

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER

Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists

September-October 2023 Issue 4

## BIKING ADVENTURES: This Summer and This Fall

*How I Spent My Summer:*

*Bev and Randy Buckeye Bridge Ride and Grand Fondo:*

*LeHigh Valley Hincapie, June 3, 2023*

On June 2, Randy and Bev Meador and Chuck Connelly headed to Allentown PA for the Lehigh Valley Hincapie, to be held on June 3rd. They offered three lengths, 77 miles for the Gran Fondo, 53 miles for the Medio or 12 miles for the Piccolo. We choose the Medio, with the elevation gain of 4244 feet for this ride. The Gran Fondo has a mass start of 1000 + riders. This is pretty cool and even more impressive is the end of the ride, coming into the Valley Preferred Cycling Center Velodrome track.

On Friday you are able to watch professional races on the velodrome and then fireworks. Hotels and nice restaurants are within an easy walking distance. Food, drinks, and awards follow the rides. George Hincapie, former teammate of Lance Armstrong, rides this event. It is a quite challenging ride, but I think I would love to do the Bangor Maine Hincapie in 2024 since the elevation seems less challenging.

Chuck and Randy really enjoyed the ride and did great. Bev did complete the ride, she loved the downhills and survived the 53 miles.

*Buckeye Bridge Ride, June 24, 2023*

The Buckeye Bridge Ride in Eaton, Ohio is also worth mentioning. It is a fundraiser for the local 4-H club. This is a smaller event, mostly a flat ride, elevation gain was 1476 feet for the 46.5 mile loop. There are also shorter rides, one of 32 miles and one of 17 miles. On this route, the cyclists go through 4 covered bridges There is also plenty of food at the end!

*Phil Slates' bikepacking trip: Radio Silence Loop*

Read about Phil Slates' four day trip through four counties of West Virginia, Pocahontas, Randolph, Pendleton and Greenbrier and two of Virginia, Highland and Bath in July of 2023. (See the article at the end of the newsletter.)

*Phil Slates' bikepacking trip: Cranberry Loop:*

Also, Phil Slates and Tom Pinto Road two days through the Cranberry Wilderness on August 17 and 18. (Details of this trip are also at the end of this newsletter.)

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**

*Exploring The GAP and The Montour Trail:*

*Biking the Eastern Continental Divide: Karl Dieffenbach*

Mike H., Phil S., Randy, and I started shortly after 10 am and headed up the long slope to Frostburg and Mount Savage. We made good time and got to Frostburg about 11:40 am. Mike, Phil, and Randy all went up the hill to the train depot to get some ice cream. I was only about 75% today due to some bursitis so I was quite happy to rest my gams at the shelter where I chatted with some nice ladies while I waited.

We soon got back on the trail and headed uphill to the Divide where we stopped for a picture. I then insisted that we go on to the mile 25 marker so we would be sure to get our 50 miles in (and another picture). Then it was downhill to Frostburg, water, and more downhill riding which was pleasantly cool.

We stopped about 3 miles out of Cumberland to do a little berry picking.

We got back to Cumberland about 3 pm. I tallied 50.44 miles and 1,864 feet of climbing today. It was plenty for me!

*The Montour Trail: Tom Pinto*

On the August 20, Sunday ride was Phil, Jennifer, Rick, Susan and Tom. We rode west for a mile and 1/2 on the Panhandle Trail and took the connector to the Montour Trail. The plan was to ride 14+ on that trail and then return. This would have been a 33+ mile ride. I missed the fine print on their web site that the said second tunnel was closed with no detour around it. we had to go back early. The group decided to go back to McDonald our starting point and ride 4 miles east on the Panhandle to Oakdale. We discovered Helicon Brewing there. Susan stopped at the cars and did 28 miles, the rest of us got in 35. A beautiful day and ride. Three of us drove over to Oakdale to check out the brewery before leaving the area.

## [Biking Adventures for this fall:](#)

**Gary Martin Memorial Ride:**

Gary Martin, a founding member of the Fairmount Flyers, who rode with the CRC and The CRC rode with the Flyers, passed away this summer. CRC folk joined the Fairmount Flyers for the Gary Martin Memorial Ride on Saturday, September 9, at 10 AM, starting from Prickett's Fort State Park. The ride was sponsored by the Fairmount Flyers. Country Roads Cyclist, MonBikeClub, and other biking clubs were there to participate in this ride.

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER

Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists

September-October 2023 Issue 4



## *Country Roads Cyclists Annual Metric Century:*

It is time for the annual metric century. See you there! Saturday, September 30 9:00 AM Mon River Trail Metric Century Kelly Williams 304-276- 5530

(\*\*\*, T) 62 miles. Meet at the parking lot behind Wendy's in Sabraton (Rt 7, East). We will bike to the Mon River Trail to Prickett's Fort, then north to Point Marion. We will stop at Mountain State Brew Pub for food and refreshments

Before returning to the start. Join us for all or part of the ride, or join us just for refreshments at Mountain State.

