

# Chris Argo, RUSA 11707

## Expanded Candidate Statement: Board of Directors

As a college student in the 1990's, I spent a fair amount of time on the mountain bike. In the late 90's and early 2000's marriage, family and work overtook mountain biking. In the summer of 2016, I was reintroduced to cycling. With my children grown, my recreational activities and goals became centered around traveling with my wife to cycle wherever I can.



In 2018, I discovered RUSA. The challenges, camaraderie and adventures immediately piqued my interest. Rider connections and friendships provided by RUSA events motivate me to keep exploring and accepting new challenges. Over the last five years, I have developed an intense passion for the sport of randonneuring. I simply love the challenges (physical, mental, emotional) of the sport, enjoy pushing myself to the limit and treasure the beautiful sites I encounter while randonneuring.

Immediately upon joining RUSA, I began looking for ways to contribute to RUSA. Since 2018, I have submitted and received approval for over fifteen permanents and over a dozen brevet/populaire routes. When RUSA considered the RWGPS Perm Routes Work Acct, I volunteered to serve as the librarian. In 2021, the RBA for Alabama asked if I would be willing to serve as RBA when he retired at the end of 2021. I was honored by his request and confidence. I gladly accepted the role. In 2022, I worked with a local attorney and accountant to incorporate Alabama Randonneurs as a non-profit organization and received approval from the IRS as a 501c7 organization.

As the RBA for AL: Birmingham, I have a few goals. 1) Alabama has pockets of active cyclists in many cities throughout the state. I would like to tap into those pockets and introduce these riders to the great sport of randonneuring. 2) For 2023, Alabama has scheduled over 60 randonneur events. The philosophy behind this aggressive scheduling is three-fold. First, scheduling this many events gives our membership the opportunity to ride more frequently and makes earning awards easier. Second, in order to run this many events, we recognize an increase in the need for volunteers to admin rides and provide support when needed. Third, the simple fact that at least one randonneur is riding nearly every weekend has led to the recruitment of new members. Some folks are simply wondering what this sport is all about. 3)

Alabama is not a huge state, but we do draw riders from all corners. Additionally, we design and host rides in Mississippi and Northwest Florida. One of my favorite cycling activities is planning new routes and spending hours on end scout-riding these routes for Alabama Randonneurs. Most of these scout-rides are completed solo. In conjunction with riders in our region, I am currently working to develop new routes throughout Alabama, Mississippi and Northwest Florida to make randonneuring more accessible to our rider's home base. I really like the idea of hosting brevets in as many corners and cities of our region as possible.



With regards to fully serving our region, I have a few ideas. One, I am developing a series of routes that will enable our riders to cover all 67 counties within the great state of Alabama. These routes will be a combination of populaires, 200k's, 300k's, 400k's and 600k's. The goal is to advertise a series of rides each year that helps our riders fill out their Alabama map. Two, with the help of another Alabama Randonneur, we are developing a six-state, 600K that covers

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Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee. As we flesh this idea out, we will be in touch with the RBA's of those regions to invite their input and participation. We hope to have this route ready for hosting by mid-2023. Three, I am in early discussions with several core Alabama Randonneur members to develop a Southeastern 1200K that provides an opportunity to cycle a bit of the Gulf Coast along with significant portions of Alabama and Mississippi.



My educational and career path afforded me the opportunity to develop skills in several areas, including Excel/Access database design and maintenance, construction/facilities management and over twenty-five years of public speaking. I also serve as a board member and associate pastor for my church, The Crossing. As Associate Pastor, my two main duties are: 1) directing the business affairs of our church daycare and 2) financial and accounting oversight of The Crossing's records.

When it comes to cycling, specifically randonneuring, I have only one regret. This regret is that I did not discover the joys of this sport many years ago. At nearly fifty-one years old, I certainly expect to have many years to rack up the K's, experience a wide-range of populaires, brevets and grand randonnees. I especially hope to experience multiple PBP's as time and finances allow. However, if I could have started this twenty years ago, I would have experienced so many more of the great routes, tremendous friendships and the highs/lows that come with randonneuring. Therefore, one of the goals that I would like to see accomplished is introducing this sport to young women and men so that they may experience a lifetime of joy, excitement and friendships on the bike. I am only in the beginning stages of thinking about how to accomplish this goal. One thing that I believe is important is helping young folks know that they can begin randonneuring without investing a fortune.

Lastly, perhaps the item of most importance to me is safety on the bike. Safety became the number one issue for me in the fall of 2021 when I was struck by a hit-and-run driver while on a solo pre-ride for a 400K that I was hosting and administering for the upcoming weekend. Of course, this is a longer story than I can share at the moment due to the ongoing criminal and civil cases. As with the majority of bike crashes, this was one that I should not have survived. My family and I were blessed that I survived and continue to enjoy life. However, I refuse to let that night deter me from an activity that brings me such intense joy and great peace. Suffice it to say that we all know the dangers and accept the risk the moment we mount our chosen steed. Undoubtedly, we all want our sport to be safer. I am highly motivated to see the safety of all vulnerable road users, not only cyclists, wherever they a vulnerable road user is on the road, brought to the forefront of the political, legal and justice systems as well as motivating riders to be proactive in their own safety and that of others.

While the whole process of my crash has been incredibly frustrating, angering and at times insulting, in what truly feels a bit odd writing, it has been and continues to be a privilege to experience this crash so that I have a better understanding of what crash victims endure. I can only hope that at some point that I will be able to use my experiences to benefit others and assist them as they navigate through the challenges of the justice system, the physical recovery and the overcoming the mental hurdle of getting back on the bike.



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In short, I will be happy to serve and assist RUSA in any capacity that I am able. If you would like to see a new generation of randonneuses and randonneurs who are passionate for this great sport step into leadership roles within RUSA, then I would deeply appreciate your vote. If elected, I will endeavor to respect the past, adapt to the future and always do what is best for the sport of randonneuring and for RUSA. I look forward to continue serving RUSA in any capacity for as many years as I am able.

### **FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MY FAMILY AND OUR RANDONNEUR REGION**

Alabama Randonneurs @ <https://bamarando.ridestats.bike/stats/pages/myClub.xhtml>

Alabama Randonneurs on Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/Alabamarando>.

While I do not post much personally on social media, feel free to find out more about our family via Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/chris.argo/>.

Please feel free to contact me by email at [chris-argo@bethel.edu](mailto:chris-argo@bethel.edu), Facebook Messenger or by text/phone at 205-281-0363. I'll be happy to answer any questions and help my fellow rando riders in any way possible!

