



# Pedal Press

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The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, Inc., October, 2000

## President's Letter

I am Karen Sue Oullette, and I am serving the remainder of the current term as KBC's President. I intend to run again in the elections this November.

I am from Battle Creek, where I went to school, married, and raised two boys. The older boy, Benjamin, was killed in a car accident eight years ago at the age of 16. This was a very hard thing, and resulted in a divorce. I also moved to Kalamazoo, remarried and became very involved in health and fitness.

I feel that my son gave me the gift of running and competing in order to truly live and enjoy life, and I am forever grateful to him for the gift that was his life. My younger son, Rob, is a senior at the University of Michigan in Finance and Political Science.

I currently am also the President of the Triathlon Club of Kalamazoo and love the sport of triathlon. I completed the Hawaii Ironman in 1998. You may have noticed on the back page that my email address is Ironmom98@aol.com

I work at the Portage YMCA and also at Borgess Health and Fitness Center. I am an Aquatic Specialist, Spin Instructor, Personal Trainer, Massage Therapist, and Graphic Artist.

Unfortunately, my jobs require me to work in the early evenings, so I can rarely attend any KBC weekday rides. And as a triathlete (where drafting is not allowed), I am not used to riding in groups. But several KBC members have promised to show me the ropes (*and bungee cords—Ed.*) yet this fall, so I hope to be involved in some group rides soon.

In addition to myself, KBC has another new face, Jinny Ahrens, who recently joined KBC and has volunteered to take over for Jeanette Holm as Database Manager. Jinny works at Chuck Jaqua Realtor, and has also offered the conference room at their Milham Road location for future KBC meetings.

Finally, KBC is accepting nominations for all Board positions at the October 10 meeting. Elections are at the November 14 meeting. We will gladly accept any and all nominations for all positions—including President. Simply contact any Board member (see back page) or just come to the October meeting to nominate someone.

See you on the Road!

- Karen Sue Oullette

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## Coming Events

**Sunday, October 1** Turning Leaves Century. Routes up to 100 miles. A great tour on deserted Cass County roads that are generally in very good shape. Day-of-ride registration. Southwestern Michigan College, just south of Dowagiac. Call 219-674-0088. If the weather's decent, a group of KBC riders will register and leave between 8:30 and 9:00 am.

**Saturday, October 14** Colorburst Bicycle Tour, Lowell, MI, at the Fallasburg County Park. 17, 30, or 62 mile routes. For more info, call the Rapid Wheelmen Hotline: 616-752-8123.

## KBC's Wish List:

We wish for a volunteer to serve as Membership Coordinator

**All KBC weekday rides start at 5:30 in October.**

## KBC Meeting Location Changes

Jinny Ahrens, KBC's new Database Manager, has kindly offered the use of the Chuck Jaqua Realty building at 414 W. Milham, a little west of Westnedge Ave., for KBC's future meetings. The KBC Board gladly accepted this offer because it's free, while we have paid the United Way a small stipend in the past for the use of their building.

So from now on, the United Way Building is passe. Head to 414 W. Milham for KBC's second-Tuesday-of-the-month meetings.

## Annual KBC Board Nominations at October 10 Club Meeting

KBC's regular Monthly meeting Tuesday, October 10th also includes nominations for all Board positions—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. Come and meet—or even be—one of the people who make KBC work. Note the **LOCATION CHANGE: Jaqua Realty, 414 W. Milham—west of Westnedge—at 6:30 pm. Please attend.** Besides, we need your input on lots of neat things, like where to hold the annual Recovery Party this January.

## Cool Stuff Cheap!

It seems our new President took the time to look through some containers she inherited from our now-departed ex-President, Richard Walter and found some cool stuff.

Remember the OLD KBC green (turquoise)/gold jerseys? The kind only guys like Dan Ferrara have anymore? Make people think you've been riding years longer than you really have! Only three remain, apparently brand new! At \$15.00 each, a great bargain for some cool retro wear.

There are some Flowerfest T-shirts from past years, and also some from the Holland Hundred. Bidding starts at \$5.00 and goes DOWN from there.

There are still a few of last year's red, blue and yellow KBC Jerseys left. The price on these is \$50.00, same as last year. Call or email Karen Sue about any of this schwag. Her number's on the back page. While you've got her on the phone, give her your thoughts on where KBC should hold its annual Winter Recovery Party.

