

## PRESIDENT’S LETTER — JOHN KNOWLTON

### Let’s Experiment!

*Innovation is an effective solution to a problem. -Jeremy Uteley*

Does KBC have a problem? Well, yes. Several that I can think of. One of our past problems was that we were seen as elitist or exclusionary. I have been told by many people that they were intimidated by our group rides: lots of fit people in fancy clothes on cool bikes. Some people have actually put their bike on a rack, driven to the start, and then kept on driving past without stopping. But here is some good news: if they stop and get their bike ready, KBC folks are nice to them! We have done a good job of making the rides friendly, inviting people into the right group, and providing a welcoming environment. The last two Monday nights I have met at least one brand new person who said something like, “I thought it would be hard to break into the group, but the people are great. I’m so glad I came!” So, on behalf of the new people, thank you for being cool!

That problem is now a problem of perception rather than reality, so that’s moving in the right direction. But we still have room to fix some other stuff. One thing I want to fix is our monthly meetings. I have heard from you that our member meetings are low value. Some of you have told me with words (which I appreciate). And others have shown me with your continued absence. I want to provide amazing value to you as a member of KBC and to the broader community. And so, I ask you to join me in an experiment. Let’s try to make KBC meetings an awesome experience. There are some things other leaders and I will do, and there are some things I will ask you to do.

Leaders: Starting in September, committee leaders and the executive committee will do our best to complete routine and bureaucratic business between 6 and 7 p.m. At 7 p.m. we will kick off the membership meeting with introductions and announcements. And then most of the hour until 8 p.m. will be taken up with presentations and conversation with other community leaders. I expect this to accomplish at least two goals:

- 1) KBC meetings will be more interesting and engaging.
  
- 2) You will have a chance to be influenced by and in turn influence other leaders in the community. I expect we will invite other transit focused non-profits; State and regional bike clubs; City, County and State



### HIGHLIGHTS

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**Please send stories and photos of your rides to:**

editor@kalamazoobicycle club.org

planners and officials; nutrition, fitness and training experts among others. Watch this space for confirmed guests at our monthly meetings on the Second Tuesday of each month in the Oshtemo Community Center.

Members: I ask you to do three things as you participate in our collective experiment. 1) Come and engage. Hear the speakers, listen, and ask (respectful) penetrating questions; 2) Propose guests whom you would like to meet; 3) Give feedback. If you come out, let me know what you think of the new format or how we could improve. If you stay away, let me know why.

You reach me at [president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org). Thanks!

## KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be **Tuesday, 08 August** at 7:00 p.m. at Oshtemo Community Center (North Room), 6407 Parkview Ave, Kalamazoo MI .

### August 2023 Membership

**Total Memberships:** 318

**Total Individuals:** 491

**New or Renewed Members:** Hank Apotheker; Jay Campbell; Cathy Cheron; George Granger III; Sue Kovats-Bell; Rob McDougall; Chuck Nutting; Matt VanMiddlesworth

**August Expired Members:** Chris Bol; Carolyn Douglass; Melissa Dipert; Gus Garza; Steve Groetsema; James Henderson

**Rick Whaley, Membership Director**

## 2023 KalTour Wrap Up

KalTour 2023, on Sunday June 25, was a success for all involved; there were no calls for road service and there was only one (unconfirmed) rumor of a flat tire. The pre-ride weather forecasts promised thunderstorms, but the actual rain inconvenienced only the early morning set-up and the last few finishers as well as the post-ride cleanup. Unfortunately, the dire weather forecasts likely held down day-of-ride registration, leading to a total of approximately 100 riders.

There were 15 riders on the century route—the pictures below capture seven of them.



At the other end of the mileage spectrum, there were a small number of takers for the fifteen mile route, including one young man who was ready to go it alone until we found another couple to accompany him.

This was the first time KalTour was able to start from an indoor facility, the Wind + James Event Center in Schoolcraft. Among the amenities offered were music, root beer floats and artistically decorated restrooms!

We had KBC ride leaders for the 100 mile, 62, mile, and 31 mile routes. One goal next year would be to expand this to the 50 and 15 mile routes as well.

