transportation and land use policy and project decisions.
- Improve bicycle network connectivity so that more people can access retail, work, and educational facilities safely and conveniently by bike. Consider innovative approaches to network analysis based on stress levels experienced by bicyclists.
- Provide specific training to engineers and planners on how to implement the Complete Streets/Accommodation Policy in everyday decisions.

CATEGORY SCORES SCORING: 5 = HIGH 1 = LOW

3	LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT	⇓
4	POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	
2	INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUNDING	
4	EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT	⇓
2	EVALUATION AND PLANNING	

TOP 10 SIGNS OF SUCCESS 🚲 = NEW IN 2015

1%	OR MORE OF PEOPLE COMMUTING BY BIKE
🚲	SAFE PASSING LAW (3 FEET OR GREATER)
🚲	COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
🚲	DEDICATED STATE FUNDING
🚲	ACTIVE STATE ADVOCACY GROUP
🚲	STATE BICYCLE PLAN (ADOPTED 2005 OR LATER)
🚲	SHARE THE ROAD CAMPAIGN
	VULNERABLE ROAD USER LAW
	BICYCLE SAFETY EMPHASIS IN STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN
2%	OR MORE FEDERAL FUNDS SPENT ON BIKE/PED

The Bicycle Friendly States ranking is based on a comprehensive survey completed by state departments of transportation and state bicycling advocates. It asks comprehensive questions across 5 categories: Legislation and Enforcement, Policies and Programs, Infrastructure and Funding, Education and Encouragement, Evaluation and Planning. The results listed above provide only a snap shot of the full application. They are intended to offer some ideas for further growth in bicycle friendliness. For more information, visit www.bikeleague.org/states or contact Ken McLeod at (202)-822-1333 or ken@bikeleague.org.

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Virginia

RANKING # 13
REGIONAL RANKING >> SOUTH #1

GOVERNOR: Terry McAuliffe
 DOT COMMISSIONER: Charles Kilpatrick
 BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COORDINATOR: John Bolecek
 STATE ADVOCACY GROUP: Virginia Bicycling Federation, Bike Virginia

OVERALL POINTS
47 of 100 2014: 41 of 100

FEEDBACK

- Update law that makes maintenance payments to cities based upon the number of moving lane miles available and which discourages road diets and bicycle lanes in urban areas. Road diets can substantially increase bicyclist and pedestrian safety without significant impacts on automotive mobility. Policies should support road diets and not punish communities for implementing road diets by reducing payments when automotive lanes are removed.
- Adopt a law prohibiting a motorist from opening an automobile's door unless the motorist is able to do so safely. Virginia is one of only 10 states to not have this type of law.
- Incentivize and document compliance with Commonwealth Transportation Board policies related to inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in projects.
- Dedicate state funding for bicycle projects and programs, especially those focused on safety, eliminating gaps and increasing access for bicycle networks. Creating programmatic funding allows local communities to better understand how to access state funding or helps guide the state's funding priorities for maximum impact.
- Adopt a mode share goal for biking to encourage the integration of bicycle transportation needs into all transportation and land use policy and project decisions.
- Adopt a vulnerable road user law that increases penalties for a motorist that injures or kills a bicyclist or pedestrian. Model language is available here: <http://bikeleague.org/content/model-legislation>.
- Add bicycle safety as an emphasis area in the state Strategic Highway Safety Plan and aggressively fund bike safety projects.

CATEGORY SCORES SCORING: 5 = HIGH 1 = LOW

2	LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT	⇓
4	POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	
3	INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUNDING	⇓
4	EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT	⇓
2	EVALUATION AND PLANNING	

TOP 10 SIGNS OF SUCCESS 🚲 = NEW IN 2015

1%	OR MORE OF PEOPLE COMMUTING BY BIKE
🚲	SAFE PASSING LAW (3 FEET OR GREATER)
🚲	COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
🚲	DEDICATED STATE FUNDING
🚲	ACTIVE STATE ADVOCACY GROUP
🚲	STATE BICYCLE PLAN (ADOPTED 2005 OR LATER)
🚲	SHARE THE ROAD CAMPAIGN
	VULNERABLE ROAD USER LAW
	BICYCLE SAFETY EMPHASIS IN STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN
2%	OR MORE FEDERAL FUNDS SPENT ON BIKE/PED

The Bicycle Friendly States ranking is based on a comprehensive survey completed by state departments of transportation and state bicycling advocates. It asks comprehensive questions across 5 categories: Legislation and Enforcement, Policies and Programs, Infrastructure and Funding, Education and Encouragement, Evaluation and Planning. The results listed above provide only a snap shot of the full application. They are intended to offer some ideas for further growth in bicycle friendliness. For more information, visit www.bikeleague.org/states or contact Ken McLeod at (202)-822-1333 or ken@bikeleague.org.

