

KBC PedalPress

www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

April 2004

President's Letter:

I try not to use this space for preaching, so forgive me if I seem to be sermonizing this month. In this issue you'll find a copy of a letter I sent to the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department after a large group of us were pulled over and lectured by a deputy south of Texas Corners on Leap Day, Sunday, February 29.

Although I originally intended to let the matter rest, I became convinced that this was actually an opportunity to be proactive with local law enforcement and score positive points, rather than the usual situation where bicyclists (like most other folks) only have personal contact with the law after some problem has arisen. Since I'm President, I decided it was my duty to follow up personally.

I hope you'll read what I sent Lieutenant Kipp, and I hope that if you aren't familiar with what Michigan state law says about bicyclists' rights on the road in the Motor Vehicle Code (printed below), that you'll take a minute to read the two most important sections, from which I edited out the portions dealing with motorcycles, wheelchairs, etc.

More importantly, as we begin another season of KBC rides, the fact that bicyclists are virtually guaranteed to painfully and grievously lose any close encounter with a motor vehicle is worth remembering. Alcohol, screaming kids, cell phones, drugs, passengers, and other distractions all conspire with generally poor driving skills to keep drivers from paying us as much attention as we'd like to think they do. And even here in relatively bucolic West Michigan, most all of us have tales of road rage, or other intentionally threatening—or worse—driving directed directly at bicyclists.

The likelihood that a police officer will be there to witness and arrest the offender is remarkably low, and besides, even if the perpetrator gets prosecuted, I guarantee you that, when all is said and done, you'd much prefer that the altercation never occurred.

One thing we all can do to keep the drivers around us from acting out towards us is to pay more than a modicum of attention to the rules of the road out there. We are, in the eyes of the law, held to the same rights and duties as motor vehicles. I'm not saying that we need to put a foot down at every stop sign, but I am saying we should strive to fit into traffic, and not do things that might anger drivers around us who, for all we know, have had a really lousy day.

And most importantly, don't give drivers a reason to think cyclists are anything other than fragile, easily injured human beings.

Doug Kirk, KBC President

257.657 Michigan Compiled Laws Annotated. Rights and duties of persons riding bicycle, electric personal assistive mobility device, or moped or operating low-speed vehicle.

Each person riding a bicycle ... upon a roadway has all of the rights and is subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by this chapter, except as to special regulations in this article and except as to the provisions of this chapter which by their nature do not have application.

Sec. 660.

- (1) A person operating a bicycle...upon a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction. .
- (2) A person riding a bicycle... upon a roadway shall not ride more than 2 abreast except on a path or part of a roadway set aside for the exclusive use of those vehicles.
- (3) Where a usable and designated path for bicycles is provided adjacent to a roadway, a bicycle rider ... may, by local ordinance, be required to use that path. Where a usable and designated path for bicycles is provided adjacent to a roadway, a bicycle rider who is less than 16 years of age shall use that path unless accompanied by an adult.
- (4) A person operating a ... bicycle shall not pass between lines of traffic, but may pass on the left of traffic moving in his or her direction in the case of a 2-way street, or on the left or right of traffic in the case of a 1-way street, in an unoccupied lane.
- (5) A person operating a bicycle ... on a sidewalk constructed for the use of pedestrians shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing the pedestrian.

Jersey News:

It's now or never if you're going to get the best price on your new KBC jersey. **Mike Lahaie** and **Jeff Newman** have been hard at work to sharpen their pencil points on this great new, essential piece of bicycling equipment. They've whittled the cost down to \$45.00 per jersey – a price five dollars less than that reported in the last *PedalPress*. But this price is good *only if you order before March 20th!* After that the price will rise to \$55.00 each.

So get your orders in early to Mike. His contact information is: lahaie01@yahoo.com, or 668-9032.

Distribution of the jerseys will occur at club rides during the week of April 26th, and at the next KBC monthly meeting on May 11th at the YMCA on Maple Street in Kalamazoo. Payment is required when you pick up your jersey(s), in cash, check, or money order.

