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I hope that everyone had a wonderful summer! Unfortunately, the nights are getting colder, the leaves are falling from the trees, and other signs of change signal that it is time for fall. It is also a time of change for me at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society NJ Metro Chapter. It seems as if it was only yesterday that Mike Gibney passed the Board Chair role to me. I would like to thank Mike for always being available as a sounding board and mentor, he has been and continues to be a tremendous asset to our Chapter. After having the privilege of being the Chair of our Board of Trustees these past three years, I am excited to welcome Jeff Hurwitz to the leadership role of our Board in October. Jeff has served in numerous key lead roles in his ten years on our board and I am indebted to him for his engagement and sound counsel. The Board and Chapter will be in great hands under his leadership.

The past three years have witnessed an incredible amount of change in the National MS Society as well as our Chapter. Locally, we consolidated to our more centrally located chapter home office in Woodbridge and welcomed a new Chapter President, Lisa Gallipoli. Lisa has brought a great deal of passion, focus, execution, and leadership to our Chapter. This past December we achieved our $250 million NOW Campaign (No Opportunity Wasted), the largest MS research campaign in history – accelerating vital research progress towards our goals to: STOP the disease in its tracks, RESTORE lost function, and END MS forever. The impact of this effort is seen as we now have fourteen disease modifying drugs approved for multiple sclerosis. To date, we have invested $924 Million towards research. Amazing - yet, not enough! We still need to address progressive MS and focus on restoring and ultimately ending this terrible disease.

I would like to thank three incredible groups of people without whom these past three years would not have been as rewarding to me personally or professionally. First, my thanks to our tremendous NJ Metro Chapter Staff. You work tirelessly for our cause and do so much for so many, thank you. Secondly, I would like to thank our volunteer Board of Trustees. You give of your selves in so many ways for the benefits of all affected by multiple sclerosis. Your engagement and contributions to our Chapter are extraordinary, thank you. And finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank the many, many volunteers who give their time, money, compassion, and prayers to the fight against MS and the care of those who are impacted by it. You are true heroes and as Board Chair and a person fighting MS, I thank you. All three of these spectacular groups inspire me!

I am excited to remain very engaged with the National MS Society. I look forward continuing to serve as a Board Member of our local chapter as well as a member of the National Board of Trustees. I hope to see many of you at a Walk, Muck, Bike, Dinner of Champions, Musical Moments, or one of the other many great events our Chapter conducts. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this great organization and, more importantly, thank you for your support of our quest to find a cure for multiple sclerosis!

Bonnie Higgins

Bonnie Higgins
TALKING TO YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT MS

For people with MS, disclosing the diagnosis in the workplace is a common concern. Whether or not to disclose is a difficult and very personal decision that should be informed by certain basic knowledge and made only after a thorough consideration of the pros and cons, which are not the same for all employment circumstances. Keep in mind that once disclosed this information cannot be taken back.

Whatever your decision, know your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Familiarize yourself with your company’s time and leave policies as well as short and long-term disability plan requirements. There are several key issues to consider — who at work needs to know, why would they need to know and what do they need to know?

It may be necessary to disclose to an employer repeatedly during your career. Educating yourself and planning ahead will help protect you if you decide to disclose.

The only situation that legally requires disclosure is a request for an accommodation in the workplace for a disability. The ADA, the primary law that deals with disclosure, stipulates that in order to request accommodations, a person must disclose. The accommodation can be requested during the interview process or over the course or during the course employment. Some of the benefits of disclosure are that it reduces stress, makes it easier to examine insurance and benefits and makes you feel more comfortable in case there is a change in your symptoms in the future. It is also important not to wait until a poor performance evaluation compels an explanation. At that point, it may be too late to save the job.

Be sure to consider both the legal and practical sides of disclosure, the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure, and explore the components of a disclosure script. A disclosure script should:

- Be brief and as free of medical terms as possible. It should explain how you are able to get your job done despite your symptoms.
- Assume the employer knows nothing about your disability. A large part of disclosing is educating your employer.
- Be practiced on friends and family.

