

Pedal Press



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The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, Inc., February 2002

President's Letter

One of the great things about living in Michigan is the weather. We get four seasons... what great variety. And, at a time like this it seems as though all four of those seasons blend together. When I started to write this letter one week ago everything was covered by 3 feet of snow. Now, well it's really beginning to feel like spring...and I haven't even made it out to the ski slopes or the trail yet.

I don't know what it is about this time of year, but it never fails. No matter how many kilometers I've skied on the Nordic skis, or how many trips I've taken to the slopes, the first hints of warmth really get me fired up to ride my bike. Walking outside today really got me thinking of spring. Of course, I know better. Michigan weather disappoints much faster than it pleases. I know full well that we will have one or more brushes with winter weather before spring really sets in. I can't put the rollers in storage for a couple of months yet. So in the meantime I'll suffer, riding very hard to get nowhere and dreaming of my cycling exploits when the season really does arrive.

So what are this year's plans? What could possibly drive a person to climb on a bicycle and ride for hours in the cramped confines of his living room? Tom Cross and the rest of my team are depending on my long days of training so I can pull my weight at 24 hrs of Boyne. It's a team event and I certainly don't want to let the fellas down. Additionally, I'll be riding my second 24 hr Personal Challenge up in Grand Rapids a couple of weeks later. These two events alone are enough to scare me into a training routine this off-season.

What about you? Any goals to shoot for this season? I've been asking myself this very question regarding KBC's executive board. What should we shoot for this year?

(Prez letter continued on page 2)

Next KBC Meeting

The next KBC Executive Board Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM Tuesday, February 12, 2002, at the Borgess Health and Fitness Center on Gull Road. Any club member is encouraged to attend.

Editor's Letter:

Please allow me to introduce myself. I'm Zolton Cohen, your new Pedal Press Newsletter editor. The task of composing and editing the KBC Pedal Press Newsletter has been handled capably for years by Doug Kirk, whom many of you know from his stalwart activities and enthusiasms concerning bicycling in this area. Taking over the editorship of this newsletter from Doug is no small thing. He's done such a good job for so long it seems like toppling an icon to assume the mantle of head scribe at KBC. It's like Lance tapping you on the shoulder and saying, "from now on YOU'RE the man on the USPS team." I feel humbled, and a bit nervous, to be so selected.

This is a very important job in the KBC organization. As the former editor of my neighborhood newsletter I understand that to many people, the Pedal Press IS the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club. It's the only contact they have with the Club, so what goes into the newsletter has to be accurate, interesting, and timely. I intend to follow in Doug's footsteps - rather, cleats - in that regard. But they are pretty big Speedplay's to fill.

As Greg Bouwman, the 2002 KBC President, pointed out in his inaugural President's letter, the KBC is your club. And so too is the Pedal Press your newsletter.

(Editor's letter continued on page 3)

(Prez letter, Continued from page 1):

With 30 years of history under our belt things seem to run pretty well from year to year. Is there something more you'd like to see from the club?

New Year's is the time to look forward and to make plans for the coming months. Not just plans for your individual cycling but the activity of your cycling club as well. This is your invitation to join us at any of our monthly KBC meetings, we meet on the second Tuesday of each month (7pm at the Borgess Fitness Center on Gull Road). Come out and share your thoughts. This is your club! Besides, if you don't share with us, you never know what crazy decisions we'll make...after all they made me president.

Greg Bouwman, 2002 KBC President

Zolton's Weird Biking Stuff

Here are a couple of incidents I observed in the bicycling world this past summer that I thought more than passing strange.

1. A group of us were riding along W Avenue in a closely knit fast pack, with a pretty good tailwind, doing in the neighborhood of 27 miles per hour. Tom Cross tapped my shoulder and pointed to the oversized calf muscles of one of the other bikers riding in front of us in the group. "Hey," Tom said, "If some of us bikers ever get caught out in bad weather and have to eat one of the others? I get dibs on those..."

