

KBC PedalPress

www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

July 2004

President's Letter:

July 2004

My wife Kathy related a sad story to me which I share because I don't really know what to do about it. A friend of hers decided to get back into shape and began riding her bike. Since Kathy and I tend to make our love of bicycling pretty obvious, she talked to Kathy about KBC and riding with the club. Kathy suggested that her friend come to a Monday Night Ride since Mondays have the most diverse groups and the flattest routes.

Kathy decided to go out to the ride to meet her friend, introduce her around, and get her hooked up with the best group leader for her skill level, but returned home disappointed because her friend wasn't there. When Kathy called to follow up, her friend admitted that when she drove by and saw all those "spandex-clad, zero body-fat" people milling around the parking lot, she got cold cleats and kept right on driving. In fact, she drove back home and went for a ride alone.

Wow! I've heard all manner of tales about new riders being unhappy with us because they got dropped or lost, or were left to fend for themselves when they flatted, but this is the first time I've heard of us losing a new member because...because...I guess because we look like a big bunch of bicyclists.

I can only wonder how many other times this sort of thing has happened. I suppose we might look intimidating to someone who hasn't ridden with a group before, who isn't used to biking in a group, or wearing multi-hued, bright Lycra, or seeing men with shaved legs, to see all of us milling about. As cyclists, we're not used to the notion that bicyclists can be intimidating—we're much more used to being victims ourselves.

On an unrelated subject, Kathy & I spent a week in May at one of Lon Haldeman and Susan Notorangelo's PAC Tour training camps in southern Wisconsin, riding a century each day and listening to presentations from coaches and trainers in the evenings. We also got a tour of the Waterford bicycle factory conducted by none other than Richard Schwinn...yes, *that* Schwinn. It was a lot of fun, with great, deserted roads, and about forty other hard-core cyclists.

Many of you know that Kathy and I train pretty hard and do a lot of miles, but we draw the line somewhere short of cross-country rides averaging 130 miles a day, or Paris-Brest-Paris (750 miles in less than four days). Many of the people there sported jerseys from these and other ultra-length cycling events that we view as way, way too much.

Yet we quickly found that we were faster than nearly all these folks—often lots faster, and the only conclusion to be drawn harkens back to the fable about the tortoise and the hare. The strange part is that, before that trip, I viewed Kathy & I as middling-fast riders. Yet among this group of really hard-core riders who talk of 600 kilometer rides and riding all night as routine events, we were speedsters—or should I say hares—in awe of these what these tortoises can and have done.

Doug Kirk

Upcoming KBC Events:

Check the ride schedule on pages four and five for information on KBC's upcoming special rides in July. There are quite a few to choose from! Or, better yet, don't choose between them; come to them all.

But whatever you do, don't miss **Flowerfest on Sunday, July 18th**. Flowerfest is KBC's largest yearly event and our only fundraiser. It's also a heck of a fun ride. And because this is a tour and not a race, you can choose the distance you'd like to ride and the pace.

There's usually a large contingent of 20+ mph riders leaving from the KVCC starting site at 9:00 AM, but feel free to gather up a group of friends and form your own group. The emphasis with this ride is on fun – and eating. Visit the well-stocked sag stops along the way for lunch, liquids, and snacks.

Flowerfest director **Tom Keizer** once again is sending out a call for volunteer road painters before Flowerfest. Road painting will take place on Thursday, July 8th. Meet at KVCC (southwest corner of the parking lot towards the tennis courts) at 6:00 pm. The more the merrier! Rain date is Thursday, July 15. Same place and time.

Road painting duties include driving the various Flowerfest routes with spray paint and templates (both provided) and marking each intersection with arrows on the roadway. The more people who show up the faster it will get done.

Flowerfest itself is Sunday, July 18. We need registration assistance at KVCC, Sag Stop manning at KVCC, The Briar Patch, and Timber Ridge, plus Sag vehicle drivers and Family Ride leaders.

To help, please contact **Mike Krischer** at mkrisch@chartermi.net or 323-2014. Or seek out **Dave Bishop, Dave Jones, Tom Keizer, Mike Krischer, Amy Lehman, or Cliff Muller** at any of the club rides.

