



MasterLink

The Magazine of the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey



Volunteer of the Month
Rich Albanese-DeMair
For Presenting the
Maintenance Clinic - page 5



Member
Appreciation
Day Rides

President: Olivia Sharp
Vice President: Avrin Slatkin
Secretary: Joyce Haddad
Treasurer: Len Ruvolo
Rides Captain: Keith Schlanger
Membership: Regina Toomey Bueno
Spec Events/Volunteer Dev: Marc Soloff
Tours: Lou Schleifer
Advocacy and Safety: Anastasia Conlon
Publicity: Sharon Hurwich
Rally Chair: Chuck White
MasterLink: Bob DeMair
Webmaster: Dave Pawlyk

June 2026, Volume 49, Number 6. Circulation: approx. 1,500 via electronic download. MasterLink is published 12 times per year as the official publication of the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey, PO Box 853, Ridgewood, NJ 07451. Our website is www.BTCNJ.com. ©2022 by the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey, all rights reserved. "MasterLink", "BTCNJ", "BTCNJ.COM", "Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey" (words and logo), and "Ramapo Rally" are trademarks of the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey.

Protection of the Intellectual Property of BTCNJ® We welcome your creative suggestions for promotional activities using the Club's brands, however, the Club's name, slogans, designs and logos are its intellectual property, which embody the "goodwill" of the Club as developed over the years through service to its members and the community, with thanks to the volunteer efforts of countless members. In order to preserve and protect our goodwill, it is critical that all use of the Club's intellectual property be properly regulated. Please do not reproduce or simulate the Club logo, the names "BTCNJ" or "Bicycling Touring Club of North Jersey", or any other brands such as "Ramapo Rally" and "MasterLink" on shirts, caps, jerseys, bottles, stickers, or any other merchandise without authorization of Amy Avitabile.

MasterLink Submissions: Materials for MasterLink are due the 21st of each month for publication in the following month's issue. Please send articles, photos, letters, or comments to my email at MasterLink@btcnj.com. Materials may be edited by the MasterLink staff for length and clarity. Publication of materials submitted is at the discretion of the Editor. Articles and photographs submitted to the MasterLink may be used in other BTCNJ media at the Club's discretion. Due to copyright laws, any articles, photos, cartoons, art, etc., that have appeared in other publications may not be published in MasterLink without written consent of the copyright holder. Photos in MasterLink may not be reused or republished without prior permission.

MasterLink

June 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 **Clip Notes**
- 4 **The Ramapo Rally**
- 5 **Volunteer of the Month - Rich Albanese-DeMair**
- 6 **5 Questions with a Ride Leader**
- 7 **Club Event Calendar**
- 8 **Ride, Picnic, Swap**
- 10 **Captains Corner**
- 12 **The Blessing of the Bikes**
- 14 **New Member Welcome**
- 15 **BTCNJ Tour Schedule**
- 16 **Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

Cover Image by **Chuck White**

MasterLink banner design **Bruce Armenante**

Proofreaders: **Harriet Einschlag, Debbie Ungerleider**

CLIP NOTES

By Olivia Sharp, President BTCNJ

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about what actually makes a "good ride." It's easy to assume it's about speed, distance, elevation, or average pace, but often a good ride comes down to something much simpler: expectations.

We've all experienced the mismatch at some point — showing up expecting a relaxed social ride only to discover it's much faster than anticipated, or arriving ready for a hard effort and realizing the group has a completely different pace or style in mind.

One of the best things about BTCNJ is the incredible variety of rides available. There truly is something for everyone. But with that variety also comes a shared responsibility from both riders and ride leaders to help make sure everyone has a positive experience.

For riders, that starts with taking the time to carefully read ride descriptions before signing up. Pace, terrain, regroup expectations, distance, climbing, and ride style are all there for a reason. Choosing the right ride for your fitness, goals, and expectations helps not only you, but the entire group. Ignoring ride descriptions or assuming a ride will adapt to individual expectations creates frustration, safety concerns, and unnecessary stress for leaders and fellow riders alike.

For ride leaders, clarity matters just as much. Accurate descriptions and clear communication help riders make informed decisions and set the tone for a successful ride before the first pedal stroke even happens.

Inside this issue, you'll find tips on choosing the right ride for you and ways ride leaders can help set clear expectations for their groups.



Because at the end of the day, great rides happen when people communicate well, prepare appropriately, and show consideration for one another. And really, those small moments of consideration are a big part of what builds a strong club community in the first place.