Other items available for order include:

- Skinsuit – short sleeve, 20" hidden zipper, team short, \$78.25
- Sleeveless Race Skinsuit – 20" hidden zipper, team short, \$72.75
- Sleeveless Race Jersey – 20" hidden zipper, \$46.75
- Wind Shell Vest – double zipper, \$44.75
- Thermal Vest – double zipper, \$81.75

If you haven't seen an illustration of the jerseys yet, take a gander at: <http://www.newmanit.com/NewmanIT/kbc/jerseyinprogress.html>.

And take a good look. You'll be seeing these jerseys on the backs of a lot of local cyclists this year. Why don't you become one of them?

March Birthdays

Jamie Clark
Morgan Clothier
Ron Doering
Logan Freer
Rebecca Gaff
Matt Gaffner
Robert Keller
Gary Lehman
Cole Lehman
David Naegele
Mark Olson
April Robison
Kim Samelstad
Henrietta Squires
Virginia Stapleton
Laura Steurer
Lilly Van Sweden
Cheryl VanDer Meer
Tracey Wade
Joe Williams
Ed Wilson

March New Members

Alice Hoekstra
Arianne Kindle
Tyler Kindle
Mary Kindle
Jim Kindle
Dick Nivala
Andrew Peterson
Juli Peterson
Julie Vichinsky
Kevin Vichinsky

Expiring Memberships

Paul & Linda Bruneau
Karen Sue Mackaluso
Steve Secondi

April Birthdays

Christopher Barnes
Matt Berner
Emily Eckert
Angie Farrell
Karen Ferrara
Rachel Gauthier
Ronald Gauthier
Cindy Gippert
Angela Harmison
Alice Hoekstra
Hannah Kallewaard
Lauren Keller
Kathy Kirk
Nikole Lahaie
Mark McCormick
Kerry Miller
John Mulac
Thomas Noverr
Scott Powers
Rollin Richman
Alexandra Steurer
Karen Watt
W. Sargeant White

April New Members

David Galarneau
Karen Jones
Katie Jones
Austin Jones
Mary Moore
Ryan Theotet
Expiring Memberships
Jamie Clark
Tom Cochran
Wade - Robison Family
Giti & Jud Henrie
Giti Henrie
Jud Henrie
Michael Krischer
Mark Krook
Emily Mattes
April Robison
Reese Spaulding
John Spaulding
Evan Spaulding
Suzan Spaulding
Brian Unser
Robert Unser
Tracey Wade
W. Sargeant White

March 9th KBC Meeting Minutes

KBC's regularly scheduled monthly meeting took place on March 9, 2004, with President Doug Kirk, Vice President Mike Boersma, Database Manager Kathy Kirk, Newsletter Editor Zolton Cohen, Communications Committee Chair Jeff Newman, Mike Miles, Cricket Howard, Paul Bruneau, and Kevin Abbot, and Mike Lahaie present.

Doug Kirk opened the meeting by presenting Treasurer **Terry O'Connor's** monthly treasury report. Currently, KBC has about \$1,000.00 in its checking account and about \$9,000.00 in savings. O'Connor recently sent the jersey company Voler a check for \$3900.00 as a down payment on the new KBC jerseys.

Additionally, Kirk reported that the Flowerfest Committee received a \$500.00 donation from the Fetzer Institute.

A flyer for a road race sponsored by the **WMU Cycling Club** was passed around, announcing a road race on April 10th, starting at the Alamo Little League field parking lot. More information is available at their website: www.rso.wmich.edu/cyclingteam.

Doug Kirk asked for volunteers to serve on the KATS (Kalamazoo Area Transportation Survey) board for the next year. KATS is a regional planning board that deals with road repair and traffic control issues. They had contacted KBC to see if anyone from the club could volunteer time to monitor bicycling issues. **Paul Pancella** has expressed interest in representing KBC on KATS, as did **Kevin Abbot** at this meeting.

