

Pedal Press

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



President's Letter

Bygones. I have just attended the March monthly meeting of the MMBA or Michigan Mountain Biking Association. I had heard a rumor that there was bad blood between our organizations.

I went as a representative of the KBC. I was immediately welcomed even before I had introduced myself. It also helped that many of the MMBA members in attendance had dual memberships, and were personal friends.

I asked about the rumor and the one person with a long memory explained an old incident having something to do with dayglo paint and a snapping turtle. Anyway it was decided we all like bikes, and that was that.

MMBA is looking for volunteers to help at the Fort Custer Stampede mountain bike race to be held May 3rd. Volunteers have their choice of racing for free or a cool T-shirt. Call Judy at 616-342-4188. I encourage you to visit their web site at www.mmba.org to learn more about this like-minded organization.

Now for my next attempt at diplomacy: Roadies & Mountain Bikers sharing riding and fashion tips.

On the topic of the Race Team, I received 3 responses to my request for input on the team. I take this to mean there is not enough interest in having a KBC sponsored race team and will not pursue this issue further.

- Tom Cross

Upcoming Events...

April

- 3 KBC Executive Board meeting, First of America, One FOA Parkway (off 9th Street); 5:45 pm.

May

- 9 Climbing party at Climb Kalamazoo with MMBA members, 6:00 pm, \$15/person.

Early Spring Tours

Notwithstanding the northeast wind and blowing snow out the window as this is written, the fact is that it's only four weeks till the spring tours begin.

The first tour in the area each year is the Blossomtime Metric Century, on Sunday, May 3 in Berrien Springs, located between St. Joseph and Niles. There are a bazillion fruit trees in Berrien County, and they are generally in full bloom. The roads are lightly traveled, the potato soup at the last rest stop hits the spot every year, you have your pick of several distances up to 62 miles, and Andrews University, where the ride starts, sports a pretty little campus. You can register the day of the event. Call 616-684-4621 or email pr@andrews.edu for more information.

The following Saturday, May 9th, is the annual Kal-Haven Trailblazer, located at Kalamazoo Central High School on Drake Road, a mile north of West Main Street. The great thing about this ride, which has various distances, is the option to ride on the Kal-Haven trail, the roads, or both. Options range up to a full one hundred miles and the last few years the food's been really good. Call 657-4537 (Paw Paw).

- Doug Kirk

1998 Flowerfest Bicycle Ride Update # 3

Cycling gods coming to Kalamazoo

Your Club's Flowerfest Ride is less than four months away on Sunday, July 19. You will receive your registration form very shortly.

This year we have *Saturn Team Riders, real pros*, scheduled to appear. You can actually meet and even ride with real professional riders right here at Flowerfest 98. Be sure to stop in and thank our new neighbor, Saturn Of Kalamazoo, on 9th Street, just North of I-94. (Say Hi to Jaci or Becky, they have been working hard for KBC.) Plan to check out the Saturn Cutaway Car in their showroom built by KVCC students. It's neat and will be on display at KVCC for Flowerfest.

Post ride massage (aaah!!!) for tired muscles will be provided by The Kalamazoo Center for the Healing Arts. Teams will be at KVCC from about 10:00 to 2:00 providing post ride sports massage. Be sure to say Hello to Lisa, Sharon or Jim the next time you are by their facility off Turwill Lane, south of West Main.

An escorted Family Ride will leave KVCC at 9:30 for the Bryer Patch rest stop for lunch, then return to KVCC, a total of 12 to 15 miles. The ride will be leisurely and is intended to introduce families to recreational riding. KBC members will escort the riders, plus separate SAG support will be provided to ensure that all riders have a memorable and safe ride.

The Prize Drawing (for pre-registered riders) includes a grand prize drawing for a pair of United Airlines tickets. We thank United Express here in Kalamazoo and United Airlines in Chicago, which have teamed up to provide the tickets. Don't forget, you *must pre-register by July 1* to be eligible for the drawing. See your registration form for details and more prizes.

We appreciate your input. Call us with questions or comments. Your faithful, hard-working KBC Flowerfest Ride Coordinators,

Rick Whaley - 329-1285
Paul Stevens - 324-9024
Al Cergol - 375-3786

April Birthdays

J. Allen Barber
Kathy Barrett
Megan Bauaer
Dave DeRight

New Members

Mary Cohen
Michael Beauchamp
Kate Beauchamp
Meghann Beauchamp
Andrew Price
Mary Ellen Jachec
Tam Blackstone

New Mountain Bike Time Trial Series

I am planning on starting a mountain bike time trial series out at Fort Custer. This will be a very low key, informal event. No spectators, no prizes, and no fame, except you may get your name in the newsletter.

The current plan is to set up an 8 to 10 mile loop (maybe the usual race course, maybe not) that would be rideable at all skill levels. There would be a staggered start, starting riders about a minute apart to avoid congestion on the trails. No fancy timing equipment needed for this event. Timing would be by me with a stop watch and a clipboard. This is really intended for the casual and beginning mountain biker, but racers will also be welcome.