For the first time we used the volunteer signup web site "Sign Up Genius." This allows me to list all (I hope) of the many KBC members and members of AMBUCS who helped out before and during KalTour as well as the tasks they performed;

- Road painting: Mike Boersma, Rick Whaley, Paul Selden, John Knowlton, Paul Runnels, Marc Irwin
- Purchase bananas & grapes: Gordy and Kitty Vader



- Post signs: Clark Bennett
- Registration: Pam Sotherland, Paul Sotherland, Terry OConnor, Scott Steurer, Julie Knowlton, Kathy Kirk, Doug Kirk
- Purchase ice and ice cream: Paul "Doc" Rehkopf
- Ride Leader - 100 mile: Michael Estes and Jonathan Penrod
- Ride Leader - 62 mile::Samuel Schnepf
- Ride Leader - 31 mile: Terry OConnor and Bill Price (see picture)
- Drive U Haul to Scotts Mill: Mike Vander Meulen
- Richland Park Sag: Paul Runnels and Barb Hart
- Fish Hatchery Sag: Kevin Douglass
- Cleanup: Clark Bennett
- Sag Driver: Mike Boersma

The following Kazoo Valley AMBUCS members served food at the Scotts Mill SAG and the post-ride lunch at Wind + James:: Donna Whitcomb, Fed Sammons, Barbara Ryder, Sarah Ryder, Jill Ryder, Craig Eberstein, Brenda Eberstein, Brandy Lowrey, Jack Bellware, Rick Remyse, Lynn Durocher, and Teresa Post

Another KalTour first was live music! The group Joshua Tree (minus their bassist) provided a combination of old favorites and original tunes. They are Kathy Nichols on mandolin and mandola, Denny Jewett on guitar and Paul Wells on violin and guitar with all three doing vocals as well. For more information (or to book them for your next affair) contact Paul at [breakawaypw@yahoo.com](mailto:breakawaypw@yahoo.com)

Clearly there are challenges ahead for KalTour, with the main one being publicity. The closure of several local bike shops over the past few years and pandemic-era restrictions on the distribution of printed material have not helped. Putting KalTour on the BikeReg platform offers us a new way to reach potential riders, and other forms of on-line publicity have become increasingly important. KBC Communications Director Jillian Howland has begun the process of directing resources to Facebook marketing and efforts in this area will continue. All KBC members are welcome to make suggestions for improving KalTour and to become part of the KalTour committee.

Mike Krischer  
KalTour Director

## 2023 Ride to South Haven

The Ride to South Haven will be held on Saturday, August 26, 2023 starting at 8:00 A.M. from the southwest corner of the KVCC parking lot on O Avenue. Put on your finest cycling apparel, because, once again, we will stop in Lawrence on our way to and from South Haven for the finest in convenience store dining. And at some point, will we be eating delicious subs? Why, of course, we'll be eating delicious subs! In South Haven! We will also ride by Lake Michigan and impress the beachgoers with our cycling awesomeness!



The ride will be about 102 miles, similar to the 2022 route that is in the KBC Ride with GPS Route Library and is labeled "South Haven Century 2022." After the Ride Leader determines the final 2023 route, it will also be placed in the Route Library. The RL's pace will be in the 15 mph range, but other groups of faster or slower riders are also welcome to ride, too.

In 2022, the RL's longest ride prior to the Ride to South Haven was 85 miles. This year, the RL's longest ride has been 71 miles. Last year, he was able to handle the distance, so he'll be telling himself that he'll probably be able to handle it this year, too. And if things continue to go well, in five years, the RL's longest ride prior to the Ride to South Haven will be 1 mile.

So, where will you be on August 26? You can lie on your couch all day and mourn the passage of time or you can actually live life! The choice is yours.

**Rick Whaley**, Ride to South Haven Ride Leader

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## Rainy Days and Bike Rides (Nearly Always) Get Me Down

“It’s raining men! Hallelujah! It’s raining men! Amen! I’m gonna go out to run and let myself get absolutely soaking wet!” - The Weather Girls

While unusual, especially so in this periodically droughty summer, it shouldn’t come as a complete surprise if you’re occasionally caught out in the rain while you’re on your bike. Some bike rides last for hours and the weather can change from merely overcast to raining pitchforks and hammer handles over the course of such an outing.



