



## President's Letter

Where has this month gone? July has almost left us, and that means only a few more months of nice warm biking weather. At least the kind I enjoy the most.

As you are reading this newsletter Flowerfest 2001 will be history. Club members have been working long hours to make this event the success that it is. A big thanks to everyone that graciously gave of their time and skills.

If you were not able to help out this year, or in the past, why not let someone know now that you would be interested in pitching in next year? We would love your help! KBC needs you!

I hope everyone is enjoying the club rides. I have only been to a few so far this year, as work just does not seem to let up. I have meet some really neat riders and I really am listening to what you are saying. Everything I hear, I write down and it is brought up at a future meeting for discussion. Mostly, thanks for the positive feedback.

I am proud to be your link to the Kalamazoo Bike Club. It is a very rewarding experience. See below for our upcoming 30th anniversary celebration!

- Karen Sue Ouellette

## KBC's 30th Anniversary Coming Up, So Let's Eat, Ride, & Party

Somebody figured out that KBC is 30 years old this year! Seems like a pretty good excuse for a ride...or a party. Or maybe a ride AND a party. We don't have all the details worked out yet, but the Board is planning to have a Saturday morning ride, the most likely date is September 22.

The plan is to meet at Markin Glen Park at 10:00 in the morning, ride for 2 - 3 hours (we'll likely have two or three different distances), followed by a pizza picnic delivered by whichever pizzeria has delivery people on bicycles (just kidding). **None of this is firmed up yet, so watch next month's issue for more information.**

- Doug Kirk

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## KBC's Wish List

That all KBC members mark their calendars and plan to attend the next KBC meeting—see below.

That someone volunteer to get KBC members' results from the Grattan training races to the *Pedalpress* Editor.

## Next KBC Meeting August 14

The next regular monthly KBC meeting will be held August 14, 2001, the second Tuesday of the month, just like always, at 7:00 pm at the Jaqua Realty Building located at 414 W. Milhan, about two blocks west of Westnedge Ave. in Portage.

There's lots to talk about, including the anniversary party, how this past Flowerfest worked out, our finances, and Pedalpress costs. **EVERYONE** is welcome to attend.

## Vineyard Classic September 9

The first of the local fall tours is the Vineyard Classic, Sunday, September 9th in Paw Paw. This is a great ride, with good good and mostly deserted roads.

No doubt a group of us who think a metric century isn't enough will meet at KVCC at 8:00 that morning to ride out to the start of the tour.

Call 657-6309 for more information.

## Flowerfest 2001: Two Big Thank Yous

As I write this, there are only 362 days until Flowerfest 2002, but I prefer to live in the past, at least for a little while longer. Although the final attendance figures need to be tallied, approximately 350 riders participated in this year's Flowerfest. This was down from last year's total of about 425 riders, but still a respectable showing. More importantly, from my perspective as the course manager for this year's Flowerfest, no one is still riding aimlessly around the back roads of southwest Michigan trying to find their way back to KVCC and/or trying to find a new route to China.

As in previous years, the courses for this year's Flowerfest were finally determined a little more than a week before the ride. It is always a challenge trying to make sure that our routes avoid the ever present summer seal coating, and this year was a particular challenge, since there were numerous areas on the courses that were scheduled to be seal coated about the time of our ride. My own particular nightmare was that 8th Street up to O Avenue would be freshly seal coated, which would have given all of our riders a little going away present for the last few miles of their rides. As it turned out, only the riders on the 100 mile route had to put up with about a half mile of almost unavoidable seal coating. Although we could have had sent the century riders on M-43 for about 3 miles in order to avoid this, this didn't seem to be a very viable solution. Thanks should go to Jim Wyrick, once again, for his mapmaking skills.