Mike Lahaie reported that KBC ordered 140 jerseys from Voler, with an expected arrival date near the end of April. After a vote, the final price of the jerseys was agreed upon: \$45.00 for those who order until March 20th. After that the price will rise to \$55.00. Lahaie reported that approximately 75 people have signed up to purchase jerseys so far, and that he had received a \$100.00 donation toward the jersey project from **Lyndon Cronen**, President of First Agency Insurance.

Lahaie will take the jerseys around to several weekly rides in late April in order to deliver them to those who placed orders. Cash, check, or money order will be due upon delivery. He will also sell them at the Trailblazer ride on May 8th, and they will be available at KBC's next monthly meeting on May 11th.

Other KBC-logo items like skin suits, bibs, vests, and long sleeve jerseys can be ordered for up to six months after the initial jersey order. Please contact Mike at: lahaie01@yahoo.com or 668-9032 to place your order or for more details.

Michele Intermont and **Megan James** were unanimously voted into the Social Director's position (Michele for her second year), as was **Paul Bruneau** to take over the Database Manager's duties. **Mike Peterson** has volunteered to take over the PedalPress Preparer's position. Thanks go to outgoing Social Director **Mary Cohen**, and to **Kathy Kirk**, who dealt with the database duties for many years, also to former PedalPress Preparer **Randy Loga** for staffing these important volunteer slots.

Doug Kirk is putting together an alternative Friday night ride route that will utilize roads south of Galesburg.

Questions arose about KBC's role with respect to either volunteer duties or donations to help maintain the Kal Haven Trail. **Zolton Cohen** was assigned the task of writing to the Van Buren County Road Commission (which is taking over the day-to-day operation of the trail this spring) to deal with the issue of continuing the Wednesday night rides starting from the Kal Haven Trailhead. He will also ask if the Road Commission would be interested in issuing trail fee discounts to clubs like KBC.

Kathy Kirk asked if anyone had older cycling gear to donate to a high school cycling club starting in Grand Rapids.

Doug Kirk related his experience in talking to a Lieutenant Kipp at the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department concerning an incident that happened to a group of KBC bicyclists on February 29th. The group was pulled over by a deputy and spoken to about riding on the roads. Kirk called the Sheriff's department in order to clarify exactly what the rules of the road are concerning bicyclists.

The next KBC monthly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11th, at 7:00 PM, at the YMCA on Maple Street in Kalamazoo.

This meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted, for **Brad Fry**, KBC Secretary, Zolton Cohen

April Ride Schedule

Hm. It looks as though KBC's Ride Captain **Randy Putt** was so excited about leaving for two weeks of riding in Florida that he forgot to send in the April ride schedule.

Not to worry though. The most important thing you need to know is that daylight savings time starts on Sunday, April 4th, and the regular KBC ride schedule starts the Monday after that – April 5th. The second most important thing is that **in April all KBC weekday club rides start at 6:00 PM**. Here are some details....

The **Monday Ride at Texas Drive Park** will consist of six ride groups, which should provide a pace to suit riders of all abilities:

- 15-20 mile group at 10-12 mph
- 15-20 mile group at 12-15 mph
- 25-30 mile recovery group at 16-17 mph
- 25-30 mile group at 16-18 mph
- 25-30 mile group at 19-20 mph
- 25-30 mile group at 20+ mph

The 10-15 mile groups will generally ride the same route and are recommended for new riders. The 25-30 mile groups will typically ride the same route in the early part of the season. KBC recommends the 15 – 17 mph group for more experienced riders who are new to the club. The leaders for the 16 – 17 mph and 18 - 19 mph groups plan to keep the groups together and at a steady pace. All riders who want to push the pace can do so in the 20+mph group. The 18 – 19 and 20+ mph groups will most likely start riding the more hilly routes after May, at the discretion of the riders and leaders.

The **Wednesday Ride** meets at the **Kal-Haven Trail Parking lot on 10th Street**. KBC plans to offer 3 ride groups:

- 10-15 mile fitness group at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail
- 25-35 mile group at 16-18 mph
- 25-35 mile group at 20+ mph.