THE LEAGUE
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since 1880

Maryland's Report Card

Maryland received high marks from the League, whose history dates back to 1880, for the state's 3-foot safe passing law, dedicated "Bikeways" infrastructure funding, its "complete streets" policy, the Department of Transportation's "share the road" campaign and the just-updated state bicycle master plan.

Nonprofit Bike Maryland also got a shout out from the League for its active state advocacy.

But Maryland's score actually dipped from 53 out of a potential 100 points to 49 points this year, falling from 7th overall to 10th. Massachusetts, Utah and California all leapfrogged over Maryland. In fact, a couple of areas where the state has scored well in the past—bicycle-friendly legislation and enforcement, for example, and bicycle-friendly education and encouragement—are places where Maryland slipped, according to the League.

Related to the Maryland's 3-foot safe passing law, the League noted that efforts failed again this year in the state legislature to amend potentially dangerous exemptions to the law.

The League of American Bicyclists survey also noted Maryland needs to improve its bicycle-related crash reporting and, as with Virginia, it needs to adopt a mode-share goal for biking and better integrate bicycle commuting into all transportation. The League also recommends that Maryland provide training to engineers and planners on how to implement the "complete streets" policy and improve bicycle network connectivity.

Emily Ranson, Bike Maryland's advocacy coordinator, said the organization will be pulling together a summer working session with state legislators, Department of Transportation officials, state troopers and other stakeholders to try to find a solution to the 3-foot safe passing law exemptions. For example, allowing drivers to pass cyclists over a double-yellow line when room and sight line permit to maintain the 3-foot buffer.

In terms of big picture bicycle connectivity, the League also highlighted the failure of the state to move forward on a safe bicycle route over the Susquehanna River between Perryville and Havre de Grace that would allow cross state bike trips. Currently, the inability to cross the Susquehanna River by bike is one of the biggest gaps in the 2,900-mile East Coast Greenway, which runs from Maine to Florida. Preliminary proposals being looked at include adding a bicycle lane to the Hatem Bridge or building a pedestrian/bicyclist bridge alongside the bridge—or including a bike/pedestrian bridge alongside the new Amtrak bridge that's being planned over the Susquehanna in the next 10-15 years.

"The best news from the past year is that Gov. [Larry] Hogan decided to keep the Bikeways funding in place," Ranson says, adding that the state also formally adopted more modern state road building guide-

lines that potentially can protect cyclists. Launched in 2011 by then Gov. Martin O'Malley, the Bikeways effort has funded dozens of projects across the state over the past several years, with \$15 million available in reimbursable grant funding in 2015 "for projects that enhance walking, biking, pedestrian safety and recreational trail access," according to Maryland Department of Transportation.

"That grant funding is the fastest way for municipalities to create bike lanes and trails, to put up signage and so it's important to maintain that funding," Ranson says. "Many states are making great strides, in terms of enhancing their bicycle infrastructure, making bicycling safer and more convenient for people, and that's what we want to do, too. Maryland isn't stagnating," Ranson adds, "but we need to do more if we are going to stay apace with other states."



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Should We Enable Obesity?

The joke goes like this: Americans don't need to build bombs. We just need to export all of our junk food and spread obesity to the rest of the world so we all self-destruct together. Ha-ha-ha. But it's not really funny, is it? It's sad.

While attending the Institute of Coaching's Fifth Annual Conference in Boston along with 700 other health and leadership coaches (www.InstituteOfCoaching.org), I had the opportunity to listen to public health guru Dr. David Katz spread his health message that we, as a society, need to curb the obesity epidemic.

