

Pedal Press

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



Editor's Letter

Okay, I know there's still some snow around, but it's going to melt, I promise it will. Time to start thinking about riding. Actually, I've been out a few times, and I know some of you have too.

More to the point, time to think about what rides you want to plan this year. We here at KBC want to get more people doing more rides. Sure, solo rides or rides with a couple of favorite riding buddies have their place, but group rides are just plain fun. And fun's the main reason to have a club in the first place, if you ask me.

The KBC Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening rides have never, and I mean never, had as many people riding as we have the last couple of years. And there's no reason to expect anything less this year.

Success breeds success, and when more people show up, more people talk about the rides, more riders share their enthusiasm, and the thing just builds. We have people coming from Battle Creek, St. Joseph and even Grand Rapids just to do these rides. These rides are growing because more and more riders know that if the weather is even passable, there will be decent riders at the designated place.

I predict even bigger turnouts at the weekly KBC rides this year.

What we need are special rides, one time rides, original rides. Many of you have heard me the past couple of months priming you to plan one or more rides you want to do this year. The idea is to arrange a ride, let people know what you've got in mind, and have at it.

On page 3 you'll see a form you can use to give us the information for whatever ride you figure out. To get it in the newsletter, I need to receive your information by the 15th of the month before publication (March 15th to be in April's Newsletter).

But the important thing is for YOU to plan one or more group rides. If you can't give enough notice to get it in the newsletter, let Ride Captain Randy Putt know and he can spread the word to a big list of KBC members via email.

SO GO GET YOUR CALENDARS, THINK ABOUT WHAT SORT OF RIDE YOU'D LIKE TO INVITE PEOPLE TO ATTEND, AND PICK OUT A DATE. I can't wait for spring, and I can't wait to hear from you.

- Doug Kirk

Coming Events

March 14 Tuesday. KBC General Meeting, 6:30 pm at the United Way Building, 709 S. Westnedge. See below.

March 26 Sunday. Fisk Knob Time Trial, Sand Lake, north of Grand Rapids. Age, sex, tandem and fixed gear categories too. Call 616-241-1969 or email mss321@aol.com

KBC General Meeting March 14

Yes, it really is time to think about real rides again soon—Axel Kleat's been out, you'll note—and we've seen quite a few other hardy souls out there.

So it's time to get together and talk about our plans for riding and for KBC this year. Should the weekday rides be changed? Got some ideas for Tuesday or Thursday or weekend rides?

Want to help convince Kathy Barrett to continue the women's ride she organized Thursdays last year, or even offer to help out on occasion?

How about other activities you think KBC ought to be involved in, like trail maintenance, or child-oriented activities, or new facilities, like the mountain bike trail that was proposed last fall for Markin Glen Park? Do you have some ideas for Flowerfest sponsorship, volunteers, or routes?

Or would you just like to get together with fellow riders and spend a nice hour or so talking about one of your favorite things? We welcome constructive comment and input.

Be at the United Way Building at 709 S. Westnedge Ave. (across from Old Central High School) at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, March 14.

News From The Powers That Be

I met with Richard Skalski of the City of Kalamazoo recently, and learned some things about what the City has in mind as far as road improvements and bicycling are concerned.

This year we should see Drake Road between Stadium and Parkview widened to four lanes WITH bike lanes each direction. I have heard talk that this section will be a boulevard—with a median, but this hasn't been decided for sure as far as I know. Believe me, I know that once you go north to Stadium on Drake there are no good options at all, but hey, it wasn't my idea, and besides, I'm told that a bike route through the Asylum Lake property to Winchell is a possibility.

Four lanes (with bike lanes and possibly a median) are planned for Parkview Ave. between Parkview Hills and Drake Road, but likely not until 2001. Both of these efforts are in conjunction with the new WMU research park. There will be a designated bike route from the current WMU campus to the new research park, likely using Rambling Road. Exactly how this will get to Drake or Parkview is undecided. It will not be possible to go south through the research park and come out the other side any time soon. Remember that US-131 and I-94 are in the way.

Oakland Drive gets rebuilt this year from Chevy Chase all the way south to Kilgore, the city limit. Real bike lanes are promised on this entire section, matching those that already exist on the northern half of Oakland. Now, if you're like me, heading south on Oakland beyond Kilgore is a frightful thought. Obviously, bikes simply weren't considered when they rebuilt Oakland adjacent to (and over) I-94.

When I brought this up, Mr. Skalski floated a most interesting idea—a bridge for non-motorized traffic only connecting the two halves of Angling Road over I-94. Don't think this will be happening real soon, though.