Various publications and a tool to help you with the disclosure process are available from the National MS Society at [http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Employment](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Employment).

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a free service of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, another useful source of information can be reached at [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org) or by calling 800-526-7234.

If you would like to discuss your decision with someone at the National MS Society, find out about local employment resources, or be referred to an employment law attorney, call 1-800-344-4867 to speak with an MS Navigator or you may email your questions directly to: EmploymentQuestions@nmss.org and an Employment Specialist will respond within 48 hours.

Make use of these helpful resources. Being informed and planning ahead give you the best chance of a successful disclosure. Share it with the world!

HOME MODIFICATION STORIES

Have you recently considered or taken steps to make your home more accessible? Were costs of the modification a hindrance or burden?

Some states offer tax credits to help people with disabilities make their homes more accessible. In New Jersey and across the country, the National MS Society and MS activists are lobbying for home modification tax credit legislation. Your story can help with these efforts.

Please complete a short anonymous survey about your experiences with home modifications at: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PXHNGJ6](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PXHNGJ6). If you have any questions or concerns about the legislation or our efforts, please contact Mara Brough, Senior Advocacy Manager for New Jersey, at mara.brough@nmss.org or 267-765-5104.

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SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS TO BEGIN IN OCTOBER 2016

MS shouldn’t stand in the way of an education. This is why the National MS Society’s scholarship program exists — to help highly qualified students who have been diagnosed with MS or who have a parent with MS achieve their dreams of going to college.

The Society established its scholarship program in 2003 and the program continues to grow both in terms of support and scholarships awarded. In its first year of operation the program awarded 36 scholarships for a total of $68,000 — to over $1 million awarded to 815 scholars in 2016. Support for the scholarship program comes from foundations, chapter donors, our own employee giving program and other sources.

VOTING WITH MS

BY LAUREN SHRYNE

I have voted in every national election, and most state and local elections, since I turned 18. I've stood in lines outside of schools, courthouses, firehouses and retirement homes, eager to register my stance on candidates and issues that were important to me. I believe that voting is the most important way that we participate in the democratic system, and my belief in its importance has only gotten stronger since I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2014.

The many hurdles, both practical and emotional, that a person with a disability might face when trying to exercise their right to vote only became apparent as I faced them myself: losing the ability to walk to school, as after half a mile I found myself tripping and dizzy; becoming unable to summon the strength in my right hand to sign a receipt for my coffee; failing to recognize friends passing on the sidewalk as my vision blurred; missing meetings and blanking on names as my memory became unreliable. And I was very, very tired. At the height of an MS flare, when performing basic, necessary tasks requires momentous effort, voting might cede to more immediate concerns.

But government can help by ensuring that polling places are accessible, by providing and maintaining accessible voting equipment, and by making sure that anyone who seeks information on how to vote can easily find it. That's where the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (eac.gov) comes in as the primary resource for information regarding voting in the United States, including specific resources for voters with disabilities.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting and training for a nationwide campaign to get out the disability vote — thereby harnessing our community's power to influence decisions of particular importance to us, like social security, Medicare, healthcare, affordable housing, accessible transportation, employment and funding for MS research. In that first meeting, we discussed the potential power of the disability vote and the challenges that we face in exercising that power. But it all starts with a simple first step: registering to vote.

Though facing an incurable and unpredictable disease like MS is difficult, learning to advocate for myself and for others with MS has been profoundly empowering. Volunteering as an MS activist has encouraged me to educate my legislators about MS and urge them to support legislative initiatives that are important to people with MS. She is a lawyer, and voting really is one of her favorite things.

Karen Kostelac, diagnosed with MS two years after casting her first vote, decided to go “all in,” working at polling locations, sometimes for more than 14 hours at a time.

“The opportunity to vote early gets people in the door so they can take the time they need without being fatigued by long lines.”

