

Pedal Press

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, Inc.
December, 1998

President's Letter

Last column of my presidency, so I better make it count. First, thanks to everyone who supported the club, from members to sponsors to the guy in the car who stopped one night and let us use his floor pump to fix a flat. Thanks to those individuals who challenged me into trying to make some things happen. I also want to thank Jeanette for setting up the recovery party last January. She was never thanked properly in print. Thank You, Jeanette!!

Next I would like to ask that all those individuals who rode outlaw on our club rides become members in the coming year. We enjoyed having you ride with us but hey, pay your dues. We carry insurance on you during those rides.

I would really like to remind every body to buy from your local shops when possible. Someone recently pointed out to me the tights I was wearing were from a mail order company. I was honestly quite embarrassed.

When you buy mail order you are buying from strangers. People who put nothing into your community or club. Wouldn't you rather buy from the guy who shows up on your clubs sponsored ride? Wouldn't you rather buy from the same businesses that contribute their time, products, staff, and financial support to your club?

Lastly I would like to say thanks to everyone who supported me in this venture. Especially Doug & Kathy for talking me off the branch.

Good luck and congratulations to Richard Walter, Barb Miller, and Paul Stevens. I'm sure you'll all do great! Oh yeah, my wife Rhonda wanted to see her name in print one last time. So thank you too dear.

- Tom Cross

(Your Editor notes a distinct, unbecoming parallel between outlaw riders and mail order houses which Tom is too polite to point out. Each takes something from the group without returning anything to support bicycling locally).

Coming Events

December 15th: KBC Club Meeting. 6:00 p.m. United Way Building, 709 S. Westnedge (across from old central high school).

January 16th: KBC's Annual Recovery Party. 6:00 p.m. University Roadhouse, 1332 W. Michigan Ave., across from the WMU track. Beer! Schwag! Fun! Be There!

KBC Elects Bigwigs!

At the November 19 KBC Board meeting, Richard Walter was elected President, Paul Stevens was elected Treasurer, and a new member, Barb Miller, was elected Secretary. No one stepped up to run for Vice-President, so the position is vacant.

Richard Walter has been a KBC member for quite a few years, and ran the Fort Custer Time Trial series earlier this year. He has been a big help in lots of KBC-related events this year, most recently the Cyclocross at the Cathedral. He has energy, rides well, and is easy to talk to.

Paul Stevens is a relatively new to the club, and has also been more and more involved, besides riding faster and faster. Mike Higgins has been doing yeoman's service in this position for quite some time now, and will help with the transition to keep the books running smoothly.

Barb Miller is a professional secretary, so we doubt our own secretarial needs will tax her too severely. Hopefully she'll create a synopsis of the Board meetings that we can incorporate in the *Pedal Press*.

We are hopeful that Barb will also become involved in leading more relaxed or family-oriented rides, which are her biking interests, something which we know KBC needs to develop further.

I've no doubt that, if you readers were all here right now, you'd join me in a rousing toast to these fine folks.

- Doug Kirk

Any Plans for April Yet?

Look, most of us haven't got Christmas planned out yet, but Christmas is small time compared to what I want to talk to you about. I want to get a good-sized bee buzzing around in your bonnet about some great rides next year. Great because they are just the rides you want them to be.

Many of you know that Kathy Barrett and I have taken the initiative to organize a good many rides the last couple of years, and we've really enjoyed the result. **When you organize a ride, you get to decide what kind of ride it is, who ought to be there, where it goes, when it goes, or whether to alter the route because suddenly there's a huge east wind.**

The point here is that the ride can be whatever *you* want it to be. And it can be a one time ride or one that repeats whenever you want. Sure KBC has a ride calendar full of rides that repeat each week, but we need individual rides put on by individuals—like you. **Would you please decide now that you'll arrange at least one group ride in 1999?**

Kathy and I have organized tandem-only rides (no single bikes allowed), all-out efforts like the Celery City Century, rides to specific destinations, and rides calculated to get slightly weaker or less skilled riders in good-natured groups with faster riders using good pacerline skills. The feedback has been uniformly positive.

Now is the right time to think about what kind of rides *you'd* like to do next year. Send the information here and we'll publish it in the January or February *Pedal Press* so people can plan ahead. The *Pedal Press* is a great way to make sure plenty of people get the word about what *you* plan.