If you ride long distances, or for a number of years, your chances of getting a good soaking naturally increase. When it does occur a lot of stuff happens all at once, much of it messy and requiring attention after you get home. If you’ve never had this experience, or it has been a while since you rode wet, here are some things to expect – with musical cues to help introduce each section. Bonus points if you can identify the artist(s) associated with each song!

### *-Splish Splash (I Was Taking a Bath)-*

There is ‘wet,’ and then there is what I like to call ‘bike wet.’ Yeah, you think you can never get wetter than when you jump in a lake to swim or stand under a shower? If so, then you’ve never ridden in a real rainstorm. My scientifically unproven and likely completely false premise for this is that the combination of wind-driven rain and hydrophobic (water repelling) bike clothing seems to drive the water into your pores. Now we’re talking real wet. Veteran riders say you haven’t really ridden wet until your shoes and socks fill up with water.

### *-Dirty Laundry-*

Along with water pelting down on you from above, your tires pick it up from the road and spray you both fore and aft (unless you’re riding a bike with fenders). If you’re riding with a group, the lovely and picturesque rooster-tails coming from the back tires on your mates’ bikes add to the fray. You get dowsed from every conceivable angle. ‘Bike wet;’ it’s a thing.

But water isn’t the only thing you get splattered with. Particles of dirt and sand from the roadway hitch a ride with those tire-thrown water droplets; and even though the water eventually drains off your body and evaporates out of your clothing, those particles stay behind. It’s a good idea to rinse everything off when you get home (outdoors, with a hose, if you want to maintain domestic tranquility), shoes and bike included. Don’t let the grit harden on your bike, which makes it more difficult to remove.

After rinsing your bike, or doing a complete wash job, bounce the bike a few times on your driveway to remove the excess droplets, towel it off and relube the chain and pivot points on the brakes and derailleurs.

Here’s something that is hard to imagine, but it can happen during a prolonged rain ride: hollow wheel rims can fill up with water. True fact. Droplets, driven by centrifugal force, follow the spokes down to the spoke nipples and then are shunted into the rim. If you have hollow rims, look for a small hole drilled into one side. That’s a drain. Prop your wheels for a few hours with that hole facing downward to let the water drip out.

Similarly, the bike's frame itself can take on water, usually through the seat post. If you can hear sloshing inside, remove the seat post and hang the frame upside down for a while. Don't let water sit inside or you can ruin the bearings in the bottom bracket.

Remove insoles and any orthotics in your shoes and stuff them with newspapers to absorb moisture, changing the paper out every few hours until the shoes are dry. Some riders like to put their shoes on top of their water heater to slowly dry them in the gentle heat thrown off by that appliance. Wash your clothing immediately if you can, as dirt that dries in and on fabric is harder to remove than when it is still wet. Rainy rides create a lot of work!

#### *-20/20 Vision (and Walking Around Blind)-*

One of the most pronounced and alarming effects of riding in the rain is that your vision immediately deteriorates. Not only do overcast skies darken the overall light, but droplets and dirt on your eyeglasses, and the condensation that can form on the lenses, markedly reduce clarity and acuity. Also, be aware that automobile drivers on the road simultaneously suffer similar deleterious vision – yet another reason to wear brightly colored clothing and to ride with a powerful rear red blinkie light, at the very least. A white front light greatly improves your visibility to motorists under inclement conditions.

#### *-Slip-Sliding Away-*

Vision isn't the only thing to go sideways on a wet ride. During the first few minutes of a downpour, pavement gets slick as oils from the tar and from motor vehicle exhaust and leakage rise to the surface. So do painted areas at intersections and railway crossings. Some road paints are worse than others, with raised polyester striping, which seems to cover up the traction-friendly roughness of the roadway, perhaps the worst of all.

