

# Pedal Press

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

www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc/

## Editor's Letter

As I write this, it's forty degrees, but it was a gorgeous day. Not a cloud in sight all day, and we rode 45 miles. That northwest wind had a bite to it, and we all were a bit chilly at the end, but what a day!

More amazing by far were the eighty degree afternoons a couple of weeks ago. When we put last month's *Pedalpress* together, the weather had just started to warm up. None of us would have likely dreamed that we'd get the string of warm weather that we did. I can't recall so many really warm days in late February and early March.

Even the mountain bikes came out. We visited Fort Custer one thirty degree day after the heat wave broke, and found the trails were in the best condition we've ever seen. No mud at all, very little sand, terrific traction. Mighty rare for this time of year, but it's been dry, no doubt about it.

The mail really gets me thinking about great rides too. We get lots of ride brochures here, no doubt the result of sharing of rider lists between lots of clubs and organizations. We've got Dalmac applications, Blossomtime applications, applications for the Annual 24 Hour Challenge, four or five rides in Indiana, a Do-Dah Parade entry form, newsletters from the Grand Rapids Rapid Wheelmen, the Lansing Tri-County Bike Club, the League of American Bicyclists' Year 2000 Almanac, newsletters from Traverse City and Detroit area clubs, and a whole bunch more.

Yes, the season is nearly upon us. By the time you read this, daylight savings time will have begun, which means the KBC regular weekly rides begin, and there's enough daylight after work (for those who work regular daytime jobs anyway) to do real rides. Randy Putt's ride calendar returns with this issue.

Frankly, we'd rather ride when it's in the fifties and sixties than when it's in the 90's anyway, so this time of year is our favorite anyway. Can't resist making as big a ride as time and temperature allow a part of every weekend.

We've heard several people talk about new or special rides they are planning, the first two of which appear in this issue. Please mail your ride information to me at 1525 Merrill, Kalamazoo, MI 49008, call me at 388-5045, or email [Kirkdoug@aol.com](mailto:Kirkdoug@aol.com)

- Doug Kirk

## Coming Events

**April 29** The "W" Ride. The County-wide ride. We guarantee no one gets lost. Ride out to the start if 48 miles doesn't seem like enough. See page 2 for details.

**May 4** Grattan Race Series begins. Bicycle road racing for beginners and experts on a 2 mile automobile racetrack, closed to motor vehicles, Thursday evenings all summer. Northeast of Grand Rapids. If you have any interest in road racing, this is for you. Call 616-241-1969, or email [mss321@aol.com](mailto:mss321@aol.com)

**May 7** 20th Annual Blossomtime Metric Century. Berrien Springs. One of our favorite tours, especially the trademark potato soup. Very scenic, thousands of fruit trees. Call 616-471-8445 or point your computer to [www.blossomtime.com](http://www.blossomtime.com)

**May 13** Kal-Haven Trail Blazer XVI. 20, 40, 62, and 100 mile routes from Kalamazoo to South Haven and back on roads or on the trail itself. Shuttle service available. Kalamazoo registration at Central High School on N. Drake Rd, by H. Ave. begins at 7:00 am.

## Daylight Savings Time Begins

According to published reports in the national media, bicyclists all over the country are swooning in rapturous anticipation of this year's magic date, April 2, when daylight savings time begins.

One notable exception is Paul "infrared-eyes" VanSweden, alias The Elder, who was heard to comment, "I can see just fine, it's not dark yet, c'mon, it's only ten more miles to Three Rivers."



## The "W" Ride

*(Here's a great idea for a ride, so simple I wonder why no one thought of it before.)*

Have you ever said to yourself, "Boy, I really enjoy these KBC rides," but then whined, "But there's just soooooo many turns!" Well have I got a ride for you.

There are only three roads that go straight across the entire length or width of Kalamazoo County—I-94 and US-131 come to mind right away, but who wants to ride either of those superslabs? What's the other one? W. Avenue, that's what.