We had some fine efforts at this sort of thing this past year—Richard Walter's Fort Custer time trials and Chris Barnes' 7:00 Saturday morning rides spring to mind, but there are all sorts of possibilities. Here are a few that come right to mind:

Night Rides. Get a group with a few headlights and lots of flashing red tail lights, and start out of town (say, in Schoolcraft) under a full moon if you can. I guarantee a fabulous ride you won't soon forget.

Culinary Cruises. Work off that fabulous meal at, oh, *Arie's* in Plainwell by riding out to dinner and back. Or a ride to breakfast in Decatur, perhaps. You won't even feel like you overindulged! And food tastes even better when you've just spent an hour or two pedaling up an appetite.

All Day Rides. Plan to leave early and ride all day. KBC members organized rides to South Haven and all around Kalamazoo County this summer. Be creative. The point is to think up a ride you'd like to do and spread the word to the rest of us right here in the *Pedal Press*. Why not a kids' ride on the Kal-Haven Trail?

So get out those 1999 calendars and give it some thought. Pick a day, a time, a pace, and anything else *you'd* like to do *your* way. Then give your trusty editor a call at 300-5045, or send e-mail to Kirkdoug@aol.com, or plain old mail to 1525 Merrill, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

December

Birthdays

Andrew Bauer
Al Cergol
Brian Clissold
Joe Dill
Julie Dill
Cara Fuentes
Charles Fuentes
Paul Guimond
Eric Gushurst
Sherry Higgins
Ann Johnson
Mike Jones
Stephanie Kennedy
Kerri Kissinger
Dale Krueger
Ruth Krueger
Charles Crawford
Laurie Walsworth-LeMieux
Paul Stevens
Barbara Miller
Meghann Beauchamp
Beverly Thome

New Members

Sandy Kimbrough
Tyler Stevens

Note from the Ride Captain

My apologies for not including Paul Wells in my thank you note last month. Paul started a new ride on Tuesday evenings from the Breakaway Bike shop. Paul lead the ride all year. Thanks Paul. I hope this ride becomes one of our regular weekly rides.

If anyone has any ideas on how to improve upon our ride schedule or the rides themselves, please contact me by phone (649-1814) or e-mail SRBike@aol.com

- Randy Putt

The Night Time...It's the Right Time...For Trail Riding

By Zoltan Cohen

Many KBC members were no doubt miffed at the recent time change that meant the seasonal end to club rides. There was still some good weather left in which to ride, but it just got dark too early to be out on the roads safely.

For those hardy souls wishing to continue their biking activities throughout the fall and winter, and for those who cannot ride during the daylight hours, there is an alternative – riding after dark.

Night riding is, as anyone in the legal profession will tell you, an inherently dangerous activity. Cars can't see you well, you can't see much of anything along the roadways, and the entire idea seems like an accident waiting to happen. However, there is a way to get in a good workout on a bike, outside, after dark, that pretty much avoids the usual hazards--riding on trails.

It sounds crazy at first. But, with proper preparation, and a good dose of common sense, trail riding can be done relatively safely. The biggest problem, dodging cars, is a non-factor, so the only other things left to worry about are trail hazards and hypothermia.

The Kal Haven Trail is an ideal venue for night riding. It's pretty flat, the surface has no potholes, it's wide enough to allow a certain amount of darkness-induced weaving, and it's easily accessed. The trailhead at 10th Street is a popular starting point, as is 6th Street, with parking at Fricano's Restaurant. The Trail is a State Park. You do need a pass to ride on it, and it stays open until 10:00 at night.

To make riding this, or any trail safer, the prudent biker will need a bike light to illuminate the path ahead. Bike lights can cost as little as \$30 or so, but the price can soar up into the \$200 plus range for units that can be seen from space by an aged, orbiting Senator. More money buys more illumination. And, while it's possible to ride the Kal Haven with a small light, a bigger model will stretch the zone that you can see up the trail to a hundred yards or so— a big safety factor. Most lights only last a couple of hours on a charge, but that's long enough to be out in the cold anyway.

Proper clothing is essential for comfortable night rides.

Underlayers that wick moisture away from the skin are essential to keeping comfortable outdoors in the wintertime, if you're biking, skiing, shoveling snow, or just walking around. Windproof outer garments help to cut down on windchill. Expect to sweat and/or shiver until you figure out what works for you.

The most important thing to take along on a night bike ride is a friend. Biking at night is more dangerous than biking by day. Lights burn out. Falls are a distinct possibility. A friend could go for help, retrieve a car, or help to change a tube or mend a chain in an emergency. Besides, it's just more enjoyable to ride with someone else, sharing the adventure.