Steel railroad tracks and manhole covers get particularly treacherous, becoming, as they say down South, 'Slicker than deer guts on a doorknob.' Be extremely cautious and aware of centering your weight on the bike when riding over wet metal.

Aggressive cornering can result in your tires losing their grip and you contacting the roadway in a manner rather rude. Slowing down and thinking through – and about - the various hazards that face you on a wet roadway will stand you in good stead. You're already wet, so don't try to rush things in order to get home or back to your car.

#### *-Still Waters Run Deep-*

One of the worst things you can do on your bike in the rain is to ride over a puddle. That puddle might just be a low spot in the road, or it might conceal an eight-inch deep pothole that could cause a pinch-flat blowout, crack your front wheel rim or throw you from the bike. There's no way of knowing which it will be. But, given the general condition of roads, it's a good bet to assume any puddle you see is covering a pothole.

#### *-Let Me Be Your Salty Dog-*

I was riding down a mountain in Maine some years ago, not far from the seacoast, when I was caught in a storm. It was a real hog-drowner and I got thoroughly wet. A few minutes after the first drops began coming down, I started tasting salt as water ran down my face. "Hm," I thought. "The storm must have picked up some seawater and is now dumping it on me. Cool!"

But when the same thing happened a few months later back in Kalamazoo, quite a distance from any

saltwater, I realized that rain running through my helmet vents was picking up salt from sweat that had accumulated during previous rides. “Hm,” I thought. “Gross!” It was a good reminder to rinse out the pads on my helmet a couple of times during the season.

*-Stop! In the Name of Love! -*

With rim brakes, moisture on wheel rims dramatically and dangerously increases stopping distances, Until the water has been sluiced off the rims and you regain some semblance of stopping power, you’ll need to consciously plan ahead when approaching stop signs, traffic lights or obstructions.

Disk brakes, increasingly standard equipment on new bikes, perform much better when wet than do rim brakes. It still makes sense though to give yourself more stopping space. When riding in a group, leave plenty of room to the person in front of you, and try not to ride directly in line with them. If they brake suddenly, you’ll need that space to slow down. Doing so will also help you avoid their roostertail.

All in all, my philosophy is to not start a ride in the rain. But if I do get caught out in a storm I know how to deal with it – and the aftermath. Now you do as well.

There are times when I’ve sought shelter to avoid a particularly severe downpour. But sometimes, on a hot summer day, a quick shower can be refreshing, and any temporary discomfort is worth it to be able to enjoy the rest of the ride.

Song titles and their associated artists:

Splish Splash, I Was Taking a Bath: Bobby Darin

Dirty Laundry: Don Henley

20/20 Vision (and Walking Around Blind): Jimmy Martin and the Osborne Brothers

Slip Sliding Away: Paul Simon

Still Waters Run Deep: The BeeGees

Salty Dog Blues: Mississippi John Hurt

Stop! In the Name of Love: The Supremes

**Zolton Cohen** — KBC Member 7 Old Crank Award Winner 2023

Zolton, I hope you have created several ear-worms and many a stroll down memory lane with this musical anthology. Only fitting I am writing this during a thunder storm. Charlie Grdina - KBC Editor



# 2023 Cycling Events.

Not all inclusive but looking to capture the main cycling events in the immediate (50 mile or so) area. Provided for informational content only – **KalTour, W-Ride, SouthHaven Ride, Bike Camp and KBC Recovery Party** are KBC sponsored events.

[RACE SCHEDULE – MGRS \(michigan gravelraceseries.com\)](https://michigan gravelraceseries.com) - Link to all gravel races



<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Link</u>
South Haven Ride	26 August 2023	<a href="https://KalamazooBicycleClub.org">KalamazooBicycleClub.org</a>
Fall Bike Celebration	17 September 2023	<a href="https://www.fallbikecelebration.org/">www.fallbikecelebration.org/</a>
Gilmore Gravel	TBD	<a href="#"><u>Gilmore Gravel Grand Prix</u></a>
Lowell Gravel Race	28 October 2023	<a href="#"><u>LOWELL CLASSIC GRAVEL ROAD RACE - Home (thelowell50.com)</u></a>