July Vital Statistics:

July Birthdays:

Marian Barnes
Michael Birmann
Dave DeBack
Pat Farrell
Scott Freer
Sherry Gordon
Tom Gushurst
Matt Henckel
Justin Machnik
Elaine Naegele
Ron Newhouse
Nicole Newman
Jason Nicolai
Marty O'Connell
Jim Pankow
Linelle Ross
Samantha Steurer
Bill Strome
Janet Teel
Steve Vonderfecht
David Watt
Brian Yost

New members:

Andy Aardema
Blair Bates
Sandy Blix
Rose Bundy-Hansen
Dan Cole
Richard Garthe
Yolanda Harris
Matt Henckel
Bernice Puskaric
Tom Saad
Dan Woodhams

July Expiring memberships:

Candy Auten
Kara Linne Barone
Deb Gray & Al Cergol
Thom Collins
Jim Cupper
Kim Fletter
Angela Harmison
Karen Heerspink
Terry & Kathy Hutchins
H. Knute Jacobson Family
David & Judy Jones
Larry Kissinger
Dale & Ruth Krueger
Scott Lantay
Greg Lawford Family
Michael Louisell
Tom Nehil Family
Jason Nicolai
Terry & Pam O'connor
Lloyd Sain
Henrietta Squires
Steve & Virginia Stapleton
Timothy A. Stewart
Harriet Swanson
Joe Williams

Crassified Ads:

2001 Raleigh SC Tandem Bike: 24 speed, with road tires, second set of rims, off-road tires, front fork shock, much more, excellent condition. \$850.00 Phone 372-6146 or 269-806-8322

Raleigh Road R500: 54cm, Metallic Maroon, 7005 Aluminum Frame, Ovalized Butted Main Tubes, Compact Road Geometry, Shimano 27 Speed Drivetrain (52/42/30 with 25-13), Shimano Tiagra Components, Vuelta Stylus 700c Rims, Continental Sport 1000 700 X 23c Tires. Great commuter bike. Asking \$500, Contact Jeff Newman, 488-2516

JUNE, 2004, KBC MINUTES

KBC's regular monthly meeting was held Tuesday, June 8th, 2004 at 7:00 pm at the Kalamazoo YMCA located on Maple Street. KBC president Doug Kirk led this monthly meeting. Present were Doug Kirk, Terry O'Connor, Dale Krueger, Mike Boersma, Mike Lahaie, Zolton Cohen, Victor Van Fleet, Paul Bruneau, Brad Fry, Jeff Newman, and Tom Keizer.

Jeff Newman and **Mike Lahaie** reported on the distribution of the new club jerseys. To date, over one-half of the jerseys ordered have been sold. Seventy-seven jerseys have been paid for, resulting in total sales of \$3300. Extra-large jerseys have sold out. Jeff and Mike indicated that a second order to *Voler* would be placed by July 20th. KBC members interested in purchasing a jersey, or specialty items, including skinsuits, should contact Jeff or Mike. KBC members who have not picked up their original order yet can contact Jeff or Mike to schedule pick-up.

Terry O'Connor, KBC Treasurer, provided an update on the club's financial status. The club has \$3,800 in the checking account, and \$6,000 in the savings account. **Paul Bruneau** will serve as acting KBC Treasurer while Terry is on vacation.

Tom Keizer reported that plans for the 2004 Flowerfest are progressing. Members interested in volunteering for the event should contact **Mike Krischer**.

Jeff Newman reported that the new KBC brochures have been printed and distributed to the local bike shops.

Doug Kirk made a motion to thank **Mike Miles** for the contributions he has made to the club. **Zolton Cohen**, *PedalPress* editor, will draft an acknowledgement to be included in the club newsletter.

Jeff Newman reported that the new website is ready to be uploaded. Jeff will contact **Larry Kissinger**, KBC Website Administrator, to finalize plans to launch the new website as soon as possible.

The vote for amending the club constitution to include the KBC Webmaster as an appointed position on the board was postponed until the August meeting to allow for time to draft the changes to the constitution.

Plans for the implementation of a KBC membership directory were discussed. The membership directory will include the member's name, phone number, email, and riding style. To reduce privacy concerns expressed at the last meeting, listings in the directory will be optional and members will be required to sign up to be included in the directory. The directory will be published and mailed out to members early next year. **Zolton Cohen** will summarize the KBC membership directory proposal in the *PedalPress*.