Night riding on trails is not for everyone. It is a somewhat "extreme" sport, in that there are dangers in the wild and dark that you usually do not encounter on a bike. On the other hand, it helps develop bike handling skills, promotes camaraderie, and it's just plain fun to test yourself in adverse conditions.

The ante is raised when there is snow on the trail, but a hardy few KBC members manage to soldier on even in these conditions, at least until we get lucky enough to get enough snow to ski—a rarity around here the last few years.

Night riding on the trail is a wintertime adventure that will expose you to some good riding, give you an opportunity to get off the couch at a time of day when you're not usually outside, and can result in some fine star gazing up through a canopy of barren trees. It's really fun if you get a few friends, have decent lighting, and wear the clothes that work for you. It's worth a try if you'd like to continue riding in the fall and winter.

KBC Recovery Party Announced

Always the biggest event in January, the annual **KBC Recovery Party** will be at 6:00 p.m., Saturday, January 16, 1999 at the **University Roadhouse**, 1332 W. Michigan Ave., across from the WMU track.

This party is always a great time, with your dues helping pay for beer and munchies. We generally have free schwag to give away, and it's the perfect time to tell tall tales of last year's epic rides, and start talking about next year's. **Mark your calendar NOW!**

Drone Moan

by Axel Kleat

When questioned about how this month's piece relates to bicycling, Axel mumbled something about returning to subjects closer to our favorite subject before long. -Ed.

As the latest bit of evidence that we are turning into a nation of lazy, inconsiderate slobs, I offer the leaf blower. Half man, half machine. Not the big ones you push around like lawn mowers that whoosh everything not firmly rooted to *terra firma* over to the neighbor's yard in mere minutes, but the little two-cycle drones people lug around their yards.

I'd have some sympathy for the tone-deaf souls who use these things if they had some real infirmity that prevented raking, but nearly anyone with the wherewithal to wander around the yard with one of these things hanging off their backs is fully capable of manually propelling a rake through the grass they probably should have mowed one last time two weeks ago.

Can there be some outrageous joy in standing around watching the leaves fly three or four yards before the little hurricane below? Is it actually fun to tether an ear-splitting drone to one's back and wander around oblivious to any other goings on? Or perhaps some misguided souls take perverted pleasure knowing everyone within earshot contemplates wrapping the blower nozzle around their necks, restrained only by the fear of near certain jail time?

Can't the leaf-blowing hordes hear us cussing them and their foul machines? Of course not! These gadget-crazed blowhards can't hear a thing as they rot their brains on whatever sweet nothings might vibrate past the ear protection they wear, but lack the kindness to distribute to the rest of us. This oversight surely proves their lack of consideration, but the real crime is that they guarantee you and I can't hear anything either.

Whether it's the leaves rustling, the radio, or hearing myself think, these mechanical windbags destroy peace and quiet on all sides. But why?

It's pleasant to hear the rustle under my feet when I kick a few leaves on a walk. The swooshy noises when I rake remind me of flopping in leaf piles as a kid and romantic walks in the woods as an adult. I hear odd little noises behind me that turn out to be leaves falling or squirrels

chomping on acorns. I hear the leaves still holding out overhead fluttering in the wind and I hope they land somewhere else.

Once one of these mechanical windbags fires up, I can't hear anything else. These buzzbombs are LOUD. A lawnmower is quieter, so is a snow blower. Both have bigger engines, so go figure. No doubt the balls of fire who manhandle those weighty leaves out to the street with these things would complain about the extra weight of a muffler on their backs. Besides, ear protection is cheaper to manufacture.

It's not the decibel level that's the worst of it. The rock band two doors down is loud. Harleys and sub-woofers are loud, too, but they create better sound—rhythmic and sonorous—and besides, they boom on by and disappear into the distance.

It's that incessant drone, unwavering, grating and monotonous, that reverberates off every flat surface around before hovering, like an army of amplified yellow jackets, between my eardrums. The racket's simply godawful, technology run amuck.

Worse, the pitifully small number of leaves these overpriced gadgets actually levitate have me convinced raking is actually faster, at least until Kalamazoo's own Tim Allen soups up the engine.

And another thing. These little noise ordinance violators create lots of pollution. Two-cycle motorcycles have virtually disappeared from the roads. Why? Here's a hint—it's the same reason two stroke auto engines don't exist. Two-stroke engines can't pass smog and emission tests. But you won't be surprised to learn that politicians aren't about to regulate windbags, even gas-powered ones.