Nancy Summers worked hard to build up the fitness group, 10-15 mph, on the Kal-Haven Trail last year. The number of riders on this ride was low most of the year. I recommend we try it again this year starting in May or June. A ride leader is needed to make the ride a go.

The Wednesday night Hammerfest will start at Kal-Haven Trail Parking lot at 6 PM when daylight savings time kicks in. The pace of the ride is typically greater than 23++ mph and the route goes to Bloomingdale and back (about 46 miles). Since the route is well known to most of the regular riders, no maps are available for this ride. This group is typically large (more than 20 riders) and consists of racers and other experienced riders. There is no designated ride leader. The group typically fragments into smaller groups and the riders oftentimes do not finish together. This ride is hard and is not suitable for inexperienced riders. Some riders can expect to be dropped from the main group.

Thursday night is a nice and easy social ride night at Texas Drive Park and has a small but loyal group, which is growing in size. Riders of all riding abilities are welcome. The pace is typically 15-17 mph and distance is 20-25 miles.

The **Friday Tour de Gull** meets at **Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg** and the pace varies depending on who shows up. We did have a 16-17 mph periodically as well as a large 20+ mph group last year. The fast group typically leads itself. The route for this ride is well established so the ride leader job is easy. KBC President Doug Kirk has suggested adding an additional, perhaps more moderately paced ride, to explore the roads south of Galesburg on Friday nights.

Plans for the 3rd year of the **Tuesday Night Time Trial** are in the works. **The TNTT will start in June**. The Barnes family plans to run the time trial and will use the same location as last year. The route starts at the Pavilion Township Hall at the corner of Q Ave and 28th St. The time trial will run the first and third Tuesdays of the month, starting in June.

April Mountain Bike Races

April 18 – Yankee Springs Time Trial (www.tailwind.net)

April 24-25 – Women's Dirt Weekend 1 (www.cycle-fit.net)

April 24-25 – Cannonsburg Challenge (www.funpromotions.com)

Tri/Du-Athlon

April 3 – Indoor Triathlon – Perrysburg YMCA (www.eliteendeavors.com)

April 18 – Dooby Du Duathlon – Sylvania, OH (www.eliteendeavors.com)

Local Road Race

The **WMU Cycling Club** is sponsoring an early-season collegiate road race on Saturday, April 10th, starting at the Alamo Little League fields on DE Avenue. Start time is at noon, and only collegiate racers are eligible to participate.

There will be five categories in this race, with the "A" men's riders doing 72 miles on the circular course. WMU is expecting several MAC and Big 10 schools to participate, some with CAT 1,2, and 3 racers, with perhaps up to 250 racers in all. WMU would eventually like to see this become an annual USCF three day stage racing event.

If you'd like to volunteer on the course, or just come and watch, the WMU Cycling Team would appreciate having you show up on April 10th.

Help out a good cause - clean out your closet!

Wanted: Any cycling related items that are too good to throw out but that you have replaced, upgraded, grown out of, no longer like or need.

Our Grand Rapids high school racing team members could use many things and most are on a very limited budget. If you can help out in any way or know of anyone who can (come on, make yourself feel good, help out a budding cyclist and promote riding), please let us know. Nick & Dixie Christensen, 616-682-0270. Thanks

Van Fleet Takes on Safety and Education

Longtime KBCer **Victor Van Fleet** has volunteered to take over the position of **Safety and Education Committee Chair**; also known as the Community Relations Director, for the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

Van Fleet, as many of you may have read through his recent viewpoint article on physical fitness in the Kalamazoo Gazette, is concerned about the general health and welfare of Americans – and most of all our youth. He hopes, through KBC, to motivate local youngsters to get off the couch and from in front of the TV and into something positive and physical, like bicycling.

Van Fleet will also serve as point person when other organizations contact KBC for volunteer or monetary help with their programming.

KBC's new Safety and Education Committee Chairman could use some volunteer help to get things started off this year. If you could lend a hand, please contact Victor at vvanfleet@kalamazoo.net.

Editor's Letter:

Buzz always knows what to say...

Buzz Burrell is a friend of mine, a friend since we met in junior high school. He got me into running track and cross country in high school, I introduced him to backpacking, and when he was in college he taught me the ropes – literally – about rock and mountain climbing.