2. A man on a department store mountain bike on the Kal Haven Trail this summer was wearing a full sized floor pump strapped across his back, like a rifle. Guess he didn't want to waste time filling up his replacement tube in the event of a flat.

3. Just for the record: Has anyone put a tandem on a trainer for a two person winter workout?

Happy Birthday to:

January Birthdays

Paul Barner
Deborah Bauer
Jack Bley
Jini Caruso
Mike Cutler
Angie Donovan
Dan Ferrara
Doug Gaff
Robert Gray
Floyd Hindbaugh
Mary Lou Hollis
Doug Jonas
Kevin Kavanaugh
Abbey Lawford
John Mathieson
Renee Mitchell
Graham Newman
Kaitlin Noverr
Peter Skellenger
Alex Thannhauser
Andrew Uggeri
Bill Watt

February Birthdays

Dale Scott Aldrich
Jo Arnold
Ryan Breisach
Zolton Cohen
Rachel Fouts
Terry Hutchins
Celine Keizer
Jennifer LaBrenz
Miranda Loga
Jason Machnik
Megan Smothergill
Mark Uggeri
Harry Wicks

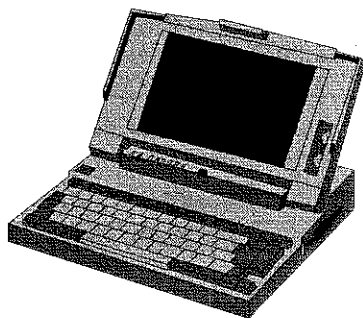
New Members

Michael Birmann Family
Mike Peterson
James Stevens

Expiring Memberships

KBC database manager Kathy Kirk has assured the Pedal Press that the lag between the time membership applications are received and when they are recorded should be reduced considerably. The reason? Well, since Doug Kirk is now KBC secretary and Kathy is the new database manager, the mail won't have to pass through so many hands before it's opened, sorted, processed, irradiated, and entered into the data files.

So, these expiring memberships should be relatively timely. If you know any of these people - or if ARE one of these people - please either inform them that their KBC membership is about to expire, or renew yourself. You might also look into re-upping for a three year stretch. It saves a bit of money and relieves you of the duty of making out a yearly check. But even more importantly, it saves wear and tear on the database manager!

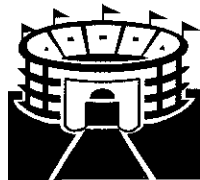


Expiring Members (January and February)

Phil & Jini Caruso
 Greg Petty
 Bob Schuler
 Jill Stewart
 Benjamin Suarez-Platt
 Paul Wells Family
 Ed Wilson
 Teresa Xaundria

Correction:

It has come to the attention of the Pedal Press that the final Grattan Road Race rankings published in the December issue contained an error. Paul VanSweden, it seems, placed 15th overall instead of the 16th.



(Editor's letter continued from page 1)

Its quality will depend at least in some part on your input. Many people have contributed articles, notes, and opinions to the Press over the years, and I hope that will continue. What you've experienced on the bike or during training may benefit others if you write an article about it. Please send in your contributions. My e-mail address is zcohen@voyager.net. I reserve the right to edit submissions for length and content to reflect the mission statement and goals of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

Over the past several years many people in KBC (including me!) have become big fans of Dr. Axel Cleat, that opinionated friendly curmudgeon, rapid and rugged bicyclist, and bike issues observer. On his way out the door as editor of the Pedal Press, Doug managed to broker a deal with Dr. Cleat to continue the monthly Axel Cleat columns. In exchange Doug only had to give up a patched 700x23 tube and a half bottle of Pedro's Extra Dry Chain Lube. It was a reasonable deal all the way around, and I, for one, am grateful to have Axel still working the bicycling beat here at the Pedal Press.

Zolton Cohen, Newsletter Editor.

KBC Hats are in!

