

Pedal Press

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, Inc., April, 1999

www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc/

President's Letter

I didn't realize until I started picking up KBC's mail just how many opportunities there were for the casual rider to ride in different, exciting, and exotic locales. I'm not talking about just driving to Ohio to ride in a one day tour. I mean full blown bicycling vacations to places all over the world.

Just browsing through the stack of brochures I have collected I find: ride across Wisconsin, ride across Kansas, cycle across Maryland, tour through Sonoma County (California), spring training in Tuscany (Italy), famous passes of the Dolomites (Italy), trips through Zion, Bryce and Grand Canyon parks, and a trip through Yellowstone. How about Czech Republic or Austria? These are just a sample of what the Club has received along with usual assortment of Michigan trips. Imagine what else is out there!

Bicycling really is a great way to see the county, state, country, and world. You can start by just touring around Kalamazoo and Michigan. Many club members have taken tours all over the US. Everyone can do it. Start out by joining one of our local weekend rides to South Haven or around the county, or make up your own destination and get some friends to go along. Start out small and work your way up. But most of all, just get out and ride.

This year the Club is offering a tremendous opportunity for everyone to hear several speakers telling of their travels. I urge everyone to come out and here these speakers. Each person will have a different perspective and tale to tell. I am sure you will enjoy them all. I will bring some of the trip brochures we have received along to each ride. If your interested just ask to see them.

Changing subjects; I hope you have ordered your KBC jersey. Every active club member should have one. It will be quite a site seeing a group of 15 or 20 riders going down the road in matching jerseys. Show your club spirit. Don't be left out.

Coming Events

April 3 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS (as do regular KBC rides)!!

April 8 Bicycle Touring Show, 7:00 pm. Portage Library. If you have any interest in multi-day rides, come listen/visit.

April 13 KBC Board Meeting 6:00 p.m., United Way Bldg., 709 S. Westnedge Ave.

May 2 Safe Kids Coalition Bike Rodeo at Home Depot (See story within.)

May 2 Blossomtime Metric Century, Berrien Springs. 25, 37, & 62 mile routes through Berrien County's fruit trees. Call 616-684-4621 www.blossomtime.com

KBC on the World Wide Web

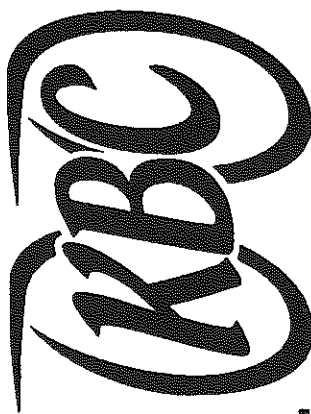
The Kalamazoo Bicycle Club is now available on the World Wide Web at www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc/. We hope to develop the site to provide more and more useful information about KBC and bicycling, and to provide links to other bicycling resources. Angelfire provides free web sites, so there is no cost to KBC. The web pages have been established in conjunction with KBC's e-mail address, which is: kalamazoo.b.c@juno.com, which is a free e-mail service.

I will be serving as the KBC WebMaster. So, use your web browser to access <http://www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc/> and mark it as a favorite. If you have KBC information or comments regarding the KBC web site, please send them to me at kalamazoo.b.c@juno.com. As the site develops, lots of good bicycling information should become available from this site.

- Larry D. Kissinger

KBC Bike Auction Ends April 15th

The phone-in auction for the mountain bike given to KBC by Village Cyclery ends April 15th. To check the state of the bidding, call the KBC Ride Line at 343-2288 (See page 6).



New KBC Jerseys Sell Like Hot Cakes

By the March 15th cut-off date for ordering the new KBC jerseys detailed in last month's Pedal Press, 63 jerseys had been sold. These things are hot!! Sale number one went, appropriately enough, to Richard Walter, KBC President, and number 63 went to Bill Strome.

Kathy & I really enjoyed having the open house for the jerseys, but there were so many people we didn't get to talk to many of you as much as we would have liked.

Not only is 63 more than we had expected to sell, it is truly gratifying to have so many KBC members supporting the club in this fashion. Voler, the company producing the jerseys, promises to ship them by the end of April, so we expect to have them here in early May. We'll put out an all points bulletin as soon as they are in.