That same sense of community extends far beyond our rides and shows up in so many ways throughout the club.

A special thank you also goes out to our Volunteer of the Month, Rich DeMair, for leading a well-attended maintenance clinic. Opportunities like these help riders build confidence, learn new skills, and feel more prepared heading into the busy riding season. Be sure to read more about his contributions later in this issue.

And don't forget about the BTCNJ Picnic on June 20th. Events like this are another reminder that the club is about more than just miles — it's also about friendships, community, and finding your place within the group.

We're also always looking for volunteers for both the picnic and the Ramapo Rally on August 30th. These events are only possible because members are willing to step up and help out. And don't forget — many volunteer roles still allow you to volunteer and ride, making it easy to give back while enjoying the event.

Rally Update

by Chuck White, Ramapo Rally Chair

June Ramapo Rally Update

As I started to gather information for this quick article on the Ramapo Rally, I was going to list the volunteer positions that we needed help with. But as I continued to look at the volunteer list, almost all the volunteer positions have been filled!! We are in fantastic shape with volunteers. So I want to send a personal thank you to all those early adopters who have already signed up for volunteer positions! It really shows the commitment that we have to BTCNJ and to the Rally.

Rather than list all of the leads who are already in positions, I really just need to highlight the very few lead openings that we need help with. Those include Parking Lead, Saturday Lead, Marketplace Lead, Welcome Lead, and a Sunday Cleanup Lead. So only five main positions remaining out of all of those that we need for August! Thanks to Joyce for tracking volunteers!

Another high point has been the distribution of rally cards, membership cards, and posters to bike shops and other venues for the Rally. We have had a small army of volunteers taking these cards and posters to shops to advertise the Rally. Here I will take the time to list people that have contributed. Those include Al Rocco Gail Bodin, Ron Polansky, Jackie DeJean, Helene Blaustein, Joyce Haddad, Regina Bueno, Paul Buch, Lori Lobelsohn, Olivia Sharp, Laura Van Riper, Bob Quinn, and myself. We have covered counties from Hudson to Sussex, and from Monmouth to Rockland. Even a lead in CT. (any name omissions here are unintentional!)



RAMAPO RALLY
RAMAPORALLY.COM

6 Beautiful Routes,
12, 25, 50, 62, 100 and 125 miles

Customize Your Route With Short Cuts
4 Month BTCNJ Club Membership*
Fully Stocked Rest Stops
Breakfast and Lunch
GPS & Cue Sheets
SAG Support
*Non Members Only



Electronic mailings have been going out to non-members via Sendgrid (thanks Sharon) and we've seen early encouraging registrations, with more mailings scheduled throughout the season.

Put in your requests for sunny weather on August 30th!!

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH



Rich Albanese-DeMair

Bicycles have always been a passion for me starting with a 20" convertible bike I received for Christmas when I was five years old. I would ride it from the family room to the utility room tirelessly, I couldn't wait for warm weather and to shed the training wheels. I had hand me down bikes for many years and finally bought a brand new Schwinn Continental with my paper route money. I rode that thing everywhere, all 37 pounds of it. At 15, I had a job at Scotch Plains Bicycle shop which started my journey into bike repair. My first good bike was a used steel Pinarello with new Ultegra components that I had my LBS build up for me. It got wrecked, but that's another story. I bought a used Lemond frame, pre-Trek, and built that up from the Pinarello parts. The Lemond is now relegated to my trainer after an incident with a wrong way cyclist, another story. I began collecting more bikes for specific purposes, a Colnago C40 for hilly rides, a DBR Podium 5 for fast flats, a Cioppi just because it's pretty, a Jamis hybrid for errands, a Raleigh M60 MTB, a Raleigh Merit for gravel, an older Jamis Aurora for touring, a Raleigh Grand Sport for foul weather, a Raleigh Professional that I store in Florida, a Burley Duet tandem, a vintage Bob Jackson, and a home-made recumbent I call the Locycle that I made as my High School independent project.

I cut up my beloved Schwinn to make parts for the frame, it weighs a whopping 95 pounds but it was a real head turner long before anyone knew what a recumbent was. There are only five people who can ride it, me, my three brothers, and my son, it's nearly impossible to balance.

