

KBC PedalPress

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club August, 2016
www.kalamazoo-bicycleclub.org

THE NEXT KBC MONTHLY MEETING IS AUGUST 9, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. at the Kalamazoo YMCA on Maple Street, 1st floor conference room. All KBC members are welcome to attend.

IF YOU HAVE AN ARTICLE, AD, ETC. to submit for the *Pedal Press*, e-mail it to editor@kalamazoo-bicycleclub.org by the 20th of the month before its intended publication.

KALAMAZOO STRONG/KBC JERSEYS NOW AVAILABLE TO ORDER ONLINE

20% of Purchase Price Goes to Kalamazoo Strong



Kalamazoo Strong inspired KBC jerseys are now available to order direct from Voler, the jersey company that produced KBC's 2010 jerseys. The design is the club's most recent jersey design with the red Kalamazoo Strong bicycle chain heart replacing the star where Kalamazoo is located on the jersey.

Cost is \$70 plus shipping (or order with a bike buddy and save shipping costs, orders over \$75 ship for free). 20% of the cost of each jersey will be donated to Kalamazoo Strong to benefit families of the June 7, 2016 cycling tragedy.

Jerseys are custom made and ship about 7 days after your order is placed and payment is verified. Here's a link to the online store where you can order the jersey:
<http://www.voler.com/browse/collections/details/li/KalamazooStrong/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Wow, hard to believe August is here already! I hope everyone is enjoying their summer and getting lots of riding in. I returned a couple of weeks ago from a weekend up north with some amazing ladies where we rode around Old Mission Peninsula and participated in the Ride Around Torch (RAT) ride, both beautiful rides! Northern Michigan is one of my favorite places to ride with the rolling hills and beautiful scenery. I highly encourage you to plan a trip soon and take advantage of all the Michigan has to offer, you won't regret it!

Welcome all of KBC's new and returning members! Since June 1st, our membership has grown by about 40%, from 277 active subscriptions to 380, totaling 649 individual members. That's amazing! We appreciate your

support and hope to meet you at one of the weekly club rides, monthly membership meetings or annual events. Please get involved with KBC and feel free to contact any of our board members with questions or suggestions.

KalTour 2016 riding to support the Kalamazoo Strong Organization was a tremendous success in June with 568 total registrations, almost doubling past totals. We are proud to announce that KBC has raised \$11,290 for the Kalamazoo Strong Organization to support the nine families affected by the tragic cycling crash in June. This is a significant achievement for KBC and the many organizations that teamed up with KBC to make this happen. A very special and heartfelt thank you to TriKats, SWWMBA, Pedal and Bells Brewery for their financial contributions, this would not have happened without their support!

In an effort to develop a motto for the club, KBC's Board adopted two tag lines to be used on publications, websites, announcements and other venues. They are listed below and will be used as best suited so keep an eye out for them.

1. Life is Better on a Bike!
2. The Kalamazoo Bicycle Club has engaged cyclists in transit, fitness and fun since 1971.

Lastly, early in July a KBC member shared an incident with me that occurred on a KBC Monday Night Ride that I feel all members should be aware of so you are 'in the know'. With this member's approval, the email states: "I work with a lady whose daughter is a Portage public safety officer. They live near 8th St and S Ave. The daughter told her that she saw a large group of cyclists, must have been the Monday ride, coming north on 8th taking up the entire lane and even crossing the center line, thereby obstructing cars behind them and preventing them from passing. She stated that if she had been on duty she would have pulled over the group and ticketed everybody. In light of recent events, local police are looking carefully at both drivers and cyclists."

Let's remember to follow the rules of the road, endeavor to ride on the right half of the right lane and single up as needed so motorists may pass. A friendly wave and/or smile is appreciated by motorists when they are being courteous. Thank you and safe cycling!