Either everyone's lying or we have a really great design. Once again, we are ordering extras which will be in the local bike shops at a somewhat higher price.

- Doug Kirk

DALMAC Entry Forms Available

We have received our 1999 DALMAC entry forms, so those of you who have done the ride in the past few years doubtless have received yours too. If you want an entry form, call Kathy or myself at 388-5045 and we'll mail you a copy. As mentioned last month, there are major changes to all routes, and even an entirely new route.

There are two five day routes, September 1 through September 5. These are the easiest because the mileage is less each day, and the east route will be easier of the two because it is shorter and, I'm sure, flatter than the west route. The 5-day west route (320 miles) stops at Mt Pleasant, McBain, Kalkaska, Petosky, and Mackinaw City. The 5-day east route (300 miles) stops at Shepard, Higgins Lake, Otsego Lake, Boyne City, and Mackinaw City. This is a new route.

The 4-day routes (September 2 through September 5) stop each day at Montcalm Community College, Marion, Bellaire and Mackinaw City for the West route (333 miles), and Sanford, East Tawas, Alpena, and Mackinaw City for the East route (349 miles).

The 397 mile quad-century route (September 2 through September 5) stays at Lakeview, Manton, the Torch Lake YMCA Camp, and Mackinaw City.

You'll note all routes begin in Lansing and end in Mackinaw City, where all routes congregate for mass crossings of the Mackinaw Bridge to the final destination in St. Ignace.

The cost this year runs \$120.00 to \$145.00 depending on the route. This even covers most (but not all) of your meals. If you need a bus ride back to Lansing, add \$40.00. Darn cheap for a great four- or five-day vacation if you ask me. There are also jerseys, sweatshirts, T-shirts, bike shorts, etc. available at good prices.

- Doug Kirk

April Birthdays

Kathy Barrett
Ann DiJulio
Rollin Richman
Daniel B. Smith
Will McWhorter
Tyler Wetters
Kellie Binczyk
Libby Heiny-Cogswell

New Members

Scott Hite
Sandy Stevens
George Boulding
Wiley C. Boulding
Louise Boulding
George Boulding

Expiring Members

He's not dying, but call up
James Wyrick
and remind him send in his
dues so his membership
doesn't lapse.

Membership questions?

Jeanette Holm, who does a great job as KBC's membership database manager, reminds us all that anyone who has questions about members, membership status, expiration dates, etc. should feel free to contact her at the phone number or e-mail address on the back page.

Personal

Roscoe Kennedy, I'm so sorry I missed your birthday last month. Please forgive me. Let's go for a ride. Call me!

What are MTR and MUTS?

(We received this article from Keith and Elaine Vandenberg, who live a few miles up US-131 in Wayland, about the Midwest Tandem Rally, a huge event which is actually close by this year, and the Michigan United Tandem Society. For tandem riders, the choice between this and Dalmac is a tough one. - Ed.)

My wife and I are the "Top Dogs" for the Michigan United Tandem Society (MUTS) and are somewhat involved in the Midwest Tandem Rally as well. The Midwest Tandem Rally is a really big annual event, always on Labor Day weekend, held in a different state each year.

While it does provide a conflict for riders who like DALMAC, the long weekend provides more opportunities to ride and also allows more travel time for teams from out of state. Last year's rally in Omaha, Nebraska required quite a drive and still attracted a large following of MUTS.

The beauty of MTR is not only the riding (I'm the first to admit that I'd rather ride the Tunnel of Trees than Midland) but it's the best opportunity you'll have to ride and visit with such a large number of tandem enthusiasts. We are expecting in excess of 600 teams in Midland this fall; with teams as far away as Alaska. At other rallies we've seen every combination of multiple rider bikes including triplets with trail-a bikes.

You haven't lived until you've ridden in a mass start of 650 tandems (plus a hand full of tag along singles.) A little scary at first but it's social and the natives are friendly. Give MTR a try this year. DALMAC will always be here but MTR won't be this convenient again for several years.

For more information check out the Midwest Tandem Rally web site at www.accn.org/~kvanden/muts/mtr

Regarding the MUTS, we get together about once a month to ride somewhere in the state, usually the central to western parts. We hope to offer an eastern and western ride each month this summer. Rides are generally 35 to 50 miles and include a meal and/or ice cream/carrot cake or other fun food. The pace varies with some teams going out fast and others slow. The hosts sweep up the rear. It's a very friendly group and open to teams of any ability or lack thereof.