I plan on starting the series in May. Most likely it will one Tuesday evening a month. We could do maybe two a month if there is enough interest. I could use a volunteer to help out if anyone is interested. Be sure to read the May issue of the Pedal Press to get all the details.

- Richard Walter

April Rides

April is the start of KBC supported rides for the 1998 season. The days are getting longer and the temperature WILL be warm enough to ride consistently. Honest!!

We'll continue the informal in April at Texas Drive Park, 11 AM on Saturdays and 1PM on Sundays weather permitting. We'll do a moderate pace for 30+ miles. Give me a call if you like to lead one of these rides.

The Monday Recovery Ride at Texas Drive Park will be lead by Mike Higgins (15-20 miles at 10-15 mph) and Steve Vonderfecht (20-25 miles at 16-18 mph.) The fast group (18-20 mph) will ride also lead by a yet unnamed ride leader. Riders of all abilities are welcome. The ride will begin at 6 PM. Hope to see you there.

The Friday ride meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg at 6 PM for the Tour de Gull Lake. The route is well established (about 27 miles) and will be conducted at an early season pace. I'll assume ride leader duties in April.

The Wednesday ride also has three skill levels, and meets at Kalamazoo Central HS. We'll start in May. We plan to continue the fitness ride (10-15 miles on the Kal-Haven Trail,) or enjoy the rolling hills of northwest Kalamazoo County for 20 to 30 miles at 16-18 mph.

A fast group also rides from Kalamazoo Central on Wednesday evenings beginning at 6:00 PM. This ride will start up as soon as daylight savings time occurs, weather permitting. The pace is typically greater than 20 mph and the route goes to Bloomingdale and back (about 46 miles). No maps are available for this ride. This group consists of racers and other experienced riders. There is no designated ride leader. This ride is hard. Some riders can be expected to be dropped from the main group. The ride is a loop and those riders who get dropped meet up with the main group on the return part of the loop, which is easy to learn.

Also on Sundays, a fast group ride has been leaving the Hardings Store at Parkview and Oakland at noon. This ride is generally similar in makeup and character to the Wednesday fast ride, but the route generally goes south and as a result is pretty flat. Historically, this ride will continue only until the race season gets into full swing since many of the participants do race on weekends.

A special thanks to the following people for volunteering to be ride leaders so far this year: Mike Higgins and Steve Vonderfecht.

We need additional ride leaders and subs for all of the regular club rides to make the rides successful. If anyone is interested in leading an established KBC ride or establishing a new regular ride, road or mountain, or a one day ride at another time, please contact me. The club would like to establish some regular weekend rides and would welcome any suggestions on types of rides, locations, and times that would interest KBC members. Think about being a ride leader for a week, a month, the season, or any combination of the above. Please give Randy Putt a call at 649-1814 to volunteer or to get more information on being a ride leader. Hope to see you on the road this month.

- Randy Putt
Ride Captain Extraordinaire

Important Miscellaneous Ramblings from the Prez

Keith at Prosport has moved again. His new address is 601 Crosstown. As always, the phone numbers for all area bike shops are on the back page of the *Pedal Press*.

The Climb Kalamazoo date has changed to Sat May 9. I have invited MMBA members to attend along with KBC members. For more details see last month's *Pedal Press* or give me a call. The date had to be changed at the request of Climb Kalamazoo.

The KBC Executive Board meetings will be the first Thursday of the month until further notice. We're also changing the location to the First of America building at One FOA Parkway off of 9th Street just south of "N" Ave. Board meetings will start at 5:45pm. It's been too hard to schedule the meetings individually, and having a steady date and location makes sense so people can plan things as far in advance as possible.

A special thanks to ICS (Internet Connection Services.) They are the folks who gave us our e-mail address. Their phone number is 616-382-5200. Their web address (website) is www.ics-online.net. They are a local ISP and do web page design and other services.

- Tom Cross

Biking Through England

by Donna & Renny Oas

Some of the people at the winter party at the Roadhouse thought the story of our trip to England in 1993 would be interesting for the Newsletter. We have sent our total diary to the Editor for use in the *Pedal Press*.

(Your faithful editor intends to serialize this very fine piece of writing over the next few months as space allows. As always, we appreciate submissions from KBC members.)

Preparation for our adventure began at least a year before we left, and we arranged our flights well in advance. Renny is very good with maps and had read about where we might want to visit. An absolutely essential source for the planning as well as the actual trip was *Biking through England*, by Les Woodland. His suggested routes served as a basis for our plans.

Making the bicycles ready for the flight was another preparation. Renny took them to Alfred E. Bike in Kalamazoo where the mechanic carefully dismantled them and placed them in cardboard cartons which had housed other bikes. Renny watched the procedure. They also put our helmets and bike tools in the cartons.

Alfred E. Bike had also overhauled and added a 22 tooth granny gear to our Miyata 512's, which gave them 18 speeds. Thank God and Alfred E. for that extra gear.