--Renee, President, KBC president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

AN UNEXPECTED ALLY

Editor's Note: *Car & Driver* magazine is not exactly where I'd expect to find an editor taking a position favoring bicyclist safety, so I was surprised to find the following by one of their oldest (and best) writers, John Phillips, in the May, 2016 issue:

Did you know that bicycles are treated as vehicles in all 50 states, which means they have the right to occupy a full travel lane? Me neither. That's why the countryside is plastered in those "SHARE THE ROAD" signs. But it turns out that that particular sign is harder to deconstruct than an airline omelet, and it has the same effectiveness as no sign at all.

Bogus, I thought, but it's verifiably true, as demonstrated by 1824 respondents in a 2015 study of motoring perceptions, conducted by M. Nils Peterson and George Hess. On the scale of humorosity, it's about as fun to read as student-loan applications. Evidently, though, if the sign makes onlookers think anything at all, this is what gets thought: Motorists believe it urges bicyclists to move the hell over to the right, and bicyclists believe it urges drivers to pass way the hell over in the oncoming lane, and I believe it urges civility, such that I shout at bikers: "Hey, looking good, chief. Did you lose some weight?"

The sign's wording is worth considering because most U.S. cities boast bicycle mortality rates about double those in other developed nations. Say Peterson and Hess, the "SHARE THE ROAD" sign has a "high semantic distance," meaning it doesn't portray what it is intended to represent—like presidential candidates—although the folks who devise our nation's signage probably don't fancy themselves as T.S. Eliot anyway.

Turns out, a replacement sign that has a superlow semantic distance and is understood by 95 percent of everybody is "BICYCLES MAY USE FULL LANE." Hah! That wasn't hard, was it? Delaware has already dumped its old "SHARE" signs, and the rest of the nation will likely follow.

JULY KBC MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance (* means newly sanctioned ride leader):

Dale Krueger, David Jones, Doug Kirk, Doug Wales, John Olbrot, Kathy Kirk, Marc Irwin, Michael Krischer, Mike Boersma, Pam Sotherland, Paul Selden, Paul Sotherland, Renee Mitchell, Rick Whaley, Scott F. Powers, Terry O'Connor, Scott Baron, Jon Ballema*, Tom Boomer*, Julie Bradfield*, Teri Olbrot, Daryl Ann Letts*, John E. Letts, Joe Kucharski*, Paul Pancella, Tom Keizer, Annie Swier*, Chris Thomas*, Mike Mock

Officer Reports:

President Renee Mitchell began by thanking Kaltour Director **Mike Krischer** for all his extra last minute work putting together a much larger Kaltour, KBC Treasurer **Mike Boersma** for his extra work dealing with the financial end of the expanded Kaltour and the Club's Kalamazoo Strong contributions, and **Jon Ballema** for his several years' efforts directing the BTR Criterium.

Vice-President John Olbrot reported that the Executive Committee decided that from now on, members asking to become sanctioned ride leaders will be asked to provide contact information and answer whether they are willing to lead club rides—and if so, what pace(s) and length(s).

Treasurer Mike Boersma reported KBC has \$5,755.94 in its bank account, \$11,159.77 in its CD, and \$10,561.23 in its PayPal account. He added that we received a "thank you" letter from Monica Tory on behalf of SWMMBA (Southwest Michigan Mountain Bike Association) for KBC's \$2500.00 contribution to help fund construction of the Maple Hill/Markin Glen mountain bike trail. Further, he noted that *Tim Krone, owner of Pedal Bicycles, donated \$1300.00 for the expressed purpose of replacing KBC's annual contribution to the AMBUCS organization.* The Club's annual AMBUCS donation has, in the past, been funded via the proceeds of Kaltour, however, this year Kaltour proceeds are being sent to Kalamazoo Strong to aid victims of the June 7th tragedy.

Valerie Litznerski, Secretary was absent, leaving your Editor to scribble notes that he has done his best to decipher. However, we know that she (and others) are working on getting out "thank you" notes to the many people and organizations that helped with Kaltour and other events in the wake of the June 7th tragedy.

