

Pedal Press



The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, Inc.
December 1997

President's Letter

The year is almost over. Its time to look back and reflect on the past year. In the spring I talked about setting goals for the upcoming year and striving to achieve them. On a personal note I set a short term goal and couple of long term goals.

My first goal was to recover from a heart procedure that I had on Feb 7, 1997. It took me a while and my spring riding suffered for it, but I was slowly able to ride myself into shape. I was amazed at what it actually took out of me. My two long term goals were to ride 4000 miles this season and to be able to keep up with Axel whenever I encountered him out on the road. With a strong finish of 875 miles in July and 1000 miles in August I'm happy to say that I made my 4000 miles this season.

As for keeping up with Axel this year I guess I have a lot more training to do. I only encountered him a couple of times this season, he would roll up beside me, I knew that I was probably a mark and he chased me down and say "hey prez, what's going on?" We engaged in some idle chatter and I must admit that I didn't really listen. I was amazed at how effortlessly he rode as I concentrated on his spin and tried to learn something. Then as fast as he was upon me he would say, "have a nice ride, keep those cranks turnin' and those lungs burnin'" and he was off. Maybe next year Axel.

As for the year as President I had some high expectations and modest achievements. We had an excellent riding season with great turnouts for the club rides. Our Ride Captain Randy Putt and Ride Leaders did a tremendous job. Dave Goldenberg did another top job on the Flowerfest Tour. To all the volunteers

Upcoming Events...

December

8 KBC Meeting, United Way Building, 709 South Westnedge, 6:30 pm.

January

17 KBC Recovery Party, University Roadhouse, 6:00 pm.

KBC Party January 17

Call your riding buddies. Mark your calendars! Again this year we're partying at the University Roadhouse on Michigan Ave. a couple of blocks up from Stadium Drive Saturday, January 17th at 6:00 pm. KBC (read *your* dues) covers the food AND drink, and we generally harass local bike shops to contribute some prizes. **Don't miss it.**

-Doug Kirk

and club members I thank you for your support of me and the club. I would also like to say thanks to Al, Paul, and Bill for the many miles of camaraderie we had this summer. Hey Al, maybe I'll be able to do some pulling next year.

We held the elections on Nov 12, 1997 and the new President is Tom Cross. The Vice-President is Richard Walter and the Secretary is Angie Richmond, with Mike Higgins returning as Treasurer. I'm sure that you will give them your full support in the upcoming year. As for me, I will be still helping out the club as Newsletter Distributor. I'll see you at the Recovery Party and thanks for a great year.

- Gerry Blohm

KBC November Meeting

On November 12th, the KBC had its general membership meeting at the United Way Bldg. at 6:30pm.

Elections for the Executive Board were carried out with the following people nominated and elected to their respective positions: Tom Cross-President; Richard Walter-Vice President; Angie Richman-Secretary; Michael Higgins-Treasurer.

These members will be spending their valuable time to continue keeping the bike club running smoothly and to introduce new ideas for improvement. New ideas such as an introducing an internet web page with links were discussed. Our new president believes that this would enhance the club's visibility (I agree, incidently).

The 1998 Flowerfest Bicycle Tour has three new co-directors: Al Cergol, Rick Whaley and Paul Stevens. They have suggested a number of improvements for the tour that will be underway after the first of the year. For example, sponsorship and publicity are two items that will be tackled.

A small increase in KBC membership dues was discussed (to help offset newsletter mailing costs). Finally, the club thanks and congratulates for a job well done the 1997 Executive Board: Gerry Blohm, Mike Higgins, Joan Root and John Brady.

- Bill Watt

Upcoming December Meeting

A KBC general membership meeting will be held on Monday, December 8 at 6:30 pm at the United Way Building on South Westnedge. Please plan on attending as a vote will be taken to increase the membership dues. You'll also have a chance to meet the incoming Executive Board members and chat with your friends.

- Gerry Blohm

Winter Rides

Now and then a suitable riding day comes along, even in December. Just wear the appropriate clothing and let's go for a ride.

If anyone would like to lead a weekend ride in December, give me a call or send me a description of the ride via e-mail.

If the roads are dry, there will be riders ready to ride. I have a lengthy e-mail list of riders, so the ride information can be transferred quickly and on short notice. To get your name on the e-mail list, send your e-mail address to me at (s.randy.putt@am.pnu.com).

- Randy Putt

New Ride Line Number

The new KBC Info Line number is 343-2288. If you want to call it something else fell free to make something up. In the spring it will be a ride, membership, and Flowerfest line depending on which phone message you want to listen to.

- Gerry Blohm

New Membership Dues Vote

The main objective of the membership dues is to cover the cost of putting out the KBC Pedal Press each month. Due to increased costs of printing and mailing the newsletter, we need to increase the yearly membership dues to \$18 for a single member and \$20 for a family membership. This will help the club break even providing the membership's monthly newsletter.

There will be a vote at the December general membership meeting to decide whether the club accepts or rejects the increased membership rate. Your participation and voice is crucial in this matter. I must add that the executive board is constantly looking for ways to cut the cost of operating the club. The increase in the membership dues will help to continue the monthly Pedal Press we have all come to enjoy.