And don’t forget that activism doesn’t stop with voting — or an election. “Don’t forget to keep in touch with your elected officials,” says Kostelac. “Let them know that you are out there, you are following them, and that you’re an MS activist!” Visit nationalMSsociety.org/MSactivist to get involved.

Our voices are important

It’s important that people with disabilities exercise their right to vote as fully as the general population. Currently, more than 1 out of 7 eligible voters have a disability; yet, the turnout rate of people with disabilities is nearly 6 percent lower than other Americans who are eligible to vote.

At nationalMSsociety.org/voterinfo, learn your voting rights, including your protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act; how to register, including online; and how to ensure that your polling place is accessible to you. Remember that currently in 30 states citizens must comply with voter identification laws when voting in person — find out ahead of time what’s required in your state.

Get close to voting

One way to join in the action is to be where the action is. Which is why Karen Kostelac, diagnosed with MS two years after casting her first vote, decided to go “all in,” working at polling locations, sometimes for more than 14 hours at a time.

“I’ve helped people with everything from vision impairments to gait problems,” she says. She recommends that people living with MS take advantage of early voting accommodations. “The opportunity to vote early gets people in the door so they can take the time they need without being fatigued by long lines.”

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WELLNESS DISCUSSION GUIDE
FOR PEOPLE WITH MS AND
THEIR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

This guide is designed to ensure that people with MS and their healthcare providers have the information and materials they need about available wellness and lifestyle interventions. You can view and download the guide from this link: www.nationalMSsociety.org/wellnessguide

NEW JERSEY METRO SPONSORED WELLNESS CLASSES

The National MS Society offers Wellness programs in the New Jersey Metro area, for people with MS. Classes are adapted for different abilities. Caregivers are welcome to participate. Registration is required; there are no fees to attend. For more information contact the Society’s Information Resource Center at 1-800-344-4867 or email patti pasquino@nmss.org.

Yoga - Allamuchy, Rutherfurd Hall
Wednesdays, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm
October 5, 19, 26 (no class on 12th)
November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Yoga - Allendale, Crescent Commons
Mondays, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
October 10, 17, 24, 31
November 7, 14, 21, 28

Yoga - Clark, Municipal Building
Wednesdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
October 5, 19, 26 (no class 12th)
November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Tai Chi - Denville, Church of the Saviour
Wednesdays, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
October 5, 19, 26 (no class on 12th)
November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Yoga - Freehold, Kershaw Commons
Tuesdays, 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
October 11, 18, 25
November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Tai Chi - Sparta, First Presbyterian Church
Wednesdays from 10:30 am – 11:30 am
October 5, 19, 26 (no class on 12th)
November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Swim-In Aquatics - Tenafly, JCC on the Palisades
Wednesdays from 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
September – May

NEW! ONE STEP FOR MS HELD AT FOUR YMCA’S IN NEW JERSEY

The National MS Society New Jersey Metro Chapter and the YMCA’s of Hamilton, Madison, Freehold and Old Bridge are proud to collaborate in offering a customized wellness program for individuals with MS. The One Step program is a 12-week, 24-session wellness course designed for adults with MS. One Step aims to help participants, in a comfortable and accessible environment, manage fatigue, weakness, impaired mobility and depression through facilitated conversations and therapeutic exercises. For more information and to register for these programs, contact the YMCA of your choice below:

HAMILTON
Bethann Wittig at bwittig@hamiltonymca.org or at 609-581-9622 x104
www.hamiltonymca.org/locations/jkr-branch

MADISON
Joe Gonsalves at 973-822-9622 x2242 or jgonalses@madisonymca.org
http://www.madisonareaymca.org/

FREEHOLD
Ginny Kowalski, 732-462-0464 ext 140, gkowalski@ymcanj.org
http://ymcanj.org/locations/freehold-ymca/freehold-ymca-news-events/