Committee Reports:

Road Safety Director Paul Selden reported that the Kalamazoo County Commission passed a "Complete Streets" resolution at its July 5th meeting by a 9 – 1 vote, and noted that Commissioners Dale Shugars and Julie Rogers deserve special thanks for working together to draft the resolution.

Insurance Coordinator Terry O'Connor reported that the one person injured at Kaltour fell due to crossing wheels with another rider and has been given the necessary information to file a claim with the insurance the Club has in place to cover all Kaltour registrants

Ride Captain Terry Butcher was absent.

Website re-design Committee spokesperson Renee Mitchell reported that the changes are proceeding behind the scenes and passed out a printout of a mock-up of the homepage as of now. Paul Selden asked about the Club's Yahoo email listserve, and Renee said they are looking to replace it with something else entirely that will offer more options.

KalTour Director Mike Krischer reported that +/- 450 people rode Kaltour (based on the number of signed releases) but that quite a few others paid the entry but did not actually ride (or sign the release). Once again he thanked the many, many additional volunteer groups and people who helped with the event. He also spoke of several possible changes for next year, including changes to the fee structure and food.

BTR Race Director Jon Ballema reported there were 268 total results at the race (slightly fewer actual participants as some racers did 2 events). This number is down slightly from last year, which Jon suspects is due to some racers saving their energy for State championship events at the Lawton Race for Wishes the following day. Jon was also thrilled to report the women's fields were substantially larger than in the past, with 19 ladies in the Category 1,2,3 & 4 event and 17 ladies in the Category 4 only event. A total of 46 volunteers came together to make the race come together. Several people at the meeting commented that the race and its organization get better every year. Finally, Jon swore on his stack of leftover USA Cycling release forms this is absolutely, positively his last year directing the event. We all gave him a deafening round of applause anyway.

Old Business: Proposed 5-foot ordinance: **Doug Kirk** reported that he has met with several people in the City of Kalamazoo government and has received very positive feedback regarding such an ordinance, which may be bundled with other bicycling-related ordinances. **Terry Butcher**, who is pursuing a similar ordinance in Portage, was absent.

Pastor Dale Kruger spoke of his efforts to gently, positively, and constructively speak with bicyclists he has seen who were exposing themselves to needless risk by wearing dark clothing at night or riding on the wrong side of the road. It was generally agreed that we all ought to do this whenever possible.

Finally, we held the raffle drawing for the bicycle repair rack that was donated to KBC in the wake of the June 7th tragedy. Helen Johnson, a Kaltour rider, was the lucky winner. She says she's gifting it to her daughter, an Iron(wo)man athlete.

--**Doug Kirk**, *ad hoc* KBC Secretary

MEMORIAL RIDE PHOTOGRAPHS & MEMORIES

Road Safety Director **Paul Selden** has assembled a number of excellent pictures from the May, 2016 Ride of Silence, the June 8, 2016 Ride of Silence and the June 14, 2016 Finish the Ride, and added some additional commentary. We felt these pictures should be made a part of the KBC website, where the underlying events will be remembered long after this monthly newsletter is forgotten. Here's the link to Paul's article:

http://www.kalamazobicycleclub.org/pedal_press/2016/memorial_ride_pics.pdf

CLARK LOGIC/KBC RACE TEAM RESULTS—BTR CRITERIUM

Women’s Races:

Tory Cane: Cat 1/2/3/4—9th place
Colleen Meyers: Cat 1,2,3,4—17th place

Robin Sides: Cat 4 only—2nd place
Valerie Litznerski, Cat 4 only—6th place
Meg Zapalowski: Cat 4 only—7th place
Tory Cane: Cat 4 only—8th place
Colleen Meyers: Cat 4 only—10th place

Men’s Races

Jesse Kooistra: pro, 1,2,3—8th place
Jamie Clark: Masters 35+ --24th place
Andy Lowaert: Masters 35+ --25th place
Joe Thomas: Masters 35+ --16th place
Gabe Rice: Cat 4-5 –2nd place
Brad Zapalowski: Cat 4-5 –11th place
Tim Stewart: Cat 4-5 –16th place
Tyson Clark: Cat 4-5 –22nd place
Ben Clark: Cat 4-5 –23rd place
Alec Schau: Cat 4-5 –38th place