## Portage Bikeway Ride

This annual ride, which raises money for bike trails and related causes, is Sunday, October 15th between 2:00 and 4:00 pm at the Borgess at Woodbridge facility on Angling Road, just north of Center St. This is a family-oriented ride, and the route is all on bike routes within the City of Portage. KBC is a sponsor again this year, and we sure could use some VOLUNTEERS on the day of the event. Contact Paul Stevens, KBC's Treasurer. His number and email address are on the last page.

- Doug Kirk

## October Birthdays

Mary Aldrich  
Lori Allen  
Thom Collins  
Don Degen  
Mark DiJulio  
Bill Duggan  
Jonathan Evans  
Brendan Gaff  
Rick Gippert  
Sherrie Glas  
Paul Grabowski  
Anne Guimond  
Mike Higgins  
Marcia Johnson  
Tom Keizer  
Roscoe Kennedy  
Robert Kennedy  
Paul Pancella  
Susan Peterson  
Mark Prairie  
Kathy Rewalt  
John Thome  
Sam Watt  
Doug Williams

## New Members

Richard Wolf  
William, Kathy, Austin and  
Amber Rewalt  
Linda Adamcz

## Expiring Memberships

Jack Bley  
Thom Collins  
Amy & Gary Lehman  
John Mathieson  
Mary Ellen McNerney  
J. S. McNutt  
Cheryl and Mark Olson  
Susan Peterson  
Victor and Judy Van Fleet  
David & Karen Watt  
Doug, Karen, Conor, Tyler,  
Griffin and Evan Williams

# Critical Mass Rides Continue In Kalamazoo

## Sept 12, 2000 KBC Meeting Minutes

Yes, we have Critical Mass rides in Kalamazoo. Riders begin congregating in Bronson Park at 4:30 - 4:45 pm and ride two similar loops through the downtown area starting at 5:00 pm. The ride itself goes roughly from the park east on Michigan Ave. to Pitcher, north to Kalamazoo Ave., west to Westnedge Ave., south to Lovell St., west to Stadium, then right, around on to Michigan Ave. again, and then repeats on largely the same route. The pace is definitely leisurely.

Turnouts so far have been variable, and should increase as the word gets around, and also once the students return in the fall. The riders obey traffic control devices, and take up one lane, not the whole road like in the BIG Critical Mass rides in major cities. Though invited, Kalamazoo's bike-mounted police have not yet partaken.

This is not a KBC-sponsored ride. The only thing this ride has in common with KBC rides is that we all ride bikes. And you'll see on page 7 of this *Pedalpress* that some KBC members think we ought not be promoting this ride because most of the participants don't wear helmets.

I urge you to check it out and decide for yourself. There's much to be said for solidarity—and for being informed.

- Doug Kirk.

Location: United Way Building, 709 South Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo. Time: 6:30 PM. Present: Kathy Barrett, Zolton Cohen, Doug Kirk, Paul Stevens, Karen Sue Oullette, Victor Van Fleet, Terry O'Connor, Dave Newman, Jinny Ahrens, Steve Vonderfect, Steve Secondi.

Karen Sue started the meeting with a personal introduction. She also reported that she has been going through the boxes of materials passed on to her, as the new KBC president, from prior president Richard Walter. There are a number of old jerseys and tee shirts and Doug suggested that these be advertised for sale in the Pedal Press at low prices in order to clear them out. The motion passed.

Paul Stevens reported on the status and needs of the upcoming Portage Bikeway Ride at Borgess at Woodbridge, Angling Road at Center St., on October 15th, between 2-4 PM. Breakaway Bikes, the City of Portage, and KBC are joint sponsors of this ride and are purchasing water bottles and supplying volunteers. KBC is also providing insurance for the riders - or, more specifically, for the Club in case a rider is hurt during the ride. There was discussion about whether it was appropriate use of club monies for this event, resulting in a vote to support the ride with up to 300 dollars for water bottles, insurance, and a donation from KBC.

Terry O'Connor reported that the Flowerfest Tour Committee is starting meetings in October to begin planning the event for next year. There will be no citywide "Flowerfest," in the summer of 2001 as the event is changing to an every other year format, but the Flowerfest Bicycle Tour will continue. Terry will report back on the progress the committee is making.

Jinny Ahrens will be taking over the KBC database from Jeanette Holm, and will undoubtedly need to do some pruning and paring down of the list in order to make it less cumbersome.