Credit for a well marked course should go out to the road marking crew (in reverse alphabetical order; after all, my last name begins with "W") of Paul Stevens, Randy Putt, Terry O'Connor, Dave Newman, Cliff Muller, Tom Cross, Zolton Cohen, and Greg Bouwman. They sacrificed their Thursday evening before the ride by busily spray painting the roads of Kalamazoo and Van Buren County for the greater good of our Flowerfest riders. Additional credit should also go to Tom Cross, whose inspirational pavement messages to Richard Wolf just south of Lawton, certainly must have motivated Richard to ride the ride of his life.

- Rick Whaley

On behalf of the Flowerfest Bicycle Tour organizing committee, I would like to publicly say "Thank You" to all the club members who volunteered their time to help put on the Flowerfest Bicycle Tour: Chris Barnes, Marion Barnes, Jack Bley, Jose Camargo, Jinni Carusoe, Phil Carusoe, Bruce Deedee, Ann DeJulio, Mark DeJulio, Sherri Jones, Celine Keizer, Amy Lehman, Gary Lehman, Michael McKee, Karen-Sue Ouellette, Steve Secondi, Lou Santos, Paul Stevens, Nancy Summers, John Thome, Bev Thome, Joe Torre, Victor Van Fleet, Judy Van Fleet, and the Hammerhead Spinners. When you see these people, tell them you appreciate their efforts.

Also, I would like to thank the local bicycle shops that provided a bicycle mechanic for the day of the ride: Alfred E. Bike, Breakaway Bicycles, Freedom Recreation, Milwood Schwinn, Village Cyclery. **Support your local bike shops.**

Finally, I would like to thank the Kalamazoo County Radio Club for their support during the day of the ride.

- Dave Newman

## August Birthdays

Jinny Ahrens  
Kathy Appledorn  
Stephen Barnes  
Kara Linne Barone  
Greg Bouwman  
Bob Burke  
Joseph Corbett  
Melissa Corbett  
Stephen Dunyak  
Ken Fouts  
John Johnson  
Denny Morrison  
Jill Stewart  
Phillip Vander Weg  
Matthew Wells

## New Members

Ryan Breisach  
Laura Finley  
Peter Finley  
Abbey Lawford  
Emily Mattes  
John Mulac  
Phillip & Judith Vander Weg

## Anybody want to organize a criterium?

An absolutely perfect location would be the new road WMU has just paved for its Research Park at the corner of Parkview and Drake Roads. Ride through there sometime. It's over a mile around, there are no side roads, no nasty curbs, and it's flat with sweeping corners.

## Expiring Memberships

*(The Editor is given to understand that sometimes people's names appear in this list even though they recently paid their dues. This problem is due to the time gap created between the mail being picked up at the Post Office, then delivered to the Database Manager, then entered into the computer. Just to add even more delay, the information is sent to the Editor on the 15th each month, and two more weeks pass before the PedalPress is written, printed, folded, labeled, and mailed. We apologize to those folks who pay up only to find themselves listed here.)*

Jinny Ahrens  
 Brad Cosgrove  
 Laura Cosgrove  
 Carl Degen and Family  
 Stacey Flinn  
 Sherrie Glas  
 Robert Hyams  
 Tom and Shari Labrenz  
 John Looman  
 Andrew Mitchell  
 Ashley Mitchell  
 Donald Mitchell  
 Renee Mitchell  
 Ray Murphy and Family  
 David Newman  
 Andrew Price  
 Jim and Sally Van Buren  
 Rick Whaley  
 Jim Wilson

## KBC July Meeting Minutes

Present: Zolton Cohen, Karen Sue Ouellette, Tom Keizer, Celine Keizer, Greg Bouwman, Steve Secondi, Dave Newman, Paul Stevens, Doug Kirk.