Though you, my readers, are likely fit, I'm sure every one of you has been affected by an over fat relative or friend who is dealing with cancer, heart attack, stroke, and/or diabetes. While they've undoubtedly heard the public health messages to eat cleaner and exercise more, they have not felt motivated to make lifestyle changes. Instead, they are suffering from the so-called diseases of aging that are really diseases of inactivity and over nutrition. They aren't having much fun at the doctors' offices....

According to well-documented research presented by Dr. Katz, if we don't stop the obesity epidemic, an estimated 42% of all Americans will be obese in 18 years. One-third will be diabetic. Our kids will die at a younger age than their parents, and the healthcare system will be bankrupt.

By preventing obesity, we can see stunning benefits. In our modern world, we are victims of our own success. We have engineered out the lifestyle that kept our par-

ents and grandparents fit and strong, including riding bikes to work, walking to school, and hanging laundry outside to dry.

We have engineered in processed foods that come in huge portions and taste yummy. No surprise less than 2% of Americans eats the recommend number of fruits and vegetables! How can we motivate people to take better care of themselves? We need to focus on the personal benefits—longer life, less pain, and more fun.

The good news is obesity is strongly linked to behaviors we can control, including the foods we choose to chew and the amount of exercise we get. Granted, other factors also have an impact, including gut microbiota, sleep deprivation, and genetics (and genes can be changed with positive food choices.) So if we will be able to have more fun, let's do it!

According to Dr. Katz, each one of us has a choice to either help solve the obesity problem, or become part of the problem. We need to build a levy to hold back the flood of fattening foods that pervade our environment. We need lots of individuals to contribute a sandbag or two to the levy. For example, smaller-sized soda pop is one sandbag. More activity in school classrooms is another.

Healthier choices in vending machines are a third. The NuVal food ranking system is a fourth. (NuVal ranks foods according to healthfulness so that consumers in 1,700 supermarkets across the country can easily compare foods to determine the better loaf of bread, brand of soup, and better choice of any food.)

Employers who encourage their staff to exercise contribute a very effective sandbag and they get a good

return on that investment. Not only are their employees healthier and take fewer sick days (think lower health-care costs), they are happier and more productive. The Cleveland Clinic's employee wellness program has saved millions of health care dollars. The clinic has made changes in the work environment that has transformed the disease-inducing culture to a culture of wellness with loss of 330,000 pounds in five years.

If you want to take steps to change your work environment, check out www.cdc.gov/nationalhealthyworksites. You'll find lots of ideas and toolkits, including how to create a program that encourages people to take the stairs not the elevator, and how to improve vending machine choices. Hospital workers might want to pass along this URL <http://HealthierHospitals.org> to an influential VIP. The goal of the initiative is to enroll at least 2,000 hospitals over the next three years to buy and serve healthier foods.

For your own personal activity program, take a peek at www.abeforfitness.com. Activity Bursts Everywhere offers free activity videos that last from 3 to 8 minutes. The videos are organized by setting (office, home, waiting room), body part involved (lower body, upper body), and whether the exercise is performed standing or seated. Pass along the info to your friends and relatives who have "no time" to exercise; they'll lose all excuses for why they cannot get a few more minutes of activity each workday.

Empowering kids to be active is an essential health initiative. If you are a parent or a teacher, check out www.ABCforfitness.com (Activity Bursts in Classrooms). These fun exercise videos insert educational activity into the curriculum during downtimes when the kids aren't really learning anything (before lunch, end of the school day). Dr. Katz believes the answer to hyperactive kids can be more activity, not more Ritalin.

Not everyone loses weight easily, so Dr. Katz has started a website for frustrated dieters, www.newlr.com (National Exchange for Weight Loss Resistance). This site wants to connect frustrated dieters with researchers so we can find solutions to the "Why can't I lose weight?" problem. Maybe you know someone who can contribute his or her experiences.

While changing the work and school environments is helpful, lasting changes really need to be made at the family level. Kids are a driving force; they have the power to change parents' food and exercise habits. Kids are unlikely to make choices based on health, but rather on pleasure. When they understand that health means more fun, they'll start making the right choices—just like victorious sports teams that win with good nutrition. Unjunk Yourself, a YouTube video for teens (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLaS0En9Q98>) gets kids (of all ages) to think more about choosing what they chew. Isn't it time for us to all work together to make it cool to fuel well?



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Green Lizard Fills the Gap

It's a beautiful Spring Saturday afternoon and a crowd of people are sipping smoothies at the drinks counter inside Green Lizard Cycling in Herndon, Va.