CLARK LOGIC/KBC RACE TEAM RESULTS—LAWTON RACE FOR WISHES

Race	Rider	Finish	Category Place	Category	Overall place2
Women Masters Race	Robin Sides	Sprint Finish			4
Women Masters Race	Tory Cane	Sprint Finish			5
Women Cat 4	Meg Zapalowski	Sprint Finish			2
Women Cat 4	Valerie Litznerski	Sprint Finish			4
Women Cat 4	Erin Rumery				7
Men Pro 1 2 3	Jessie Kooistra	Sprint Finish	State Champion	Cat 2	2
Men Pro 1 2 3	Chris Gottwald		6	Cat 1	12
Men Pro 1 2 3	AJ Larivee		State Champion	Cat 3	19
Men Masters 45+	Jamie Clark	Sprint Finish	State Champion	Cat 4	13
Men Masters 35+	Joe Thomas	Sprint Finish	2	Cat 3	2
Men Masters 35+	Andy Louwaert		9	Cat 3	17
Men 4 5	Alec Chau	Sprint Finish	State Champion	Cat 5	1
Men 4 5	Steven Bromiel	Sprint Finish			8
Men 4 5	Tyson Gilmore	Sprint Finish			19
Men 4 5	Brad Zapalowski	Sprint Finish			21
Men 4 5	Gabe Rice	Sprint Finish			27
Men 4 5	Tim Stewart	Sprint Finish			38
Men 4 5	Ryan Heidenfeld	Sprint Finish			39
Men 4 5	Benjamin Clark				48

TWO SUPER SUCCESS STORIES

(Editor’s Note: The BTR Criterium and the Lawton Race for Wishes were Team Clark Logic member Robin Sides’ first bike races. She took 2nd place in the Category 4 race at BTR, and 4th in the 40+ age group at Lawton—also winning the age 50 – 54 age group. We asked her to tell us a bit about herself and her riding.)

First and foremost I'm a mother of four kids and a grandmother of four more! I've always been a stay at home mom, not very physically active but always busy.

I trained for a triathlon at the age of forty and thought I would like to do the Ironman, but I became idle and gained my weight back. A few years down the road I started running again and I ran my first marathon in 2012. But I was having knee issues and started riding my bike again.

I fell in love with biking. My husband Matt and I started riding together a lot, and he suggested we try some group rides. I was reluctant and said, "No way, why would I do that?" I ended up riding a few group rides, and at first I hated them. But we continued the group rides and I enjoyed meeting new people. Plus I kept discovering new things about myself.

Bike riding isn't all just riding your bike, it's about meeting new people and figuring yourself out. Through riding I've met many influential people who have helped me gain knowledge and confidence about my riding, and also had fun with me.

Biking has opened new doors to test my limits, to push myself and to work to my full potential. Hard work pays off, and wanting to be an example to my children and grandchildren showed me that anything is possible if you set your mind to it and make the effort to put in your time and to enjoy the ride. It's worth the sweat, tears and the occasional scabs.

Preparing for the BTR race and Race for Wishes, **Kathy Kirk**, a teammate, friend and mentor, prepared me mentally and physically for those two races. She encouraged that having fun was the most important thing. To go out there, enjoy it, have fun and smile. Her excitement helped me get ready to race and made me see that racing can be a lot of fun. And that's what I did. I was nervous before the race, but Kathy had assured me that once the race started the nerves would go away and it would be just a regular fast ride. She was right!

Aside from the many people I've met from cycling, another teammate and dear friend from Team Clark Logic that has helped me improve my training is **Valerie Litznerski**. Valerie really made me train hard with her crazy intervals and hill climbing. Chasing after Valerie in our rides paid off in the end. I had a feeling of camaraderie riding with my teammates in the BTR race and Race for Wishes. Having your team with you to train and make some memories is worth it all. I am extremely grateful to be able to race and be apart of a great bike club and team.