Membership in MUTS is \$17 per year. For more information on the MUTS, check the MUTS web site at www.accn.org/~kvanden/muts. Our ride schedule, newsletter and membership information can be found there. You can also e-mail your address to kvanden@accn.org for print copies of the bulletin. Hope to hear from you soon.

KBC Kids/Family Ride

I am planning and scheduling this year's KBC rides for kids. I have discussed this idea with the City of Portage, and have their full support for the use of the Portage Bicentennial Park Trail. We'll use the section that connects Milham Road and the Celery Flats on Garden Lane.

This will be an excellent opportunity for families with or without kids to ride together while eliminating the risks of being on the road. The paved trail runs along some great sights such as the Portage Creek, some wooded areas, and possibly some wild life. My plan is that this ride would occur several Saturdays during the Spring and Summer. The starting times would be in the morning around 9:00 a.m. and run for a couple of hours. Parents will be responsible for their kids during the ride and KBC members will assist also. The ride will be open to the public. Rides will be free of charge. KBC will provide beverages for all the participants.

There are several goals and reasons for these rides.

- 1) It fits the KBC's mission in promoting the activity and safety of the sport.
- 2) KBC has many families with kids for which scheduled rides should be planned.
- 3) This is a stepping stone for teaching the skills and safety of bicycle riding.
- 4) It extends KBC rides to a broader range of bicyclists, thereby encouraging club growth.
- 5) I plan on being out there anyway with my son, to teach him the skills necessary to ride his bike. Who will be the next generation of bicyclists if we don't pass on our knowledge to our children?

What is needed for these rides? Volunteers! We will need volunteers to help with signing in participants at the beginning of the ride, on bikes to act as ride leaders to monitor the trail and to help out, to supply beverages at the Celery Flats (during the rides) and at the Bicentennial Park for the end of the rides. If you are interested in volunteering, to make these rides successful for our kids, please give me, Paul Stevens, a call, or e-mail me. My number and e-mail address are on the back of this newsletter. If there is an interest for additional rides, let me know so I can add those dates to the schedule as well. The schedule will be supplied to the City of Portage and possibly be published in the Portager Newsletter and/or Portage Gazette.

- Paul Stevens

April Ride Calendar

By Ride Captain Randy Putt

April is the start of KBC supported rides for the 1999 ride season. The days are getting longer even if it is not warm yet. The roads are mostly dry, so I know that riders are getting out on the road. Soon the weather will be warm enough to ride consistently. When the weather cooperates, impromptu rides will materialize in April. I know that a Sunday ride from KVCC at 1 PM has started. This ride is usually pretty fast and is 40 to 60 miles in length. Riders of other abilities are welcome to start impromptu rides also.

If anyone would like to lead a weekend ride in April, give me a call or send me a description of the ride via e-mail. I have a lengthy e-mail list of riders, so the ride information can be transferred quickly and on short notice. If you'd like to be added to the e-mail list, send your e-mail address to me (srbike@aol.com).

Efforts are underway to recruit ride leaders for the 1999 ride season. A couple of volunteers have contacted me, but we need more. We especially need ride leaders in the 10-12, 12-15, and 16-18 mph groups. Speak up, be heard, and volunteer. Leading rides is not difficult, but we need you. Give it a shot. The club will be happy to help you get you started. Once a group gets started it feeds on itself and grows.

KBC plans to continue the Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and possibly some regular weekend rides for the 1999 season. In April a partial ride schedule is planned after daylight savings time starts, April 4.

The Monday Recovery Ride at Texas Drive Park starts April 5 at 6:00 p.m. and KBC plans to provide three ride leaders which should provide a pace (15-20 mile group at 10-15 mph, 20-25 mile group at 16-18 mph, and the 25-30 mile group at 19+ mph) to suit riders of all abilities. Larry Kissinger has volunteered to lead the 19+ mph group, but needs help. He plans to keep the pace at 19-20 mph. We need ride leaders for all three ride groups. KBC hopes to have leaders for the other ride groups in April also.