OLD BRIDGE
Brenda Werneiwskei, 732-727-0704, ext 310, bwerneiwskei@ymcanj.org
http://ymcanj.org/locations/old-bridge-ymca/old-bridge-ymca-news-events/
Find out if there’s a local YMCA in your area, and if they offer any adaptive exercise classes. Simply go to: http://www.njymca.org/locations/
ADDITIONAL MS SPECIFIC WELLNESS PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

**SWIM, Inc. (Specialized Water Interest Movement)** is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 to offer adults with motor impairment with water-based therapy. Originally located in an indoor swimming pool attached to the home of founder Doris Hollingsworth in Bedminster, SWIM, Inc. now operates ten programs in nine community and YMCA pools in New Jersey, from Sussex to Cape May Counties. Each program is run by a dedicated group of volunteers and provides adults with MS, post-polio syndrome, Parkinson’s disease and other disorders that impair mobility with **FREE** aquatic exercise in a safe and caring environment. [http://www.swim-inc.org/](http://www.swim-inc.org/)

**MS Aqua Therapy Class,** co-sponsored by Physical Therapy by the Bay and Toms River Fitness and Aquatic Center. This group physical therapy class is conducted in a swimming pool and meets every Friday from 1:00 to 2:00 pm at Toms River Fitness and Aquatic Center, located in the K-Mart Plaza on Route 37. There is a chair lift to accommodate those who choose not to use the ladder. A licensed physical therapist teaches the class exercises that target strength, flexibility, balance, posture, co-ordination and functional activities. There is a $5.00 per person charge for each class attended. A medical release note from a doctor is required for participation. Contact Carol Buckwalter, 732-270-0224.

**The Linda E Cardinale MS Center** at CentraState Medical Center offers a 12-week, comprehensive wellness program that is the first of its kind on the east coast. Designed to address the physical and psychological issues associated with MS, this life-affirming program helps strengthen mind and body through education, aquatics and exercise. To learn more about this valuable program, visit: [https://www.centrastate.com/Rehabilitation-Services/MS-Wellness-Program](https://www.centrastate.com/Rehabilitation-Services/MS-Wellness-Program).

**Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation** in West Orange offers two unique programs to enhance wellness and cognition for people with MS. The programs focus on increasing a participants’ awareness and understanding of the many changes of living with MS while helping them to achieve a greater quality of life through education, support and experiential activities. Kessler’s team of MS specialists, including a neuropsychologist, psychologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist and others, will introduce evidence-based cognitive strategies, psychological treatment and wellness-based practices. The Living with MS series and Wellness Seminars run for ten consecutive Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Kessler’s West Orange campus, located at 1199 Pleasant Valley Way. A continental breakfast and lunch are included. Interested individuals will be interviewed and evaluated to identify and explore their physical, cognitive and emotional concerns. For more information and to register, please contact the Neuropsychology Department at 973-324-3634 or visit the Kessler Website.

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS WELLNESS PROGRAM**

The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Wellness Program at Kessler Institute focuses on creating greater awareness and understanding of the many changes and challenges that persons with MS may experience. It is designed to empower individuals to best manage their condition and increase their quality of living through education and an experiential curriculum. Our dedicated team of neuro-rehabilitation specialists integrates evidence-based cognitive and psychological treatment with wellness-based practices to meet each client’s needs.

Before beginning the program, individuals will participate in a clinical interview to help identify the physical, cognitive and/or emotional concerns they may have.

**LIVING WITH MS SUPPORT GROUP SERIES**

Facilitated by a psychologist, this unique support group will address a range of topics, including:
- Mind/body interaction
- Adjusting to your changing self
- Managing MS-related fatigue
- Loss, grief and spirituality
- Cognitive challenges

**WELLNESS SEMINARS**

Presentations cover a variety of informational and educational topics, and provide important cognitive strategies to help those with MS. In addition, Yoga, Pilates and/or stretching exercises will be included in each session, and the benefits of physical and occupational therapies will be explored.

