

PRESIDENT'S LETTER—DOUG KIRK

Bring on the Dirt!

By now most everyone knows that dirt road riding is the new Big Thing in bicycling. Unless you already have lots of experience riding dirt roads, you need a bike with 32mm or wider tires—so, a cyclocross, mountain, or fat-tire bike—or what the bike shops call an “All Road Bike”. If you don’t have one, beg, borrow or buy one and get ready to experience a terrific new kind of ride.

Like mountain biking and cyclocross, dirt-road riding started out with races like Barry – Roubaix. Those events are aimed at pretty hard-core racers, but KBC wants to attract non-racers to this totally fun variety of riding.

We know that lots of you want to challenge yourselves but maybe are a little nervous about getting started riding on dirt. Or you don’t necessarily want to ride yourself into the ground—or get lost—but do want to have a great time riding truly deserted roads with a lot of bike-buddies. So we have TWO great rides coming up in June, both of which offer great dirt road riding with sag stops, marked routes, plenty of camaraderie, and more.

On Saturday June 29th, in addition to 3 different road routes, Kaltour has 31 and 62-mile dirt road routes through very rural farm and forest land southwest of Schoolcraft. See www.kalamazooBicycleClub.org/events/kaltour for more details.

On Sunday June 9th, 2019, KBC and Team Clark Logic member Dan Frazier is spearheading **THE DIRTY DONUT**. Dan says this is the first event of its kind (a dirt road donut ride) and will have three distances (18, 40, and 64 miles).

Everyone from racers to folks who just want a fun riding experience should try this event. Each race distance will have **DONUT STOPS** along the race route. **Everyone—no matter how fast or slow they feel like riding—gets to deduct FIVE MINUTES from their finish time for each donut they consume at one of the official donut stops.**

The race will start and finish at the US 131 Motorsports Park in Martin, Michigan (the drag-racing facility just south of Exit 55 on US 131). ALL finishers will receive a medal, and there are several ways to win, which will create a fun podium experience. There will be custom winners’ cycling jerseys, trophies, and medals in several different divisions and age categories.

Dan wants The Dirty Donut to be lots of fun for all types of cyclists and emphasizes it is an all-inclusive race, “A Race for All of Us” that will reward participants at several different levels. There will be awards for recreational cyclists as well as highly competitive cyclists. No participant will leave the event empty handed, and Dan promises an **AFTER RIDE PARTY**. For more information check out the web site at dirtydonutraces.com Both rides will have sag stops, ride leaders, course sweepers, and promise great riding and lots of fun. So mark your calendars now for June 9th and 29th. There’s fun to be had for sure! [Continued on p. 2]



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Recovery Party Review!.....	3
Focus on KBC Women.....	4-6
60 Bike Give Away!	8
Kal Tour.....	10
Editor’s very well reasoned and articulate letter.....	10

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Do you take pictures? Send some cycling pics for inclusion in future PedalPress issues! editor@kalamazooBicycleClub.org
- The weather WILL become bike friendly. Soon. We hope.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED

One Other Thing

Whew! On January 24th Pam & Paul Sotherland and I ventured into Portage Central Middle School to present John Dunlop, a teacher there, the 2019 Friend of Bicycling award for his efforts to introduce students there to mountain-biking (See Pam's article below).

The presentation took place in the gymnasium just before the annual faculty/student basketball game. WHOA! Talk about a lot of energy. I want to

thank Jeff Hamilton, the Principal (and an erst-while KBC member and Truly Great Rider) for arranging for us to be able to present the award in front of the student body. Hearing the resounding cheers from those students was truly heart-warming!

—Doug Kirk

president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

KBC RECOVERY PARTY

2018 CLUB AWARDS!

Each year the club awards members in some key categories. At the recovery party the following members were recognized:

Most improved woman: Bonnie

Conway

Most improved

man: Thom Brennan

Best wheel to

suck: Kevin

Oostema

Worst wheel to

suck:

Valerie Litznerski

Volunteers of the

year: David & Mary Jo Warwick

January 26, 2019 was the date of the famous Recovery Party! We had a new location this year: Wind + James in Schoolcraft, a facility owned by Jamie and Windy Clark in the former Arco building. The facility was open, spacious and bright with ample seating and mingling space.

Vice President Paul Sotherland brought his blender bike, a bike powered drink mixing machine! The two photos below show Paul mixing a margarita and Doug Kirk powering the blender. Maybe we should change Paul's title to President of Vice?