--Robin Sides

(Editor's Note: Jesse Kooistra is a very talented young man, and a member of Team Clark Logic. He sent the team a summary of a couple of his races. We've edited what he sent about his race to 2nd place (!) in the Lawton race, which was the State Championship Road Race for the pro, 1,2,3 category.)

Ten minutes before race start, my teammate, Chris, went over our race strategy in no uncertain terms "I work, you sit, I work, you sit I work, YOU sit!" One short burst of blurry memories later, it was already lap two.

Sitting near the front of the pack, with a small breakaway up the road, I heard Chris talking to me, but couldn't understand him at first. I looked over at him to try and read his lips over the wind, this time I got it. "One short kick, GO!" Perfect timing—another rider was just beginning his attack to bridge up to the breakaway, and I got his wheel—an easy free ride. Moments later we were in the breakaway.

As a group of seven riders we were able to produce an aggressive pace and eventually put a sizable gap on the field. Laps 2-4 were smooth sailing, everyone taking their turn on the front of the pace line. Lap 5? That was not as easy.

Half way through our final lap people began to play games, much too early. We had established a solid gap, but we needed to keep the pace high if we wanted it to stay away. Thankfully, this reality seemed to dawn on the group as the pace line naturally returned to its normal rhythm. At least, it was normal until seven miles to go.

The attacks started, the legs hurt, and I was determined not to crack. We were screaming towards the finish, but you could feel the tension as the breakaway, now down to five riders, closed in on 2 miles to go. Positioning.

I wanted to try a flyer with 1 kilometer to go, but with strong riders still on my wheel, an attack would simply waste me for the sprint. So I followed the plan, they work, I sit. Rounding the final corner with only four of the original breakaway riders I found a wheel, and followed. Out of the saddle I gave everything I had to stay on. My legs gave out, I sat down, breathed deep, and pushed on.

My friend Andy lit up the final hundred meters, and pulled away for a brilliant sprint victory. I stayed in the draft for as long as I could, then put in one last desperate effort to take second place on the line.

A breakthrough in the breakaway, I broke through a mental block today. I know how strong I can be now, I know I can keep up, and that I don't have to race afraid. Looking back, I remember doing this race for the first time as a junior four years ago. I got absolute last place, I was so dejected and discouraged. Today I took second in a Cat 1 race, how crazy is that?!? I look forward to the road ahead. Thanks to everyone for making this dream possible for me, ya'll make me smile and pedal as hard as I can.

--Jesse Kooistra

CLARK LOGIC/KBC RACE TEAM RESULTS—CAPITOL CITY CRITERIUM

Alec Schau— 2nd, Men's Cat 4/5; 4th Cat 5

Tim Stewart— 10th, Men's Cat 4/5; 3rd Cat 5

Tory Cane—9th Women's Cat 1/2/3/4

Jesse Kooistra—7th Men's pro, 1/2/3

KBC TUESDAY TIME TRIAL RESULTS FOR JULY

July 5, 2016

Jamie Clark: 23:23 (25.9 mph)
Sandy Reid: 26:21 (22.99 mph)
Paul Guthrie: 26:32 (22.83 mph)
Matt Babbit: 26:53 (22.54 mph)
Jim Henderson: 26:58 (22.47 mph)
Tom Keizer: 27:11 (22.29 mph)
Terry Butcher: 27:16 (22.22 mph)
Paul Raynes: 27:25 (22.10 mph)
Frank Neugbauer: 27:26 (22.08 mph)
Kevin Oostema: 27:55 (21.70 mph)
Herman Everboer: 27:55 (21.70 mph)
Terry Hutchins: 28:49 (21.02 mph)
Rick Whaley: 29:02 (20.87 mph)
Terri O'Connor: 29:52 (20.29 mph)
Dick Fridley: 34:02 (17.80 mph)
Dale Krueger: 35:31 (17.06 mph)