Starting in 2008, my wife and I connected with a church group that needed gifts for their Christmas party. I scrounged up seven bikes that needed repair and gave them away. The next year I found 27 bikes and 130 bikes the year after. Some years we gave away over 500. So far over 5,400 bicycles have been given away to children, young people, and adults, providing exercise, a ride to school, work, or a social activity, and putting into practice the mantra: reduce, reuse, recycle. Nothing can beat the joy on a child's face when they receive their first bike, that's what makes it worth it for me.

I used to consider myself an avid cyclist, riding over 6000 miles a year for several years. Distance was never a limit, it was how much time I had. But, times change, I got older, and I'm not so interested in mega miles anymore, so I fix bikes in my spare time and give them away. I have had many experiences on a bike, climbing many of the state high points on the East Coast, riding the abandoned PA turnpike tunnels, 57.1 mph on a screaming downhill in PA, BTCNJ tours, sibling tours, many parts of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Skyline Drive, and so many wild animals! Recently I was privileged to present a Bike Maintenance Clinic for club members; I'll plan another in the Fall.

5 QUESTIONS WITH A RIDE LEADER

Christina Fernandez



1. What was your first BTCNJ ride?

My first BTCNJ ride was the Waldwick Meander D ride in 2020 — a gentle, scenic 10-mile route through Waldwick, Allendale, and Ramsey. I chose it because the description mentioned that it was designed to help riders develop bicycle techniques, making it feel like the perfect beginner-friendly introduction to group riding and the cycling community.

As a first-time rider, it gave me the chance to build confidence and gradually pick up basic skills at a comfortable pace. At the time, I wasn't entirely sure what level of riding I could handle, so I appreciated being part of a welcoming group where I wouldn't feel left behind. I also hadn't yet been introduced to GPS, cycling computers, and all the other "fancy" gadgets, so everything felt new and unfamiliar — but in the best possible way.

2. What was the most memorable ride?

Every ride becomes memorable because of the different people, personalities, and experiences that come together along the way. One ride that especially stands out to me was the Westwood-to-Nyack route, topped off with a stop at Nyack Beach. The peaceful water views and the sight of the Tappan Zee Bridge created a beautiful and relaxing atmosphere.

What made the ride truly special, though, was the camaraderie among the group — sharing stories, favorite ride snacks and energy fuel choices, and learning more about each other's families and backgrounds. It reminded me that cycling is not just about the miles or the ride itself, but also about the friendships and community we build along the way.

3. What are you currently riding?

I currently ride a Trek Domane equipped with electronic shifting, a carbon frame, and carbon wheels. It combines smooth endurance comfort with responsive handling, making it perfect for everything from spirited fast group rides to long days in the saddle while still feeling fun and efficient.

4. What can members expect from your ride?

Members can expect my rides to prioritize safety, organization, and enjoyment. My goal is to create rides where everyone feels confident, supported, and part of the adventure.

I also believe safety is a shared responsibility. I ask riders to follow traffic laws and BTCNJ guidelines, come prepared with a well-maintained bike and working lights, and download the route in advance whenever possible. When everyone works together, we create a safer, smoother, and more enjoyable ride for all.

5. What is your favorite coffee/snack stop and what do you order?

I always get excited whenever we make a stop at Coffee Ride Cafe in Nyack. I can never resist their warmed-up Pan de bono (may I have 2, please?), along with a Cafe Latte.

CLUB EVENT CALENDAR

June 20th — BTCNJ Annual Picnic



Join us for the annual picnic and rides. Check out the article in this edition for details. Suggested items to bring by last name are recommended.

August 30th — Ramapo Rally

It takes over 100 volunteers to put on the Ramapo Rally. The rally is our biggest event of the year and an opportunity to host riders from all over.

We need volunteers in all areas but we especially need members who can move supplies. There are many jobs which can be performed and allow you to ride on Sunday.

[Volunteer Here](#)

Reflection on Membership Appreciation Day

Membership Appreciation Day was a fantastic reflection of what BTCNJ is all about — community and a shared love of cycling. With 149 members leading and participating in rides ranging from D through B, routes varied from 14 to 48 miles with options for everyone, from flat and easy spins to more challenging climbs. The sunny weather made for a perfect day on the bike, while the snacks, drinks, and post-ride socializing gave everyone a chance to relax, refuel, and enjoy time together after the ride. Most of all, it was wonderful seeing so many members enjoying a great day together and celebrating the community that makes BTCNJ special.