Several KBC members in attendance expressed concerns regarding new riders getting dropped on weekday club rides. However, members in attendance noted that the situation was much improved from years past as a result of the ride classification system developed by **Jeff Newman**. Proposals were made to better coordinate routes of the multiple groups to accommodate riders who may have been dropped on a faster ride, and to effectively communicate to new members to attempt a slower ride before starting with a faster group.

Mike Boersma, **Dale Krueger** and **Victor Van Fleet** summarized recent Southwest Michigan Area Rails-to-Trails (SMART) meetings. Mike will compose an article on these meetings to be included in the *PedalPress*.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm. **Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13th, 7 PM, YMCA on Maple Street in Kalamazoo.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Fry, KBC Secretary

July Ride Schedule

The rain has slowed down a bit; so riding in June has become a bit more predictable. Unfortunately, it was raining at the start the **Old Car Ride**. The ride was canceled for the first time since it was started 7 years ago. The weather did clear later in the morning though. It's too bad I didn't schedule it to start at 10 AM!

I hope you have been able to do some riding this month. The attendance at the 2004 KBC rides continues to be strong. There were 4 ride groups at the first Monday Ride in June. As always we can use more help in leading rides. Riders have been stepping up to help at the rides. Thanks everyone. Please continue to help greeting new riders and make sure they get started with the appropriate ride group. It would be helpful if all members participated with this activity. Introduce yourself to someone you do not know, especially in other ride groups. Riders, if you have not tried a KBC ride yet this year, bring your bike and let's ride. Riders and especially ride leaders bring your cell phones for emergency use. It is desirable to have at least one cell phone per group.

We plan to continue the Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday rides for the 2004 season as well the special weekend rides. KBC is open to other ideas for weekend rides as well. Send your ideas to any KBC officer or the Ride Captain.

BE A RIDE LEADER

KBC is in need of more ride leaders. If anyone is interested in leading rides this year, please give me a call at 649-1814 or send me an email at sterling.r.putt@pfizer.com. I will be more than happy to discuss how to lead rides with you. In fact, most any experienced KBC rider would be happy to discuss ride leader responsibilities with you. You do not have to wait to be asked. No experience is necessary; you just need the desire to ride with a great group of people who enjoy riding their bikes. See the March Newsletter for information on how to lead a ride.

ALL WEEKDAY RIDES START AT 6:15 PM THROUGH AUGUST

The Monday Ride at Texas Drive Park will consist of 3 - 5 ride groups:

- 15-20 mile group at 10-12 mph leaders TBD
- 15-20 mile group at 13-15 mph leaders led by **Mike and Sherry Higgins**
- 25-30 mile group at 16-17 mph (Recovery Ride) led by **Zolton Cohen**
- 25-30 mile group at 18-19 mph leader, **Randy Putt**
- 25-30 mile group at 20+ mph leaders TBD.

The 10-15 miles groups will generally ride the same route. The 10-15 mph groups are recommended for new riders who are not certain where they fit in. These groups typically ride to Schoolcraft and may take a break for ice cream.

For more experienced riders who are new to the club the 16-17 mph group is recommended.

- The 16-17 mph Recovery Ride group is for riders who are interested in a steady pace with lots of conversation. This ride is great for riders who may be new to group riding or may be a bit nervous about riding in a group, or for more experienced riders looking for a steady-paced recovery type ride. The leaders hope to help teach some group riding techniques and help riders feel more comfortable riding in a group. No one will be left behind in this group.
- The 18 - 19 mph group is for riders interested in improving their skills and speed to move into a faster group. The leaders plan to promote pace line skills and improving bike-handling skills. The ride leader will make every effort to keep this group together.
- The 20+ mph group is for more experienced riders. This group can splinter into smaller groups. The 18 - 19 and 20+ groups will usually start out together and will ride the same route.

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 led by TBD
- **The fitness ride at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail was new last year and needs a leader in to make it a go.**
- 25-30 mile group at 18-19 mph led by **Tim Stewart**
- 30 mile group at 22+ mph led by **Zolton Cohen** (the Half-Fast Ride)
- 46 mile Hammerfest at 23++ led by **Doug Kirk**.

Zolton's Half-Fast Ride is back by popular demand. It is one of KBC's most popular rides. Zolton does a great job keeping this group together. Its success is due to his efforts in making this a fun and fast ride. Join Tim for a more laid back Wednesday night ride.