FRIEND OF BICYCLING AWARD PRESENTATION

Portage Central Middle School – Ride For Focus Program wins KBC’s Annual “Friend of Bicycling” Award

Each year, KBC members who attend the club’s December meeting vote to determine the winner of the KBC’s annual “Friend of Bicycling” award from a list of nominees. The winner of the 2019 Friend of Bicycling Award was John Dunlop and the Portage Central Middle School’s Ride for Focus Program, which won by an overwhelming margin. Through the Riding for Focus Program, Mr. Dunlop along with the support of other staff members has exposed well over 700 students to the sport of cycling. John has also offered bike-handling clinics for parents and staff of the school, many of whom now share a love for bicycling. The award was presented to John at an all-school assembly in late January. President Doug Kirk, Vice President Paul Sotherland and members Kathy Kirk, Pam Sotherland and Zolton Cohen were there to join in the cel-



Doug Kirk, John Dunlop, Pam Sotherland. Photo Credit Zolton Cohen

WOMEN'S RIDE LEADERS WANTED!

The Pedal Women's Ride is looking for ride leaders. Are you a friendly female cyclist interested in facilitating a group ride? The PWR meets on Tuesday evenings at Pedal South bike shop. All paces are represented and welcome -- provided we have enough leadership.

Several years ago, I started the Pedal Women's Ride so that women new to cycling could build their skills, and more experienced riders could enjoy an easy, social spin. With the help of other strong leaders, we've done pretty well meeting this goal.

I think of those rides fondly now, as I look out at the snow, and look forward to getting back on the road in the spring. But I'm in need of assistance. I need experienced women riders at every pace to help lead, mentor, and coordinate the Pedal Women's Ride. My intention is to back away from weekly leadership so that others can step forward and add their own "spin" to the PWR. I will continue to be fully engaged and available to support, mentor and assist as needed.



One of the groups at a 2018 Pedal Women's ride

Being a Ride Leader is rewarding community service and so much fun! Since starting the PWR, many women of all paces have found friendship and a sense of community while riding their bikes, and have built the skill and confidence to join other rides, making KBC a stronger, more diverse club.

I'd love to talk to you about how we can work together and share our enthusiasm for cycling as Ride Leaders for the Pedal Women's Ride. Please give me a call -- Teri Olbrot, 269-615-5297. Thank you!

Editor's note: Being a ride leader is an important, high calling. Leaders set the culture of their rides and help maintain the safety of their group, ensure that everyone knows the route, organizes a cool photo opportunity, etc. Consider finding a buddy or a partner to lead a ride together. One of you can lead and the other can sweep, then next week you can switch. Riding bikes is at the core of our group, and ride leaders are often the face of the club to new riders. There are lots of resources for ride leaders on the KBC website: <https://www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org/rides/club-rides/ride-leader-responsibilities/>

KBC WOMEN'S RIDES —DALE ABBOTT

A lot of female cyclists enjoy riding with other women. They describe it as being a more relaxed, friendly, and supportive atmosphere than other group rides. Women's rides provide an opportunity for women to get in a good ride while building friendships and socializing with other women who are passionate about cycling. Women of all different paces and skill levels are out there enjoying the friendly camaraderie that is found on most women's rides.

In 2005 Renee Mitchell and Jelania Haile started the first KBC women's ride which met on Thursday's at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. They started the ride to meet more women cyclists and provide a riding environment that would encourage women in the sport. Currently, KBC offers two regularly scheduled group rides specifically for women and both offer options for different pace groups.



*Above; Pedal Women's Ride participants
Below; Friday Morning Ladies' Ride*



The original Thursday women's ride is now our Friday Morning Women's Ride out of Texas Township Park. Renee still leads a group at a brisk pace on a rolling route toward Lawton. A few years ago, Chris Dahl added a more relaxed pace option to the Friday Morning Women's Ride; this group modifies its distance and pace to the interests and abilities of the women who are there that week. New riders and/or those who feel they need a level of mentoring are welcome to join this group. Both Renee's and Chris' rides have a core group of women who generally show up and others who drop in when they are available. Renee said, "I've been blessed to meet many wonderful, inspiring women and treasure our Friday Morning Rides where we share life experiences together while riding our bikes."