Karen Sue brought up the possibility of conducting a spring membership drive at the Borgess Fitness Center on Gull Road in conjunction with the Triathlon Club and also with a local swimming club. There was discussion about developing a curriculum for use in educational forums for beginning riders and riders interested in riding with groups. Doug Kirk said he would be interested in teaching such classes, Zolton Cohen said he would be interested in helping with input into the content of the classes.

Dave Newman mentioned he thought there was also a need in the community for basic education on bike purchasing - what type of bike to buy for different uses. Steve Vonderfect said that the road commission has removed a portion of the new, white speed bumps along 8th Street in order to better accommodate bike riders riding along this route.

Jinny offered the use of the conference meeting room at the new Chuck Jaqua Realtor office on Milham Road for KBC Board meetings. This would save KBC the 10-dollar per use fee United Way charges for its facility on Westnedge. Motion passed to move the meetings to the Jaqua office starting immediately, with announcement in the Pedal Press to that effect.

- Zolton B. Cohen, KBC Secretary

## Letter To The Editor

Dear Doug:

David and I were riding back from the Paw Paw Wine and Harvest Festival Ride when we met another tandem. The couple rode with us from Decatur to Lawton. We asked them if they were members of the KBC and/or did any of the bike club rides. They related a story of doing one bike club ride.

One of the riders in the club told them that if they couldn't keep up at 20+ miles an hour, they should do the ice cream ride. (Folks riding 20 miles or less for ice cream at about a 10 mph pace.) After this conversation, this couple did not want anything to do with the KBC.

Now, this couple's riding ability was pretty good. Don't you think there is a place in the club for good bikers who fall between the hammerheads and the ice cream riders? With age and time, we all may be in the category.

- Jill Stewart

## Editor's Response

Jill, I respond with some trepidation because my editorial response last month was felt by some to be a castigation of the letter-writer, which is NOT my intent then, or now.

Without commenting on the specific comment by the KBC person to this couple (the Ice Cream Ride has been gone several years now), the problem you bring up is a constant thorn in the side of KBC—and other clubs, I'm sure—and one which doubtless limits club growth.

The problem is that KBC's rides are populated mostly by enthusiasts who come to the group rides planning on a hard ride. Very few of us show up at group rides in order to take it easy. If we want to go 14 - 18 mph, most of us just go out by ourselves.

KBC badly needs people willing to lead rides in the 14 - 17 mph range. While we always have a few people who ride this pace, we have great difficulty getting enough middle-paced riders to form decent-sized groups. And there's a big, big difference between riding at 15 mph and 18 mph. Ride Captain Randy Putt is ALWAYS searching for people to lead groups at these paces, and can NEVER get enough people involved.

Actually, we have good 18 mph rides on Mondays and Wednesdays the last couple of years, it's the paces just below that lack any cohesive leadership.

The key here is to get several people committed to a regular, weekly ride or two directed specifically at a pace THEY want. Then make sure it happens every week at the same time and place. Then spread the word. And KEEP ON spreading the word. If you keep at it, eventually enough people learn about it that riders show up that you've never even seen before.

I do think KBC might benefit by a regular ride where the idea is to teach and practice group riding skills at a moderate-say 18 mph—pace. Maybe next year.

It is no more realistic to expect a bunch of Hammerheads (who are full of energy, working on their fitness, and raring to go hard with their buddies) to dial it back than it is to expect a 15 mph rider to start drafting at the back of a 22 mph paceline. In other words, blame, if it must be apportioned, is a 50 - 50 thing here.

I think many times the difference goes even deeper than just speed. An awful lot of the 14 - 17 mph riders either are not comfortable riding in a group, or lack the skills or knowledge to do so. I have friends who are unwilling to ride closely enough to benefit from drafting. Spinning, drafting, pulling, and just knowing how to be smooth in a group are skills that many riders simply don't have.

Frankly, I don't know which is worse: struggling as hard as I can to hang on the back, huffing and praying that the pack takes pity on me, or spinning happily in the pack and wondering if I have enough in my legs to drop back and see whether the guy off the back can stay in my draft till we catch back up to the group.

So let me return to the question at the end of your letter. Yes, I DO think there is a place in KBC for good riders that aren't Hammerheads. They—and we—need to figure out who they are. Communication is the key, and I rarely hear from these folks. I sure wish they would come to rides and shout out what ride they would like to do and ask for companions. And I sure wish they would call me or Randy to post rides they are planning.