The Wednesday ride meets at Kalamazoo Central HS at 6:00 p.m. and starts April 7. This ride consists of a 16-18 mph lead by Bill Strome and a 19+ mph group. It would be great to restart the fitness ride at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail. We need ride leaders for these rides also. KBC hopes to have leaders for the

other ride groups in April also.

The Tuesday ride from Breakaway Bicycles on Romence Rd just west of S. Westnedge in Portage is back for its second year. The ride leaves the parking lot at 6:00 p.m. starting April 6. Paul Wells plans to lead the group for 25 to 30 miles at about 17-19 mph. The early season pace will most likely be a bit slower than indicated. Check it out.

The Wednesday night Hammerfest will start at K-Central HS at 6 PM when daylight savings time kicks in. The pace of the ride is typically greater than 20++ 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. There is no designated ride leader. The group typically fragments into smaller groups and the riders often times do not finish together. This ride is hard and is not suitable for the faint of heart, lung or leg. Some riders can be expected to be dropped from the main group.

The Friday Tour de Gull meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg at 6:00 p.m. and the pace varies depending on who shows up. This ride starts April 9. We did have a 16-17 mph as well as the 20+ mph group last year. The route for this ride is well established so the ride leader job is easy. Give it a try. Randy Putt plans to lead the 20+ mph group, more likely an early season pace of 17+ mph in April. KBC needs more ride leaders for this 20+ mph group and ride leaders for the 16-17 mph group.

Several rides are being planned for the summer months, so mark your calendars. Look for the 2nd annual Old Car Festival Ride (about 60 miles) starting from Vicksburg on the second weekend in June, a ride to South Haven with a stop at the beach (100 miles) in July, and a ride around Kalamazoo County (100 miles) in August. The dates and pace have not yet been firmly established. These rides were done in 1998 with small groups and were so successful and fun that KBC would like to include more KBC members in 1999. If you have comments about these rides or suggestions for other rides, drop me a line or give me a call. If anyone is interested in leading rides this year, please give me a call at 649-1814. No experience is necessary. Let's get out and ride. The 1999 ride season coming quickly.

Is anyone interested in leading regular mountain bike rides this year? If you are, give me a call.

April

1999

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			Wed Night Ride Kazoo Central HS 6:00 20++mph 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph	1	2 Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:30 18-21mph	3
4	5 Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph 6:00 19+mph	6 Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	7 Wed Night Ride Kazoo Central HS 6:00 20++mph 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph	8	9 Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:00 18-21mph	10
11	12 Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph 6:00 19+mph	13 Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph Mtn Bike Time Trial Fort Custer Trailhead 6:30	14 Wed Night Ride Kazoo Central HS 6:00 20++mph 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph	15	16 Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:00 18-21mph	17
18	19 Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph 6:00 19+mph	20 Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	21 Wed Night Ride Kazoo Central HS 6:00 20++mph 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph	22	23 Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:00 18-21mph	24
25 Tandem Ride KVCC 11:00 19+ mph	26 Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph 6:00 19+mph	27 Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	28 Wed Night Ride Kazoo Central HS 6:00 20++mph 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph	29	30 Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:00 18-21mph	

KBC Ride Calendar

KBC Bike Auction Winding Up

The Giant Mountain Bike which was donated to KBC is, as you probably know, being auctioned to KBC members. To check the bidding, call the info line at 343-2288.

The Board has decided to keep bidding open to April 15th, and we will announce the winner in the May *Pedal Press*.

Once again, this is a \$750 value Giant mountain bike, 18 inch frame (right for people from about five foot six through six feet tall), with front suspension, Shimano parts, more gears than you'll ever use, and is assembled, complete, and ready to be ridden by the clever soul who wins the auction. Why not you???

Calling All Triathletes

We have received information that a triathlon club is forming in Kalamazoo. The first meeting is scheduled for April 6, 1999 at 6:00 p.m. at the Borgess Health & Fitness Center, 3015 Gull Road, Kalamazoo.

The movers and shakers in this fledgling organization are Dan VanSweden and Karen Sue Ouellette. For more information, call Dan at 343-9790 (home) or 342-9631 (work); or contact Karen at 327-5846, Ironmom98@aol.com.

Heck, I just assumed the old Seahorse club was still around. Shows how little I know...

- Doug Kirk

Blossomtime Tour May 2

Every year, the first real tour of the year in west Michigan is the Blossomtime Metric Century, at Andrews University in Berrien Springs. Always the first Sunday in May, there are 25, 37, and 62 mile routes. The weather being iffy this time of year, you can register the day of the ride.