Paul Stevens, KBC Treasurer, and Doug Kirk, KBC newsletter editor, started discussions about the rising cost of printing and delivering the newsletter. The total for last year was approximately \$1400.00 for printing and \$600.00 for mailing. In the first half of this year, due to increased membership in the club and other factors such as increased printing costs, KBC has spent \$900.00 for printing and \$446.00 for mailing. Extrapolated out for the entire year, this would amount to approximately \$2700.00 for newsletter printing and distribution versus \$2000.00 for the previous year. Doug Kirk will check with the printer to see if costs can be lowered at that end.

There was discussion related to this issue regarding the possibility of delivering the newsletters via e-mail. This would cut down dramatically on printing and mailing costs, but may bring on another set of problems concerning members without email access and management of the system.

A local sports clothing outfitter contacted KBC recently to ask if they could run advertising in the newsletter. While advertising would help defray some of the newsletter expenses, it also brings up issues such as the loss of editorial space and giving equal advertising opportunities to the many bike shop and other corporate sponsors who have been so generous to the club over the years. The Board decided to table the topic of newsletter advertising and ad coupons until a later meeting.

Paul Stevens brought to the Board a request from the annual Portage Bikeway Ride, scheduled for October 14, 2001, for the same level of financial and volunteer support KBC has supplied in the past. The \$300.00 request includes rider insurance and water bottles, with the rest earmarked as a donation for maintenance of the Portage Bikeway lanes. The Board unanimously approved this expenditure.

Flowerfest has approximately 120 riders pre-registered for the Flowerfest Tour this year, more than 100 less than last year at this time. Saturn is holding an open house for the Saturn Bicycling Team riders on Saturday, July 21st, between 10 and 4 at the Saturn dealership on 9th Street in Oshtemo. There will be a pig roast at this event.

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, there was a proposal to set up an "Anniversary Ride," tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 22nd, at 10:00 AM. This ride would include a 30-mile route, along with several shorter routes, with pizza and possibly sub sandwiches, and apple cider, to be delivered and served at noon after the ride. A possible site for the event would be Markin Glen Park on North Westnedge, with the rides to head north and west from there.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

- Zolton B. Cohen, KBC Secretary

# June & July Mountain Bike Race Results

by Cheryl Olson

*PedalPress* publishes results of KBC members in area (or regional or national) races. Cheryl Olson and Chris Barnes supply information they obtain to the Editor, who will try to get the information straight. PLEASE notify the Editor of mistakes or omissions. We'll try to list upcoming races too. PLEASE, PLEASE help Cheryl and Chris out and notify them of any results you know of. Call Chris Barnes at 327-8972 or email [barnesmc@net-link.net](mailto:barnesmc@net-link.net). Or contact Cheryl at 616-664-6912 or [caolson@resourceocean.com](mailto:caolson@resourceocean.com).

## Mountain Bike Race Results

### 6/17 Whiskey Creek XC

Name	Class	Place
Mark Olson	Elite 35 & Under	11th
John Meyers	Elite 35 & up	2nd
Cheryl Olson	Expert Women	5th
Andrew Weir	Expert 25-29	4th
Mike Jones	Expert 35-44	1st
Scott Steurer	Expert 35-44	4th
Richard Neumann	Singlespeed	2nd

### 6/24 TK Lawless Time Trial

Name	Class	Place
John Meyers	35 & up	2nd
Richard Neumann	Singlespeed	5th

### 7/1 Bloomer XC

Name	Class	Place
Mike Jones	Expert 35-44	1st
Scott Steurer	Expert 35-44	8th
Richard Neumann	Singlespeed	2nd

### 7/8 Pando XC

Name	Class	Place
Mark Olson	Elite	13th
Cheryl Olson	Expert Women	3rd

## August Mountain Bike Races

### 8/5 Big M XC

For information, race to [www.tailwind.net](http://www.tailwind.net)

### 8/11 12 Hours of Pando

Questions? Point your browser to [www.funpromotions.com](http://www.funpromotions.com)

### 8/17 - 8/19 Mt. Snow -NORBA

Maybe you'll show up on OLN  
Steer yourself to [www.usacycling.org](http://www.usacycling.org)