- Doug Kirk

## October Ride Calendar

by Ride Captain Randy Putt

**NOTE: Due to less light in the evening all weekly evening rides will leave at 5:30 PM in October.**

The weather has remained beautiful for riding as we approach the end of another riding season. The Fall color will be peaking soon and several great organized rides are available in October. DALMAC and the Wine Harvest Festival Ride are behind us. As I write this calendar, the Apple Cider Century is yet to come (Sept 26). The Turning Leaves Century in Dowagiac is coming up and is typically nice (Oct 1). For those who like a challenge check out the Columbus Fall Challenge Sept 30 and Oct 1. Also, the Hilly 100 in Bloomington, IN on Oct 14 and 15 is a great way to end the touring season.

There are four ride groups at the Monday Night Ride at Texas Drive Park, 10 -15 mph, 16-18 mph, 19-20 mph, and 20+ mph. Maps will be available.

The ride leaders will make sure that the groups stay together and ride as a group for all rides except the 20+ ride. Sherri and Mike Higgins plan to lead a group for about 20 miles at 10-15 mph.

The following three groups will typically follow the same route. Both the 16-18 mph and 19-20 mph groups plan to stay together and not drop riders. Both groups plan work on group riding techniques and pace lining in order to improve group riding skills. Terry O'Connor leads the 16-18 mph group for 25 to 35 miles. Randy Putt and substitutes lead the 19-20 mph group for 25 to 35 miles. The 20+ mph group will do their thing without a designated ride leader. Due to the riding pace and style of the 20+ mph group, it can fragment into smaller groups and all the riders may not finish together. This ride can be hard and is not suitable for inexperienced riders. Some riders can be expected to be dropped from the main group. Since the ride follows the same route as the 16-18 mph and 19-20 mph groups so any riders who get dropped can wait for 19-20 mph group.

The Tuesday ride from Breakaway Bicycles on Romence Rd near S. Westnedge in Portage leaves the parking lot at 5:30 PM. Paul Wells leads the group for 25 to 30 miles at about 17-19 mph.

The two Wednesday rides begin at the Kal-Haven Trail

arking lot on 10th St between H Ave and G Ave at 5:30 PM. Enjoy the rolling hills of northwest Kalamazoo County for a ride of 25 to 35 miles in one of two groups. The 16-18 mph group is lead by Bill Strome. The 20+ mph group is lead by Zolton Cohen. Both Bill and Zolton do a great job in keeping the groups together. These are good rides to learn how to ride in a group.

A fast group also rides from the Kal-Haven trailhead on Wednesday evenings beginning at 5:30 PM. The pace of the ride is typically about the same as Zolton's group, but the route goes to Bloomingdale and back (about 46 miles), often when you'd swear there simply isn't enough daylight to do so. No maps are available for this ride. This group 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 inexperienced riders. Some riders can be expected to be dropped from the main group.

The Thursday evening WOMEN'S RIDE is done for the year, but should return next spring.

The Tour de Gull Lake meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg at 5:30 PM on Fridays. The route for this ride is a loop around Gull Lake with a number of rolling hills. The route is well established, is 26 miles in length, and maps are available. There are two groups. The 17 mph has no designated leader, so we could use your help in leading this ride. This group finishes together. Randy Putt leads the 20+ mph group and tries to keep up. The pace for this group is typically greater than 21 mph at this time of year. Even though this ride can split into more than one group the ride leader will make sure that all riders finish the ride.

There are nice days in October, November, and even December, so weekend rides are possible. Plan a ride for a Saturday or Sunday. There are many club members who would be interested in riding. I have a lengthy e-mail list of riders, so let me know a few days in advance and I will be happy to put the word out. If I do not have your e-mail address, send it to me and I will add you to my list.

Call Randy at 649-1814 for more information about any of the rides described above.

