

# The Wheel

December 2011  
Volume 27; Issue 30

## The Newsletter of Reston Bicycle Club

### Chairman's Message

by Dan Scrafford

The weather this Fall has been wonderful. As a result, several RBC riders continue to log serious miles heading into December. At least two members will have over 9,000 miles by year's end. Impressive! If you are proud of the miles you've ridden this year and would like to share your numbers with your fellow members, please email me with your annual miles by the end of this month and we will publish them in the January edition of The Wheel ([Scrafford@aol.com](mailto:Scrafford@aol.com)).

On November 13, 2011 we held our Annual Meeting, which included an election of Board member positions. I am honored to serve as Chair for one more year and I am also thankful that John Hamilton, Barb Lytle, Ken Thompson, Randy Karn, Ed Robichaud, Jeff Major, and Tricia Wells will be continuing as fellow Board members.

Several awards were handed out to members at the annual meeting. Some of these awards were serious and some of them were given out in good fun. They were:

Most Improved Riders: *John Schiavo, Tina McGarvey, Chris Ciccone, Jill Spaeth, The Fools*

An inspiration to all of us.

Best Ride Leaders: *John Hamilton, Randy Karn*

It wouldn't be Saturday without them.

Black and Blue Award: *Steve Slovikosky*

For being the first to bear the brunt of Super Squirrel's wrath.



### Cutest Cycling Couple: *Alisdair Craig and Steve Slovikosky*

For morally supporting each other after being taken out by Super Squirrel.



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**RBC Monthly Meetings**  
First Wednesday of every month.  
**We hope you'll join us!**

### In this Edition:

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## Who's Who In Reston Bike Club

**Chairman:**

Dan Scrafford, (703) 955-1676  
[Scrafford@aol.com](mailto:Scrafford@aol.com)

**Vice Chairman:**

John Hamilton (703) 904-9381  
[Jhamilton11@cox.net](mailto:Jhamilton11@cox.net)

**Secretary:**

Barb Lytle, (703) 362-8286  
[vballbarb@yahoo.com](mailto:vballbarb@yahoo.com)

**Treasurer:**

Ken Thompson, (703) 476-4106  
[e2Ken@verizon.net](mailto:e2Ken@verizon.net)

**Members at-large:**

Randy Karn (703) 402-0227  
[RandyKarn@cox.net](mailto:RandyKarn@cox.net)

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## Welcome New And Returning Members

New

Stephen Fields, Jason Kyzar

Returning

Yung Kim, Kristy Kim, Lois Olson, Mike Olson, Jerry Pollatos, Robert Rodriguez, Maryann Erfami, Karen Rompalo, Michael Ruth

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### Ride Level Descriptions

**A** - Aggressive riders. Grueling pace with sprints, 40 - 100 mi, 18 - 20+ mph avg.

**B**—Strong riders. Demanding pace, 25 - 75 mi, 14 - 18 mph avg.

**C**—Average riders. Moderate pace, 15 - 50 miles, 10 - 14 mph avg.

**S**—Social riders. Relaxed, casual tempo per group consensus

**RIDE SCHEDULE—DECEMBER**

**NOTE:** Due to club insurance policies all participants on RBC rides must be current club members. Non-members may try a ride one time before joining.

Call Ride Leader to confirm information accuracy. Check the club website at [RestonBikeClub](http://RestonBikeClub) for new rides and additional information. **If there is greater than a 50% chance of rain or if the forecast starting temperature is less than 40 degrees, the ride may be cancelled.**

**Saturday Rides** begin at **10:00**. These rides are impromptu and start in the parking lot across from the Caboose in downtown Herndon. Rides include A & B level riders and typically cover distances of 50+ miles. They are “no-drop” rides. First time riders please call: A/B - John Hamilton, 703-593-9384 or Randy Karn, 703-402-0227; C - Gaston Prudencio 703 906-7524. Please check the website for updates.

**“Chairman’s Letter”** (from Page 1)

The Tania Award: *Bob Rodriguez*

Ask Tania what this means.

The Ken Thompson and Ed Robichaud Award - for outstanding contributions by a club member: *Barb Lytle* for her amazing job in recruiting and for organizing the volunteer effort for the 2011 Century. The Century is such an important event for RBC, we can’t thank you enough Barb!

