

SPOKE

Notes

Newsletter of the Cyclonauts Bicycling Club, Springfield Massachusetts

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



My first experience with the Springfield Cyclonauts began in 1986. My father, Henry, brought me hiking with him as a young boy. I used to run ahead and jump off the rocks on the side of the path.

Through the years, I enjoyed hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and cycling. In 1998 I started to bring my college girlfriend (and future wife) with me. Cindy joined me for many years until we welcomed our first son in 2009. I continued my Saturday outings while she cared for our two boys. Around 2018, we decided that Dylan and Lucas were old enough to participate, and now we hike as a family.

As I begin this fall season as the new president of the Cyclonauts, I would like to thank our outgoing president, Betty Siwinski, for her many years of hard work and dedication.

I look forward to this opportunity and will do my best to live up to the standards previously set.

Congratulations to those reelected to the board, those elected to different positions, and to newly elected Mike Cronin as our new Wednesday Hike Chair. Their time and effort help with the continuation of this club.

I would like to *thank* everyone who signed up to lead hikes so far, and encourage everyone to consider leading a hike in the future; even if you haven't led a hike before. Without our member volunteers, we would not have hikes to enjoy as exercise and a chance to socialize. There are plenty of resources out there to help you find trails, such as the MA DCR and the CT DEEP websites.

Please remember with the changing of the season to dress in layers, stay hydrated, and most of all, have fun. I look forward to seeing you on the trails!

James DeSellier, *President*

EDITOR'S REST STOP



Hi everyone,

Just a reminder: If you wish to contribute, please don't hesitate to submit information you think will be helpful or of interest to the other club members. Send letters to the Editor, or feedback to me at donna.katz56@gmail.com regarding how SpokeNotes can be more interesting or useful to our members.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

This is a place for club members to share their ideas and opinions with respect to all aspects of cycling and our club. Please limit letters to less than 200 words.

No letters this issue.

Given there are no letters to the editor, I thought I would provide some interesting content from MassBike. "MassBike is a statewide bicycling advocacy non-profit working to make bicycling better for all riders across Massachusetts. Find more information at www.massbike.org "

Since some of our members are riding ebikes and others may be considering them, I thought this information from the MassBike website may be of interest to our members. According to MassBike, a new Bill regarding ebikes was enacted in Massachusetts on August 10, 2022. With permission, the content on the following pages was copied and pasted directly from <https://www.massbike.org/ebikes> .

Electric Bikes

The use of electric-assist bicycles (“e-bikes”) has grown rapidly over the last 5 years. Modern e-bikes often look indistinguishable from a “regular” bike but have robust batteries and technology which are capable of sensing when a rider needs a helping hand over a hill, into a headwind, or accelerating from a stop. While e-bikes have existed for years, recent advances in technology have allowed batteries to become smaller, lighter, cheaper, and longer range, enhancing the usefulness, appeal, and affordability of these machines. E-bikes appeal to many types of people but particularly for those who use them as a tool to overcome limited physical fitness, for people running everyday errands who want to carry heavier loads, and for parents transporting children. In addition, several bike share systems have begun adding e-bikes to their fleet in Pioneer Valley, in the LimeBike network, and elsewhere around Massachusetts, enhancing the appeal of bikeshare for everyday riding.

Current E-Bike Laws in Massachusetts

As of August 10, 2022, the e-bike definition language was signed into law as amendments to the Transportation Bond Bill (S.2989) to include Class 1 and Class 2 definitions for e-bikes. This law will go into effect 90 days from signing, on November 8, 2022.

CLASS 1: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.

CLASS 2: Bicycle equipped with a throttle-actuated motor that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph.

Note: MassBike will continue to advocate for a Class 3 definition in order to match MA law with federal definitions and statewide regulations set by the Department of Conservation of Recreation.

Regulations

E-bike riders are afforded all the rights and privileges related to all bicycle riders, except that e-bikes are not allowed to be ridden on sidewalks.

Class 1 and Class 2 electric bicycles are not considered to be "motorized bicycles" as further defined in MA law, as such are allowed on bikeways and bike paths, however a local jurisdiction may regulate and prohibit their use, but only after a public notice and public hearing.

E-bikes are not allowed on "natural surface" trails (ie. mountain bike trails) unless otherwise permitted by a local jurisdiction.

The Previous Law

Before the e-bike definition amendment passed in the Transportation Bond Bill, there was no designation with which to regulate e-bikes. However, a "motorized bicycle" is defined as having a helper motor with a cylinder capacity not exceeding fifty cubic centimeters, an automatic transmission, and which is capable of a maximum speed of no more than thirty miles per hour. Motorized bicycle riders must be licensed, and are prohibited from off-street pathways.

The lack of similar designation for e-bike riders left ambiguity in where electric bicycles should be ridden on paths, trails, and sidewalks.

Our proposed changes are outlined in our Massachusetts E-Bike Law Info Sheet.

E-Bike Rebates

Thanks to Representative Natalie Blais (1st Franklin), the Transportation Bond Bill included a provision for \$1M to establish a state rebate program to offset the cost of e-bikes with \$500 rebates to consumers – and \$750 rebates for low-income consumers. The bill directs the Department of Energy Resources to evaluate offering electric bicycle rebates at the point of sale through Massachusetts owned and operated bicycle retailers. This is a bond authorization that still needs to be included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to be allocated, which is done by the Governor's administration. Typically, the finance teams will begin this work early next year in 2023, with a plan released in late May or early June. Once the funding is included in the CIP, the grant program can be announced.

MassBike is advocating for the ability to apply the rebate retroactively, which is still in discussion.

Interested in e-bike rebates? You can elevate the issue by contacting your local State Representative and Senator to ask for their help making sure the CIP includes this rebate when finalized in 2023.

National Legislation

There is a bill in the House of Representatives, Electric Bicycle Incentive Kickstart for the Environment Act or the E-BIKE Act, which would allow a refundable tax credit for 30% of the cost of a qualified electric bicycle.

You can see the full bill at: H.R. 1019 - E-Bike Act

Tell Congress to support a consumer credit for electric bicycles:

<http://bit.ly/Electric-Bikes-Credit>

We've been getting lots of questions about e-bikes and the recently passed Massachusetts e-bike legislation. You can always find a comprehensive overview of current Massachusetts e-bike laws at www.massbike.org/ebikes .

Our e-bikes page will be updated as new information becomes available and also includes a link to our in-depth e-bike FAQ.

THE WEBMASTER'S CORNER

Thank you Ray Siwinski for the great job that you have done with our website for the last 8 years. Thank you for working with me this past season as I learn the ropes of managing the website. I am excited to be writing my first Webmaster's Corner. I have already made a few changes to the website, and I invite all of you to submit comments as to what changes you would like to see to make the site more appealing and informative.

As the board had voted to do so, I added a list of our current officers and board members on our About Us page. I am still looking to add more rides to the Ride Library as well as GPS or Strava links for the existing rides. While not necessary, I welcome ride leaders to include these links in ride descriptions.

Please let me hear from you as this is your website. As always I can be reached at spfldcyclonauts@gmail.com.

**Betty Siwinski
Webmaster
Cyclonauts Bicycle Club**