The Tuesday Night Pedal Women's Ride (PWR) was started by Teri Olbrot four years ago to increase diversity in the sport of cycling and to help women build their confidence and skills in a safe, supportive,

environment. The PWR meets at Pedal Bicycle in Portage and the routes are all fairly flat. When the PWR first started, Teri promoted the ride as a "mentoring" ride and it attracted a lot of women new to cycling, many coming out of KBC's Bike Camp. In that first year, it was a smaller group of new riders who enjoyed a leisurely pace as they continued to build their skills. The PWR has grown significantly since then; most weeks there are three to four pace groups with anywhere from five to 12 riders each including both novice riders and long-time riders.

A women's ride is a great way to connect with other female riders while enjoying a fun ride in a non-intimidating environment. Whether you are new to riding or a seasoned pro, KBC has a women's ride that is just right for you! Come join us!

MEMBER PROFILE: TERI OLBROT — BY DALE ABBOTT

If you don't know Teri Olbrot personally, you probably at least know her name and her reputation for being a constant source of encouragement and positive energy. Teri is a long-time member of the club and is the founding organizer of the Tuesday Night Pedal Women's Ride.

Teri started cycling in 2000 when her husband, John, bought her a used Schwinn mountain bike and encouraged her to ride with him – Teri on her mountain bike and John on his road bike. John let Teri set the pace and, with gentle persistence, took her on longer and longer rides as Teri's strength and confidence grew. Teri recalls more than one ride in those early days when she felt like she was going to die and wondered how she would finish the ride.

In 2006 Teri bought her first road bike and was amazed at how much faster it was. At that point, she decided she wanted to try a bike tour and they registered for the Bon Ton Roulet in the Finger Lakes region of New York – a fairly challenging ride. Teri loved every day of it and was instantly hooked on bike touring! Teri's favorite cycling memories are of the bike tours she and John have taken, either as a couple or with groups. She has many happy memories of challenging climbs, exhilarating descents, beautiful scenery, and interesting skies.

When Teri got up the nerve to show up for a club ride she chose the Friday Morning Women's Ride which at the time was co-lead by Renee Mitchell and Jelania Haille. Teri recalls the ride leaders regrouping a bit when they saw her arrive for that first ride; they modified the route to reduce the hills, hoping not to frighten her off on her first group ride. At the end of the ride, when asked how she liked it, Teri's response was, "It was euphoric!" Teri continued showing up for the Friday Women's Ride with Renee coaching her up the hills until one day Teri caught up to Renee on her own.



Road biking continues to be Teri's favorite style of cycling; she enjoys the relative quiet of riding a bike and finding just the right challenge, where she's working hard, but it's still doable. Teri says she loves the feeling of moving through space, outdoors, under her own power, with an element of speed. As a career occupational therapist, she calls this "linear vestibular movement" – moving through space in a straight line. She explains this kind of movement, known as "self-regulation," is very grounding, calming, and helps settle one's emotions in the same way that swinging on a swing, or rocking in a rocking chair are.

Now a very skilled and experienced rider, Teri embraces the role of mentor and has encouraged many others in the club, most notably as ride leader for the Tuesday Night Pedal Women's Ride. Teri looks forward to continuing to support the club as a mentor and in helping to shape ride-leadership within KBC. Thank you Teri, for your dedication and perseverance!

ANNUAL MILEAGE REPORT

How many miles did you ride in 2018?

I know a lot of you keep track of the miles you ride. This is a call to submit yours, in time to print in the March edition of Pedal Press. Your report may inspire others to get out there and ride, too -- regardless of the distance!

If you are a current KBC member and want to give others a sense of what you are doing mileage-wise, mail your first and last name and miles logged to pselden@aol.com. Estimates ("about 750"), reasonable rounding (if you say, "under 1000" that is close enough for me), and exact numbers ("1234") are all equally okay. In other words, this is for fun and it's very informal.

To make March's Pedal Press, reports submitted on or by February 20 will be printed. After that, I'll close the request for our "2018 KBC Member's Mileage Almanac."

Paul Selden



Next Club Meeting: February 12



7:00 p.m. @ Shakespeare's Pub

Interview with Julie Reisner—60 kids' bikes given away!

Editor's note: Julie Reisner is a Kalamazoo area Real Estate agent who gave away 60 bikes for kids to Kalamazoo Open Roads at the end of 2018. El Presidente Kirk and other KBC members helped assemble bikes Julie had purchased. This interview with Julie was conducted January 19, 2019. Please thank Julie for her contributions to Kalamazoo cycling when you have a chance. Julie has a great personal story which she tells in a cool video on her website (you have to check out the 70's plaid pants!)

www.juliesellskzoo.com.



Why do you give bikes away?