July 19, 2016

Jamie Clark: 23:18 (26.0 mph)
John Wonderlun: 24:31 (24.71 mph)
Adam Cefai: 26:38 (22.75 mph)
Tori Cane: 27:15 (22.23 mph)
Herman Everboer: 27:37 (21.93 mph)
Matt Peterson: 28:16 (21.43 mph)
Rick Whaley: 28:20 (21.38 mph)

LOCAL LEADERS WORKING TO IMPROVE BICYCLISTS' SAFETY

In the wake of what may be the most deadly bicycling crash in US history this past June 7, 2016, local civic leaders are taking action on a variety of positive steps. These steps will ultimately make the roads safer for bicyclists and many other non-motorized users of the roads, including pedestrians, runners and individuals who use assistive mobility devices such as scooters, walkers and canes.

This is on top of the many projects that are adding to our local bicycling infrastructure, piece by piece. The beauty of infrastructure such as asphalt and concrete, bike lane striping and route signing is that once in place, they tend to last a long time. Having the right policies tends to ensure that the infrastructure will get built. Having the right laws that protect bicyclists tends to create safer behaviors. And the beauty of policy and legislation is that they can be created relatively quickly with a little ingenuity and public support, with the stroke of a pen. The most obvious immediate steps are taking place in public forums.

State Senator Margaret O'Brien is working on bi-partisan legislation that will support a number of measures that the League of Michigan Bicyclists have been advocating. These include Vulnerable Roadway User laws that will stiffen penalties for injuring or killing bicyclists and other non-motorized users, legislation that would establish a five-foot passing distance between motorists and bicyclists, and another that would require driver's education to include topics pertaining to "bicycling regulations and protections."

On July 5, Kalamazoo County commissioners overwhelmingly voted to approve a bipartisan resolution to support and encourage the adoption of Complete Streets policies by every jurisdiction within their borders, including the Kalamazoo County Road Commission. The resolution was introduced by Julie Rogers (District 5) and Dale Shugars (District 9). Both have deep rooted connections within the bicycling community. For KBC members not familiar with Complete Streets policies, they aim to make the roads more accommodating to all legal users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, persons with mobility challenges, as well as to motorists, in a way that takes into account of where the roads are located and how they are used, in a fiscally responsible manner. Thanks go to the many KBC members attended to witness and speak in favor of this historic turning point.

A quick civics sidebar may be in order. The power of County Commissioners to direct how roads are designed is currently quite limited by law. Kalamazoo County Road Commissioners do not run for elective office, unlike positions such as the Sheriff, Drain Commissioner, Prosecutor and the County Commissioners themselves. Instead, the County Commission appoints Road Commissioners for six-year terms and once appointed, the road commission independently decides matters pertaining to county roads. That said, the Kalamazoo County Commission also has the power to abolish the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County entirely and bring it under County administration as sort of a public works department (as was done in Calhoun County and others in the state). In other words, the bipartisan power of our county commissioners to support and encourage others to adopt Complete Streets policies should not be underestimated.

Other significant progress for bicyclists took place in July, at the historic crossroads of many of our bicycling activities, in the City of Kalamazoo. On July 18, the Commissioners of the City of Kalamazoo publicly discussed their own progress toward adopting Complete Streets policies at their regular city commission meeting. They requested Laura Lam, Director of Community Planning and Development, to bring a draft policy back for review by the commissioners in four to six weeks. The sense was overwhelmingly positive in that the commissions seemed ready to adopt a policy as soon as possible. In fact, the mood of the commissioners seemed very positive toward bicyclists in particular.

Thanks again to all the KBC members who sat through a rather lengthy City Commission meeting, listened to the Complete Streets discussion, and voiced their opinions. A number of us will be asking for your help on these

matters, via our Facebook page and emailed to our Yahoo Groups list as developments unfold. It will be a real team effort, and your voice will matter a great deal especially this (election) year. So stay tuned!