The Hammerfest riders leave the parking lot at 6 PM. The pace of this 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 15 riders) and consists of racers and other experienced riders. The group can fragment into smaller groups and the riders oftentimes do not finish together. This ride is hard and is not suitable for inexperienced riders. Some riders may be dropped from the main group.

Thursday night is Coed night at Texas Drive Park. This is a nice and easy social ride and generally has a pace of 15 – 16 mph. There were several dedicated riders who made this ride successful over the past couple of years. **Amy Lehman** and **Dave Jones** plan to share leadership responsibilities.

The Friday Tour de Gull (TDG) meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg for a fast ride around Gull Lake (27 miles) or a ride south out of Galesburg at steady pace (30 miles). These rides typically consist of 3 groups. Additional ride groups are welcome. The TDG is a great route of rolling hills and curvy roads and a fast and furious finish for the 22+mph group. The southern route is flatter and has minimal traffic.

- 16 – 18 mph group needs a ride leader (TDG or southern route)
- 19 – 20 mph group lead by **Doug Kirk** (southern route)
- 20+ mph group led by **Randy Putt** and others TBD (TDG)

The route for the northern ride is well established so the ride leader job is easy. Give it a try. There has been some interest from club members in establishing a 13-15 mph group for this ride. If you are interested, please contact the Ride Captain.

Special July Rides:

- **Marion and Chris Barnes, and Knute Jacobson** invite you to the **2nd Annual Family Ride on Monday, July 5 at 10 AM**. The ride will depart from St. Timothy's Church on BC Avenue, Richland (0.7 mile east of M43—or you can follow the Tour de Gull route, and keep going straight past the golf course instead of turning on West Gull Lake Road to head north to M43. St. Tim's is 0.5 miles past the golf course.)

There will be two rides, the shorter family ride to the ICE HOUSE ice cream shop, and a roughly 40 mile ride at an LSD pace—17-18 mph average, easy spinning. Bring a picnic lunch and stick around after the ride after for some socializing.

- **The 7th Annual Ride to South Haven** (100 miles) from KVCC on **Saturday July 10th**, starting at 8 AM led by **Larry Kissinger**. The pace will be 17 – 19 mph. Riders of all abilities are welcome. Additional leaders are needed for a ride pace other the one posted. The group plans to have lunch at the Sub Shop in downtown South Haven and spend a little time at the beach. It is a fun ride.
- **Flowerfest!** Sunday, July 18th. KBC's largest event of the year, Flowerfest is a tour, not a race, and is suitable for anyone. Pick your route distance and stop at the sag stops along the way for lunch and refreshments. Check the KBC website for details.

Mark your long-range calendars for the rest of KBC's special weekend rides this summer.

- The **7th annual Ride Around Kalamazoo County** (100 miles) August 21.
- The **33rd KBC Anniversary Ride**, distance and route TBD.

Stay tuned for further details about these rides. If you have comments about the above-mentioned rides or have suggestions for other rides, contact Randy Putt by phone or e-mail. Check out the KBC website (www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org) for the ride calendar and for any last minute changes

Race Results:**Racing Update**

As I report these race results I am sitting in a fantastic luxury home at Mt. Snow, Vermont preparing for Friday's NORBA National Off Road Bike Association) Mountain Bike Race. It is dry and warm here, conditions we've not had for this race in 3 years. The course is technical, fast and lots of fun. Next month I'll let you know how the KBC gang I'm staying with here performed. Regardless of results, climbing and descending this mountain is a true challenge that anyone having done it can take pride in!

Check out the great performances by **Mike Peterson** and **Rob Nicey** in Adventure Racing!! If you ever get a chance to chat with these guys on a group ride it will be well worth it to hear about their great experiences and success!

If I've missed your race results, please email me at caolson@mei.net and I'll be sure to add your results in the future.

Date	Race	Name	Class	Placement
5/15	TK Lawless	Stephen Barnes	14& Under	4th
5/16	Pando	Scott Steurer	Expert 40-49	4 th
		Michael Birmann	Expert 40-49	6th
		Taylor Birmann	Sport 14	5th
5/22-23	Tri Peaks Challenge Stage Race	Mike Miles	Cat 4	Stage 1: 5 th Stage 2: 9 th Stage 3: 6 th GC: 6th
6/6	Hansen Hills	Michael Birmann	Expert 40-49	3 rd
		Scott Steurer	Expert 40-49	4 th
		Taylor Birmann	Sport 14 & under	3 rd
5/22	Niagra Classic Stage Race	Mark Olson	Cat 1/2	Crit: 6 th RR: 60 th TT: 41 st
6/5	Traverse City BMX	Stephen Barnes	Expert/Novice	1 st
6/9	Lansing Capital City BMX	Stephen Barnes	Expert/Novice	2 nd
6/13	Lansing Capital City BMX	Stephen Barnes	Expert	3rd
	2004 Maumee Valley Adventure Race	Mike Peterson Rob Nicey	2 man	1 st ; 10hrs 8min
	Infiterra Sports Spring Fury 10 hr Adv Race	Mike Peterson Rob Nicey	2man	1 st 6hr 42min