Among the topics addressed:
- Health and well-being
- Nutrition
- Energy conservation
- Bowel and bladder management
- Balance
- Vocational rehabilitation

The Living with MS Series and Wellness Seminars will run for ten consecutive Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. A continental breakfast and lunch are included.

**THE NEXT SERIES IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN FALL 2016 at Kessler’s Saddle Brook location.**

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact the Department of Psychology & Neuropsychology at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation

Phone: 973.324.3634  Fax: 973.677.4253
DIGNITY THROUGH MOVEMENT

“As a person living with MS and mobility limitations, I found the existing mobility devices to be functional, but also discouraging,” says Joe Revello, who has been living with MS for more than 20 years. “Using a walker, rollator or crutches, I found that I had to be hunched over while looking down and moving very slowly with the device.” Joe searched for a better solution for his mobility problem, even Googling “futuristic walking devices.” He brightens up as he discusses his new discovery, the Alinker. “After searching for years I found Barbara Alink in the Netherlands and discovered the Alinker. This new device allows me to enjoy walking and being mobile! I could never have imagined I could walk 3 miles… damn, I couldn’t walk 100 yards without fatigue and pain. On the Alinker, I am upright and actively moving, I am at eye-level and I have my hands free. I find that I have less stress on my lower limbs, I sit with good posture and I am stable and safe. I find that I have dignity through movement.”

Joe is excited to share this news with everyone. To learn more about the Alinker, view this website: http://www.thealinker.com/.

NOVEMBER IS CAREGIVER AWARENESS MONTH

Every November organizations from around the country celebrate caregivers! The National MS Society recognizes the love and care that caregivers and care partners give to people with MS – we applaud you!

There may be caregiver programs scheduled in November in your county. To learn about caregiving activities and resources, visit the website for The Caregivers of NJ at www.njcaregivers.org or the National MS Society’s website at www.nationalmssociety.org and enter ‘caregiving’ in the search button.

Maria, Lisa and Alvin enjoying a break at the program on Sept 24 at Kessler Rehabilitation in Saddle Brook, There’s No Place Like Home.

PARTNERS IN MS CARE

The National MS Society recognizes and supports quality MS care through a program called Partners in MS Care. This program involves healthcare professionals in the areas of neurology, mental health and rehabilitation. Healthcare professionals recognized as Partners in MS Care:

- demonstrate knowledge and experience in MS care,
- have a special interest in treating people living with MS, and
- work closely with the Society

The most recent healthcare professional to achieve this status is Allison Averill, MD of Kessler Rehabilitation in Saddle Brook. Dr. Averill is a physiatrist and has been a Partner for more than three years; she now has been renewed for another three years. Dr. Averill (on the left) accepts her new certificate from Chapter President Lisa Gallipoli.

To learn more about the Partners in MS Care, view the national MS Society website at: http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Treating-MS/Find-an-MS-Care-Provider/Partners-in-MS-Care.

DO IT YOURSELF FUNDRAISING MS

You’ve all heard about our amazing chapter events and maybe you’ve participated in our amazing chapter events like Walk MS, Bike MS and MuckFest MS, but have you heard about Do It Yourself (DIY) Fundraising MS?

With DIY Fundraising MS, you can turn your talents and hobbies – playing sports, dancing, hosting dinner parties, making jewelry – the possibilities are endless – into a fundraising event of your own! DIY Fundraising is another way we can raise awareness of MS and fund the research that will someday end MS forever. Rally your friends, family and coworkers to do something about MS today!

For additional information on kick-starting your DIY event contact, Julie Falgiano at 732.508.4432 or email julianne.falgiano@nmss.org.
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MS
An Educational Program and Chapter Annual Meeting
Sunday, November 13th, 2016
8:30 AM to 12:00 PM

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:
The Renaissance Woodbridge Hotel
515 US-1, Iselin, NJ 08830

8:30-9:15 AM
Registration and breakfast buffet

9:15-9:45 AM
Annual business meeting of the board of trustees

9:45-10:45 AM
Cognition Research in MS
John DeLuca, PhD
Senior Vice President for Research, Kessler Foundation

10:45-11:00 AM
Break

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Rehabilitation and Exercise in MS
Brian Mason, PT, DPT
Clinical Director, Rehabilitation Services, CentraState Medical Center

Vendor display tables will be available for viewing from 8:30 AM until the end of the meeting.