- Gerry Blohm

What Mountain?

by Axel Kleat

Must have something to do with withdrawal symptoms, I just don't know how else to explain it. It was cold and damp and dreary last Saturday, just too miserable to go for a ride. Then a friend suggested going mountain biking. Right away I began cogitating excuses.

Amazingly enough, open-mindedness won out. It's fall, so no problem with spinning tires in tender, new spring growth. Weather's been dry too, so no greasy, messy, slippery mud. It's cold, so no heatstroke symptoms while cranking up ridiculous grades in tiny gears at 2 miles per hour deep in the woods without a breath of wind. The fall colors would certainly be terrific out there. What's more, the weather was just lousy enough that only the seriously deranged would show up. No clogged trails.

To my surprise, all my usual demurrers failed entirely. My only excuse was how old and lousy my mountain bike is. But this lone argument stunk. Old, heavy, unsuspected and slow my mountain bike may be, but it's not as though I'm about to contest many dirt sprints anyway. Besides, the slower a dirt donk like me traverses the berms and bumps, the less likely I am to bounce off a rock or impale a tree.

One thing about mountain bikes—if you rarely ride 'em, they don't need much work. I pumped up the tires, grabbed the first spray-can I saw, spritzed the chain, and heaved it in the truck. Scratches? Dings? Who cares? It's a **mountain bike**, right? Made to bounce off rocks, right? Frame weighs twice as much as my road bike's, so it's gotta be tough.

To Fort Custer we drove, putting aside all those uncomfortable thoughts about the silliness of driving one's car to get to a suitable place to ride one's bike. Off-loaded the bikes (Geez, these things weigh a ton), and took right off to ride the red loop—as far as I could tell, the longest loop out there.

Mountain bike skills are so much different. Who cares if you ride straight? The path never goes straight more than ten yards or so. Neither did I.

Didn't take me long to hook one of the bar ends on a two inch sapling. Luckily, I'd been giving up forward velocity to all sorts of other obstacles like ruts, twists, rocks, stumps and **real trees**. At least the ground was soft right there, so bif number one was pretty painless. The sap and the sapling were both bent but unbroken.

This little diversion got me wondering how bar-ends ever became popular. Thousands of klutzes, and even some coordinated people must have hooked them on one thing or another. Conclusion: bar-ends have got to go.

Bif number two taught me the difficulty of keeping the bike upright while pedaling roughly straight up, barely moving, when the front wheel hits something (who knows what) that encourages the wheel to become airborne. Good thing no videocams were pointed my way.

As I tipped over, I had the opportunity to practice a new skill—jerking the cleat (or should I say KLEAT?) on my shoe out of the SPD pedal in those microseconds between the realization that, *Aw man, I'm falling over* and actual contact with terra firma.

I think the biggest difference between road and mountain biking is falling. Roadies dread falls, and for good reason. The pavement's really hard, there might be a car involved, a couple of those wheel-suckers two inches behind are about to run over you, and while road rash doesn't hold much allure, fractures hold even less.

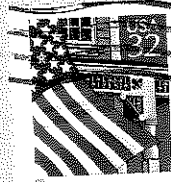
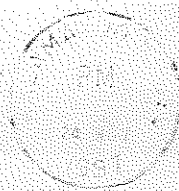
So as a confirmed roadie, my opinions on falling run the gamut from fear to loathing. Like most of my roadie buddies, I regularly go thousands of miles between falls. In the dirt, I'm lucky to get in a few thousand yards without a fall.

It's all part of the experience, as far as I can tell. But as long as excessive speed, trees, rocks, or cliffs aren't too forcefully involved, falling doesn't hurt very much.

This is a very novel realization for most roadies, especially old ones like me. It's going to take a while to get used to it, and maybe by then I won't fall so much. In the meantime, I'll be out there in the cold weather on that heavy old thing, searching in vain for a mountain.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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 Treasurer: Mike Higgins 327-0387
 Secretary: Angie Richman..... 353-3752

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KALAMAZOO AREA BIKE SHOPS

Alfred E. Bike 349-9423
 Billy's Bike Shop 665-5202
 Breakaway Bicycles..... 324-5555
 Cycle Works & Sports 353-7615
 Milwood Schwinn 349-6384
 Parchment Bicycle..... 343-8118
 Portage Schwinn 327-3393
 Pro Sport..... 381-7233
 Team Active Schwinn 962-7688
 Village Cyclery 679-4242
 Vorncamp Bike 344-3599

KALAMAZOO BICYCLE CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Dues (Check One)

- Adult Membership..... \$15.00
- Family..... \$17.00
- Senior (60+)..... \$13.00
- Youth (17 or younger)..... \$13.00

Please Print

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State ____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Birthdate _____
 E-mail _____

Family Member Names

Birthdates

Signature _____

Parent's Signature (if under 18) _____

Interested in working on KBC Events? Yes No

Registered Racer: USCF NORBA

SEND TO: KALAMAZOO BICYCLE CLUB, PO BOX 50527, KALAMAZOO MI 49005