Some of you met Buzz here in Kalamazoo the couple of times he and his son Galen have done a Wednesday or Friday night ride. Though he and Galen live in Boulder, Colorado, they do make it back a few times each year to visit friends and family.

Buzz is a world class trail running ultra marathoner. He owns records for running the 520 mile Colorado Trail (12 days), and the 223 mile John Muir Trail (4.5 days). Trail runners in Boulder refer to Buzz as a "guru," and a couple of outdoor recreational magazines last year did articles on him – and Galen as well, who is a fine athlete in his own right.

To me this is quite ironic. I could always beat Buzz in one and two mile events in high school, and always bested him in cross country. It seems in retrospect that these races were too short for him.

We've kept up a correspondence all these years, at first by letter and now by email. Our conversations centered around sports, biking, cross country skiing, training, kids, parents, extended family. But we're both in our early 50's, so recently some injury and illness reports have been creeping into our mail.

This past week, I wrote to Buzz bemoaning a particularly long bout of sickness that has afflicted both me and my wife this winter. I was about ready to pack it in, mostly out of frustration. I didn't see how I'd ever be able to get back into the swing of physical fitness again. Buzz wrote back quickly...

“Zolt, we’re in our 50’s. We’re in transition. The real question is, are we going age gracefully or go down kicking and screaming bloody hell?”

“Are we going to make an elegant transition to being respected elders, esteemed statesmen, in possession of dignity, grace, a 401K, hours of boring stories and millions of unorganized photos, or are we going to flog ourselves endlessly, pathetic shells of our former selves, and pumped up with assorted herbs and drugs, watch helplessly as younger males who possess barely a fraction of our wit, charm, and style, nonetheless hammer us into submission by virtue only of their brutish hormonal excess?”

Well I know the answer to that question! And I very quickly stopped whining and got back on the bike. Immediately, I started to feel better. Sometimes it just takes a bit of perspective from an old pal to set you on the path again.

A new season unfolds...

This is always an unsettled time of year for me, It’s the ‘tween season. Generally not enough snow around here for cross country skiing, yet often too cold and wet for riding outside. So when the opportunity presents itself, I like to take advantage of sunny skies and warm days and get out on the bike.

But here’s the rub. One of my biking mentors, Dave DeBack, always preached to me the gospel of piling up a lot of slow, steady miles early in the season. Steady spinning. “Building a base” he called it. 800-1,000 miles of nothing but moderate miles. No intervals, not even much hill climbing. After you got those base miles built, Dave taught, you could start opening things up a bit – get into the bigger gears, push yourself to your limits.

So on the one hand I’m enthusiastic to go out and do group riding again, but in the back of my head I hear Dave’s voice saying, “It’s too early in the season for that stuff right now. You’ll just burn out in August.”

A good example of this dichotomy occurred on

February 29th. A good sized mob met at KVCC and headed south on 8th Street. The plan was to do about 40-60 miles that day, depending on what group you stayed with. It was good to see these many friends again, and the day promised to stay pretty decent for the duration of the ride.

But within a few miles I knew I’d be hearing Dave DeBack’s voice a lot. I could keep up the pace, but I knew the testosterone thing was running a bit wild through the group. Maybe it was the day, the weather, the aspect of getting together with bike buddies again after a long layoff. No matter the cause, we were just going too dang fast for my tastes – for my training.

Fortunately, about 20 miles out some of us either got dropped or chose to get dropped and we reformed into a smaller, more moderately paced group. On the way back to the parking lot we had some good conversation and a reasonably paced ride for this time of year.

So I guess the moral of the story is that you need to be true to yourself – and that there are others around who might feel the same but do not raise their voices. In the end we probably all got what we had set out for. The faster riders got to beat each other up and established bragging rights and pecking order for the season. The more moderate group I wound up with got about 40 base miles in, and we didn’t kill ourselves doing it.

