RABA Group Rides Return!!! (Virtually that is)

By Josh Silverman

Being kept off the roads has not put an end to RABA group rides. On April 21st, Trey Dunnaville “led” the first of a series of virtual group rides with a dozen fellow RABA members on the UCI 2015 course.

While keeping our social distance we logged into Zwift for a virtual group ride that took us past the Siegel Center, the VCU Museum of Contemporary Art, down Monument Ave., through Shockoe Bottom, along the James River on Dock St. before making a u-turn at Rocketts Landing, and then up the infamous cobblestones of Libby Hill.

Even with a mix of strong climbers, sprinters, and more casual riders like myself, Zwift kept us together on screen. Anyone who fell behind got a push from Zwift back into the pack. Using the app Discord we could talk (like we used to do before texting) to each other throughout the ride. The ride was live streamed on the Friends of RABA Facebook page and is now on Youtube. Click here to see for yourself.

Trey will be continuing the rides Tuesdays at 6:05 p.m. If you’d like to join us, here’s what you need to know:

- Watch your emails for the ride announcement. You

Survey Results: Ride Routes and Types of Bikes Ridden

By Kim Moore

Thanks to the 122 club members who took the time to take this very short, unscientific, anonymous, and fun survey to learn what members are doing during the COVID-19 pandemic. No question was required to be answered. The survey response rate was 12.5%, which was excellent.

The intent of the survey was initially to find out how many were riding on the Virginia Capital Trail (VCT) since there has been a very big jump in its usage since the state of emergency was declared, businesses closed and travel has been sharply curtailed. But I didn’t want to have just a one-question survey, so I wondered how are members were keeping up with bicycling, was it through riding indoor trainers or riding outside by yourself or with small groups? As you can see from the responses, most of the respondents are riding outside, but not using the VCT as much as we thought from reading the VCT

Bob Gore’s New Electric “Bike”

By Bob Gore

Just wanted to let the club members know I am still kicking about. My new “bike” cost $30,000, weighs 460 lbs., and goes downhill like a son-of-a-gun. Climbing... not so hot. It has a padded seat so bike shorts are not needed and has
Virtual RABA Rides...

(Continued from page 1)

will need to respond to the ride leader who will send
you an invite to join the “Meetup” and to voice chat
if you’d like.
• As for equipment, you need your bike and a trainer.
  While a smart trainer that adjusts the re-
  sistance as you go up and down hills is ideal, most
  basic trainers will work if you have a speed sensor
  that connects with your smartphone or tablet via
  Bluetooth.
• You will also need a Zwift account. Zwift offers a 30
day free trial and then the monthly fee is about $15
that can be canceled anytime.

While we all miss riding together in the real world, this
is a great alternative until it is safe to resume our out-
door group rides. Even then it makes for a fun workout
on a bad weather day. Thank you Trey for leading us
into the world of virtual bike rides.

Bob Gore...

(Continued from page 1)

ten speeds. I have a few complaints though. I cannot mount
my Garmin, no cleats (or pedals for that matter) for my
shoes and you cannot ride it in the rain. Rain kills the bat-
tery. You can watch TV from it, which I do (a lot...). I even
bought a subscription to the NBC Sports Cycling Pass so I
could watch cycling live this year. That didn’t work out so
well though. Sigh...

I am well and miss riding with my friends more that I can
say. I am not able to have visitors since my meds depress
my immune system so I am very vulnerable. You can call
me at 370-9906 or email me at gorerm0715@gmail.com.

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Survey Results...

(Continued from page 1)

If respondents were riding only indoors, I asked them to skip to Question 4 and complete the survey from there.

As for what counties were the most popular for our club members to ride, Hanover County just edged out Henrico County by one vote. Most of the respondents ride only on the road, but I was pleased to see 30% of respondents who ride off-road too, either on a mountain or the gravel bike, the relatively new “it” bike of the past few years. And I salute those members who are still riding at 75+ years of age! Bicycling is truly a sport activity that can be done well and enjoyed much later in life than other activities.