### 8/19 Ithaca XC

Find out where the heck Ithaca is at  
[www.funpromotions.com](http://www.funpromotions.com)

### 8/26 Fort Custer Time Trial-

Hey! You could ride out to the race!  
Learn more at [www.tailwind.net](http://www.tailwind.net)

## Road & BMX Racing News

By Chris Barnes

Richard Wolf was a lone wolf road racer in July, doing two criteriums on the July 7th and 8th weekend. On the 7th Richard was in South Bend where he placed 6th in the 45 minute criterium after missing the breakaway. Not a bad finish considering the 26 MPH average. Next Richard ventured to Midland for the Michigan State criterium where he took 10th in a pretty big and fast field. Unfortunately, he didn't learn from the South Bend Race as he watched another break go up the road. Next up for Richard, Mike Jones, Chris Barnes, Greg Bouwman and any other nutty takers, is the Grand Blanc Road Race on July 28th. This is a great course (i.e. no big hills) and a really well run event.

Last year a lot of us slugged it out in the rain for a power bar prime (sprint) and a cold egg McMuffin.

Stephen Barnes continues to burn up the the BMX scene by usually placing first in the weekly races in Wayland. Stephen also brought home two-3rd places and a 1st place in the Michigan championship qualifier series. This series travels around the state to different BMX tracks and features the best kids in the state. You haven't really experienced

# August Ride Calendar

by Ride Captain Randy Putt

## ALL WEEKDAY RIDES START AT 6:15 PM

**IN AUGUST.** The Monday Ride at Texas Drive Park consists of five ride groups which should provide a pace to suit riders of all abilities:

- 15-20 mile group at 10-12 mph to Schoolcraft; need leaders,
- 15-20 mile group at 12-15 mph to Schoolcraft for ice cream, led by Mike and Sherri Higgins, and Cliff Muller,
- 25-30 mile group at 16-18 mph led by Terry O'Connor and Fred James,
- 25-30 mile group at 19-20 mph led by Randy Putt, Rick Whaley, Greg Bouwman, Tom Cross, and Larry Kissinger,
- 25-30 mile group at 20+ mph, need ride leader.
- the Paceline Skills Ride at 15-20 mph (25-30 miles) led by Doug Kirk. This is KBC's newest ride, also known as the DRAGS (Decent Riders Attempting to Go Slow.) Learn/practice proper paceline bike handling and drafting technique at a recovery ride pace, around 18 - 19 mph.

The turnout on Mondays and Wednesdays has been tremendous. Several riders from each group are typically present with as many as 50 riders all together.

The 10-15 miles groups will generally ride the same route and are recommended for new riders. More experienced riders may like the 16-18 mph groups. The faster groups ride the same route. We always need additional ride leaders for all the ride groups. The ride leaders make every attempt at keeping each group together although the 20+ mph groups may fragment.

The Tuesday Ride starts at Breakaway Bicycles on Romence Road in Portage. The ride is led by Paul Wells and consists of one group that rides 25-30 miles at 16-18 mph. This is a nice, friendly ride.

The Wednesday ride meets at the Kal-Haven Trail Parking lot. We offer three ride groups:

- 25-35 mile group at 16-18 mph led by Bill Strome,
- 25-35 mile group at 20+ mph led by Zolton Cohen.

In addition to these two rides, the Wednesday **Hammerfest** also starts at Kal-Haven Trail Parking lot at 6 PM. The pace of the ride is greater than 20+ mph, and lately has averaged as high as 25 mph. The route goes to Bloomingdale and back (46 miles). No maps are available for this ride. This group is generally large (20 - 40 riders) and consists of **racers and other assorted masochists**. There is no designated ride leader. The group routinely fragments into smaller groups, riders get spit out the back of the pack, so the riders rarely finish together. This ride is

hard and is not suitable for inexperienced riders.