Of interest to trail riders is the route from downtown Kalamazoo out to the Kal-Haven Trailhead which should be completed this year. I had to go check it out for myself, but there really is an old, abandoned railroad right-of-way you really can ride. The hardest part is seeing exactly where it goes as it parallels Ravine Road. For the foreseeable future it will end near H Ave. and use the H. Ave. bridge over US-131.

We'll try to get the word from Chris Barnes about what the City of Portage is up to and report in the next month or two.

- Doug Kirk

Flowerfest Sponsors Wanted

The Flowerfest committee is looking for new sponsors. Do you work for a company that has ties to sports in general, or has sponsored other community events? Do you know of a company that might make a good sponsor? All ideas are welcome. Please contact a board member or Flowerfest committee member. Our phone numbers are on the back page of this and every issue of *Pedal Press*.

February Birthdays

Dale Scott Aldrich
Marla Atkinson
Jay Campbell
Zolton Cohen
Doug DiJulio
Clarissa Gaff
Mona Gronert
Terry Hutchins
Celine Keizer
Jason Machnik
Jody Meyers
Scott Reynhout
David Sluyter
Ann Thomas

March Birthdays

Kathy Aulds
John Brady
Jerry Clevenson
Dan Degen
Ron Doering
Rebecca Gaff
Brian Gronert
Eve Gronert
Jeanette Holm
Chris Kline
Gary Lehman
Cole Lehman
Rose McKenna
Juliette Mott
Andrew Price
Robin Warden
Jim Wilson

Expiring Members

If you know any of these people, do them (and us!) a favor and remind them to send us their dues—use the form on the back page.

Duva Appleman
 Alex Appleman
 Alyce Brady
 John Brady
 Bill Strome
 Lauren Brady
 Lee Anderson
 Paul Banner
 Beth Davis
 Jeff Davis
 Stephen Dunyak
 Michael Louisell
 Frank & Patricia Machnik Family
 John & Roma Mott Family
 Steve & Carolyn Vonderfecht Family

Ride Leaders Needed For Y2K

I encourage all riders who have participated in the rides this year to volunteer to lead rides next year—regular rides or special/occasional rides you decide to do, like the tandem-only rides, the ride around Kalamazoo County, or anything else you want to put together. Usually, a few KBC members end up doing most of the ride leading, but there's just no reason for this. Ride leading is easy and fun. No previous experience is necessary to put on a ride or to become a ride leader on one of the regular KBC rides. Please give Randy Putt a call at 649-1814 or send an e-mail to sterling.r.putt@am.pnu.com to volunteer or to get more information on being a ride leader.

Classified Ads

1994 Cannondale SuperV 3000 size large, full suspension mountain bike. Full XTR group, with titanium spoked wheelset on Mavic rims and XTR hubs. Black and purple two-tone paint, excellent shape, seldom ridden. \$1100. **1989 Nishiki Linear time trial bike.** 58cm. with small front wheel. Full Shimano 105 group. Ridden only twice, mint condition. \$300.

For EITHER bike, call Matt Holloway 616 646 1004

KBC Ride Information Form

Planning a ride? Send us the facts. Deadline is 15th of the month before publication.
Mail to: Pedal Press Editor, 1525 Merrill Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

Date:	Location:
Time:	Distance:
Pace:	
A few words about your ride:	
Ride Leader/Contact:	
Phone:	Email:

March Ride Schedule

Although there are no official rides scheduled for March there are riders ready to ride if the weather is suitable. When the weather cooperates, rides will materialize in the next couple of months. Lack of daylight prevents scheduled rides on weekdays until next month.

Meet at 11 AM on Saturdays in the SW corner of the KVCC parking lot near the tennis courts,

Meet at 1 PM on Sundays in the SW corner of the KVCC parking lot near the tennis courts.

Meet at 5:30 PM on Mondays at Texas Drive Park,

Meet at 5:30 PM on Wednesdays at the Kal-Haven Trail parking lot, on 10th St between G & H Aves.

Meet at 5:30 PM on Fridays at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg.

by Ride Captain Randy Putt

The hardy souls who show up for any of these rides can determine the length and pace of the ride. There will be no official ride leader or maps provided.

KBC will offer at least a partial weekly ride schedule in April as the weather permits. Look for details in the April Newsletter.

Wear the appropriate clothing and let's go for a ride. If anyone would like to lead a weekend ride in March, give me a call or send me a description of the ride via e-mail. If the roads are dry, there will be riders ready to ride. I have a lengthy e-mail list of riders, so the ride information can be transferred quickly and on short notice. If any of you would like to be added to the e-mail list, send your e-mail address to me (sterling.r.putt@am.pnu.com).