The "W" Ride starts at Vicksburg High School, goes west to the Van Buren County line, then we'll turn around and ride back to Vicksburg, take a break and ride east to the Calhoun County line before returning to the start. It's pretty flat, and real, real straight.

This may not be the most scenic ride in the world. This may not be the most interesting ride in the world. But you won't get lost no matter what and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you've ridden the entire length of W. Ave. not once, but twice.

The "W" ride is 48 miles long and is Saturday, April 29, 2000 at 9:00 a.m. at Vicksburg High School. Pace will be 17-19 mph and there may be faster or slower groups too depending on who shows up. Contact me at 329-1285 or email [fswhaley@am.pnu.com](mailto:fswhaley@am.pnu.com)

- Rick Whaley

## Ride To Saugatuck

*(Another terrific ride idea. A century-plus with a nice break in the middle in a very cool town.)*

Jill and I like boats just about as much as bicycles so once a year we ride our tandem to Saugatuck to have lunch and walk the docks. This year we thought we would invite the members of the bike club to join us.

We plan to leave from the Fetzer Institute parking lot at 9:00 a.m. on June 11th. This is the Fetzer Institute 9292 W. KL Ave. not the Fetzer Center on WMU's campus. Our route will skirt the Allegan Forest, take us through a number of small towns, and include some nice long straight flat stretches where we can get a good pace line going.

We plan an hour or so to walk around Saugatuck and have lunch and then take the ferry across the river and climb Mt. Baldy for a fine view of Kalamazoo Lake and Lake Michigan. Then we will head for home. Can't pack much more into a day.

We expect the trip to take most of the day as it is a bit longer than most--about 110 miles altogether. Depending on who is riding with us, we would expect a pace of 17 to 19 miles per hour. Reserve the date now and give us a call at 375-1505 if you have questions. We will provide maps for everyone.

## April Birthdays

Christopher Barnes  
Kathy Barrett  
Claudia Cap  
Thomas Cross  
Rhonda Cross  
Ann DiJulio  
Bob Hoffman  
Ed Maring  
Will McWhorter  
Laura Tyler  
Karen Watt  
Conor Williams

## New Members

Jack Baldwin  
Kay Eddy  
Ronald Eichaker  
Bob Hoffman  
John, Marcia and Cody  
Johnson

## Memberships Expiring in April

*Know any of these folks? Give 'em a call and ask them to send in their dues.*

Scott, Mary and Dale Scott  
Aldrich  
Wiley C., Wiley, Louise,  
and George Boulding  
Elaine Daniel  
Dave DeBack  
Mark, Ann, Cara and Doug  
DiJulio  
Scott Hite & Sandy Stevens  
Ed Maring  
Joan Orman  
Dan Van Sweden

## Classified Ads

Cannondale Tandem dark green color, like new, very clean, lots of great components, size large front and medium rear. Must see and ride. \$1499. Call John & Jody Meyers at 344-8186 or 337-8212.

1994 Cannondale SuperV 3000, size large, full suspension mountain bike. Full XTR group, with titanium spoked wheelset on mavic rims and XTR hubs, color is black and purple, excellent shape, seldom ridden. \$1100. Matt Holloway 646-1004

1989 Nishiki Linear time trial bike 58cm. with smaller front wheel. Full Shimano 105 group, ridden only twice, mint condition. \$300. Matt Holloway 646-1004

**WANTED:** A child bicycle trailer in good shape AND a rear-mounted child seat. Call Tim Harris at 657-3908.

## Safe Kids Bike Rodeo May 20

The Safe Kids Coalition is sponsoring a bike rodeo for children again this year. Last year's event was a big success, with dozens of helmets given to children, and volunteers teaching kids proper riding techniques and demonstrating proper helmet fit and adjustment. Helmet adjustment/fit is extremely important, and about half the kids I see have the helmet tipped way, way too far back, providing no forehead protection at all.