**The new, co-ed Thursday Ride** is be more laid back than most KBC rides, more social and relaxed. The ride is about 20 miles, at 15 - 16 mph. Members are encouraged to bring spouses or significant others to ride at this pace. The ride leaves Texas Drive Park at 6:15 pm. Kathy Barrett needs alternate ride leaders, so please contact her at 388-5045 if you can help.

The Friday Tour de Gull meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg for a ride around Gull Lake (27 miles). We have two ride groups this year.

- 16 - 18 mph group (need ride leaders,)
- 20+ mph group led by Randy Putt, Rick Whaley, with a host of others filling in as needed. All groups follow the same route. The route for this ride is well established so the ride leader job is easy. Give it a try.

**If you are interested in being a ride leader, please contact me, Randy Putt, at 649-1814.**

Meet at the KVCC parking lot on Saturdays at 9 AM and 12 PM, and Sundays at 9 AM and 12 PM for 30-60 mile rides. There are no designated ride leaders. The riders who show up will determine the route, distance, and pace.

**Join us for the Ride Around Kalamazoo County (100 miles) on Saturday, August 18 at 8:00 AM at the KVCC parking lot near the tennis courts (corner of 8th St. and O Ave.) We'll stop about three times for food/drink, so bring money and/or food and liquids.**

**Maps for the ride are available on the KBC website ([www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc](http://www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc)).**

**This ride is lots of fun. Riders of all abilities are welcome. We plan to average about 18 mph, but could use ride leaders for other speeds. Please call Randy Putt at 649-1814 if you are interested.**

**THE CLUB CAN ALWAYS USE MORE RIDE LEADERS. PLEASE VOLUNTEER. IT'S EASY AND FUN, AND IT REALLY MAKES YOU A BETTER RIDER TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE WHOLE GROUP AND HELP THE OTHER RIDERS KEEP TOGETHER. PLEASE CALL ME AT 649-1814.**

# August

Hey folks, the days are getting shorter already, darn it. If you have any pull with the sun gods, now's the time to put it to good use

2001

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>29</b> KVCC-9:00 AND noon  Riders present decide pace and distance.	<b>30</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park  6:15 10-15 mph 6:15 16-18 mph 6:15 20+ mph Paceline Practice	<b>31</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles  6:15 17-19mph	<b>1</b> Kal-Haven Trail- head  6:15 10-15 mph 6:15 16-18 mph 6:00 Hammer- heads	<b>2</b> Co-ed Ride Texas Drive Park  6:15 pm 20 miles at 15 - 16 mph	<b>3</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop  6:15 15-16 mph 6:15 17-19 mph 6:15 18-21 mph	<b>4</b> KVCC  9:00 am AND ALSO NOON Riders present determine pace and distance
<b>5</b> KVCC  9:00 am AND ALSO NOON  Riders present determine pace and distance	<b>6</b> Recovery Ride Texas Drive Park  6:15 10-12 mph 6:15 10-15 mph 6:15 16-18 mph 6:15 20+ mph Paceline Practice	<b>7</b> Breakaway Ride Breakaway Bicycles  6:15 17-19 mph	<b>8</b> Kal-Haven Trail- head 6:15 16-18 mph 6:15 20 - 22 mph (1/2 Fast Ride) 6:00 Hammer- heads	<b>9</b> Co-ed Ride Texas Drive Park  6:15 pm 20 miles at 15 - 16 mph	<b>10</b> Tour de Gull Lake Billy's Bike Shop  6:15 15-16 mph 6:15 17-19 mph 6:15 18-21 mph	<b>11</b> KVCC  9:00 am AND ALSO NOON Riders present determine pace and distance.
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## Just A Morning Shower

**A**t 8:00 in the morning on July 6th, ten hardy souls with bicycles appeared at KVCC under gray skies for KVCC's annual Ride To South Haven. Eight singles and a tandem longed to roll freely while their riders looked up at the skies and wondered what the day held.