# OCTOBER

2000

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>1</b> KVCC- 12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance.	<b>2</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 5:30 10-15mph 5:30 16-18mph 5:30 20+mph	<b>3</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 5:30 17-19mph	<b>4</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trailhead 5:30 20+mph 5:30 16-18mph	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 5:30 18-21mph	<b>7</b> KVCC 9:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>8</b> KVCC-12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance.	<b>9</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 5:30 10-15mph 5:30 16-18mph 5:30 20+mph	<b>10</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 5:30 17-19mph  <b>KBC Monthly Meeting. See Page 2.</b>	<b>11</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trailhead 5:30 20+mph 5:30 16-18mph	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 5:30 18-21mph	<b>14</b> KVCC 9:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>15</b> KVCC- 12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance.	<b>16</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:00 10-15mph 6:00 16-18mph 6:00 20+mph	<b>17</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	<b>18</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trailhead 6:00 20+mph 6:00 16-18mph	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 5:30 18-21mph	<b>21</b> KVCC 9:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>22</b> KVCC- 12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance.	<b>23</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 5:30 10-15mph 5:30 16-18mph 5:30 20+mph	<b>24</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 5:30 17-19mph	<b>25</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trailhead 5:30 20+mph 5:30 16-18mph	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 5:30 18-21mph	<b>28</b> KVCC 9:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>29</b> 12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance.	<b>30</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 5:30 10-15mph 5:30 16-18mph 5:30 20+mph	<b>31</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 5:30 18-19mph	<b>1</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trailhead 5:30 20+ mph 5:30 16-18mph	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 5:30 18-21mph	<b>4</b> KVCC 9:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.

## A Dalmac Diary

by Terry O'Connor

This year's Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw Bicycle Tour (DALMAC) will go down in history as the "wet" one. Anyway, I completed the Quint Century 515 mile 5 day ride and thought I would share some daily events with you.

**Day One:** Kalamazoo was well represented with about 20 riders from our area and club which helped make up the 350 riders on our route. DALMAC had 2000 riders in total over five routes. Weather was in the high 70's and we had a beautiful start from MSU headed northwest to Morley near Big Rapids about 110 miles in 6:22. The Wolverine Riders sped by at 24 mph and three of the riders in my group did a break-away with them not to be seen again until the Morley High School camp site. Paul, my constant companion on the ride, stopped in a corn field with an emergency call of the nature and took a bit of ribbing because of the corn leaves hanging from his jersey. Taco dinner. Excellent first day.

**Day Two:** Morley to West Shore Community College in Scottville, 101 miles just over 17 mph 5:56. Chatter bump and chip & seal roads jarred our bikes, body and teeth. Sunny breeze SW 15 knot wind. Dogs out in force. The rottweilers were chained, but a black Beauvais had his eye on Paul's banana yellow bike. Shouts of, "No, go home" worked this time. Later in the day the sound of toe nails closing at our heels caught our attention. A mean brown "woofy" (that what you call dogs when you are a grandfather to Miss Claire) and the adrenalin kicked in to save the day. Tent up, Cytomax energy powder mixed and GU quick gulp food ready for day three.

**Day Three:** Headed North to Glen Arbor with Paul, 100 miles averaging 15 mph, 6:56 including a climb we called Mt Ventoux (a French mountain). I used a new bike rack for toting rain equipment, food, etc. but after these hills no extra weight tomorrow! Totally organized. Good, because rain started just as I got the tent up. Spaghetti again for dinner.

**Day Four:** Caution Hills!!! 101 miles, averaged 17.3 mph, 5:56 Glen Arbor to Bellaire. Wet and cold. Hooked up with Mike, Peter and Joe from Ann Arbor and Stockbridge. These guys had legs size of my chest! Found out later they were past University of Michigan wrestlers. A pace line established. Thing of beauty. Reminded me of the old movie *Breaking Away*. Chains singing, moving as one unit, cadence in sync and "hammering." Even met my

dentist, Dr Schockey, in Elk Rapids at lunch. Rick joined our pace line. Chicken pasta for dinner. Static on cell phone trying to talk to Pam as the rain pounded away on the tent. Torrential rain and lightning resulted in cancellation of the high school football game so reporters took pictures of the dumb cyclists floating in 3 inches of rain, thereby making the cover page of Traverse City newspaper. Nice people at Bellaire allowed cyclists who got wet to spend night in the gym. I understand the snoring was louder than the thunder! Fortunately, my good neighbors, the Latham's, allowed me to use their tent, a Stephenson, parachute material, extra light and compacts into 2 pound unit. Highly recommended. I was one of the very few dry people. Oh, massage was highlight of the day. A young lady rubbed my neck and cries of pain and uncontrollable pleasure poured from my mouth. Jenny's coworker said, "You got a live one there." I had not realized just how vocal I was so I replied, "Listen, If I were a garage door, Jenny has been pushing all the right buttons and I am just up and down." It hurt so good! I have been sleeping on the ground without a mat which probably compounded the knots in my neck muscles.