Thanks to those who participated in the survey and who knows, there may be more of these short, easy and anonymous surveys in the future. They do provide an interesting snapshot of what club members are doing and, depending on the questions asked, could help guide club leaders in decisions affecting the future of the club.

1. In general, where are you riding during the pandemic? One choice, please.

119 responses

- Indoors only (i.e., a trainer) - If you...
  - 7 (5.9%)
- Outdoors only (by yourself or with a vehicle)
  - 82 (68.9%)
- A mix of indoor workouts / outdoor rides
  - 27 (22.7%)
- I am not riding at all
  - 4 (3.4%)

2. How many times have you ridden the Virginia Capital Trail since the pandemic was declared (mid-March to now)? One choice, please.

113 responses

- 1 or 2 times
  - 23 (20.4%)
- 3 to 5 times
  - 14 (12.4%)
- 6 to 8 times
  - 5 (4.4%)
- 9 times or more
  - 5 (4.4%)
- I have not ridden on the VCT at all during the pandemic
  - 67 (59.3%)
Survey Results...

3. What area of Central Virginia do you mostly (over 50% of the time) ride? One choice, please.

113 responses

- Charles City County: 6 (5.3%)
- Chesterfield County: 21 (18.6%)
- City of Richmond (riding within city limits): 8 (7.1%)
- Goochland County: 10 (8.8%)
- Hanover County: 34 (30.1%)
- Henrico County: 33 (29.2%)
- New Kent County: 3 (2.7%)
- Powhatan County: 3 (2.7%)
- I ride beyond the Central Virginia area: 5 (4.4%)

4. Do you ride mountain bikes or gravel bikes?

119 responses

- Yes, all the time: 30.3%
- No, none of the time: 67.2%
- Mix of road biking and mountain / gravel biking: 2.5%

5. Gender

117 responses

- Female: 32 (27.4%)
- Male: 84 (71.8%)
- Prefer not to say: 1 (0.9%)
Survey Results...

6. Age range
120 responses

- 24 years or younger: 0 (0%)
- 25 to 29 years old: 0 (0%)
- 30 to 34 years old: -4 (3.3%)
- 35 to 39 years old: -1 (0.8%)
- 40 to 44 years old: -2 (1.7%)
- 45 to 49 years old: 9 (7.5%)
- 50 to 54 years old: 8 (6.7%)
- 55 to 59 years old: -24 (20%)
- 60 to 64 years old: 30 (25%)
- 65 to 69 years old: -18 (15%)
- 70 to 74 years old: 17 (14.2%)
- 75 years or older: 7 (5.8%)

We Have Our Sign!
As we’ve completed a couple of Adopt-A-Trail cleanups along the Capital Trail, we now qualify for a sign along that portion showing who has a hand in keeping that area looking nice.
Thanks to Susan Craver for the picture.

Coronavirus Coping
Scary fun on Moonshine Run.
-Tony Hogue

Hip replacement postponed. Riding postponed.
-Michael Testerman
Thoughts about Biking Through a Pandemic

By Peter Benda

This past Sunday—yesterday, though it seems ages ago—I decided to go for a ride on the Capital to Capital Trail, gambling that the overcast sky would ward others away and give me a chance to stretch my legs while maintaining adequate social distance.

I wanted to share my thoughts from that experience in case any of my perspectives might be helpful to others. I may have been, and may still be, overthinking the risks of biking during a pandemic, but perhaps that’s the point of this story. Decide for yourself whether you’re an optimist or a pessimist, and make your decisions accordingly.

To begin with, I am not recommending that anybody go ride on the trail. It is open to the public, subject to social distancing rules provided on the official website, but there is a fair amount of traffic on it. I was an aeronautical engineer in a past life, and I find myself visualizing the flow of air in moving conditions. Given the speed of travel on bikes, and the extra breathing plume that we put out when exercising, the dynamics of social distancing while biking are different than they are when we stand in our front yards talking to our neighbors across the street. I believe one should be mindful not only that there are risks, but that the nature of the risks is different than we’re accustomed to in our offices and homes.