The event is May 20, 2000 at Schrier Park (on Osterhout, between Oakland and Westnedge in Portage) between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm, and is sponsored by Life EMS Ambulance Service. Volunteers are certainly needed, so if you can, ride on over and give a hand. Call Brian Scribner at 373-3101 or Officer Steve Lang from the Portage Police, 324-9255.

## Peloton Prattling

Tom Cross claims that local scholars have discovered that "Kalamazoo" is an Indian word for "land of four headwinds". Who could argue??

Al Cergol says he's going to ride 10,000 miles this year, and since he and Randy Putt have signed up to ride the KVCC cross-country ride, he's got a good shot at it. Al's always looking for someone to do a few more miles.

## KBC Ride Information Form

Planning a ride? Send us the facts. Deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> 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:

## Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Approved

Regular readers will recall my involvement in the time-consuming and expensive planning for a comprehensive non-motorized transportation master plan for the City of Kalamazoo. It was therefore with some degree of anticipation that I travelled to City Hall the evening of March 20 (fittingly enough, the first day of spring) for formal presentation of our efforts to the City Commission.

I had originally thought of riding to the meeting wearing my KBC colors, but the weather was entirely uncooperative, which was just as well since it is best when in Rome to act—and look—like a Roman.

After an hour of various people haranguing the Commissioners on various and sundry topics which interested me not one wit, City Manager Pat DiGiovanni gave a very nice introduction to the Plan, which had clearly been provided to the Commissioners in advance. Mr DiGiovanni also stated that the Plan had been approved by the Planning Commission already, and was now part of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

I then got up and put in my two cents' worth, which was that it's all fine and good to have a plan, but the important thing is to execute the plan. Upon returning to my seat, I was genuinely surprised to hear several Commissioners as well as Vice-Mayor Hannah McKinney speak emotionally and knowledgeably on the sad state of our current biking facilities, the quality of our planning effort AND the importance of following through to turn the plan into reality.

Commission meetings are videotaped and broadcast on the local cable-access channels 30, 31, 32 and 33, and I was thrilled to think that John Q. Public might actually see and hear all this in the comfort of his living room!

Obviously the key is money, and some federal money has already been obtained for the first few steps (Oakland south of Parkview, extending the Kal-Haven Trail into downtown, etc. But there's still a long, long way to go. I'd like to thank fellow KBC members **Kathy Barrett**, **Joan Orman**, **Mary Hosley**, **Steve Vonderfecht** and **Dave DeRight** for their work on the plan, and also **John Thome** and **Zoltan Cohen** for attending the Commission meeting.

- Doug Kirk

## What Is Tea-21?

TEA-21 is a new federal law that has some specific provisions which should impact design considerations for bicycle access and facilities nationally. Below is a summary of some of those provisions.

"Bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by each metropolitan planning organization and State." (Section 1202(a) of TEA-21)

"Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction and transportation facilities, except where bicycle and pedestrian use are not permitted." (Section 1202(a) of TEA-21)

"Transportation plans and projects shall provide due consideration for safety and contiguous routes for bicyclists and pedestrians." (Section 1202(a) of TEA-21)

"In any case where a highway bridge deck is being replaced or rehabilitated with Federal financial participation, and bicyclists are permitted on facilities at or near each end of such bridge, and the safe accommodation of bicyclists can be provided at reasonable cost as part of such replacement or rehabilitation, then such bridge shall be so replaced or rehabilitated as to provide such safe accommodations." (23 U.S.C. Section 217)

"The Secretary shall not approve any project or take any regulatory action under this title that will result in the severance of an existing major route or have significant adverse impact on the safety for nonmotorized transportation traffic and light motorcycles, unless such project or regulatory action provides for a reasonable alternate route or such a route exists." (U.S.C. Section 109(n))

Congress clearly intends for bicyclists and pedestrians to have safe, convenient access to the transportation system and sees every transportation improvement as an opportunity to enhance the safety and convenience of the two modes. Bicyclists and pedestrians should be included as a matter of routine, and the decision to not accommodate them should be the exception rather than the rule. There must be exceptional circumstances for denying bicycle and pedestrian access either by prohibition or by designing highways that are incompatible with safe, convenient walking and bicycling.