Ride, Picnic, Swap

Saturday June 20, 11:00AM - 2:00PM



Saturday, June 20, 2026

Location:

Pascack Brook County Park

[150 Emerson Road, Westwood, NJ](#)

Now that the weather is finally turning into Spring, our attention also turns to everyone's favorite Club event. The annual BTCNJ picnic will be on Saturday, June 20, from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM, at the Pascack Brook County Park in Westwood. Our Club Picnic is a great way to socialize with your BTCNJ friends as well as get to know other members. All BTCNJ members and their families are invited. A special invitation is extended to new BTCNJ members and those who haven't previously attended.

Rides:

Rides of all levels will depart from Pascack Brook County Park in the morning before the picnic and return between 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM. All rides will be posted in advance, so just decide on the level and distances you'd like, and picnic with us upon your return—or not ride and have more time for eating and shmoozing.

Rides will leave from the parking lot near the tennis courts. There are several parking lots at Pascack Brook Park. Please park close to one another so that we have room for all. NOTE: parking is only in designated places in the park, and any overflow must find street parking outside the park. For those who may have forgotten from past years, the police are only too happy to issue parking tickets for those not in actual spots.

continued

Volunteering:

In order to ensure our picnic's success, we need volunteers for different tasks. If anyone has a truck or large van (or two people with SUVs) and can help with getting bulky items from our storage facility – Friday afternoon prior to the picnic - it would be most appreciated. Also needed is help with set-up, clean-up, manning the food tables, and working the grill area. We thank you in advance for your assistance. To volunteer, contact us at chris.nerrie@yahoo.com.

The Food:

Our culinary experience has always been a combined effort on the part of BTCNJ and our members. BTCNJ will provide charcoal broiled beef burgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, paper goods, as well as assorted cold beverages (alcohol is prohibited). As always, our own Meandering Mark Swanek will once again take the helm at the grill.

Additionally, we encourage you to bring your favorite dish to the buffet table for sharing. If you are comfortable, please bring one potluck dish that will feed 6-8 people. Review the categories that follow, find the letter your last name begins with and the category of food you are recommended to bring; we have switched it around this year so as to encourage rotation. Of course, if you have a favorite specialty outside of the categories below, bring it on! Vegetarian dishes are welcome. Lastly, if you have a moment, send us an email at chris.nerrie@yahoo.com as to what you intend to bring so we can fill in the gaps.

A - G: Salads, Pasta, and Veggies

H - K: Main dishes, Fruits and Desserts

L - Q: Fruits and Desserts

R - Z: Snacks, Chips, and Dips

The best way to keep food fresh for the picnic while you are riding is to bring a cooler or other container with ice and leave it in your car. Please don't drop off food at the picnic site before you leave for your ride as there aren't enough coolers to keep everything fresh. Do not bring raw meat that needs to be cooked.

The Swap:

From jerseys to tire irons and beyond, do you have some excess bike related clothing and gear in good shape that other Club members might love to have? We especially would like to help our new members get bike-related gear and clothing! Harriet Einschlag will once again be holding the much-loved Gear Swap. A table for clothing and accessories will showcase these treasures. Please bring your swap gear to the designated table prior to your ride, in a bag with your name on it. The swap event will open for browsing once the rides are completed. We ask anyone who takes an item to make a reasonable nominal donation depending on the item.

Contact: Chris.Nerrie@yahoo.com

by Keith Schlanger

Which Ride Should I Go On?

There's really no such thing as a bad ride — but sometimes a ride may not be the best fit for you. Fortunately, the club provides several tools to help you choose the right ride.

Our ride categories are based on average speed. However, terrain, distance, and wind all have a big effect on speed. For example, on a flat B* ride with little or no wind, you can expect the pace to be closer to 17-19 mph, which is the flat pace for a B* ride.

If you are new to the club, I always recommend choosing a category one level below what you feel comfortable with. It's better to be on a ride that feels too easy than to struggle through one that is too difficult. If the ride feels easy, you can always move to the next category on your next ride.

You can think of the categories' average pace as what you should be able to maintain on your own on a moderately hilly or rolling ride for forty miles. Once you are part of a pack or group, it allows you to ride at faster speeds. Therefore, group ride speed alone is not always the best indicator of what rider category you fit into.

Next, review the Ride Leader's statistics for the ride you are considering. When you click on a leader's name, their contact page will appear. From there, click on "Ride Stats" to view their riding statistics.