Tuesday, July 13, 1993

We arrived at London Gatwick airport by way of Boston. We found a fairly quiet corner in the airport where Renny put the bikes back together.

Wednesday, July 14

We left Gatwick about 11:30 a.m. and biked through heavy traffic around the airport. We were not yet accustomed to our loaded panniers, and this

was a harrowing experience. We had made reservations in Kemsing at the Yew Tree Bed and Breakfast, which turned out to be a 450 year old charming house, though a little out of plumb. We covered 40 very hilly miles through the North Downs of Kent like none we'd ever biked. Our maps were not complete and we took a couple of wrong turns.

The B&B was owned by a very friendly nurse and her husband. We slept for ten hours that first night with only a few leg cramps waking us in the middle of the night.

We learned several lessons that first day. Donna was so exhausted by the time she rode into Kemsing that she thought she'd never get there. We learned not to make reservations, to modify our expectations for distances we could cover with the hills, and to pack our panniers so they balanced and so more weight was in the back than in the front.

In Michigan, we can cover 50-70 miles in one day with no adverse effects. We based our anticipation of distances we could cover on the assumption that it would be the same in England. Nothing in the books we had read led us to expect such steep climbs.

Toy Hill was the name of one of the Downs. It was certainly not a Toy. We had dinner at a pub next to the B&B.

Thursday, July 15

We left Kemsing by 11:00 a.m. after Renny fixed a flat rear tire on his bike. This was the first of about 15 that he had, while Donna never had any. Renny attributed that to the fact that he had heavier panniers and was heavier himself. Most gas stations in England did not have air to reach 120 pounds. Consequently, he could not get enough air in his tires and riding over bumps caused them to snake bite and develop leaks.

(To be continued.)

March Sadness

by Axel Kleat

I was hammering a tour up north with four friends a few years ago. It was a cool, cloudy, early fall day, and we'd been rained on a few times as the clouds rolled in off Lake Michigan. Still, the roads were great, and we were working hard to keep our soggy selves reasonably warm.

Dave had broken a spoke chasing Ed in a sprint, but as a luck would have it, we found a repair truck which was following the tour at the bottom of a hill just north of Petosky.

So we stopped and shivered and marveled as the mechanic fixed Dave's wheel in three or four minutes. As we ate and drank and stomped our feet, I eyeballed the sky and noticed a little patch of blue northwest of us over Little Traverse Bay. The first blue sky we'd seen all day. I crowed "Hey, check it out, blue sky," as I willed it our way.

One of the mechanics, a woman who gave every appearance of being at peace with bicycling, rain, and the universe in general glanced up from the truing stand and opined, "Looks like a *sucker hole* to me", and returned to the spoke wrench and Dave's wheel.

We all got a big kick out of her phrase and her deadpan delivery. And of course she was right. The clouds quickly realized the error, and covered over that patch of blue.

It rained on us the rest of that day. But I've never forgotten that line, and pull it out whenever the situation calls for some weather-oriented levity. But I digress.

Fast forward to 1998. Turns out late January, most of February, and early March were one big sucker hole. Rollers? Trainers? Ha! I'd forsaken those nasty instruments of mental cruelty. The weather was so fine I was riding—outside—almost every day. It was warm enough to actually sweat.

All those beautiful weekend days, 50 degree temperatures, and dry roads, had me convinced that winter, what there was of it, was a thing of the past. No snow! Perfectly clear roads! Then a few shafts of spring green popped up just to be certain I was completely suckered.

Now it's in the middle of March. It snowed every day last week, and it's rained every day this week. Back to business as usual for March, the dingiest month of the year.

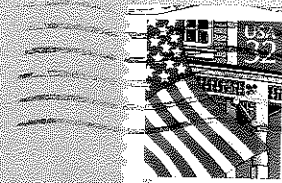
Every year the slow metamorphosis of the fall gives me a good two months to resign myself to the seasonal layoff. I usually manage to get myself that the changing of the seasons has some good points. This year the leaves fell just like always, and sure enough, late November and December brought the usual cold, dark, and snowy reality check.

Whether it was El Nino or just a mild winter this year, that big sucker hole in the winter sky drew me in body and soul. So that blizzard a couple of Sundays ago hurt me as only a sucker can be hurt.

Basketball fans know March madness. But Old Man Winter broke my heart. I know March sadness.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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KALAMAZOO AREA BIKE SHOPS

Alfred E. Bike 349-9423
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 Breakaway Bicycles 324-5555
 Cycle Works & Sports 353-7615
 Milwood Schwinn 349-6384
 Parchment Bicycle 343-8118
 Portage Schwinn 327-3393
 Pro Sport 381-7233
 Team Active Schwinn 962-7688
 Village Cyclery 679-4242
 Vorncamp Bike 344-3599

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

SEND TO: KALAMAZOO BICYCLE CLUB, PO BOX 50527, KALAMAZOO MI 49005