So, these expensive tiny tornadoes create noise pollution AND air pollution, burn gas, and irritate the neighbors. And for what? Is raking THAT grueling? Are people THAT lazy? Has the key to our quality of life become using any energy source other than ourselves?

On the other hand, maybe it's not as bad as I think. Some of these windbags doubtless forsake the rake in order to pollute the air on those nice, quiet afternoons so they can hurry back inside and hop on the turbo-trainer!

My First Dalmac

by Randy Putt

(Editor's Note: In 1998, Several Kalamazooans rode Dalmac, an epic four or five day tour. I love this tour, and have done it 10 years running. I asked a couple of the riders to write about their experiences for the Pedal Press, and our intrepid Ride Captain is the first to step up to the plate.)

In March 1998 I once again considered riding DALMAC. In past years I put off registering until the ride filled up and it was too late. But this time my closest riding buddies were all going, so I filled out the registration form early and sent in the fee for the four day, four century route, the longest of three routes offered.

I wasn't too worried about riding 400 miles in four days. I could train for that. Sleeping in a tent on the ground was something else entirely. I had no interest in training for it. I'm a city boy at heart. I haven't camped for years. Sleeping worried me. I'm too old to sleep on the ground and frankly am not real interested in sleeping anywhere besides a nice, soft bed.

Several friends recommended buying a self inflating mat, so I went shopping and bought one. It's didn't look all that comfortable to me. I had a tent, but hadn't used it for years. I found it in the basement, mildewed. I spent hours cleaning the thing.

The ride started in Lansing and ended in St Ignace, across the Mackinac bridge. Two weeks until the ride and my travel plans were in limbo. I wasn't too excited about having strangers manhandling my bike back to Lansing in their trucks loaded with dozens off other bikes, even if lots of other riders do it every year.

So between travel plans, camping concerns the the weather, I had plenty to worry about. Good thing I have friends and family...

DAY 1

I'd been watching the weather map for weeks and praying for decent weather. Sure enough when the big day finally arrived the weather forecast was great. Al Cergol, Larry Kissinger, Rollin Richman, and I loaded into Rollin's van at 5:45 AM and headed to Lansing. Time to quit worrying and start riding! We

met Kathy Barrett, Doug Kirk, Paul Stevens, Scott and Mary Aldrich, and Jake in Lansing for a Kalamazoo mass start.

The group rode together for a while, but we eventually split. Larry, Rollin and I rode most of the way to Mount Pleasant together at a comfortable pace and found plenty of food along the way. People in the small towns knew we're coming and some have little sag stops waiting for us. The route was mostly flat with a few rolling hills. We arrived on the campus of CMU in Mt. Pleasant after 105 miles feeling good. It was an impressive sight to see all those tents set up at the camp site. The college kids were plenty noisy until the wee hours of the morning, so it took a while to get to sleep.

DAY 2

The early risers starting breaking camp about 5:30 AM, well before I'm used to. It takes these old bones a while to get rolling. I'm not used to taking my home down, packing up a tent wet from the dew, and stowing my gear before sun up. My riding partners tolerated me, but I vow to improve tomorrow. We started about 8:20 AM (target 8 AM). Kathy and Doug left without us. I guess I'll have to learn the hard way.

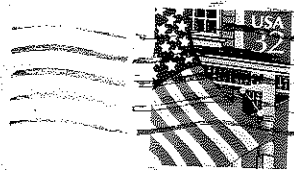
More beautiful weather. We started with a large group of Wolverines (a big club from the Detroit area). We had 40 or more riders including 7 or 8 tandems. What a way to start the day! We rode with the big group for about 20 miles, and it was quite a hoot in that big pace line. Al, Larry, Rollin and I got tired of the big group, so the four of us rode on together. The hills weren't big, but there was certainly more climbing than descending on the second day into Cadillac (97 miles). Still felt good. Wow, 200 miles in two days and I'm still standing.

We set up camp at Cadillac Middle School on the shores of Lake Cadillac. A beautiful spot, yet just a short walk from downtown. Some folks went for a dip. Amazingly, my tent dried out in about 30 minutes. We took a long walk after dinner which did wonders for my legs, and once again managed to locate a wee bit of ice cream. Cadillac was quiet and I slept well.

(We'll publish the last two days of Randy's ride next month. -Ed.)



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Expires 99/02

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KALAMAZOO BICYCLE CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Dues (Check One)

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

Please Print

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

Family Member Names

Birthdates

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signature _____
 Parent's Signature (if under 18) _____

Interested in working on KBC Events? Yes No
 Registered Racer: USCF NORBA

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