I have had a blast being your Chairperson this past year and I can’t wait to help the Club celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> Year in 2012. Have a great Holiday season and, as always,

Ride Safely!

Dan



Since most top tubes were horizontal; and most seat tubes angled at about 73 degrees; most frames of the same “size” were almost identical in their geometries.

In recent years, the use of carbon fiber has revolutionized frame-building. Now, top tubes slope and curve in myriad ways on different bikes; and seat tubes may or may not end at the top tube junction. The result: a “54” size bike may not have ANY 54-centimeter tube at all! Even worse, it may have completely different geometry than a “54” bike from another manufacturer. If you ride a time-trial or triathlon bike, you probably know the problem is even worse on those frames – and fit mistakes are potentially more damaging.

In an effort to somewhat standardize bike comparisons in the modern era, the bike industry has made some efforts to come up with new measurements. For example, most of us no longer pay attention to actual “top tube length.” Instead, we measure an imaginary “top tube” which runs on the horizontal plane from its origin (at the head tube in front) to the seat tube (or seat post inserted inside the seat tube) at the rear. That horizontal measurement can give us a sense of the frame’s “reach” – its length relative to other bikes. However, tube angles also vary considerably; so two frames with the same “top-tube-horizontal” measurement may still have different geometries – and feel very different.

**Stack and Reach**

To further standardize frame comparisons, most fitters (and an increasing number of manufacturers) now rely on STACK and REACH dimensions (see diagram). The “stack” is standardized to mean the vertical height of the top of the head tube – the highest point of the frame under the handlebar stem – from the center of the bottom bracket (the center of rotation of your crankset). Thus, a bike with a greater stack measurement will generally have a higher front end, with handlebars sitting up somewhat higher than bikes with lesser stack measurements.

The frame’s “reach” is standardized to mean the horizontal length from the center of the bottom bracket to the top of the head tube. So, you can see that the stack and reach form X and Y coordinates which allow us to compare frame geometries. Typically, a more “aggressive” geometry – made for aerodynamic riding and racing – will have a longer reach and a shorter stack. A more “relaxed” geometry – often better for comfort or endurance riding – will have a shorter reach and a taller stack, so you can sit a little more upright.

Unfortunately, even stack and reach don’t tell the entire story of a bike’s geometry, or how it will fit YOUR body.

**BIKE FIT - Deciphering the Code**

By Doug Baumgarten  
Director, Sportfit Lab  
SICI Certified Bike Fitter

Why are bikes so hard to buy and fit? If you’ve done any bike shopping recently, you may have noticed that, for example, a Trek “54” size bike doesn’t fit like a Specialized “54” size bike – even when you set the seat to the same apparent height. The reason there is so much variation, and confusion, has a lot to do with the evolution of the bike industry in recent years.

**Bike History**

When most road bikes were made of steel, the frames were constructed from straight, round tubes that were welded together to form a basic triangle (except for the seat stays and chain stays sticking out behind). The top tube was always horizontal, and typically matched the length of the seat tube. Thus, a “54” centimeter bike actually had top AND seat tubes that measured 54 centimeters in length.

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“Bike Fit” (from Page 3)

First, we have the problem of seat tube angles changing the EFFECTIVE reach of the bike: two bikes with the same listed “reach” measurement can have different effective reach lengths, if their seat tube angles differ. When this happens, the “reach” measurements may be the same, but the “seat X” measurement (see diagram) will differ. The seat or saddle “X” is the horizontal distance from the bottom bracket to the seat, which will depend on both the angle of the seat tube and the height of the seat.

Second, we have the problem of stack measurements: although they tell you how high the FRAME is in front, they don’t tell you how high the HANDLEBARS sit! Why is this so? Because bikes vary in how much steerer tube – the part on which the stem is fitted – extends above the top of the frame. Some bikes’ handlebars sit very low – just above the frame. Others’ are raised 2-4 centimeters above the frame, with “spacers” inserted between the frame and the stem. This can significantly change the height of the handlebars. [Don’t forget that stems also vary wildly, in length and angle, which contributes to the final position of the handlebars]. This is why, as fitters, we lock into “handlebar X/Y” dimensions (see figure) to determine ideal positioning.