-From: Todd Scott email: luckyf@concentric.net

## April Ride Calendar

**ALL WEEKDAY RIDES** (*even the Tour de Gull*)  
**START AT 6:15 PM IN APRIL.**

Yes!! April means daylight savings time, longer days, and warmer weather. In other words, the riding season arrives, along with KBC's weekly ride calendar.

The **Monday Ride** at Texas Drive Park will consist of four ride groups in April which should provide a pace to suit riders of all abilities:

- 15-20 mile group at 10-12 mph (will start in May or June),
- 15-20 mile group at 12-15 mph led by Mike + Sherri Higgins + Cliff Muller,
- 25-30 mile group at 16-18 mph led by Terry O'Connor and Dale Krueger,
- 25-30 mile group at 19-20 mph led by Larry Kissinger and/or Randy Putt,
- 25-30 mile group at 20+ mph no leader yet.

The 10-15 mph groups will generally ride the same route and the 25-30 mile groups will typically ride the same route. The 10-15 mph groups are recommended to new riders. For more experienced riders who are new to the club the 16-18 mph groups is recommended. The ride leaders make every attempt at keeping each group together although the 20+ mph group may not stay together the whole ride.

The **Tuesday Ride** starts at Breakaway Bicycles on Romence Rd in Portage. The ride is led by Paul Wells and consists of one group that rides 25-30 miles at 16-18 mph. Check this ride out. It is a friendly group.

The **Wednesday** ride meets at the Kal-Haven Trail parking lot. KBC offers three ride groups:

- 10-15 mile fitness group at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail (to start in May, need leaders)
- 25-35 mile group at 16-18 mph led by Bill Strome, and John & Bev Thome.
- 25-35 mile group at 20+ mph led by Zolton Cohen.

The fitness ride at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail is a new ride and will start in May. This ride needs ride leaders to make it a go. We can always use additional/substitute ride leaders for the other 2 rides also.

The **Wednesday Hammerfest** will start at Kal-Haven Trail Parking lot at 6 or 6:15 pm when daylight savings time kicks in. The pace of the ride is typically greater than

by Ride Captain Randy Putt

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 when people's heart rates exceed their fitness levels 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.

If evening rides do not fit into your schedule, give Thursday mornings a try. Bryon Bierema from the Borgess Fitness Center is starting a new ride from the Borgess Fitness Center on Gull Rd (the old Nazareth College Rec Center). Meet in the parking lot at 8 AM on Thursdays to ride for 1 hour. No pace has been established for this ride.

Kathy Barrett is going to lead a **Women's Ride** on **Thursdays starting in May at 6:00 pm** from the Texas Drive Park—same spot as the Monday night ride. The idea is to ride at a moderate pace and let women learn more about riding, especially in groups, with other women. Please contact Kathy at 388-5045 if you have questions or could serve as a substitute leader.

The **Friday Tour de Gull** meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg for a ride around Gull Lake (27 miles). This ride typically consists of two groups:

- 16-18 mph group (need ride leaders)
- 19+ mph group led by Randy Putt and Richard Walter.

We can always use additional/substitute ride leaders. The route for this ride is well established so the ride leader job is easy. Give it a try. There has been some interest from club members in establishing a 13-15 mph group for this ride. If you are interested, please contact me.