## *Confluence Overnighter, October 7 and 8:*

Once again this year, we will bike on the GAP from Connellsville to Confluence. This time, we will be able to participate in the Confluence Pumpkin Festival, three days of activities. Plan to join us. And, make your reservations soon!

Saturday, October 7 at 10:00 AM Connellsville to Confluence Overnight Bike Ride

Sunday, October 8 at 9:00 AM Confluence to Connellsville Overnight

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**

## Annual Meeting:

Country Roads Cyclists Annual Meeting:

CRC Annual Meeting will be held on October 28, 2023 at 6:00 PM, at the Panera's Bread, 357 Patteson Drive, Morgantown, WV

Please join us for dinner, and then a discussion of the financial status and future of this club.

## *Phil Slates' bikepacking trip: Radio Silence Loop, July 2023:*

I had been wanting to do the route I had seen listed as the Radio Silence Loop for a few years since I had heard of it online. The name is from the area of the Green Bank telescopes and as I just learned Sugar Grove and officially known as the Radio Quiet Zone which was established by the FCC in 1959 to minimize possible harmful interference to the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) in Green Bank, WV and the radio receiving facilities for the United States Navy in Sugar Grove, WV.



The loop of the route goes through four counties of West Virginia, Pocahontas, Randolph, Pendleton and Greenbrier and two of Virginia, Highland and Bath and I decided to start in Durbin, Pocahontas County WV. I have visited the WV counties numerous times over the years and lived some in both Greenbrier, with my parents and Pocahontas at a Boy Scout summer camp for six summers but had never cycled most of the route, having done only a short part two years ago.

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**



From Durbin I took the West Fork trail--which to distinguish it from the one between Fairmont and Shinnston is the West Fork of the Greenbrier River which is formed a little outside of Durbin in a thick wooded area I visited once. That trail is rough compared to the Mon and Decker's trails and this time after about ten miles became very overgrown from little use and not being mowed so for the 2nd half or so I took the neighboring Forest Service road to the town of Glady. From there I started up the mountain toward Spruce Knob on a county road which turns into a Forest Service road going by the Spruce Knob Lake which is just before entering Pendleton County. The county line there and further south between other counties is considered to be the Eastern Continental Divide separating the Potomac and Mississippi rivers watersheds. After riding some along the ridge I started a long decent to the town of Cherry Grove where I spent the night at a campground.

For my 2nd day after a short ride along the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac I arrived at the state line and immediately started on a rocky road up a mountain in Highland County, WV which is known as "Virginia's Switzerland" and lays claim to being one of the least populous counties and one of the highest average elevations east of the Mississippi River which I find interesting because the highest elevation of VA which I visited a few years ago is far south of there and straddles the border of Grayson and Smyth Counties. Once I got up the mountain I mainly road along the ridges into Bath county regarding the many mineral springs found in the area. The county was named for the English spa and resort city of Bath. The most interesting part of Bath County was the Dominion Back Creek Recreation Area which is a nice park and camping area which was very busy and constructed at an area where Dominion Energy has what is listed as the world's most powerful pumped storage generating station which generates electricity. Because I did not know how much distance I would be covering each day this is one location I had marked to camp if needed but just took a good break there since it was still afternoon. On that break I decided to head back into WV but to do so had to ascend up the continental divide from the valley into Pocahontas County and that is when I got my first thunderstorm. The ascent on Rt 39 was rather steep and also because of the storm I got off my bike and turned on my blinky because it was rather dark in the storm and walked along the side of the road back into WV where the storm quit. I took a break at the ridge and various photos at the state line and then headed a short distance to spend the night at the Monongahela National Forest Pocahontas Campground just off Rt 92 which I



# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**

liked and was very quiet with only two other parties there. I had wondered how busy these campgrounds would be because of the July 4th long weekend but all had numerous empty spots.



For my 3rd day I woke up early as usual and got riding by 6:45 on a cloudy, cool, but not cold morning which was great because I was out in the open on Rt 92, the same that goes to Morgantown, as I made my way back home into Greenbrier County stopping to take a photo with me and my bike at a sign. Once about half way toward the southern end of the county I turned off onto a county road to get to Blue Bend Campground which I had never visited and it was very nice including a swimming area along the stream and then up a very steep hill, which I walked and then down to the Greenbrier River and Greenbrier River Trail. I had cycled this area before on my first overnight bike ride and that day got a lot more miles in stopping at a campsite North of Marlinton. The river was very interesting because I passed multiple spots where dozens of people were just gently floating on inner tubes in the normally rather shallow and calm river.

On my last day I finished my section of the Greenbrier trail and road away on probably the easiest road to get out of the valley and back to Rt 92 where I then took a county road over a hill to Green Bank. Years before I had done a day ride from Durbin to Greenbank so this time was interesting taking a few days to get there going the long way. I took a good break at the visitors center and then cycled by the telescopes and then to what became a trail which got really rough so I started walking.