I have lived worked and worshiped in Kalamazoo my whole life. My family has always been philanthropic. I came out of corporate America and wasn't able to be as generous as I wanted. When I started selling real estate I wanted to give gifts on behalf of my clients when they bought a home.

Buying a home gives a sense of freedom. And bikes are similar. They give kids the freedom, and the knowledge that they can be citizens in the world. My first bike had that impact on me. Transportation is a form a freedom.

First bike

I remember...until I was 5 I lived on Creston and we had a little bike gang. I had a three wheeled red trike. Then I had a yellow banana seat bike that was AMAZING! It had a silver sparkle seat cover.

A bike represents freedom, and the ability to be a good citizen. When you give kids freedom to go, do and be, they can go down a good or bad path. Open Roads is training their students to make good decisions. If students don't have transportation they are dependent on others. With a bike they can learn to be good members of their communities. Most kids in the open Roads program haven't had the same advantages as others and the bike might be a time when they remember someone being generous and they can pay it forward as well.

How did you get the idea?

I love to bike; I ride an e-bike and my husband rides as well. I have some health issues and getting an e-bike has opened my world and my freedom. When I was growing up we would camp and always brought our bikes. I remember riding to town and getting ice creams.

For every home sold or bought through me, I donate a bike. I didn't sell 60 homes last year, but often my clients will match and donate a bike, too.

I donated 36 bikes the first year. The second year it was 56. In 2018 I was able to give away 60 bikes!



Bicyclists' Malfeasance — Facts vs. Myths:

In mid-2018 a group of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo volunteers (among them a number of KBC members) conducted, wrote and published the results of a huge fact-finding effort (see Note). The facts found debunk the holier-than-thou misconception that motorists are somehow superior to bicyclists when it comes to breaking traffic law.

Here is some of the source material we found to answer the question of whether bicyclists are any more or less law-abiding than motorists. You be the judge.

“When it comes down to it though, motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians are all people going places, and they all break laws in their own ways. Studies have show[n] no real difference in the rate of rule-breaking between groups. Pedestrians jaywalk. Cyclists roll through stop signs and run red lights. Motorists speed, tailgate, not signal, not stop before turning right, drive while drunk, drive while distracted, and others. One group breaking laws doesn't make it okay for any other group, but no one says that motorists don't deserve to be on the road because they break laws. Just because you notice bikes breaking laws, doesn't mean they are doing it any more than other modes. Rule-breaking is a human trait, not reserved for cyclists alone.”

From: Let's Put Those Tired, Anti-Bike Arguments to Rest <https://streets.mn/2015/07/13/lets-put-those-tired-anti-bike-arguments-to-rest/>

“When it comes to obeying traffic laws, “we're all criminals,” says Wesley Marshall, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Colorado. After surveying 18,000 people, Marshall is trying to understand why cyclists, in particular, might bend or flat-out ignore traffic regulations.

“When you look at the transportation system and the laws we have, pretty much everybody is a criminal. ... We've all gone a few miles an hour over the speed limit, and as a society we seem OK with that....”

“The study gathered similar rates of infraction — 8 percent to 9 percent for drivers, and 7 to 8 percent for cyclists.”

From: Survey Finds Bicyclists and Motorists Ignore Traffic Laws at Similar Rates

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-07-18/survey-finds-bicyclists-and-motorists-ignore-traffic-laws-similar-rates>

“Nearly everyone has jaywalked, rolled through a stop sign, or driven a few miles per hour over the speed limit, but most such offenses face no legal consequences. Society also tends to see these relatively minor infractions that almost all people make—though they are unmistakably illegal—as normal and even rational. Bicyclists who break the law, however, seem to attract a higher level of scorn and scrutiny.”

“When including driving and pedestrian scenario responses—such as how often respondents drive over the speed limit or jaywalk—100% of our sample population admitted to some form of law-breaking in the transportation system (i.e., everybody is technically a criminal). When disaggregating by mode, 95.87% of bicyclists, 97.90% of pedestrians, and nearly all drivers (99.97%) selected responses that would be considered illegal.

“When it comes to rule-breaking bicyclists, one popular opinion is that if bicyclists want to be taken seriously as road users, they need to obey the rules of the road like everyone else. Our survey results and the literature review both suggest that drivers break the rules of the road just as much, if not more, than bicyclists. The other common argument is that cities need to step up bicycle law enforcement to improve safety. While bicyclists are certainly not immune from causing harm, the literature suggests lower societal costs and safety risks associated with lawbreaking bicycling as compared to lawbreaking driving. Drivers speed, roll through stop signs, park in bike lanes, and run lights that have just turned red while still considering themselves to be law-abiding citizens.”