For example, looking at my stats, you can see that 39% of my rides fall in the 15-16.9 mph range, with about half of those classified as Hilly. Another 49% fall in the 17-18.9 mph range, with the majority being Rolling terrain. Before joining a ride, it's important to make sure you're comfortable with both the average speed and the terrain profile shown in the Ride Leader's statistics.

Rides Lead/Coled by Keith Schlanger

Year	Total	Led	Coled	Average # Riders	Average Mileage	Average Speed	Distribution
							■ - Flat. ■ - Rolling. ■ - Hilly. ■ - Very Hilly+.
2026	9	4	5	18.3 6-28	34.9 20.0-58.0	15.4 (n=9) 13.9-16.8	13.0 - 14.9 mph ■ 3 33.3% 15.0 - 16.9 mph ■ 6 66.7%
2025	41	6	35	17.8 3-35	45.2 20.0-100.0	16.9 (n=41) 10.6-19.8	9.0 - 10.9 mph ■ 1 2.4% 13.0 - 14.9 mph ■ 1 2.4% 15.0 - 16.9 mph ■ 16 39.0% 17.0 - 18.9 mph ■ 20 48.8% >= 19 mph ■ 3 7.3%

Which Ride Should I Go On?

Another tool we introduced around 2016 is our terrain classification system, which is based on elevation gain per mile. This is especially helpful in understanding how much climbing a ride may involve. For example:

Hilly rides average 56–75 feet of elevation gain per mile

Rolling rides average 26–45 feet of elevation gain per mile

This can make a big difference in how challenging a ride feels, even if the mileage and speed look manageable.

You should also review the RWGPS route. It provides the ride profile and total elevation gain. If you use a bike computer, downloading the route ahead of time can be very helpful. Garmin's ClimbPro feature, for example, provides detailed information about upcoming climbs, including grade and distance. Wahoo and Hammerhead offer similar features as well.

You should also be aware that evening rides tend to go faster since they are shorter and riders are usually trying to get back before sunset.

If you have any questions about a ride, don't hesitate to contact the Ride Leader — or feel free to reach out to me. I'm always happy to help members choose a ride that matches their experience and comfort level.

A Note to Ride Leaders

To help ensure your ride is successful, please include as much detail as possible in the ride description, including rest stops, terrain, and anticipated average speeds.

It's also helpful to look at who has signed up for your ride. If a rider is new or someone you're unfamiliar with, consider reviewing their ride history to see whether they've completed similar rides before. I also sometimes check Strava for additional context.

If it appears that a rider may not be a good fit for your ride, it's better to reach out beforehand to explain what to expect. You can contact them directly, or ask me to help.

Blessing of the Bicycles, by John Toth

I don't know about you, but I need all the blessings I can get for riding safely on two wheels, wherever I might go. Safety first, last, and always! So to receive those bicycle blessings, ten members of BTCNJ went to St. John the Divine Cathedral (one of largest Gothic Cathedrals in the world) to participate in the annual Blessings of the Bicycles event, now in its 28th year.

So, on Saturday May 2, we parked (seniors aged 62+ can apply for free parking at <https://njpalisades.org/parking/>) at Fort Lee Historic Park and bravely pedaled over the George Washington Bridge.

Bicycling over the GWB can be unnerving because of the high speeds and close passings of other pedaling and electric powered cyclists. Our advice to everyone is travel on the bridge's bicycle/pedestrian path by staying to the right and monitoring other bicyclists both in front of and behind you.

Once over the GWB, we followed the Hudson River Greenway south, and exited through Riverside Park on 110th Street and proceeded to the Cathedral at Amsterdam Avenue and 112th Street.

Upon our arrival we found hundreds of other riders with their bicycles waiting outside of the Cathedral while a small, energetic marching band, with dancers, played lively tunes, which added to the festive atmosphere. See <http://hungrymarchband.com/> At 9am, the Cathedral doors were opened, and everyone brought their bikes in. Since there were no chairs or pews inside it was easy for us all to organize our bikes on the left and right to point to the center and form an aisle down the middle of the Cathedral.