**Weekends.** Meet at the KVCC parking lot on Saturdays at 11:00 am. and Sundays at 12 noon for 30-60 mile rides. There will be no designated ride leaders. Those riders who show up will determine the route, distance, and pace. There has been a ride on

# April

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 11:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>2</b> KVCC-12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance. Multiple groups likely.	<b>3</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph 6:15 20+mph	<b>4</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	<b>5</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trail-head 6:15 20+mph 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph	<b>6</b> Borgess Fitness Center Ride, Gull Rd (Nazareth College). 8:00 am. Riders set pace	<b>7</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:15 18-21mph	<b>8</b> KVCC 11:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>9</b> KVCC-12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance. Multiple groups likely.	<b>10</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph 6:15 20+mph	<b>11</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	<b>12</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trail-head 6:15 20+mph 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph	<b>13</b> Borgess Fitness Center Ride, Gull Rd (Nazareth College). 8:00 am. Riders set pace	<b>14</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:15 18-21mph	<b>15</b> KVCC 11:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>16</b> KVCC-12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance. Multiple groups likely.	<b>17</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph 6:15 20+mph	<b>18</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	<b>19</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trail-head 6:15 20+mph 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph	<b>20</b> Borgess Fitness Center Ride, Gull Rd (Nazareth College). 8:00 am. Riders set pace	<b>21</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:15 18-21mph	<b>22</b> KVCC 11:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.
<b>23/30</b> KVCC-12:00 noon Riders present decide pace and distance. Multiple groups likely.	<b>24</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph 6:15 20+mph	<b>25</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles 6:00 17-19mph	<b>26</b> Wed Night Ride Kal-Haven Trail-head 6:15 20+ mph 6:15 10-15mph 6:15 16-18mph	<b>27</b> Borgess Fitness Center Ride, Gull Rd (Nazareth College). 8:00 am. Riders set pace	<b>28</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop 6:15 18-21mph	<b>29</b> KVCC 11:00 am. Riders present determine pace and distance.

## Kalamazoo Bike Club Board Meeting Minutes

Date: March 14, 2000. Location: United Way Building, 709 South Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo. Time: 6:30 pm. Present: Gerry Blohm, Al Cergol, Zolton Cohen, Doug Kirk, Randy Putt, Richard Walter, Larry Kissinger, Rick Whaley, Greg Bauman.

Doug and Richard reported contact by the Safe Kids Coalition, which asked for volunteers to help staff an event at Schrier Park on May 20th. (See page 3. -Ed.)

Zolton submitted a note received from the Kalamazoo Youth Ministry thanking KBC for the donation of two bicycles, which will be used by their clients.

Several people who had received complimentary KBC memberships due to their work on the Board of Directors voluntarily waived this privilege and will pay yearly dues.

Randy Putt has spoken with Bryon Bierema at the Borgess Fitness Center (on the grounds of the old Nazareth athletic complex). Bryon has started a Thursday morning ride (See ride calendar. -Ed.) and plans others, including a trail ride on the weekends. Randy has been working with Bryon to see if KBC and the Borgess Bike Club can get together for some joint rides.

Randy also reported contact from several people in the Battle Creek area about any KBC rides that start on the East Side of town. He directed them to the Friday night Tour de Gull, starting at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg. He also reported he has been getting some volunteers to lead rides this summer, especially for some of the more moderately paced rides.

There was discussion about the start times for the evening rides in the summer. After weighing the advantages of a later start time and the possibility of picking up more riders who cannot make a 6:00 pm. ride, and the disadvantages of starting - and ending - later in the evening, the Board decided to compromise and start the evening rides at 6:15 pm sharp for the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday rides. The Friday Tour de Gull will move to 6:30 in May.

Richard reported that the Flowerfest committee manned a booth at the recent Flowerfest show and passed out many membership and Flowerfest brochures.

There was discussion about the possibility of changing the website address in order to make it easier to access. The current address is a bit long and complicated, and a commercial site address (".com") would be shorter and more specific to the bike club. This might make it easier for out-of-towners to locate. However, as there would be an approximate cost of \$275.00 a year for this service, the board decided that it would not act on this change at this time. Larry reported that there has been an average of 7 "hits" a day on the site.

There was discussion about the announced building of a velodrome in Rochester Hills by Detroit, and KBC's role in helping provide funding for this facility. At this time, there was no move to donate any money to the velodrome.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.  
Submitted by Zolton Cohen, KBC Secretary

### Kid's Kal-Haven Trail Ride

Gerry Blohm is pretty sure he'll be doing a kid's ride weekly on the Kal-Haven Trail Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. starting in May. The idea is for parents and kids to ride as little or as much as they want.