$10 registration fee per person

To register and for more information:
Call 1-800-344-4867 or visit www.nationalmssociety.org/NJM

THE PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES PROGRAM (PASP)
The PASP provides routine, non-medical assistance to adults with disabilities who are employed, involved in community volunteer work, or attending school. Personal assistants help with tasks such as: light housekeeping, bathing, dressing, preparing meals, shopping, driving or using public transportation. The total number of hours a person can receive is determined based on individual need, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week. For more information, view this webpage: http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/projects/pasp/.

WALK MS 2017
SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday, April 29 & Sunday, April 30

Registration opens early November!
Walk MS helps us team up with friends, loved ones and co-workers to raise funds that drive groundbreaking MS research, provide life-changing services and guarantee a supportive community for those who need it most.

Through Walk MS, thousands of people are able to make connections and unite together in our fight for a world free of MS. Together, we will end MS forever.

To learn more about Walk MS visit WalkMS.org or contact us at 732-660-1005.
FINISH MS

Finish MS is an opportunity for cause-driven athletes to push personal limits while working to create a world free of MS. You can participate by doing your own thing – a marathon, triathlon, or by registering for one of our charity races. When you join Finish MS, you have access to online tools and resources to help you with your fundraising and the personal support of our Finish MS staff. For more information visit FinishMS.org or contact Juliane Falgiano at 732.508.4432 or julianne.falgiano@nmss.org.

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE:

New Jersey Metro Chapter
nationalMSsociety.org/NJM
njminfo@nmss.org

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@NMSSnjm

Watch us:
youtube.com/NewJerseyMetro

Production of this newsletter is generously supported by:

NOVARTIS

DINNER OF CHAMPIONS

More than 150 individuals filled the ballroom at the Hanover Marriott on September 21, 2016 to celebrate 70 years of the National MS Society and honor our evening’s honorees, all of who have been on the forefront as we continue to move closer toward a cure. The evening’s master of ceremonies, Michael Weiss, said it perfectly, “Not only are we celebrating the champions that we all are, and we are quite the room full of champions! We are Ambassadors, Fundraisers, Walkers, Bikers, Climbers, Advocates, Sponsors, people living with MS and people who love people living with MS.”

Thank you to everyone that joined to celebrate and a special congratulations to our honorees of the evening, Bonnie Higgins, Rosemarie Collopy and Bayer Pharmaceuticals for their continued support and dedication to the National MS Society.

NEW JERSEY REPRESENTED AT CHALLENGE WALK MS: CAPE COD

Challenge Walk MS took place the weekend of September 9-11, 2016 on Cape Cod. Hundreds of participants each walked 50 miles over the three-day event.

Juliana shared: “The MS Challenge Walk is my annual inspiration in the fight against Multiple sclerosis. Walkers and Crew have become my close friends; we walk, share our stories, laugh, and shed a few tears along the way. I could not do it without their brave strength over 3 days and throughout the year.”

For information about how YOU can participate in Challenge Walk visit: www.ChallengeWalkMS.org.

PICTURED ARE (L TO R): MELISSA RYAN AND JULIANA PASCALE

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS
DON’T JUST BIKE, RIDE MS

Thank you to the 450 cyclists, volunteers and sponsors who joined us on the beautiful weekend of September 17th and 18th for Bike MS: Country Challenge!

Together we raised $300,000 (and counting!) while increasing awareness by pedaling our way across on some of NJ’s prettiest back roads, past historic towns and around The Great Swamp.

We hope to see you next year at Bike MS: Country Challenge or Bike MS: Coast the Coast on May 20th and 21st!