The new Kalamazoo Bike Club hats made their debut at the Recovery Party, and how handsome they looked! They're made of a faded denim type material, are in a classic "baseball" style, and come in four different color combinations. Quality construction throughout, one size fits all. You'll be seeing them on all the best dressed heads this coming year at Club rides and other KBC events.

The cost is a mere \$15.00, a portion of which goes to the KBC treasury to support biking activities and programs. Judging by the response to the hats at the Recovery Party the supply may not last long. One would make a great gift for your favorite Club member. Contact any KBC Board officer for information on how to get hold of one of these topnotch toppers.

KBC Recovery Party January 19th, 2002

Under the direction, tutelage, and guidance of a crack team of experienced party organizers (Karen Sue Mackaluso, Steve Secondi, Kathy Kirk, Greg Bouwman, and others) the annual KBC Recovery Party on January 19, 2002 was an unqualified success. Hungry guests had a wide range of food from which to choose - from Karen Sue's delectable sloppy Joes to the most delicate of desserts; with vegetables and dip, spinach balls, and cranberry bread thrown in for good measure. A keg of Bell's finest, *Amber Ale*, graced one corner of the room, and there were enough carbonated soft drinks on hand to keep a class of 2nd graders climbing the walls for a week. The approximately 70 people who attended had only inattention to blame if they weren't able to find enough to eat and drink.

Karen Sue, erstwhile KBC President (and new Vice President) bestowed several awards on KBC volunteers during the course of the party. The top prize, *Volunteer of the Year*, went (deservedly so) to tireless Flowerfest organizer and all-around good guy Dave Newman. Newman received, in addition to a handsome plaque, a heart rate monitor donated by one of the area bike shops. It was a good night for Newman, who also picked off the male version of Doug and Kathy Kirk's coveted *Most Improved Rider* trophy - a bag of "bicycle pasta." Deb Gray won the female edition of the award for completing three centuries in her first year of serious riding in addition to participating in many KBC club rides.

Karen Sue also gave awards to Paul Stevens, the outgoing KBC Treasurer, for his 3 years of service in that position, as well as his volunteer work on the Portage Bikeway Ride Tour, Flowerfest, and many other events; and to Zolton Cohen.

Doug and Kathy's awards continued with their selections for: *Fearsome Fusion*: (on a tandem): Greg Bouwman and his brother-in-law.

Most Likely To Blow Up the Paceline: Tom Cross.
Now You See Him, Now You Don't: Dave DeBack.
Paul VanSweden Crazier-Than-We Are Award For Riding When No One Else Will: Richard Neumann.
He's Here, Now We Can Ride Award: Randy Putt.
Leader of the Pack: Richard Wolf.
Sweethearts--Must Have Been Something in the Powerbars, the Frame Tubes, or the Water This

Year: Karen Sue Mackaluso and Steve Secondi; Sally and Dan VanSweden, Michele Cudahy and Dave DeBack, and, (though disqualified since they were giving out prizes) Kathy & Doug Kirk.

Best KBC Ride of the Year: 30th Anniversary Ride: Great route, great food, great atmosphere.

After the awards ceremonies, the schwag parade began. Doug Kirk and others had solicited many valuable biking oriented items from Alfred E. Bike Shop, Breakaway Bikes, and Village Cyclery, and numbers were drawn to determine who walked away with the prizes. Many party-goers went home with seat packs, clothing (including a USPS jersey), mountain bike shoes, socks, CO2 inflators, lubricant, posters, helmets, and, of course, water bottles. KBC thanks these generous bike shops for donating prizes to the Recovery Party.

In the end the Recovery Party isn't just about food, drink, prizes and awards. It is the opportunity to connect with other bikers, old friends and new, that draws people to the party - and to KBC itself. At this gathering there were many tales told of epic rides in the past, and plans hatched for such rides in the future. People caught up on the latest news in the biking world, and in the personal world of those with whom they ride. Karen Sue and her party team put together a great "forum" for people to talk and socialize, and the evening passed all too quickly. Make plans to attend this party next year - and other KBC events as well. It's hard to find better people with whom to congregate.