This tour has been going on for years, has very little traffic, and has good food including HOT drinks and terrific potato soup. For more information call 616-684-4621 or point you web browser to www.blossomtime.com

KVCC Plans 8-Day Bike Trip

Kalamazoo Valley Community College is sponsoring an 8-day bike trip from Nashville TN to Kalamazoo which will take place May 23 through May 31, 1999.

Cost is \$350.00 for students enrolled part-time OR NOT AT ALL for the Spring, 1999 semester. If by chance you are a full time student, the cost is only \$200.00.

The ride will pass through five states: Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, and will stop to visit such destinations as Mammoth Cave, Opryland, Cave-in-Rock Ferry, and James Dean's Home.

The ride is limited to the first twenty people who register. The ride down to Nashville will be by bus. Overnight accommodations will be.

For further information, contact either Darrell Davies at 372-5355, e-mail ddavies@kvcc.edu OR call Paul Milikan at 372-5287.

Basic Bicycle Maintenance Class Offered

KBC is offering a basic bicycle maintenance class for those of you who aren't comfortable looking after your trusty velocipede. If you are interested, mark your calendar for Thursday, May 6 and be at the Portage District Library at 7:00 p.m.

Topics covered will include dealing with flat tires, lubrication, chain maintenance, derailleur adjustments, wheel truing, and basic adjustments like seat height, steering bearings, and stem height.

So if you are someone who has fears or questions about maintaining your bike, be sure to attend. The flat you fix may someday be your own!

Hey! It's Nice out. And if it's not, just wait five minutes.

GO RIDE YOUR BIKE!!!!

1999 Flowerfest Bicycle Tour, Update

Your Flowerfest committee has been navigating the winter and wishes to report on our progress for this year's Tour, which will be held on Sunday, July 18. First and foremost, the following corporations have generously agreed to sponsor the 1999 Flowerfest Tour: Chuck Jacqua Realty, Clif Bar, Flowserve, Meijer, Physicians Health Plan, Q-Lite Radio 106.5 FM, Saturn of Kalamazoo and United Express Airlines.

Flowerfest wouldn't be a success without the continued support provided by the following good people, whom we all know so very well: The Bryer Patch, Mackenzie's Bakery, Subway, Kalamazoo Radio Club, Kalamazoo Center For The Healing Arts, Powerade, Alfred E. Bike, Breakaway Bicycle, Schwinn Stores, Village Cyclery. Please be sure to remember all our fine sponsors and friends the next time that you are shopping for a product or service.

We are close to completing printing of the Tour registration form and event poster for distribution in April. Since the weather remains a bit cool for riding, we could use your help with publicity, route planning (a full 100 mile century route has been added) or day of event activi-

ties. Publicity has been expanded, so we would expect that Flowerfest '99 will have increased attendance from last year's successful Tour.

Our T-shirt designers have some promising ideas. Incidentally, last year's Flowerfest commemorative T-shirt was a sell out, so those who were fortunate to purchase one have a real collector's item. You may wish to consider ordering the Flowerfest '99 edition early, since it will be unique and should sell out again.

Mark your calendar now for our 8th Annual Flowerfest Tour on Sunday, July 18, 1999. Please give any of the Flowerfest committee members a call or leave a message on the club info line; 343-2288, if you have some time to help out. It's always fun, plus you will have plenty of time to ride your bike when the weather breaks and all the work is finished. Stay tuned for news about Flowerfest activities or check out your Club's new web-site for info.

Good riding to you from your KBC Flowerfest Bike Tour Committee,

Rick Whaley - 329-1285,
Terry O'Connor - 342-4608,
Al Cergol - 375-3786

Tandem Rides Planned

Yep, it's blatant discrimination, no doubt about it. So sue us! Kathy Barrett & I are planning four tandem-ONLY rides this summer, all on Sundays. We figure Sundays are the best bet for both captains and stokers to be available, and if most of the tandems we know show up, we'll have at least 10 tandems.

We did a couple of these rides last year, and everyone had a great time. A tandem paceline is a wondrous thing indeed.

The dates are April 25, June 6, July 25, and August 15, so line up your partner and mark your calendars.