A few feet away, owner Dave Meyer is fitting helmets on a couple who are preparing to take a test ride on a pair of road bikes. Half way down the deep store, service manager Bernard Kocis is wheeling a bike out to a customer who stopped in for a quick adjustment. Just entering the store are a father and his young son, whose tiny bike is still sporting training wheels.

The activity is typical for Green Lizard, located right off of the W&OD trail (mile 19.8) opposite the historic train station and old Herndon town hall. The store, which opened in March 2013, fills the need for a bike shop on the path between Reston and Leesburg.

Extra features make Green Lizard stand out as more than just another bike shop. First and foremost, the store is also a local coffee house featuring Kaladi Brothers coffee, shipped in fresh from Alaska once a week, said owner Beth Meyer, who runs that part of the business. In addition to the certified organic roasted coffee, the store offers smoothies, Italian sodas (flavored syrups with club soda) and pastries from a local bakery.

Running a coffee shop year-round means opening early, so Green Lizard opens every day at 7 a.m. to cater to passing bike commuters and local residents. Dave said that also means that cyclists can bring their bikes in early in the morning for repairs and often are able to pick them up before the store closes at 8 p.m. every day but Friday and Sunday, when it closes at 6 p.m.

Another extra feature is an indoor bike wash. Bernard, a former bike racer and director of a bike mechanic school who has wrenched for more than a half-dozen pro teams including US National Track and US National Team CycloCross, insisted on the bike wash when he and Dave discussed the shop prior to its opening.

Dave noted that customers who bring their bike in for a tune-up or other major overhaul get a bike back that looks practically new (your dents are your own) and that washing the bike before working on it results in a better tune up.

Although the store has only been open slightly more than two years, that doesn't mean the mechanics are newbies. Far from it. All together, the folks in the service department have been working on bikes for more than 90 years, mostly at the top levels of competition.

Les Welch has been in the bicycle industry for 42 years, including working as a mechanic at the US Cycling Federation's Olympic Training Center in Colorado and traveling with US Cycling teams throughout the Western Hemisphere. Les is the service director and also runs the state-of-the-art bike fit operation within Green Lizard.

Bill McCarrick, a 17-year veteran racing cyclist—including two-time Virginia time trial champion, former Virginia cyclocross champion and Virginia cyclocross series winner—has worked at Ironman events for 11 years and been service manager for two other Virginia bike shops.

Brad Kendall, who has raced road, mountain and cyclocross, has been a bike technician in Northern Virginia since 2007.

Another amenity not typically found in bike shops: Green Lizard provides space for Hefler Performance Coaching, which runs spin and training classes, primarily in the fall and winter months. A line of advance Computrainers fill the back area of Green Lizard. Each trainer is hooked to a video. Unlike stationary bikes that offer a set of different resistance levels, the Computrainers are programmed so that the resistance mimics the feel of a bike as if it were riding along the path shown in the video.

Dave and Beth came to the bike business later in life than many of their compatriots. Before moving to Northern Virginia a few years ago, they had been in Alaska for 15 years. Beth worked as an investigator in the cold case homicide division in Anchorage; Dave ran an environmental laboratory. They moved briefly

to North Carolina when Dave got a consulting job. Another consulting gig brought them to Northern Virginia where Dave worked for a Reston firm.

The job involved traveling three weeks a month around the country. Dave spent a lot of time on airplanes and in airports and gained 60 pounds. To battle the bulge, Dave started riding to work, an eight-mile commute each way. Within a short while, he'd lost the 60 pounds and was feeling better than he had in years.

After their third son left home for the Navy two years ago, Dave was ready to retire from consulting. But, still in his 50s, he didn't want to retire from work altogether. Instead, he and Beth decided to open a bike and coffee shop.

"It was something I had a huge interest in," said Dave, who enjoyed frequenting local area bike shops. "I wanted something unique. I wanted something that didn't seem like every other bike shop. I wanted something I could have fun with."

He also wanted a name that was different from the typical bike store name. Something catchy and memorable. He recalled the small green lizards that were so prevalent around their home in North Carolina. It was fun and harkened to his decades of working to protect the environment.