For me, there was a calculation that traded off the physical and psychological benefits of fitness and plein air biking vs. the risks of reduced social distancing on a public pathway. When I arrived at Four Mile Park, I found that it was about half full. The reason I know it was half full is because cars were parked, social distancing-style, with consistently one empty space between them. It was almost hard to find a slot with an empty one on either side. By sunny-day, pre-Covid standards, the park and the trail were quiet, and I believe more people were departing than arriving to the park by the time I arrived (11.30 am).

I had brought a mask in case I ended up interacting closely with people, for example, if I stopped to provide aid, or had a breakdown myself. However, the mask was a flimsy throw-away version, and I suspect it would have flapped off of my face as soon as I picked up any speed. So I stashed it into my pocket instead. I did not see anybody else on the trail wearing a mask, among bikers, walkers, or roller skaters. While it was generally possible to maintain excellent spacing if nobody had been moving, I passed or faced 40-60 (rough guess) people in the course of my 45 minute venture. These were groups or individuals through whose breathy plume I undoubtedly cut. I found myself slowing down before I came up to pedestrians, to make a careful circuit around them, taking and holding a deep breath, and then quickly pedaling away as I passed them, waiting until I was well past them again before resuming my breathing. When another biker would come towards me with a group of people in between, I would slow down to let the other biker get through the group so he or she could maintain as much social distance as possible, and then I would do the same when it was my turn.

Generally, I tried to maintain a 50+ foot distance from others on the trail, with the idea that traveling at biking speeds, the separation distance would have to be greatly increased from the 6 feet recommended for people standing in place. I guess the purpose of the 6 foot recommendation is to give the out-breathed plume time to dissipate and/or settle to the ground before it is blown/breathed across to the other person. If someone has passed through an area traveling 10-20 mph, you are likely still to be cutting through that person’s plume if you yourself enter that area even if they are quite far away. Likewise, if you’re traveling at those speeds, there’s a risk that that person’s plume has not cleared yet even if they have stepped away.

I found myself wishing there were strong crosswinds, and I was happy to be on curves where I might cut in and out of the wind stream, in case it were blowing the same direction I was headed. I also found myself wondering how much extra plume was on the climbs, where runners and bikers had huffed and puffed to get to the top, and their plumes might be rolling down the slope as I biked up the path.

While social distancing is possible when you’re biking, invariably you will be biking behind somebody for some distance who is going roughly the same speed you are. So even if you’re 200 feet behind them you’re likely to be breathing the same air that they had breathed just a few seconds ago. I found myself assessing how tall the other bikers and runners were, and if my head was above or below their plume.

It was interesting to look at the other bikers. Most of them looked down, few smiled, and few seemed to acknowledge my smile to them. I guess they were running the same dark calculations that I was.

If I did this again, and I might, I would first check the weather conditions to verify that there is a wind, and that it is crossing the path rather than blowing along it. I would start in the early morning to get ahead of the crowds, and I would wear a well-fitting, secure mask for those times I encountered people on the trail.

As it was, I soon realized I wasn’t having fun, my head filled with ruminations and calculations on whose air I was breathing. At five miles, I stopped to have a drink and turn around. I thank the kind rider who called out to me to check if everything was alright. It was reassuring to know people want to be helpful, regardless of the conditions. I biked back to Four Mile Creek, stuck my bike in the car, washed my hands with disinfectant, and sped home on the freeway with my car windows wide open.
No RABA Rides... So what's a Member to Do?

Taking the group ride virtual.
- Tobias Janke

Making me a bonfire!
- Garrie Rouse

I'm not slower, social distancing
- Brian McCahill

My daughter starts cycling during COVID.
- Jan Waldron

Sitting wants his partner back.
- John Hibbits

Reading, indoor cycling, exercising, vegetable garden, video chatting with family, reconnecting with old friends.
- Gary Thabet

"Herd" someone wants a walk...
- Deanna Weiler

Riding solo. Time with sons.
- Karen Murphy
No RABA Rides... So what's a Member to Do?