- Paul Selden, Director of Road Safety

KUDOS

Kudos to the City of Portage Department of Transportation and Utilities for the additions to the Portage Bikeway.

Kudos to Safe Kids Kalamazoo of County for their ongoing work ensuring young bicyclists have affordable, properly fitting helmets.

Kudos to everyone whose support and encouragement following the senseless and tragic crash on June 7, 2016 has meant so much and is helping us move forward.

Kudos to the greater bicycling community whose members shared a communal sense of grief with the friends and families of the Chain Gang riders who were seriously injured and killed, and are helping everyone involved move forward. Organizations that have come to my attention include Cooper Township, Kalamazoo Township, the City of Kalamazoo, the City of Portage, The River church, Arcadia Brewing Company, Kalamazoo County, Allegan County, the City of Plainwell, and Kalamazoo Strong. Their departments, leaders, staff and volunteers are people who make a difference.

Submit your kudos to Paul Selden (awardscommittee@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

-Paul Selden

Editor's Letter: HUMANIZATION

Many of you will remember **Greg Lawford**, a very talented and smart fellow who, before he moved to Texas several years ago, was one of the original people behind the KBC race team that is now Team Clark Logic.

Greg was back in town two or three weeks after the tragedy and he spoke to me about wanting to make road riding safer. The important thing, he said, is to work on getting drivers to view bicyclists as vulnerable human beings rather than objects encased in steel and plastic and protected by airbags. I couldn't agree more.

Wife Kathy & I have spent quite a few weeks bicycling in Spain and Italy, including many hundreds of miles on skinny, winding roads—many only a lane and a half wide. Drivers often had to wait a minute (sometimes much more in the mountains) in order to safely pass. Even though we were in foreign countries on completely unknown, narrow roads with no shoulder at all, we felt a good deal safer than we do anywhere there's traffic back in the states. Why? As one of our tour guides explained, European drivers realize the cyclist up ahead might be their grandma...or nephew...or cousin, and drive accordingly.

Which begs the question: how do we get more drivers to realize how vulnerable we are and treat us like their nieces and nephews (or in my case, their grandfather)? Some obvious things come to mind—ride your bike to fit in with traffic, generally follow the rules of the road, don't impede motor vehicles unnecessarily, that sort of thing.

Although KBC—especially the President—gets calls from irate drivers complaining about bicyclists' behavior, my own experience is that KBC riders generally know what they're doing. Most of these complaints 1) are from

people who don't know what they're talking about (that is, how to ride a bike in traffic); or 2) are complaining about non-KBC cyclists (sadly, a lot of bicyclists are not part of the club).

And while the knowledge and skill required to obtain a driver's license is ridiculously low (especially compared to Europe), there's no denying that the State requires NO bicyclist's license at all. Which means you and I are stuck being associated with cyclists who ride the wrong way, make offensive gestures at drivers, and run red lights.

So, what can we do? We can do what we can to make drivers LIKE us, or at least not treat us as a nuisance. Some ideas you can use every time you ride:

- 1) Be aware enough of what's going on around you that you do what you can to actually help cars get past you. Wave them past (when it makes sense).
- 2) Give a friendly wave to drivers who wait till it's clear to pass—reward them for being nice to you.
- 3) There are times when it's safest to take up the entire lane—when turning left, or when the right side of the lane (or shoulder) isn't safe, for example. Don't leave the driver behind you thinking he can slip past, go ahead and take the lane, just like a car. Fitting in with traffic means there are times when being assertive is the right thing to do. Then get out of their way ASAP and give them a friendly wave.
- 4) Chat with drivers at stoplights. Especially if the road's not too busy, give drivers—including oncoming traffic—a friendly wave whenever you can.
- 5) When people complain about cyclists' behavior, point out that anybody can ride a bike—without a license—and that there are plenty of awful, distracted drivers too—many of whom roll right through stop signs! These are things you can—and should—do on every ride.