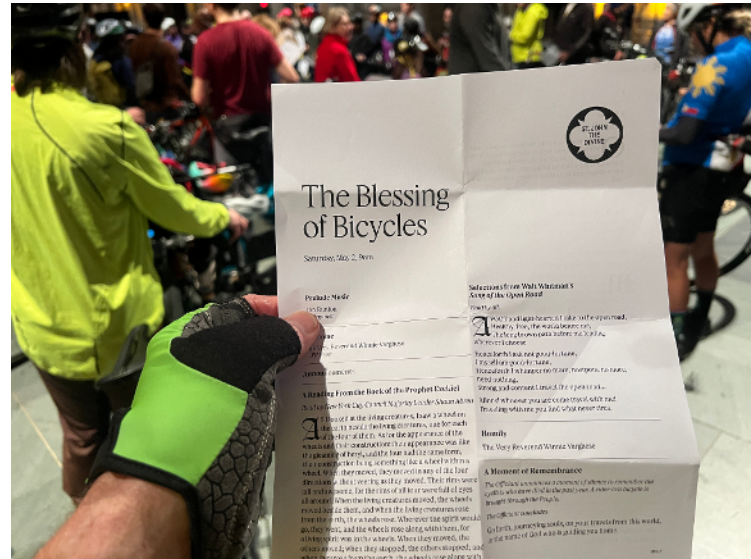


The short service included a reading from Ezekiel, a memorial to cyclists and pedestrians who died in motor vehicle incidents the last year, and a homily by the Cathedral Dean, Rev. Winnie Varghese. Bagpipes provided musical accompaniment to components of the ceremony.

After the blessings of the bicycles, we followed the procession of bicyclists around the interior of the rear of the Cathedral, behind the altar, and viewed the many different and interesting small chapels.

After biking a loop in Central Park, we returned to the cathedral and ate a variety of food on the steps that we had bought at a farmer's market around the corner. What a joy it was to bicycle the entire roadway within Central Park on a newly laid smooth asphalt. To return to the GWB, we followed St. Nicholas Avenue north. To anyone who thinks Manhattan is flat, we suggest you experience the steady uphill of St. Nicholas Avenue.

The Blessings of the Bicycles was a fun and unique way to connect with cyclists from all different styles and backgrounds. We would highly suggest you checking it out next year for a fun and serious and spiritual way to carry good feelings and blessings with you all throughout the year.





TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Julia Forecast	Montvale	NJ
Lucia Franco-Dilone	Basking Ridge	NJ
Cheryl Kerpez	New Paltz	NY
Brennen Lee	Morristown	NJ
Fun Lee	Long Branch	NJ
Trishul Patel	Towaco	NJ
Reid Paul	Wayne	NJ
Jennifer Pitrelli	Woodcliff Lake	NJ
Justin Rafel	Mountain	NJ
Rob Stevenson	Edgewater	NJ
Paula Vaccarella	Boonton	NJ
Harrison Vogel	Franklin lakes	NJ

BTCNJ Tour Schedule

Tours are filling fast and several are already closed or waitlisted — see below for what's still available, then head to the website for full details and instructions on how to sign up.

Ride Name	2026 Dates	Tour Leader	Hyperlink for tour page below	Cost*	Status
New Paltz Gravel	May 21-25	Lou Schleifer	https://btcnj.com/pages/toursShow	\$445	Complete
20th Annual memorial Day W/E Tour	May 22-25	Linda Krauss		\$565	Complete
Wonders of Eastern Pennsylvania (Philadelphia Tour)	June 5-7	Tom Wieser		\$360	Closed
Chamber Music, Charlemont, MA	July 30-Aug 2	Jane Porges Jerry Szubin		\$200	Open
Pioneer Valley Tour Hadley, MA	Aug 21-23	Joan Brickman Don Schlenger		\$330	Waitlisted
Amagansett, NY	Sep 18-20	Robert DeMair		\$295	Waitlisted
Cape Cod - Boston (Point to Point)	Oct 3-11	Rich Brookler Debbie Ungerleider		\$1,300	Waitlisted
XNHAT+ Bikepacking New Hampshire	Oct 5-9	Avrin Slatkin Jerry Szubin		\$550	Waitlisted
* All costs are PPDO			PPDO = Per Person Double Occupancy		

BTCNJ Executive Board Meeting

Date: May 4, 2026

The meeting held virtually on Zoom, was called to order by Olivia Sharp at 7:05pm

Present:

Olivia Sharp, President

Avrin Slatkin, Vice President

Len Ruvolo, Treasurer

Joyce Haddad, Secretary

Sharon Hurwich, Publicity

Marc Soloff, Special Events

Keith Schlanger, Rides Captain

Chuck White, Rally Chair

Regina Bueno, Membership Chair

Anastasia Conlon, Advocacy & Safety

Absent:

Robert DeMair, MasterLink Editor

David Pawlyk, Webmaster

Treasurer's Report:

Len Ruvolo reported a net loss of just under \$19,000 for the year, which was \$600 better than the previous year, with membership dues slightly behind by about 7% in dollars. Total Liquid Assets remain at recent levels and exceeded last year by a small margin.