The route called for going over a mountain to the Greenbrier River and a very old pedestrian swinging bridge which I wanted to see because it was new to me so mainly walked over the mountain experiencing another thunderstorm along the way and having to lift my bike over numerous downed branches then finally getting to probably an old logging road which I was able to ride down to the river to the very interesting bridge in the middle of nowhere. From there it was a very steep gravel

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**

road which I mainly walked to get the famous cycling route which I had done before of Back Mountain Road which took me back to Durbin and just outside of town, with another short but powerful thunderstorm, to my car.

I was very happy to get back to my car and one of my favorite towns and in the planning new I could spend the night here but since it was only middle of the afternoon I drove home taking various breaks along the way as I was tired and feeling sleepy at times. Overall I loved it and would do it again except for over the mountain from Greenbank on the non-road-- here is the route from the person I originally got it from who use to have a very nice website on this route and others in the are <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/34238850> .

Phil Slates' bikepacking trip: Cranberry Loop, August 2023:

The Cranberry Loop is another ride I had been wanting to do for years. I got this from Dana McKnight who at least was with the Ohio Gravel Grinders and I had met him with Kelly around the PA state line on the Mon River trail as we road with him and a few others to Shinnston as they were going to be continuing over a few days to Ohio.



Cranberry is another area of WV I have visited numerous times over the years mainly backpacking and never before bike riding. There was a time when I lived in Lewisburg an hour away from the visitors center so went there often and in Winter to ski but I knew this route would allow me to visit on the northern side I had never been before which is what mainly interested me. Most of the time I had been in the valley of the Cranberry River along a Forest Service Road but only about half way hiking in with a Boy Scout troop to spend Memorial Day weekend trout fishing. I once got what I will call a ticket there when I was about 18 for fishing without a license or national forest stamp or trout stamp and luckily my fine was just my requirement to purchase those items. I knew Tom was a big fan of the Cranberry area so I asked him if he was interested and we set out on a Thursday morning to possibly miss a crowded summer weekend. I was guessing we would not see many people based on my last visit when I was surprised how few people I saw and how the parking areas had few vehicles and that was the case this time. Along the way we passed multiple

# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**

campgrounds and campsites and there were many empty spots in each and where we camped at the largest campground there was one other group of people.



We were debating where we would prefer to start and leave a vehicle. I had verified from my Forest Service friend I contact in Elkins multiple times a year that we could even park at the visitors center if we wished but we decided to park further in the valley past the Glades at the last parking lot before the gates FS road which would allow us to finish without going up a hill for a mile or so. So from the valley of the Glades we road to the visitors center and then started the climb up the first mountain of the Highland Scenic Highway covering about 8 miles and 1500' from where we parked. We then turned off a side gravel road and began the long descent to the Williams River. We took this road rather slow because of the rather step descent and gravel finally meeting the Scenic Highway again, crossing it and started the paved road that parallels the Williams.

This was now the area I had never visited before and was our favorite part of the trip. This was the start of an eleven mile ride gradually downhill following the Williams River downstream and crossing into Webster County for my first cycling trip there. The road was paved the entire way but very light traffic and along the way passing dispersed campsites where only half were taken and then exiting the National Forest area to various scattered homes and our bridge across the river. We had passed the last campground of the valley but we decided it was still rather early so we continued. Crossing the bridge we started back on a gravel road which went up the mountain and our plan was to camp at the official campground on top of the mountain which I had read had a water pump. We finished the day up the gravel road for 3 ½ miles and around 1000' once again taking our time on the gravel. I was surprised when we got



# **...SPOKIN' WORDS...**

**COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER**

**Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists**

**September-October 2023 Issue 4**

there it was very quiet because only two other people were there and we picked out our location and pitched out tents and had dinner.



The 2nd day we got a good start and knew we had a few miles to descend on the gravel road back to our starting point of the Cranberry River valley. When we arrived in the valley I took lots of photos because this was the part of this valley I had never visited as we made our way to the valley campground and gated Forest Service Road we would use to finish our trip. From the start of the valley we had about 15 miles to our car but 2000' feet of a slow climb since we would be going upstream. Where I had visited the Cranberry before I had just been backpacking and had never been to the western side and a few places we went up hills on the old logging road. We once again stopped various times along the way to take photos and view the rather new shelters that had all been replaced. We passed back into Pocahontas County then we arrived in the area I had visited multiple times before and the most interesting spot to me is where the North Fork of the Cranberry meets the South Fork of the Cranberry because this had been the location my scout troop had camped in the late 70s but these days it is a rather large building I read called the Neutralization Station to help with the acid in the water.

From there it was a few more miles continuing gradually up hill to the parking lot and that day only passed two others cycling the valley road to go fishing. Overall I loved the area and can't wait to go back and ride this and see about extending this to a longer three or more day ride.