Putting their worries aside and reveling in the freedom of the road, all ten riders struck out for South Haven with hope for clearing skies and sadness that so many of our usual compatriots were not with us.

Soon after the group departed, the skies opened. At first there were sprinkles. At length there was a downpour. Fortunately the hard rain was brief. It tested the riders with thoughts of a quick return to dry homes, but it was brief enough that those thoughts were quickly discarded and the riders pressed on into the unknown.

The riders gave thanks that there were no worries of sunburn on this day, as they sped toward South Haven. The roads were damp, but not their spirits. The group held together, and stopped to wait for repairs to one rider's flat tire.

Once in South Haven, the riders were confronted with a car show on the main street through town. They rode to the sub shop for lunch, ignoring the small-minded comments of passers-by clearly envious of the riders' fitness, cool bikes, massive quads, and gasoline efficiency. After a tasty repast in South Haven, the riders declined to visit the ice cream shop due to the temperature and the high-strung dispositions of their trusty steeds.

Unfortunately, before beginning their return trip, the riders lost one of their number to the honorable art of berry-picking, and another to the attractions of quality time with the family. Smaller in number, but no smaller in honor and commitment to the open road, the riders set out for the return to Kalamazoo.

Once again, the riders sped over the open roads and under the gray skies like the wind rushes over the Siberian Steppe, daring the morning rain to return.

During the return trip, they regretted the absence of their erstwhile leader, Larry Kissinger (*who, it was later discovered, used the pitter patter of the rain as good and*

*sufficient cause to spend additional quality time with his mattress and pillow. -Ed.*) Larry's absence forced them to stop and actually *read the map!* The stop was brief, however, and once the riders were again secure in their knowledge of the road home, they sped on, as before.

Late in the day, after many miles, the trusty steeds were flagging, but not as badly as their riders, some were in dire need of sustenance. Joy was widespread indeed when the group happened to come upon a purveyor of frozen dairy concoctions in the remote village of Lawton. (*Lawton is REALLY out of the way from a direct route between KVCC and South Haven. - Ed.*) The remaining eight riders descended on the poor merchant like a horde of sweaty locusts, only adding to the existing confusion within the tiny shop.

However, once the icy refreshments were consumed, the riders and their wheeled vehicles were once again able to speed across the land like the gazelle before the hungry cheetah.

Seven riders arrived safely at KVCC after a magnificent day, made grander by the epic nature of the ride. They began with grave doubts about the wisdom of their trek, and finished triumphantly with the knowledge that they had been brave when others had wimped out.

- Dave Newman

## Hurry Before It's Too Late

Although some of the routes are completely full, there is still time and space to enter my favorite Michigan tour, DALMAC, a one-way ride from Lansing to St. Ignace, which takes four or five days and covers between 330 and 400 miles (depending on the route you select). Depending on options, it costs about \$140. You camp and they haul your stuff. They are amazingly well organized.

DALMAC has raised well over \$100,000 in profits over its 30 years—profits which the Tri-County Bicycle Club in Lansing has donated to all sorts of bike-oriented things, including over \$35,000 to the Kal-Haven Trail. Call Doug Kirk at 388-5045 ASAP if you need an entry form, or browse [www.biketchba.org](http://www.biketchba.org) to learn more.

# How We Spent Our Summer Vacation

by Doug Kirk

Last summer, Kathy & I found that we really enjoyed credit card bicycle touring when we rode unsupported from Kalamazoo to Keokuk, IA, where we hooked up with the KVCC cross-country bike trip for a couple of days before riding back home. We vowed long before we were home that we'd be doing as many more trips like this as we could.