The decision to combine the bike shop with a coffee shop came from the couple's need to have a business that would be sustainable year-round. So while some independent bike shops may have struggled during the past harsh winter, a steady stream of customers was beating a path to Green Lizard for the coffee and pastries, if nothing else.

The next decision was location. Dave said he wanted something right on the W&OD trail. The Herndon storefront on Lynn Street is a block east of the Dairy Queen, a popular stopping place for cyclists along the trail. Luckily, there wasn't a bike or coffee shop in the area.

"I wanted to be a destination, not just another bike shop," Dave said. With the drink counter—hopping even in mid-afternoon—the store has become a place where riders stop—roughly at the mid-point of the 45-mile W&OD trail.

Finally, there was the question what bikes to carry. Initially, the store carried Scott, Raleigh and Cannondale—primarily road bikes, hybrids, high-end mountain bikes and a few recumbents. In April, their inventory expanded to include Litespeed titanium bikes. Also available are a wide array of clothing and accessories.

Dave said his goal is to appeal to riders at all levels, from the person just thinking about riding, to the commuter, weekend enthusiast and high performance racer.

"We bend over backward to make sure (the customers) are treated the way I want to be treated," Dave said. "We're a bike shop for everybody."

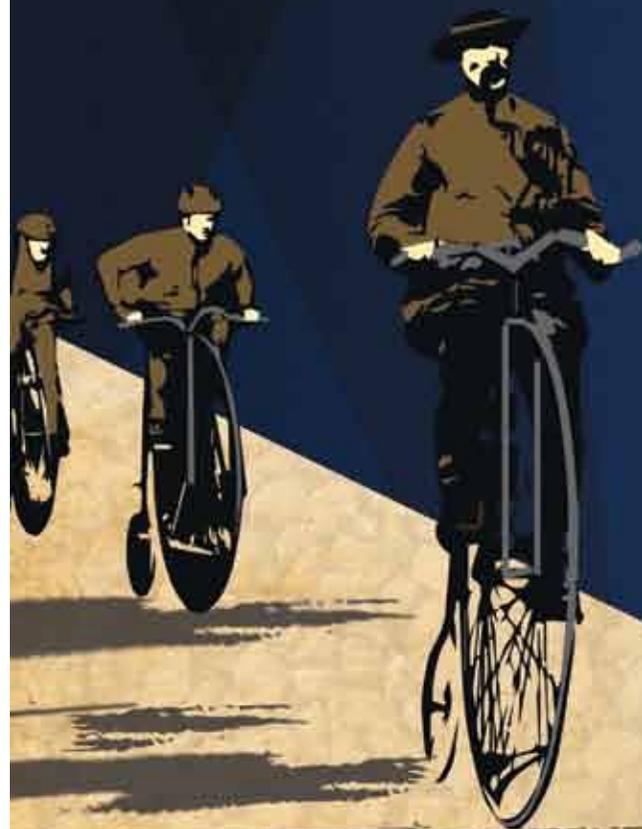
EDITOR'S NOTE:

A good independent bicycle shop still remains one of the treasured resources of bicycling—among the best places to learn about places to ride, meet locals to ride with, and learn about new products. Oh, and they also do a super job fixing the bike stuff you break. "My Bike Shop" is a regular feature of SPOKES in which we give you a look into a local shop and the folks behind it.

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JULY 26 – FIREFIGHTER 50

Last year's hugely popular "Lost Valley Loop," century, hailed by Active.com as one of the nation's best new century rides is back in this fourth annual event, traversing scenic northern Carroll County and eastern Frederick County, Md., and scenic south-central Pennsylvania. Beginning at the Pleasant Valley Fire Department, fully supported road rides of 30 and 50 miles are planned plus a "Dirty 30" loop that is 30 miles long and includes 12 miles of dirt and paved roads. Great loop for hybrid bikes and mountain type bikes. Routes were selected by local cyclists with low volume roads with great views of the Catoclin Mountains. The firefighters will prepare you "all you can eat" lunch and door prizes are planned. For more info contact David Yonkoski at (410) 751-6476 or dfyonko@hughes.net

AUGUST 14-16 – TOUR DE FREDERICK

Three days of cycling, socializing and meeting new friends. This ride, created by Spokes Magazine in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Frederick County, is designed to showcase that some of the best road bicycling in the country can be had in Frederick, Md. The rides on this year's weekend will be less hilly, than last year and get this kids now ride for only \$5. Proceeds benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Frederick. For details log onto www.tourdefrederick.com