On April 10th our 21st grandchild was born in Baltimore. On April 17th I bought a dog for my wife.

-Thomas Buehler

Here’s the VCT yesterday (April 26) near Westover Church in Charles City.

-Kathy Hamby

The yard never looked better.

-Miriam Ford

Post work Sanity Ride!
- David Hightower

Love my toys...
-Jinx Lucas

Riding and representing JMU Dukes.
-Earl Shaffer, Jr.

Casey has walked with our dog Molly about 20 miles/week since mid March...
-Mary Falterman

Ever present pandemic bandana cycling.
-Greg Doggett

Long Solo Rides

Beer Helps
-Edward Millner
No RABA Ride... So what's a Member to Do?

Cycling and walking...of course with lots of social distancing!!
-Fran Smith

Zwift my new best friend!
-Fred Soltow

Loop Road riding at Lakewood Retirement Community - 69 laps = 40+ miles
-Joe Kent

Gardening is always fun.
-Matt England

Cyclist’s nirvana! Traffic free roads.
-Stan Goldman

Enjoying outdoor cycling, with Spring foliage and weather.
-Ed Hellermann

Dog One Two Three Four...
-Ted Zeh

-Barbara Bishop
Our “new normal” means being at home more than we are used to, which can be a time to be more inward, reflective, and creative. This is a great opportunity to tap your inner muse to write about biking for our first ever May BikeWrite Contest!

We invite you to use your literary talents, whether well developed or latent, to express yourself! Stir a reader's imagination or emotions through stories, essays, poetry or other writing about cycling!

Some Writing Ideas:
- What about that memorable ride or race, personal best, training, special bike or gear, cycling team or group, or cycling friendship?
- Road versus mountain versus indoor cycling?
- New to cycling? What is your perspective about our great sport!
- Describe how you and your cycling habits have changed by staying home or maintaining a social distance

Winners:
- Receive their choice of a BIKEWALK RVA T-Shirt or Water Bottle,
- Have their poems posted on the BIKEWALK RVA website
PLUS
- have the opportunity to read their work at a BIKEWRITE Virtual Reading Event hosted by BIKE WALK RVA*

*Participation in the virtual reading event is optional, but encouraged. You may elect to have someone else read your work. Date of event TBD.

GUIDELINES for BikeWrite Contest Entries

Age Categories for Submissions:
A. 5 – 11 years old
B. 12-17 years old
C. 18 years and older

Up to 5 Winners will be selected for each category!

Deadline for Submissions: Tuesday, May 19  [12 midnight cutoff]
Winners Announced: Sunday, May 24

How to Submit:
Upload your file (word doc’s are ok) by using the Google forms link from the RVA Bike Month page: https://www.sportsbackers.org/rva-bike-month/

The link is posted in 2 places on the page:
1) in the Creative Writing Contest announcement and
2) below the “New for this year, submissions” heading

Include in your writing entry: 1) full name, 2) email address, 3) phone number, 4) address and 5) age category: A) 5-11 years, B) 12-17 years, C) 18 or older.

Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of judges.
- Word Limit: 500 words
- Written submissions must be unpublished work.
- Authors, by submission, certify the work is their own.
- Submissions may have more than one author; all authors’ names must be submitted.
- Work submitted may have been written prior to this year.
- Content of submissions must be in good taste. Strong obscenities, explicit sexual or violent imagery, or discriminating language will not be accepted.

QUESTIONS??: email Georgiana Ball at agmball@gmail.com or call 804.232.7549
Thanks to our Sponsors!

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- S. A. Cox Demolition Contractors
Here is the new design for RABA apparel. We are using Starlight out of Roanoke. They re-open their online store for us occasionally for a limited time. Then, order your gear and have it shipped to your home. You can get a short sleeve jersey (club fit), bibs or shorts, arm warmers and a wind/rain jacket.

Some popular sizes will be kept in stock but anyone interested in this gear is encouraged to order directly from the web when the store reopens. Keep an eye on your mailbox for notices.

Contact Connie at cjackson2@ymail.com if you have any questions.