Our packing list was—and is—pretty short: for the bikes, a spare tire and some chain lube in addition to a well-stocked seat pack. Anything else we'd have to borrow or buy. For time off the bike, lightweight synthetic pants and T-shirt, a spare pair of socks, sandals, and underwear, and the least possible toiletries. For riding, in addition to helmet, shoes and gloves, we took bike shorts, a jersey, arm warmers, tights, Camelbaks and a nylon windbreaker. All these things fit into bags we strapped to seatpost racks. We had no panniers. Odds and ends such as maps, wallets, glasses, and extra food fit into relatively small fanny packs.

I haven't weighed things but each of us carries less than 15 extra pounds. Panniers would be better because the weight would be lower (so the bike would handle better,) but once we got used to the extra weight, it was no problem, even in driving rainstorms and truly steep out-of-the-saddle climbs.

Last year we had the trip planned out in advance. We knew each town we'd stay in, and we knew where we'd stay. But we figured out that there was no need to plan things that carefully, and this year we left our plans as loose as we could.

We decided to visit Wisconsin, mostly because I lived there over 20 years ago and remembered the country roads fondly. So I called an old friend who said it would be no problem to leave our car at his house outside Milwaukee.

We found some excellent maps especially for bicyclists from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and a list of motels and decided to wing it. We knew we wanted to see Madison (one of the most bike-friendly towns in the country), Door County and LaCrosse, but other than these three stops, we'd figure out where we were going as we went.

We started with Door County, which sticks up into Lake Michigan north of Green Bay. It's much like northwest lower Michigan—lots of water and beautiful homes and farms. And the whole place thrives primarily on tourists

and big city folks with summer homes. Really pretty, and not too hilly. But I'd avoid it during July and August—vacation time—the word is that it gets pretty packed with gawking tourists, degrading the riding quite a bit.

Wisconsin is the dairy state, which turns out to be a huge benefit for bikers. Farmers have to get the milk out every day, no matter the weather, so virtually every road is paved—even the most rural, deserted farm roads. As we worked our way towards Madison, we found ourselves on road after road with less traffic than any paved roads I've ridden, even though we weren't more than 25 or 35 miles from cities like Milwaukee and Madison. We rode within five miles of Madison before traffic picked up. Indeed, Madison has bike routes galore, many of them along busy city streets (and some through huge parks, along lakeshores, and through the University). And a truly gratifying number of people ride their bikes. But the biggest difference was that drivers there have come to accept cyclists. The lesson is clear: as bicyclists ride more and more, especially in populated areas, we gain further acceptance from the motorized masses.

From Madison, we rode west, and into the biggest surprise of the trip. Even though we'd been warned, we were amazed at two things—how absolutely beautiful the farms and the land are, and how truly steep and challenging the terrain is. Imagine multiple 80 - 100 mile days that include climbing 6th St. hill 25 or 30 times. No kidding! Some of them are lots longer, and some are a good deal steeper. At the pace one ascends these hills, there's plenty of time to take in the scenery, let me assure you. As far as we could tell there are NO remotely flat roads anywhere in south-central or western Wisconsin except along the Mississippi River. When leaving LaCrosse to go east, away from the river, we rode uphill for over a half hour without a break. And once at the top, that's when the HUGE rollers start. Forty-five mph downhill, eight mph uphill. We've ridden Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Tennessee, and North Carolina. This was as challenging as anything, the climbs steeper than anything out west, and as steep as anything we've encountered anywhere.

But Wisconsin is a whole lot closer. The scenery is simply outstanding, with picture postcard farm scenes in every direction. The people are just as friendly as can be. Prices were reasonable. But the best part for sure was riding down roads where, for hour after hour, a car might come by every half hour or so—likely as not, heading the other way. We'll be going back, and may try to organize a small group to come along. Interested?



## Dog Days Of Summer

by Axel Kleat

I've been riding here for nearly twenty years, and it's safe to say I know most every paved road worth knowing within thirty miles. I know the hilly routes, the flat routes, the bumps, where the dogs are, where I've had flat tires, you name it. But every time I travel, I'm reminded how much I enjoy pedaling places I've never ridden before. And there's no better time than July, when the days are long and it's never cold, to head out on those all-day rides that actually go far enough from home to find someplace new.