For simplicity, we'll have all four rides meet at the southwest end of the Kalamazoo Valley Community

College parking lot (in Oshtemo) at 9:00 in the morning, EXCEPT APRIL 25, when we'll leave at 11:00 so things warm up a bit more.

We'll be planning to ride 60 to 80 miles at around a 20 mph average with two or three stops, so bring some food and drink. We plan relatively flat routes (though there will certainly be hills) but we won't decide the exact routes until the day of the ride. We'll try to keep the group together until we're close enough to the end that everyone will know the way.

Of course, the weather's always a variable, especially in April. But if it's at least in the low 40's and dry when we start, we'll be going. If you have questions, call us at 388-5045.

- Doug Kirk

News From LMB

The LMB has received a definite, written commitment from the Art Van's furniture company to do a one day bike safety day on May 22 in their 27 Michigan stores. Last year the LMB sent them a letter commending them for ads showing bike riders in a positive way, riding safely and this invitation is their response!

This event is going to happen and we have been expressly invited to participate! Art Van's representative also told me they particularly want the local bike clubs and other bike groups to participate. This event will help the clubs promote themselves and their local activities with publicity they couldn't buy themselves!

Art Van's will promote the event in their newspaper inserts and other advertisements and they are going to provide financial support to the LMB for printing some of the safety materials.

If you or your bike club are interested in showcasing your club and promoting biking by staffing a table in your nearby Art Vans or running some other kind of bike safety event please email me ASAP. More information, including store locations, is listed below. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity!

Lucinda J. Means Executive Director
League of Michigan Bicyclists
P.O. Box 16201, Lansing, MI 48901-6201
Lmbike@voyager.net

The bicycle industry in recent months has had increased interest in bike advocacy efforts on a national level. The successes of the ISTE and TEA-21 campaigns and other advocacy work have galvanized a more formal approach to advocating for biking by the industry. As a result, an Executive Director has been hired by the bicycle industry. I have included his contact information below. We will be sending him our LMB newsletter and other Michigan information from time to time. Check out their website for more information about the Coalition.

Richard Olken c/o Bikes Belong Coalition
1368 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02446-2800
617-734-2800 fax 617-734-2810
rich@bikesbelong.org www.bikesbelong.org

News From City Hall

Many of you know that I have been serving on the non-motorized transportation committee for the City of Kalamazoo the last two years. Faithful readers will recall that the City obtained a \$120,000 grant solely to PLAN non-motorized transportation issues.

This money is long gone, and the plan is nearly complete. Along with other committee members, I have seen the rough draft, and we're almost done with the final editing. The resulting document will be presented to the City Commission this spring and become a part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Let me just say that if money grows on trees, we've got a plan that will make Kalamazoo so bike-friendly you won't believe it. But money doesn't grow on trees, and it remains the opinion of your faithful scribe that the \$120,000 should have been spent on some of the projects described in the plan. When there are some spare pages in the Pedal Press, I'll outline the proposed changes in more detail, but for now, I'll just list some of the top priorities:

- 1) Restripe Oakland Drive to create bike lanes from Lovell to Howard (also improve pavement).
- 2) Restripe W. Michigan Ave (probably three lanes), to create bike lanes from Stadium west to Drake.
- 3) Stripe bike lanes on Lovell and South Sts. between downtown and the colleges.
- 4) Stripe bike lanes on Howard/Solon/Kendall between W. Michigan Ave. and W. Main St.
- 5) Create a bike route on Rambling Road/Ferdon/Broadway between Stadium and Parkview.

These are all pretty good ideas, I think, and pretty inexpensive, too. The next one won't be cheap, but since it's in conjunction with the new WMU Research Park, there should be lots of money (we hope)! Yes, I have now been informed by Richard Skalski what the plan is for Parkview west of Parkview Hills: four lanes with wide, bike-friendly shoulders on each side and a big median. The extra lanes would be just north of the present road, and the trees there would be in the new median. The same thing is planned for Drake south of Stadium.

I have written the County Road Commission to ask what they plan west of U.S. 131, and will let you know...Stay tuned.
- Doug Kirk

Dune Ride

by Axel Kleat

Desperate times call for desperate measures. But desperate measures, I was reminded, can produce desperate straits. So it was that in mid-February I was slated to go up north for the weekend. A check of my up-north sources for snow cover (for skiing) turned up conflicting stories, but on the whole conditions didn't sound too promising for white stuff. For the running-impaired, outdoor exercise can be a challenge that time of year. But my state-of-mind and the bathroom scale both needed several hours of aerobic activity.