Upcoming Local Events

DATE	EVENT	WEBSITE
July 11 th	Boyne XC	www.funpromotions.com
July 18 th	Stoney TT	www.tailwind.net
July 25 th	MI State Championship RR	Grand Blanc, MI

Tuesday Night Time Trials Up and Running

As can be seen from Cheryl Olson's racing update page, the bike racing season is well underway. And KBC's Time Trial season has started with a bang as well.

Chris and Marian Barnes, operations managers of the Tuesday Night Time Trial series, report a good turnout for the first two TNTT's of the year. The updated, exactly ten mile course has a new champion already this season, **Matt Berner**, who turned in a sterling 24:24 on June 15th, yielding 24.59 mph. **Kathy Kirk**, on the new Kirk Pace Arrow velo was hot on his heels at 24:36, 24.39 mph, on the same night.

During the inaugural 2004 TNTT on June 1st, **Mike Peterson** stole the show at 25:14; 23.77 mph, though **Paul Bruneau's** new, low-slung carbon fiber racing recumbent drew a lot of awed comments as well. And **Victor Van Fleet**, wearing his new KBC jersey during the second TNTT, managed to peel an incredible seven minutes off his first week's time. Who says equipment doesn't matter? The rumor about KBC's jerseys making for faster riders does, in fact, appear to be true...

Time trials are for everyone. They're a race against the clock – and against yourself. You're set out on the course with other riders, spaced at 30 second intervals at the start. When you cross the finish line your time is calculated and results are available when everyone is finished. If you haven't done one before, consider coming to the next TNTT to test your mettle against the clock. Time trials are a good way to measure fitness level over the course of a season.

KBC's TNTT's are held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, starting at the parking lot of the Pavilion Township Hall at the corner of 29th Street and Q Avenue, south and east of Kalamazoo. Start time is 6:15 sharp.

Check the TNTT results on KBC's new website at www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org.

Small prizes are awarded at the end of each week's time trial, and a grand prize of a new KBC jersey, donated by none other than **Axel Kleat** himself (autograph available on the jersey on request) will be given away at the last TNTT of the season.

Jersey Update:

KBC's new jerseys are gracing roadways across the county this summer, and about half of the initial order is already gone. The XL sizes have sold out (does this say something about the size of KBC bikers, or about the size of the original order?), but help is on the way.

Jersey masters **Mike Lahaie** and **Jeff Newman** are already putting a re-order together. The plan is to order more of the most popular sizes (yes, including XL!), plus any other items you might want; skinsuits, long sleeve jerseys, vests, or anything else Voler offers with the popular KBC design emblazoned on the front and back.

But time grows short. You have to act fast if you want a jersey or specialty item. *You must have your order in to Mike or Jeff by July 15th.* Please contact Mike at lahaie01@yahoo.com, or by phone at 668-9032 to place an order. Specialty items must be paid for in advance, before the item is ordered.

Membership Directory:

At the request of several KBC members, **Paul Bruneau**, **Jeff Newman**, **Zolton Cohen** and other members of the Communications Committee are planning on putting together a membership directory, or "Ride Buddy" list. A Ride Buddy list would enable riders to call or otherwise get in touch with each other to get together for riding opportunities.

This seemingly simple task is more complex than it sounds at first.

Sure, we could just mine the computerized KBC database, print it up and pass it around. But we won't. Why? Because we're concerned about your privacy. *KBC will not publish or distribute your name, address, phone number, or email address to anyone or any entity without your express permission.* Not only don't we want your contact information to fall into the wrong hands, we also don't want your email address getting out to spammers.