- Randy Putt 649-1814

Something New This Year

Keith Little from Freedom Recreation has volunteered to run a biking activity titled "Club Fellowship" on Saturday afternoons from 2:30 to 5:30 PM beginning March 4 through October 28 as the weather permits. The activity starts at Freedom Recreation 6101 KL Ave. Kalamazoo, 49009.

Club Fellowship consists of the following activities:

- maintenance lessons,
- bicycle safety instruction,
- helmet sizing,
- groups rides, all riding abilities and all ages
- refreshments served,
- daycare provided,
- fun for members and friends.

As far as we know, this is the only biking event in the area with day-care provided, a big plus to some people who's love to get out there and ride.

If you want to give this activity a try, call Keith at 381-SAFE for further details or to let him know of your interest in this activity.



(The above cartoon is flagrantly copied, scanned, cut and pasted from Funny Times magazine. Readers can only hope that with time, the Pedalpress Editor's computer/artistic skills improve. At least I managed to shrink it to fit the space available!)

Road Test

by Axel Kleat

Let me set the scene. It's February, 22, and it's the warmest day of the new year, a bit over 50 degrees. I've got the afternoon off. It snowed seven or eight inches five days ago, but it's going fast, and the February sun has the roads clear and dry except a few tilted spots where melting snow leaves trickles of water meandering across the asphalt at odd angles.

I haven't been out on a road bike since November. In fact, I haven't even tested my own trusty steed since I overhauled it in January. Yeah, I've had the mountain bike out for a few short rides, but nothing very long, no real efforts. So I'm just itching to go for a nice, long ride—you know how you get to missing that feeling this time of year—and the balmy day beckons. There's a big south wind, mandatory for an unseasonably warm February day, but so what?

As I pump up the tires, I realize I'm pumped too. Everything is right for a genuine road test. I'll pretend I'm a high falootin' writer for some biker rag. True, no fancy test equipment just lying around the basement, only me and the trusty velocipede I know so well. But it's freshly polished, greased, trued and adjusted with new cables, chain, and handlebar tape, and I haven't spun its cranks in months. Do my January ministrations work like they should? Does the bike still have that magic ride I remember? Does it carve corners like it's on rails and convert every ounce of my sprint into pure velocity like the magazine road test rigs? Will I return bursting with journalistic hyperbole frantic to report on my flailing to you loyal readers?

My legs sure ought to be fresh, and my attitude couldn't be finer. Time to slip into that flinty-edged road-tester mentality and get started on my base miles too! One thing I notice the instant I push off: my legs must have shrunk over the winter. My mind races, painfully analyzing the situation in an instant. Could those squats at the YMCA have compressed things an inch or two? Why don't they tell you about the nasty side-effects of cross-training in those winter articles? Dang, I exhale out loud in a breathless soprano, that saddle is up there, 'way up there.

Reason slowly returns. Can this really be where that saddle was last fall? I know, I know, this happens every spring. Better ride for a while, I mutter, and see if the

legs stretch out. Within a block, I realize there's hope, but it feels for all the world like I'm pedaling tippy-toed. How'd that mountain bike seat get so low, anyway?

Before long, I'm tiptoeing up to a hill. Who cares, I smirk, with my fresh legs, bursting with new sinew thanks to three months of cross training? Even if the old gams won't spin too fast yet, they've gotta have plenty of push. But—say it isn't so—I can't tell just how much thrust might be lurking in the old engine room, for as soon as I send down the call for some power, the new chain and the old gears commence a nasty confrontation, and seem intent on breaking off their engagement entirely. They never write about stuff like this in the magazines, do they? So of course I do the same stupid, hopeless thing everyone does at times like this, I ride along a while, in complete denial, thinking maybe things will magically get better, and trying some other gears. Some cogs actually work okay, but the few friendly ones aren't exactly the ratios of my dreams.

No way I was going to have the first road ride of the year besmirched and befouled by my *el cheapo* decision not to replace the chain *and* the gears. Besides, the skipping and jumping increased my anxiety relative to the seat and my nether regions. Any serious road testing would be out of the question with this state of affairs. Desperate times call for desperate measures. I did the only sensible thing—rode home, dug out the old chain, and put the groaty thing back on.

It's always discouraging when one fixes a problem by replacing shiny new parts with grimy, worn-out old ones, but that's the way it goes sometimes. The overall effect was vastly improved with old drive train parts which, like old lovers, were well-acquainted with one another's imperfections. Finally I could pay attention to the bike. I decided the brake hoods were angled just right. I dropped down to the bottom of the bar and stood up to charge a little hill. Yes! My wrists felt perfect, not cocked either way. The gears whirred happily as I tried to spin, and produced nice, positive snicks when I'd shift.

Before long, I stopped thinking about the bike and started thinking about riding.

(...To be continued...)