So Friday noon we hung the mountain bikes from the rack, tossed in the skis just in case, and bolted. Three-and-a-half hours later, we were up there, snow cover was anywhere from none whatever to a foot, depending on the lay of the land. But flurries were flying, and who knows how much it might snow?

Maybe ninety minutes of daylight remained. We threw on just about every stitch of lycra we owned, and headed out on the bikes to check out a couple of cross country ski trails. Our theory was simple—if we couldn't bike 'em today, we'd ski 'em tomorrow.

The main thing we found was that toes and fingers get real cold in fifteen degrees and no sunshine after an hour and a half of stop and start, uphill and down riding. The fields were mostly bare and frozen solid, and the ground and the crunchy snow that remained offered great traction for knobby tires. The woods had some snowy spots, some not-so-snowy spots, and a few bare spots. Cold as it was, we prayed for snow.

Only an inch fluttered down overnight, but we just had to try the skis in the morning. At the woodsiest and therefore snowiest trail around, the skiing was mediocre to bad, and would only get worse as the day wore on. We trashed the bottoms of our skis for a couple of hours, then shivered back to our rented getaway, got up close and personal with the fireplace, ate some lunch, and headed out on the mountain bikes again.

It was twenty degrees, but sunny. We headed for some trails a couple of miles down the road that led back into the sand dunes. Most of the year, the dunes are way too loose to ride—tires sink right in. But even the sand was frozen solid, so we could explore places no one could ride once the ground thawed. And as bonus, there seemed no way we could be damaging the environment

when it was just as hard as could be.

After a couple of miles on some beautiful trails that led in and out of woods, hills, and hollows, we were wearing giant grins. In shady spots, we rode on crusty snow that supplied good traction. In open areas, we never sank into the sand more than an inch, even in direct sunlight. I wasn't even conscious of the cold. It was some of the best mountain biking I'd ever experienced, so good that even when one trail just faded away in a field, we just kept right on exploring, pedaling over hard sand, last year's dead grass, and some dead underbrush.

But eventually we figured we'd better turn around. Getting even a little lost in twenty degrees would be stupid, to say the least. Besides, I thought, between the skiing that morning and the riding, I must have had enough. My legs were getting heavy, probably from churning up steep inclines. Oddly, when once we hit the pavement again, the cranks still weren't going around as easily as it seemed they should. I shifted to the big ring and stood up to get the kinks out. The bike felt mushy, the suspension fork seemed softer too. Hmmm...

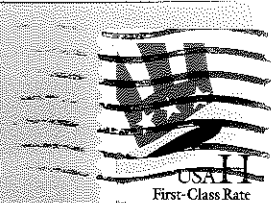
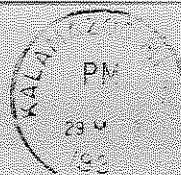
I can be pretty dense, but just then I finally figured out my front tire was flat. Oh boy, I thought, time to change a tire in twenty degrees. My fingers will just love this! As I was coming to grips with this cheery little thought, my partner also discovered a flat. Not good!

Actually, a little checking disclosed all four tires were flat! We were victims of the dreaded prickler bushes. Never occurred to me those little wooden needles could possibly survive the winter and still be sharp. We had two spare tubes between us, plus pumps and patch kits. In theory we had all we needed, but as we set to prying and gluing, we found tubes with more than one hole. Not a good thing in twenty degrees, and our fingers weren't working too well anymore, either. Good thing we were back to pavement by then, because it was definitely time to hitch a ride.

That evening we had a patching party. Two tubes had three holes each, two had two holes each. Ten holes total, all so tiny they were invisible. In the warmth of the cottage, I also found several amazingly sharp, pointy, slivery objects stuck into and through the tires waiting to cause more trouble. No way we'd have ever gotten up and running again. If we hadn't been somewhere we could catch a ride, the rest of that afternoon might have been truly unpleasant. And very, very cold.



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Dues (Check One)

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Please Print

Name _____
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Signature _____

Parent's Signature (if under 18) _____

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