From: New Study Shows That "Scofflaw Cyclists" Don't Break the Law Any More Than Drivers

<https://www.treehugger.com/bikes/new-study-shows-scofflaw-cyclists-dont-break-law-any-more-drivers.html>

You are welcome to continue your own research and draw your own conclusions. For me, the facts I've seen don't support the theory that motorists are any more law-abiding than bicyclists, and vice versa.

I believe that such misconceptions about bicyclists can lead to dangerous conclusions that lead to even more dangerous consequences. I hope to spell some of them out another time.

Note You can find the 35 page “Answers to Common Bicyclist-Motorist Myths, Misunderstandings and Misconceptions” (Paul Runnels, editor) on Bike Friendly Kalamazoo's website at <http://bikefriendlykalamazoo.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Bike-Motorist-MisunderstandingsFAQs180516.pdf>.

—Paul Selden

ABOUT KBC

Recognizing that Southwestern Michigan offers a rare combination of good bicycling roads and great scenery, several cycling enthusiasts got together in 1971 to form the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

They wanted to support and encourage other riders in the area, to promote the sport of bicycling, and to have fun. As shown in the Club Mission, that tradition continues today in the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

Club Mission

The purpose of the Club shall be to promote bicycling; to encourage and facilitate touring, races, bicycle outings, and all forms of recreational bicycling activities; to defend and protect the rights of bicyclists; to secure a better understanding and recognition of the need for safer riding conditions; to encourage the allocation of facilities for bicycling on public lands; to cooperate with the public authorities in the observance of all traffic regulations; to provide an opportunity for members to socialize with others who have an interest in bicycling; and to recognize bicycles as vehicles used for pleasure, fitness and transportation. The Club will cooperate with other organizations with a similar goal and purpose. Click [here](#) to view the constitution.

Editor's Letter: REAL Food on the bike

Julie and I often do some kind of a fast in January. Many Christians take the first month of the year (or 21 days) to do a Daniel Fast. The biblical character Daniel was a young Jew in the court of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. The food at court was not kosher and he chose to eat vegetables and water for a test period of three weeks. At the end of the 21 days, Daniel was healthier and stronger than the other young men who continued to eat the normal food.

This year we decided to do the Whole 30 diet for the month of January. On the Whole 30, you avoid grains, dairy, alcohol and added sugar. When shopping you stick to the outside walls of the grocery store. We have enjoyed trying new recipes and cutting out some empty (mostly liquid) calories has resulted in a little less editor's belly. One unexpected side effect has been my discovery of figs.

I almost always carry some nutrition when riding. Many cyclists struggle with nutrition, especially as the duration of the ride goes longer than a couple hours. We are often caught on the horns of a dilemma: if I don't eat, I will bonk. If I do eat, I may get gut rot. Riding a bike moves blood to your legs, leaving less blood than normal for digestion. This makes our stomachs more sensitive than normal. There are plenty of sports nutrition companies offering products that they claim are easy to carry, easy to open, easy to swallow, easy to digest, and provide the perfect blend of energy. Many of these have made their way into my body on rides. Some stayed where they were supposed to. . . some didn't.

It seems clear that our bodies were designed to eat food. Actual plants and nuts and animals. Anything made in a lab is simply an imitation of the real thing. But, it isn't always quick or easy or convenient to bring a plant or nut or animal in a jersey pocket. Into this Gordian conundrum comes the fig. One regular on the Monday night Lawton ride is a guy named Richard. Sometime in the summer of 2018 we had a participant who forgot his water bottle. While the ride is named "Lawton," we generally skip most of the town and turn south before we make it to the commercial district. On this waterless ride, though, I led the group into town where there are two Citgo Gas stations. The southern station was closed, but we found relief at the northern brother and our dry rider was able to purchase a bottle of hydration.

Whilst waiting for the hydrological transaction to commence, Richard brought out of his pocket some dark wrinkly things that he proceeded to eat. I looked askance and him what those weird looking shriveled sacks were: Dried Mission figs. Turns out these God's gift to cyclists!

As part of the Whole 30 Julie and I bought some foods we didn't normally bring home from the store. Dried Mission figs got caught in our net. Since early January I have consumed several bags of these babies. They are tasty, crunchy, and full of energy. And since they are actual food made by nature, my stomach is pleased to receive them. Real food for the bike! —John Knowlton editor@kalamazoo-bicycle-club.org