So that means we're starting at square one. You'll have to opt onto the list in order to have your name included. We're adding a new checkbox to the membership application form in August so new members could be on the ride buddy list if they choose that option. In addition, if you're already a member and wish to be on the list, please contact KBC's database manager **Paul Bruneau** at paul@ethicalpaul.com to sign up to be a Ride Buddy.

Information on the list would include the method by which you would wish to be contacted – via phone or phone, or both. It would also be helpful to know what type of riding opportunities you're interested in, for instance touring, racing, mountain biking, and what pace you like to ride.

Mike Miles: Not Just a Strong Biker...

Many of you knew **Mike Miles** from his presence on KBC's club rides. He was pretty easy to spot, usually up front on the faster rides, always pushing the pace. As one of the stronger riders in the club, Mike also raced extensively both locally and as far away as Arkansas and Texas, and had good success on all levels.

If you didn't know Mike, it's probably too late to meet him now. The Pfizer upheaval has claimed yet another victim. And victim in this case isn't Mike, it's KBC.

Mike worked as a contract worker for Pfizer, and his now-relocated team has sent for him in New Jersey. He'll be there most of the summer, and it looks as though he'll be moving away from Kalamazoo permanently when this portion of his job out there is finished.

Pfizer's gain, unfortunately, is KBC's loss. In recent years Mike contributed much to KBC. That snazzy new four color brochure/handout you see lying on the shelves of local bike shops? Mike's idea. And, more importantly, Mike's follow-through. While it's one thing to think up something great for an organization to do; it's quite another to be the point person, the detail person, to carry the process through to its conclusion. But that's where Mike excelled. With this brochure alone he helped put a more professional face on KBC's contact with the public at large. And ditto that sentiment with regard to his work on the new KBC website.

He also helped nudge, through software and hours of training, a certain bicycle club newsletter editor along the road toward better and more efficient desktop publishing.

Mike was also intensely involved in KBC's push toward the upcoming electronic newsletter, and his input into that process was invaluable. His vision, humor, and effort are even now helping move KBC forward into the future. An extraordinarily complete package of athlete and scholar, Mike Miles is a guy KBC will miss dearly – and not just for the terrific draft he provided us on the bike...

Here are Mike's first impressions of New Jersey's riding opportunities:

Did my first group ride last night out here with a local bike club. I smoked 'em. It was pretty cool though, everyone who shows up (and there were about 30 total for A, B, C and D riders) chips in 3 bucks and the bike shop orders up pizza. Starts/ends at the bike shop. So, afterwards, everyone hangs out and eats pizza and drinks pop. Good way of meeting people.

Hope all is well! I keep hearing crazy stories of the egomaniacs on the Wednesday night ride. Hope things settle down out there!

Just call me Jersey Boy now...

Arriving in New Jersey wasn't what I expected. I grew up hearing all the jokes about New Jersey being the armpit of America. Stories of how the beaches were awash with trash and that the Mafia lives in and controls the whole state.

Well, the only truth in all of that may have been revealed by the breakfast I ate at a local diner. For my first day at my new job I dressed with a pressed shirt and tie and, accordingly, looked like a well-groomed FBI agent. Let's just say I must watch too much *Sopranos*, because I felt like I could have been whacked at any moment with all the glares directed my way.

Those stories of being the armpit of America aren't quite true though. At least not in Northern New Jersey. The first thing that caught my cycling attention was the hills. And I'm talking HILLS. I salivated at the sight of (at least) a 1,500 ft. peak followed by another and then another. This area is beautiful, with trees everywhere! I think that's because there are only 3 roads in the whole state.

You see, outside my office window is what I suspect to be a 500' hill. But I have been quite unsuccessful in finding a road that goes over that little darling of a climb. Every road (or driveway in this case) that branches off the main streets I travel on is a dead end. And they always end at the base of the hills.

And furthermore, my maps seem to lack a very important feature in my area of New Jersey. That feature would be little black lines crisscrossing the open country. I can't seem to find those long, deserted country roads for which West Michigan is known.

Hmmmmmm, could it be that the New Jersey government is so fond of the landscape that they do not allow people to build on these hills?! Or, even drive on them? It is the Garden State for a reason, right?

I know one thing for sure; I do NOT want to be riding on the main roads. No shoulder, and the speed limit seems to be 65 no matter what (even when it's posted 35)!

Well, obviously, I need to find some local expertise in the matter. It's time to research a Bike Club!