**Day Five:** More rain and more hills and no soft place for my behind!!! Mackinaw City just 106 miles away. Learned how to keep by body and bicycle in sync going up steep hills. Many times my heart was jumping out of my chest, but I got in a rhythm when I geared down, got the cadence and kept a steady heart pace and could climb at a steady 8.2 mph. Amazing what you learn about your body and the energy required to maintain such a Quint Century pace. Lunch at Good Hart. Burger, Chili and Pepsi along with other riders from other routes joining up together, all headed for the Bridge. Passed through Cross Village and the beautiful stone church. Pedaled along the Michigan Lake shore line and into Mackinaw City, finally! Bike on truck, showered, and hurry-up-and-wait. But the Bridge crossing closed to bicyclists because of bad weather. Only the earliest of three groups were able to cross. Started to rain. Very cold wind. Chatted with all the cyclists about next year.

**Day Six:** Clean up bicycle, tent, clothes and rest. Have my fond memories, red, white and blue ribbon with medal, plus saddle slick for one sore butt!

What did I learn? On the bike weight is more important than comfort. When in doubt don't take the jacket or extra water. Only bare necessities. But take a mat to sleep on!

## Pedaling Dynamics

by Steve Cox

*(We are very happy to publish this first in what will be a series of articles by one of Kalamazo's most accomplished and enduring cyclists. A smooth pedal stroke (or spin) is the key to efficient cycling, whether in a paceline, or all alone. -Ed.)*

**D**uring the summer, I try to ride in a fast paceline about once a week. This often gives me the opportunity to observe how other riders pedal and sit on their bikes. Even among racers there is a wide discrepancy in pedal strokes. A few riders have very choppy pedal strokes in which most of their pedaling effort is on the downstroke, and at the other extreme, a few riders have a fluid pedal stroke that seems light and effortless, even at high levels of exertion. Most racers and recreational riders are somewhere between these two extremes.

The riders with the smooth pedal strokes are generally the better riders in the paceline and the most interesting to watch. It can be extremely difficult to learn to pedal a bike smoothly, and even accomplished professional racers often work hard in the off-season to improve their pedal strokes. What kind of rider are you, and should you be concerned if you have a choppy, uneven pedal stroke? How do you recognize if you have poor pedaling form? What can you do to improve your form if you pedal squares? This series of articles will briefly attempt to address these questions.

A choppy pedal stroke almost always results in wasted energy. Watch a rider who pedals squares, and you will see side-to-side movement of the butt on the saddle. In addition to the side-to-side movement, the butt may also slip forward a bit on the saddle with each pedal stroke, ultimately requiring the rider to reposition his/her butt back on the saddle every mile or so.

The choppy rider often uses his/her upper body to counter all of this hip movement, resulting in either upper body movement or a tense upper body. These riders may have arms with locked elbows or worse, straight arms that do not absorb any road shock. Riders with tense upper bodies and locked elbows can

be a menace in a pace line because they can't often ride in a straight line and because they are more likely to lose control of the bike when riding over potholes or gravel. The excessive butt movement can also result in chronic saddle sores and prematurely worn out riding shorts.

In contrast, a smooth rider has little, if any, hip and upper body movement. The butt remains motionless on the saddle unless the rider decides to move it to a different portion of the saddle. (This may happen, for example, in order to gain more efficiency for seated climbing or for rolling a big gear on flats.) The upper body is loose and relaxed, allowing the rider to more easily absorb the shock from potholes. It is much easier for the smooth rider to bike in a straight line and to have enough control over the bike to allow very close drafting in a paceline.

The smooth rider is usually able to go faster and farther on a bike than a choppy rider who has a much greater limit strength. As an example, consider two riders of equal fitness, body size, and weight who are biking at the same speed on a flat road. One of the riders has a choppy pedal stroke that provides all of the propulsive power from the downward push on the pedals.

The other rider is much smoother and is able to exert similar propulsive force on the pedals, not only on the downstroke, but also when pulling back at the bottom of the pedal stroke and when pushing forward at the top of the pedal stroke. For the two riders to do the same work and thereby go the same speed, the choppy rider will have to apply at least twice as much peak force on the pedals as the smooth rider. The smooth rider exerts lower force on the pedals but applies that force over a longer duration of each pedal stroke. The smooth rider's lower pedaling forces allow more efficient energy utilization, particularly as speed increases, and may result in a slower onset of fatigue.