Lastly, we have the problem of body geometry. As you know, people differ in their dimensions and ratios: some have longer limbs and some shorter, even at the same overall height. Thus, bike measurements can only tell you so much – that’s why professional bike fitting is so important, both before and after purchasing a bike.

Fitting Tips and Recommendations

So, what can you do to shop wisely and fit properly? First, there are a couple of “rules of thumb” that can be used to shop for bikes. Measure your inseam length from top of crotch (where you hit the bike saddle) to the floor (without shoes). If you multiply that length, in centimeters, by 0.657, you will obtain an estimate of the frame size that will fit your legs. Of course, this won’t take into account your personal body characteristics, but it’s a place to start.

Next, you can estimate proper seat height by multiplying that same inseam by 0.883. That measurement (in cm) should be measured from the bottom bracket, up the seat tube, to the top of the saddle.

When riding, your knees should extend to about a 150-degree angle at the bottom of the pedal stroke – that’s the best way to determine correct seat height. For horizontal seat placement, keep in mind that your knee should be directly over the pedal at the front of the pedal stroke – when the crank is parallel to the ground. Once you’ve achieved those positions, your upper body should be resting comfortably on the handlebars: your back should be fairly straight, your arms should be very slightly bent at the elbows, and you should NOT feel you have to reach hard to get to the hoods. If the handlebars are in the wrong spot, AFTER your legs are adjusted properly, then you either have the wrong bike or need to move the handlebars (if possible). Never compromise proper leg position for arm position.

As mentioned above, you can compare stack and reach dimensions – now listed by most manufacturers – to compare bikes.

(Cont. Page 5)

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**“Bike Fit”** (from Page 4)

Don't assume that one 54 is the same as another – you may need a COMPLETELY different size from one manufacturer than you do from another. Of course, the ultimate in proper fit is a custom frame, made to your dimensions. A custom bike will usually cost a little more than a stock frame; but the improvement in comfort – and potential savings in not having to change parts to get it to fit – can often make up for that difference.

Finally, the best way to be sure is to get professional guidance. An independent, certified bike fitter can determine the best bike for your needs, even before purchase – and then adjust it properly. And remember that a bike salesman is not the same as a bike fitter; a qualified fitter knows bikes and also knows biomechanics and physiology.

**About the Author**

Doug Baumgarten, M.S. is Director of Sportfit Lab in Herndon, Virginia ([www.sportfit-lab.com](http://www.sportfit-lab.com)). The lab provides performance testing, training, professional bike fitting, and custom bike design for cyclists, triathletes, and other recreational and competitive athletes.



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# The Wheel

The Newsletter of Reston Bicycle Club

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*Please complete form (circle information) & return with check payable to: Reston Bicycle Club*

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Annual dues for single membership : \$20.00 plus \$2.00 for each additional household member riding with the club.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Rider Level A . B . C . S  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Household Members:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Rider Level A . B . C . S  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Rider Level A . B . C . S  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Rider Level A . B . C . S

Attention Parents: Parents must sign a parental consent form for riders under the age of 18. Please request a copy of this form so young riders can present it when signing up for each ride. An adult family member must accompany children under 15.

What is your preferred day/time to ride? Saturday—Sunday—Weekday (AM—PM)

Are you interested in mountain biking? Yes No

Indicate areas you might be willing to help with: Lead Rides; Tours & Weekends;  
 Annual RBC Century; Newsletter; Club Social Events; Data Entry; Triathlon;  
 Education/Safety; Legislative Action; Membership; Phone Calls;  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Club Rider Levels

*RBC tries to cater to every level of cyclist. Please use this guide when completing your application and planning your rides.*

- S Social riders.** Relaxed, casual pace; Distance & speed per group consensus
- C Average riders.** Moderate pace; 20 - 50 miles; 10 - 15 mph average
- B Strong riders.** Demanding pace; 25 - 75 miles; 15 - 18 mph average
- A Aggressive riders.** Grueling pace with sprints; 40 - 85 miles; 18 - 20+ mph average

**Helmets are required on all RBC rides.**




**RESTON BICYCLE CLUB**

P.O. Box 3389  
Reston, VA 20195

[RestonBikeClub.org](http://RestonBikeClub.org)