-Jersey Boy

A Big Job

By Axel Kleat

I just completed building my own bicycle, from scratch, more or less. I decided what size and geometry I wanted by reading up on it, measuring the length and relative angles of the tubes on some bikes I was familiar with, and doing some educated guessing. I mitered or “fishmouthed” the ends of the tubes so they fit snugly up against one another when properly sized and fitted in a frame jig I adjusted to the size and angles I wanted.

I welded all the joints, aligning and realigning the tubes frequently on a flat plate as the tubes warped under the intense heat from welding. I hand-finished every weld, faced and reamed the seat and head tubes, and faced and threaded the bottom bracket. Then I fit the fork and the bearings and assembled all the pieces.

Lots of work, but then there’s the list of all the steps I didn’t do: For starters, I didn’t decide just how thick the various tubes needed to be or make the actual tubing. Instead, I bought a top quality tubeset complete with dropouts and cable stops from a supplier. I farmed out the paintwork and the heat-treating of the fully welded frame. I bought the fork, as well as all the other bits.

I was surprised at how much physical work was involved, even though I used aluminum not just because it’s light, but because it is soft and relatively easy to cut, drill, file and sand, nearly all of which I did by hand. I knew that welding aluminum is more difficult than welding steel, but I was prepared—I took two semesters of college welding classes. Welding the frame was hard, but didn’t require as much just plain thinking as cutting and fitting the tubes, and wasn’t as scary and worrisome as keeping everything straight and true.

As I invested more and more time and elbow-grease, I became acutely aware of all the time and effort I stood to lose if I botched a weld and blew a hole in a tube, or threaded the bottom bracket crooked, or if a cable stop broke off the first time I squeezed the brake. The problem with building something for the first time is that it’s hard to know all the different ways you can screw up.

Then there’s that deep, nagging fear that, even though I’ve done everything as well as I know how, the frame will break—either on the first ride or at some critical moment when I’m sprinting for all I’m worth. When you do all the work yourself, you know exactly where to look and who to blame when the wheels fall off.

There were great moments I won’t forget—weighing the frame, showing the welds to my instructor, threading a new bottom bracket into threads I’d cut myself (you really *can* turn a bottom bracket tap set with all your fingers crossed), and especially seeing that, once the bike was assembled, the wheels lined up exactly and rested in the same vertical plane. Compared to the joy of these little triumphs, the first ride was an anticlimax. Everything worked. Nothing broke. It went straight. I hammered it up a steep hill in a huge gear and nothing broke or creaked.

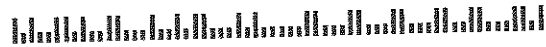
In fact, it worked and rode just like any other properly built bike. No better, no worse. In hindsight, that’s the best I could have hoped for. But emotionally, I guess somehow expected something more.

So what did I learn from the dozens and dozens of hours I invested? Primarily, that mass production and bulk purchasing are amazingly cost-effective. Even overlooking the cost of the equipment I used (and I am deeply indebted to **Paul Wells of Breakaway Bicycles** and **Doug Stevenson of Alfred E Bike** for letting me borrow some of the more arcane but absolutely necessary tools), I’m not sure I saved any money over the price of a similar name-brand bicycle, even though I did all the work myself, and bought the parts as cheaply as I could.

I understand firsthand why the people who take the time and trouble to hand-build first-class bicycle frames are truly artists with real skills. It’s also difficult to see how they could hope to make any sort of a living at it. Even though I fumbled my way through one attempt successfully, mastering the art of fitting, mitering, welding, aligning and finishing would take years.

The fact that I pulled it off hardly qualifies me as a master frame builder, but I doubt anyone would pay what I’d charge to make a frame for sale. But hey, now, I’ve done it. And for a little added bonus, I’m in charge of my own warranty claims.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



LAST ISSUE: 2005/02
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2003 KBC Officers

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Database Manager: Paul Bruneau.....343-6016
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 Social Director: Michele Intermont.....373-8929
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Kalamazoo Area Bike Shops

- Alfred E. Bike.....349-9423
- Billy's Bike Shop.....665-5202
- Breakaway Bicycles.....324-5555
- Parchment Bicycle.....343-8118
- Team Active.....962-7688
- Village Cyclery.....679-4242

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 _____

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

Yes No

Family Member Names

Birthdates

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signature _____

Parent's Signature (If under 18) _____

Interested in working on KBC Events? Yes No

Ride Category: Fitness Casual Competitive

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