And that was the plan a couple of weekends ago. An early morning thunderstorm had blown through, and the cooler air that followed took away a big chunk of the oppressive humidity of the day before, drying the roads quickly. The air had that crisp, clean feel that only comes after all that electricity zaps the atmosphere again and again. It was perfect weather for a long, long ride to find some new roads. Just as we headed out, the sun peeked out. Before long we were on our way to Lake Michigan, but further up the coast than usual.

The first twenty miles were roads I've ridden hundreds of times, but eventually we were able to pick some asphalt I was a little less familiar with. And after another ten or fifteen miles of less familiar stuff, we finally turned north on a road I honestly couldn't remember having traveled before.

Allegan County is pretty rural out there. The land's too sandy for serious farming, though some hardy souls do work the patches of decent soil between the swamps, sand, small lakes, woods, and houses. The land's pretty, and not very populated. If you stay off the main roads, there's not much traffic, even on a gorgeous July Saturday afternoon, so mostly we could take up the entire lane without a thought, and hear the occasional car well before it got close.

Riding doesn't get much better. On our left, we were passing a relatively prosperous looking farm carved out at the edge of some thick woods that abutted the far side of the front yard. The clean, white farmhouse was set back from the road a ways, and had lots of flowers in the yard.

There was a dog on the porch, probably napping, since we were practically past him before let out a

bark and took off after us. I didn't really pay too much attention at first because we were rolling along pretty quick and the dog was already behind us. But soon I could tell from his barking that he wasn't giving up easily and was actually gaining on us. I cranked my creaky neck around and sure enough he was making like a greyhound across the yard, adjusting his angle of attack on the fly. He was definitely fast, and I was thinking I might as well pick up the pace a bit to get him winded and protect my ankles.

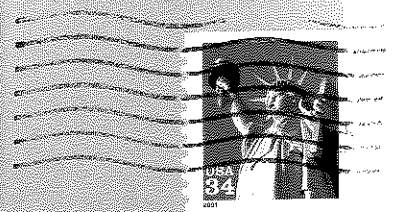
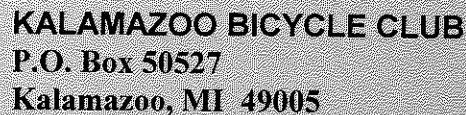
That's when things happened really fast. I looked ahead again and saw a pickup coming towards us, right along the woods beside the house. The dog burst out of the yard and into the road, angling towards us, right at the edge of the woods. There was no time at all for any of us to react—me, the driver or the dog. It all happened maybe 20 or so yards behind us, and the driver had no time to hit the brakes. The impact was unmistakably audible, and I had to choke down the bile rising into my throat.

We were utterly innocent bicyclists enjoying a lovely country ride, but it wouldn't have happened if we weren't there. Slamming on the brakes when I first saw the dog is the only way I can imagine to avoid the carnage. Not exactly the best plan as a rule. I shouldn't feel guilty—people need to control their dogs.

But I do anyway. I should have gone back. I could have gone back. I didn't go back. It would have been graphically more personal and lots more emotional if I had. If I returned, that dog, which had been a minor intrusion in the ride and no real threat, would paradoxically have become a real, live creature as it laid there dead, not just an object. No guts. Life is full of difficult, emotional stuff, and objectifying that dog in order to avoid facing the driver, the carnage, and maybe the owner was easier, but wrong.

The driver stopped and got out, bless the man. I saw him just as clearly in my mirror as I saw the dog crumpled in the road. I told myself that stopping to deal with the situation was really his job, not mine, since his truck actually hit the dog. And I told myself that I would have gone back if he hadn't. I truly think I would have, but I'll never know for sure.

What I do know for sure is that I should have gone back, that new roads demand extra attention, and that I don't like the guy I see in the bathroom mirror quite as well lately.



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