Because the pace of the kids will likely vary widely, Gerry anticipates that each parent will be responsible for keeping track of his/her kids. We hope to have more on this next month.

### KBC Ride And Info Line Up And Running

Kathy Barrett, who is in charge of the KBC ride/information line, tells us that this will be up and running again for the season right after daylight savings time starts April 2. Kathy's going out of town the week before, and it might take a couple of days after her return to get caught up.

The ride line has recorded information about KBC rides and is a good resource to get the latest information about rides, especially rides we get too late to include in the *Pedalpress*.

## Be A Ride Leader

The weather is becoming more spring-like, and the KBC ride calendar is starting in April. KBC had a great group of ride leaders last year and the 1999 ride season was as good or better than 1998. Attendance at the rides continues to increase. With the increased ride attendance we need more rider leaders for the 2000 season to accommodate more and larger groups. The more ride leaders we have the better. Volunteer to lead some rides. It's fun. The routes are well established for the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday rides. Give it a shot. The club will be happy to help get you started.

There was a large rider participation the 16+ mph ride groups and these groups are well established for the three weekly ride nights. Although there was a good 10-15 mph ride group on Monday evenings, participation on other nights has been limited for riders at this pace. In order make additional 10-15 mph ride groups a part of the KBC ride calendar KBC needs you 10-15 mph riders to participate and to help lead the rides. Once a group gets started it feeds on itself.

Some members of the Portage Pedalers, a seniors riding group from Portage, led the 10-12 mph group on Monday evenings for most of the 1999 ride season. We hope to continue this group this season. There will be more info about this group in future newsletters.

If anyone is interested in leading rides this year, please give me a call at 649-1814. I will be more than happy to discuss how to lead rides with you. In fact, most any experienced KBC rider would be happy to discuss ride leader responsibilities with you. You do not have to wait to be asked. No experience is necessary, just the willingness to ride with a great group of people who enjoy riding their bikes.

## KBC Donates Bicycles

KBC donated two bicycles to the Open Door in February as part of the KBC's program to return used bicycles to the community to promote cycling as a form of recreation and a mode of transportation.

The Open Door, located in downtown Kalamazoo, is part of the Kalamazoo Youth Ministry and serves homeless men 17 to 35 years of age who are in need of help getting their personal lives redirected. The Open Door does this by attending to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of these men.

The bicycles will be used by the residents as transportation to work and around the community. The residence is run by Ron Bush, a fellow club member.

KBC would like to thank Jo Cornell and Bill Strome for donating the bikes to the Club. We also want to thank Paul Wells of Breakaway Bicycles for his help in making the bikes road-worthy and donating his time and the needed parts.

KBC is looking for more bikes to donate in the future. If you have a used bike in good condition or one that can be repaired for a small amount of money give us a call. Any size or type of bike is acceptable. We will see that it gets to someone that will appreciate it.

- Richard Walter

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## "Club Fellowship" on Saturday Afternoons

Keith Little from Freedom Reaction has volunteered to run a KBC 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, MI 49009. The proposed "Club Fellowship" consists of the following activities: - maintenance lessons, - bicycle safety instruction, - helmet sizing.

Keith also plans groups rides for all riding abilities and all ages and will serve refreshments and provide daycare. Keith promises fun for all

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



## Road Test (Continued)

by Axel Kleat

*(In last month's exciting installment, Axel got out on his road bike for the first ride of the year and had a problem with a new chain and old gears, and with a seat so high he was talking soprano. -Ed.)*

Before returning to the road test we began last month, I just can't resist a few comments about bike tests in general.