Maybe, too, some people already have those base miles in and are already in mid-season form. For me though, I’m going to exercise some restraint for a while yet. It’s just too early for me to be going too fast. There will come a time for that...

Zolton Cohen

Editor's Note:

Axel Kleat gave up his usual spot in the PedalPress to President Doug Kirk so we could publish this important letter.

As one of the riders who was pulled over on the day in question, it seemed to many of us that the deputy may not have known the law regarding bicyclists on the roadway. Now, thanks to Doug getting involved in this issue, he probably does.

This is a good example of how the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club can become active in promoting bicycling safety and understanding throughout the community. We're all better off when we are all - bicyclists, law enforcement, and motorists - on the same page...

March 12, 2004
Lieutenant Wally Kipp
Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department
1500 Lamont Street
Kalamazoo MI 49001

RE: Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

Dear Lieutenant Kipp:

I am writing to confirm the substance of our conversations of March 5 and 8, 2004, concerning the rights of bicyclists on our public roads. I was motivated to contact you after a group of approximately 26 of us were pulled over by one of your deputies on Sunday, February 29. While the deputy was friendly and non-confrontational, the content of his comments to us led us to believe that he is not fully aware of the rights bicyclists have to the use of the road.

On behalf of the Club, I emphasize that all reasonable bicyclists understand that we will lose any confrontation with a car, but the fact is that we do have the right to be on the road, and, more importantly, we discussed that you would communicate with your deputies not only our right to the road, but that they should explain this right to motorists who, the deputy states, from time to time complain about bicyclists on the road.

It is indeed true that bicyclists have the right to ride two abreast, riding as far to the right of the lane as is "practicable." As a lawyer and a bicyclist, I've been trying to decide exactly what "practicable" really means for 20 years, and can only figure that it means we should ride as far to the right as we reasonably and safely can. There is nothing in the law to limit bicyclists from riding in groups, nor should there be. We are safer in groups than we are singly.

The fact is that the cars should pass us when they have the room to do so and wait behind us when they don't. Please make sure that your deputies understand that this is what the law requires, and is what they should communicate to motorists when the situation arises.

I would be happy to discuss bicycle safety issues of any kind with you or your deputies, so please feel free to contact me. I'd much rather be proactive and address any issues before they turn into problems or accidents.

Sincerely,

Douglas G. Kirk
President, Kalamazoo Bike Club

KBC Kalamazoo Bicycle Club
 P.O. Box 50527
 Kalamazoo, MI 49005

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President: Doug Kirk.....388-5045
 e-mail: kirkdoug@aol.com
 Vice President: Mike Boersma.....720-1409
 e-mail: m_e_boersma@voyager.net
 Secretary: Brad Fry.....383-8047
 e-mail: bafry@netonecom.net
 Treasurer: Terry O'Connor.....342-4608
 e-mail: Terry.OConnor@Davenport.edu

Other Important KBC Folks

Database Manager: Paul Bruneau.....343-60
 e-mail: paul@ethicalpaul.com
 Newsletter Editor: Zolton Cohen.....344-0200
 e-mail: zcohen@ameritech.net
 Ride Captain: Randy Putt.....649-1814
 e-mail: SRBike@aol.com
 Social Director: Michele Intermont.....373-8929
 e-mail: intermon@kzoo.edu

Kalamazoo Area Bike Shops

- Alfred E. Bike.....349-9423
- Billy's Bike Shop.....665-5202
- Breakaway Bicycles.....324-5555
- Instant Replay Sports.....345-9040
- Parchment Bicycle.....343-8118

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club Membership Application

- Yearly Adult Membership-----\$15.00
- 3 Year Adult Membership-----\$40.00
- Yearly Family Membership-----\$17.00
- 3 Year Family Membership-----\$45.00
- Yearly Senior (60+) Membership-----\$13.00
- 3 Year Senior (60+) Membership-----\$35.00

Renewal? Yes No

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

Permission to register your name with the KBC groupserve list and receive all the group's email messages?

Yes No

Ride Category: Fitness Casual Competitive

Send to: Kalamazoo Bicycle Club P.O. Box 50527, Kalamazoo MI 49005