Overall, a smooth pedal stroke can allow greater cycling comfort, fun, safety, and satisfaction. A smooth pedal stroke allows greater pedaling economy, which can potentially translate to greater cycling endurance and speed. The next article will focus on ways to evaluate your pedal stroke and on drills to improve it.



## Another Satisfied Customer

*We here at the Pedalpress have done dozens of tours over the years, and enjoyed most of them immensely. Never, however, have we felt compelled to offer up written thanks to any tour sponsors for finding the smoothest roads, or lining up the greatest grub. So I think we all ought to be pleased and proud that we found the following letter in our mailbox recently -Ed.*

July 26, 2000

Dear KBC,

Howdy! Hope you folks are doing well. I'm writing regarding your "Flowerfest Bicycle Tour" that I attended on July 16, 2000.

I'd like to congratulate all of you on a job well done. This was a great ride! I did the Circus City Metric Century (Peru, IN) the day before (also an excellent, scenic ride), and the combination of the two rides made this the nicest cycling weekend I've had in a long, long time.

I rode the Flowerfest two years ago when it was only a metric century (I remember the morning thunderstorm and the hot-looking Saturn riders) and had a great time then too.

This was my first full century of the summer, and I'm glad to tell you it ain't an easy one...cool!

This was a very pretty ride, and much hillier than I remember from two years ago. I dig the hills, and we don't have many in this area (lotsa flats and cornfields) so this was a welcome change of pace from what I'm used to. "What Hill?" is definitely a keeper.

The road quality ranged from good to excellent (no really bad ones) and the SAG workers kicked butt. I overheard a couple of workers after the third loop saying that they'd run out of subs and had to make an emergency run to get more...WAY TO GO! Most tour operators would have said, Uhh, sorry man, we're out..."

You guys really outdid yourselves and your effort is appreciated! I've been talking up this ride to anyone

who will listen...hopefully you'll get more Michiana riders next year. I know I'll be back next year, hopefully with lots more friends.

And to that group of KBCers that we blew by on the 2nd and 3rd loop, thanks for the challenge. We'd have caught you on the last loop too, but one of our guys bonked—his first full century.

One last thing—the free camping is a nice touch. At least one friend of mine came to Kalamazoo after doing the Holland Hundred the day before and camping worked out really well for him.

Peace,

Anthony Hessling  
921 Sancome Ave.  
S. Bend IN

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## KBC Spinning Classes Possible

You'll note from the President's Letter that KBC's new President, Karen Sue, is a fitness instructor at Borgess Health & Fitness Center. This facility has about 20 spinning "bicycles" for spinning classes.

Karen Sue has suggested setting up some evening spinning classes for KBC members this winter. There would be a fee involved, but we would not have to pony up the big bucks to actually join the Fitness Center as regular members.

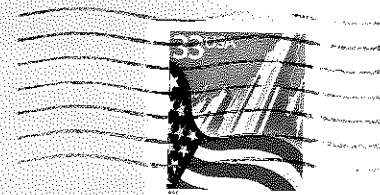
Karen Sue assured yours truly that we'd be able to use the showers there, and a way cool fitness-babe—Karen Sue herself—will whip up a workout that might even elevate John Meyer's heartrate. I've done a couple of these classes in the past and I don't care how strong a rider you are, you can definitely get a serious workout spinning away on these stationary bikes with BIG, BIG flywheels and adjustable resistance.

Contact Karen Sue (see back page) or come to the October 10th KBC meeting (see p. 2) to learn more.

- Doug Kirk



**KALAMAZOO BICYCLE CLUB**  
 P.O. Box 50527  
 Kalamazoo, MI 49005



**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

Expires 2001/02

**Phil & Jini Caruso**  
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 Plainwell, MI 49080

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**KALAMAZOO AREA BIKE SHOPS**

Alfred E. Bike ..... 349-9423  
 Billy's Bike Shop ..... 665-5202  
 Breakaway Bicycles ..... 324-5555  
 Milwood Schwinn ..... 349-6384  
 Parchment Bicycle ..... 343-8118  
 Portage Schwinn ..... 327-3393  
 Team Active Schwinn ..... 962-7688  
 Village Cyclery ..... 679-4242  
 Vorncamp Bike ..... 344-3599  
 Freedom Recreation ..... 381-7233

**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**

Family Member Names	Birthdates
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature (if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in working on KBC Events?  Yes  No

Rider Category: Fitness  Casual  Competitive

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