AUGUST 15 – CLUSTERED SPIRES HIGH WHEEL RACE

Held in conjunction with the Tour de Frederick (see above) America's only race for antique and reproduction high wheel bicycles will come to historic downtown Frederick, Md., for the fourth year. Last year over five thousand spectators lined the 0.4 mile loop in the famed restaurant district. The start-finish line is in front of Brewer's Alley Restaurant & Bar (124 North Market Street), which is also one of the sponsors of this unique event. For details log onto www.highwheelrace.com. Tour de Frederick participants will have special access to the highwheel race venue.

AUGUST 15-16 – LURAY TRIATHLONS

Now celebrating its 10th anniversary, this is weekend full of triathlon splendor in the mountains of Virginia. The international distance events will be held on Saturday and the sprint events will follow on Sunday. Visit or sign up at luraytriathlon.com

AUGUST 29-30 – AMERICAN CENTURY OF BIKES & BREWS

This full weekend of cycling fun in the Leesburg, Va., area including gravel riding, dirt track racing, high wheel rides in bucolic Loudoun County, Virginia, a historic expo and marketplace, plus a brewfest to celebrate the best in American beer-making. Visit www.artisanbikefest.com

SEPTEMBER 12 – AMISH COUNTRY BIKE TOUR

The best of Delaware's Amish country, choose routes 15,25,50,62 or 100 miles, all flat. Last year over 2,000 cyclists of all abilities enjoyed this popular ride. Enjoy locally baked pies, a catered BBQ picnic, and craft beer sampling, as well as live folk music. Register at www.amishcountrybiketour.com

SEPTEMBER 20 – GRAN FONDO NATIONALS

Open to all riders from beginners to elite this event hosted in Frederick, Md., offers distances of 30, 60 and 100 miles with four timed sections. For details and to register log onto www.gfnccs.com

SEPTEMBER 20 – TOUR DE TALBOT

Spectacular Eastern Shore scenery and a great cause, are the highlights of this ninth annual event that begins and ends at the Talbot Country Club, 6142 Country Club Drive, Easton, MD. The rides (full century, metric, 65 miler and 20 mile family ride) benefit JDRF (helping to cure Type 1 diabetes) and the Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy. Register online at www.tourdetalbot.org (kids under 16 free).

SEPTEMBER 20-25 – ESCAPADE

This relaxed six-day tour of southeastern Indiana will visit three state parks; two layover days will offer loop rides, or time for hiking and photography within the parks. Cycle through the Cordery-Sweetwater Lakes region and visit the former artist colony of Nashville. Ride Devil's Backbone on the way to Spring Mill State Park, with its pioneer village & working grist mill. Enjoy the historic architecture of Madison on the Ohio River. Catered breakfasts and dinners are served in the inn dining rooms. For more information, see www.triri.org, email triri@triri.org, or call 812-333-8176.

SEPTEMBER 26 – TOUR DE CURE – WASHINGTON DC

Take a journey along the closed-off streets of Washington, DC, and see the monuments like you've never seen them before! Ride along a traffic-free Whitehurst Freeway, Arlington Memorial Bridge and along Constitution Avenue. Ride 13, 33 or 50 miles in support of the diabetes cause with a fun-filled finish line celebration by the Capitol Building. Register

CALENDAR continued on p.26

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CALENDAR continued from p.24

online at www.diabetes.org/dctourdecure or call 1(888) DIABETES, ext. 4541.

OCTOBER 3 - SEA GULL CENTURY

The 27th annual Sea Gull has been acclaimed as one of the best run and flattest century rides in the country, the Sea Gull has become a full weekend of Eastern Shore riding fun with rides and events offered on Friday and Sunday. Expect a lot of company, as in over 7000 riders. For details or registration call (410) 548-2772, or log onto www.seagullcentury.org

OCTOBER 9-11 - GEORGIA BIKEFEST

The 24th annual Georgia BikeFest in Columbus, GA, consists of three days of autumn fully-supported cycling and camping next to the Chattahoochee River. Various mileage options are available each day along with a fully-supported century on Saturday. For more ride details, and to register, visit <http://www.brag.org/gbf-event-details.html>

OCTOBER 17 - TOUR OF RICHMOND

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