Flowerfest volunteers needed

With snow on the ground it's hard to imagine that people are already working on the 2002 Flowerfest. But they are, and have been for months. This is what it takes to put on a huge event like the Flowerfest Tour, KBC's largest fundraiser, on July 21st.

If you're interested in helping out (and, not so incidentally, meeting some great people), please contact Dave Newman (David.Newman@wmich.edu, or 375-8105). The organizing committee will meet at 7PM on February 21, March 21, April 18, May 16, and June 20, location to be announced (contact Dave). Flowerfest requires people to staff sag stops, drive sag vehicles on the route, mark roads, and ferry items around (anyone with a pickup truck willing to help?).

The Future

Went to southern California over Christmas to visit family. Took the bike along too. Figured I could get in a few miles and maybe avoid a couple of pounds of winter fat. In the process, I got an idea of what the future of biking might be. A little scary, kind of sad, but not as bad as it might be.

Twelve million people live around Los Angeles, I'm told. Talk about urban sprawl. Freeways head every direction, often six or eight lanes wide. Same for the surface streets. And do they have the cars to fill'em up? You bet they do.

What's more, there are mountains, gullies, canyons and ridges jutting out everywhere you look--at least on the north side of the city, and most of these are too steep to develop. So the enormous valleys in between consist of one development after another, set behind the non-stop strip malls that line the major streets. This goes on for miles and miles, till you abruptly arrive at a point far enough out that the developers have yet to buy up the property rights, and suddenly, in the space of a couple of blocks, you're in the country.

Apparently no one works in the same valley they live in, and there must be an ordinance against building more than two stories high at the very most. No matter where you want to go, it's miles away. I visited a family of four. They all had cars, and it looked like the same was true for the entire neighborhood. The driveways and both sides of the street were packed.

So just how does biking fit in to all this? On a few paved multi-use trails and some bike lanes at the edge of really busy, very wide roads, that's how. You want wide open spaces and beautiful mountain roads? They're out there all right, but be prepared to put up with an awful lot of civilization, and traffic--busy, in a hurry, on the cell-phone, what-am-I-doing-here-on-my-bike,

by Axel Kleat

traffic.

No one ran me down, so I shouldn't complain, I suppose. But a big reason I survived is that, at least in the valley I stayed in, a biking, running, walking, etc. path ran down the middle of the valley, right next to a riverbed. Fortunately, the river rarely has water in it (an oxymoron the humor of which seems lost on the locals,) for when it does, large chunks of the path are under water, a situation the planners appeared to be at pains to avoid for the real roads.

Well, anyone who's done much bicycling is used to second class status. What got to me was that there were so many people, so much development, so much obvious over-dependence on motor vehicles. And rather than looking to foster bicycling as an answer in a climate where you really can ride all year around, they've shoved us off as second class citizens. As soon as you want to get somewhere off the bike path, better take another brave pill.

Seems to me that the bottom line is that the more people we shove into an area, the more we cyclists suffer. I suspect it's going to stay that way as long as we build out and not up, and as long as our planning is focused on unfettered vehicular travel no matter the cost.

West Michigan is no LA, but it's growing too. And even though the weather is better lots of the year out there, believe me, overall the ridings still far better here--dozens more rideable roads, much less traffic, and bike paths we ride because we feel like it, not because they're the only sensible option.

We need to protect what we have going for us here, and if you aren't involved in doing so, take a good look in the mirror tonight and ask yourself why not.

KBC KALAMAZOO BICYCLE CLUB
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

2002/02

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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
- Adult 3 Year Membership\$40.00
- Family.....\$17.00
- Family 3 Year Membership\$45.00
- Senior (60+).....\$13.00
- Senior 3 Year Membership\$35.00

Renewal? Yes No

Please Print

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Birthdate _____
 E-Mail _____

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