And now some systemic things—things that we cyclists all need to work together to make happen:

- 1) Remember the billboards we saw earlier this year with a picture of a woman on her bike with a caption like “mother, co-worker, athlete”? We need to get advertisers to do LOTS more public service advertising in this vein—with kids, racers, commuters, all sorts of bikers. And not just billboards, either. TV, radio, you name it.
- 2) Talk to your friends, your family, and your co-workers. Spread the work. Ask them to talk to their friends about how vulnerable we are to their bumpers and tires, about how even minimal contact that might produce a scratch of a dent to a car most likely means serious injury or even death to a cyclist.

Getting more drivers to treat us with respect is a big, big job. But it's something we can work on as individuals every day, as a club, and on state and federal levels too. And it's a far better idea to be proactive by doing these things regularly—starting now—than to be reacting to terrible news or lining up for another Ride of Silence.

CLASSIFIED ADS



For sale: size small Giant Avail road bike

Very gently used. Less than 500 miles. Purchased at Alfred E. Bike in 2011. Aluminum frame. Carbon fiber seat post. 18 gears. Shimano gears and pedals. Cat eye bike computer. Sized as a small woman's bike 5'7" height. \$1400 new. Asking \$700.

Ed. Note: Bike is hanging from ceiling in the picture!

BICYCLING SAFETY ADVICE

Get a rear-view mirror! Go ahead and risk looking like a dork or even a geek. Before long you'll wonder why you ever rode without one. I think helmet (or glasses) mount mirrors are better than handlebar mounted ones because you can turn your head a little bit to see anywhere you want in back. Aim it so you see a bit of your shoulder and also your "blind spot" when looking straight ahead. It's SO much safer to be able to see how close the cars are, how much room they're giving you, and how much of the lane is available to you when the shoulder is full of potholes or broken glass. But it's okay to leave it home when mountain biking or on race day.

KBC STATISTICS

New members: Rick Bauer • Dennis Bronson • Gretchen Hinga • Sarah Hinga • Jamie Lear • Phillip Lear • Andy Lefebure • Phyllis Lefebure • Matt Petersen • John Ryder • Rick Thomas • Maxwell Zigterman • Rylee Zigterman

August Expiring memberships: Scott Ashford • Debra Bradley • Adam Cefai • Bruce Dedee • Tyson Gilmore • David Middleton Family • Doug Wales Family

Renewed memberships: Daniel Victor • Bill McKinney • Christopher Gottwald Family • Karen Christensen • Carolyn Wyllie • Phil Isom • Christina Thomas • Greg Dehaan • Mostyn Lumbard • Marshall Beachler •

YOUR LOCAL BIKE SHOPS:

They support us so please support them—seriously, what goes around comes around

Alfred E. Bike, 320 East Michigan, Kalamazoo, (269) 349-9423, www.aebike.com.

Billy's Bike Shop, 63 East Battle Creek Street, Galesburg, (269) 665-5202, www.billysbikeshop.com.

Custer Cyclery, 104 North Augusta, Augusta, (269) 731-3492, www.custercyclery.com.

Gazelle Sports, 214 South Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo, (269) 342-5996, www.Gazellesports.com.

Visit Downtown Kalamazoo for Summer Sidewalk Sales August 4-7. Get great bargains on super sales taking place on REAL sidewalks!

Kzoo Swift, 445 Forest St, Kalamazoo, (269) 929-8053, www.kzooswift.com.

Pedal Downtown, 611 W Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, (269) 567-3325,
Pedal South, 185 Romence Road, Portage (269) 324-5555,
info@pedalbicycle.com and www.pedalbicycle.com.

Team Active, 22 West Michigan, Battle Creek, 1-800-841-494, www.teamactive.com.

Village Cyclery, US 131 in Schoolcraft, (269) 679-4242, www.villagecyclery.com.

Zoo City Cycle, 4328 South Westnedge, Kalamazoo, (269) 552-3000, www.zoocitycycle.com.