Rides Captain's Report:

Keith Schlanger presented data showing 21 more rides in April compared to the previous year, with notable increases in gravel rides (160% increase from 5 to 13 rides) and also an increase in B level rides. The team discussed the upcoming Membership Appreciation Day, with most ride categories participating except for the "A" category. Keith mentioned plans to send reminder emails about jersey pickup and encouraging additional rides in each category.

The discussion clarified route differences between various skill levels, with C and D rides avoiding Oakland Rec Center by starting in Great Oak Park, due to an incline and heavy traffic, while Regina's C* ride was specifically designed to challenge riders beyond the standard route. The conversation concluded with a discussion about potentially starting future cookie rides from Pascack Park rather than Oakland to avoid route conflicts.

Membership Report:

The team discussed logistics for the upcoming Member Appreciation event. Regina volunteered to handle refreshments. The group also clarified that the event would involve multiple rides starting and ending in

Oakland. C and D rides will start and end in Great Oak Park with participants transporting their bikes and themselves after the ride to the Oakland Rec Center for snacks. They will ask Renata for venue suggestions, for future events, that would accommodate all ride categories.

Publicity Report:

Sharon Hurwich opened up the discussion about access issues with Facebook Business Suite permissions for various members. She has sent invitations for partial access but only Amy Avitabile should have full control over advertising due to the complexity of managing ads. The team agreed to follow up on resolving access issues before Wednesday to enable posting about Membership Appreciation Day events, and Olivia suggested that Gail Bodin could help coordinate with Amy regarding ad management given her business experience with social media.

Tours:

The group discussed plans for an upcoming Tour Leader party to show appreciation for our leaders' hard work. Olivia proposed creating a MasterLink article featuring tour leaders to highlight the rewarding aspects of leading tours. The team discussed historical tour documentation and resources, which are supposedly stored on a thumb drive in the storage locker. It has not been found yet..

Rally Update:

Chuck White provided an update on the Ramapo Rally, reporting that 90% of the bike shops in North Jersey had received Rally postcards. Current registration numbers showed that we are close to last year's numbers as of May 1st. Chuck noted that email notifications sent to over 2,200 addresses generated 870 clicks and 252 new clicks, and planned to focus next on securing sponsorships to replace Kessler's absence

Olivia invited Chuck to attend Wednesday night pizza meetings to hear member feedback about the Rally. They also group discussed route changes for the Rally, The team also discussed continuing the distribution of Rally Postcards at bike shops and adding new shops to their distribution list.

Membership and Special Events:

The Vice President reported that the April happy hour at Miller's Ale House was attended by about 50 members. The club subsidy was less than \$10 per member. The attendance and subsidy are in line with prior happy hours. Although the venue was not perfect, attendees gave favorable feedback and it was recommended to continue to host our happy hours at Miller's.

Bob DeMair will write an article about June's Volunteer of the Month. Regina Bueno will prepare a recap of the maintenance clinic. The group then discussed a "5 questions with a ride leader" initiative, where Regina proposed featuring a relatively new ride leader. Olivia suggested including some other ride leaders, who frequently post rides with low attendance and relatively new ride leaders who have been leading rides weekly.

They debated the format and frequency of the "new member spotlight" section, with Olivia suggesting they could move to a question-and-answer format and alternate between Member and Volunteer Spotlights. The group discussed various leaders that could be in those 2 categories.

Regina discussed membership statistics and follow-up processes. She will send out follow-up emails for new members. The discussion also touched on the challenge of reaching out to lapsed members.

The team discussed the club picnic which takes place on June 20th. Chris Nerrie and Bob Goodfriend volunteered to run it again; however, they will need to rent a van to fit all the grills, coolers and supplies needed for the event.

Safety and Advocacy:

Anastasia Conlon opened up the discussion about the Cycle Hope ride event planned for May 18th along the East Coast Greenway. Avrin offered to help Betsy Longendorfer with parking information for the ride, suggesting locations like Johnson Park in New Brunswick and Colonial Park.

The next board meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned by Olivia Sharp at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Haddad, Secretary