Reading bike tests in magazines always amuses me. I smile as the tester strives gamely to find a new combination of adjectives to describe the qualities of the latest, greatest bike he's ever ridden...at least at this *price point!* As far as I'm concerned, all reasonably good bikes feel about the same. I know, I know, aluminum is supposed to be stiffer and a bit lighter, good steel and titanium have that magic ride, and carbon fiber can be layered to give the perfect combination of strength and resiliency.

But the pros ride whatever the team gives them, and they do 20,000 miles a year, ride up and down impossible grades, and sprint at 45 mph, right? You ever hear about their frame letting them down? Wheel or tires maybe, but never the bike itself. You never, ever read about George Hincapie or Frankie Andreu claiming frame flex allowed Mario Cipolini to nip him in the sprint.

You think the magazine guys somehow know more? Hah! Lately I've read tests referring to a bike's "control center" and even its "cockpit." Give me a break! If the thing fits right, has a good seat, you like the ride, and the parts work well, that's what counts. A good frame is a good frame, and a new bike is automatically better than an old bike. That's the real deal. If bike dealers wanted to sell more bikes, they'd figure out how to get us out on lots more genuine test rides.

But I digress. This *is* supposed to be a road test we're finishing up here, even if it is a test of my own very used bike and the first ride of the year, right? And the roads are dry! Cool! I always hate it when I've cleaned, polished and shined everything right down to the spokes over the winter, and the first ride sprays wet crud all over my efforts. My legs feel pretty strong too.

So, back out on the road, I figure I better be doing some tests, even though there's rarely anything remotely objective in the magazines. I test my spin on a downhill stretch and find it's rustier than the my old chain. But when I stand up there's some real push in the old thighs! I crank it up to maybe 30 on a descent—the frame and fork feel as solid as ever—and toss out the anchor. Yup—brakes are good. No lumps in the wheels either.

Strange how that seat height seems to be coming down as I ride. Could the seatpost be sinking into the frame? Maybe the pinch bolt isn't tight enough. But no! A quick check shows it hasn't moved. Maybe my gams stretched out on that one hill I charged back there.

Okay, finally time to turn into the wind, pick a low gear, and start learning how to spin again, same as every year. Hands on top of the bars, elbows bent enough to cheat the wind a little. Back flat, heels low on the downstroke, flip the pedals across the bottom, try to give a little lift on the way up. Keep that fat ass planted nice and firm on the saddle. Resist that urge to upshift. Spin, spin, spin, till I just can't stand it, then spin a few minutes more. Finally I just can't stand it another second.

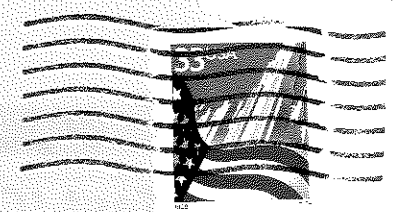
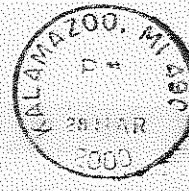
I stab at the shifter as I stand, and shift the chain right on past the big ring. Damn! No matter how carefully I adjust the front derailleur on the workstand, I mutter to myself as I reach down to grab the chain and plop it back where it belongs, it's never right on the road. Like any good cyclist, I swipe my greasy glove on my tights then stand and pound heavily on the pedals a few times, and before long it's time to turn around for the tailwind home.

Of course, everything works and feels much finer with the wind pushing me happily along, and of course wind noise is non-existent, so I get to listen to all those muted whirrs and clicks that a well-oiled machine produces. As I'm daydreaming my way along, I realize that somehow the saddle is clearly so low that I stop to raise it even before I get home. Unbelievable.

Later, as I reflect on my road test, I realize that while the bike had a few little odds and ends to get straightened out, the real test was not of the bike, but of me. And what I can tell you is that the pieces are all there, and they still function. But some parts are showing their age, and like last year's component group, replacements are really hard to find.



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



**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

Expires 2001/02  
**Phil & Jini Caruso**  
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Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent's Signature (if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Interested in working on KBC Events?  Yes  No

Rider Category: Fitness  Casual  Competitive

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