

KBC PedalPress

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The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

Feb
January 2003

President's Letter:

Actually, this is not your president writing. It's your newsletter editor.

Where's the president? Well, rumor has it that during a weeks-long binge of post-election partying, new KBC President **Doug Kirk** got a little carried away with things, ran down into his basement workshop, deconstructed his titanium Merlin road bike down to its basic elements, started greasing and oiling and lubing and wiping, and has not been seen since. Oh? That's not new? He does that every year? Well, I guess he's on his bike then – even though it's about 20 degrees out, with icy roads and high winds. Conditions like that never stopped him in the past.

But before he bundled up and left, he directed me to write something about the **KBC Recovery Party**.

If you weren't at the Recovery Party, you don't know what you missed. Try and correct that omission next year; you won't be sorry. It truly was a highlight in the KBC season. There were approximately 66 people there, more than a third of KBC's current membership. A grand turnout on a night when roads were bad and thoughts were far from biking.

KBC Social Director **Emily Mattes** coordinated this entire party, down to the napkins, soft drinks, and plastic eating utensils. The fact that the party came off so seamlessly is testimony to her excellent planning and organization. And special thanks go out to **Dave Newman** who "volunteered" his house for the evening's celebration. It worked out so well that **Axel Kleat** was heard to remark that we ought to think about breaking open the KBC Treasury to purchase the house for future parties and events. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, but it was a good thought.

There was a slide show going on downstairs of two of the **Tuesday Night Time Trials**, plus the **31st Anniversary Party**, followed by some exclusive KBC video action footage shot by **Bill Strome**. And people brought bike clothing and parts to swap. Upstairs? Well, there was food, people, and more food. The thought during the planning of the party was that we'd see what people brought to eat, and then order in pizzas to fill the gaps. But pizzas? We don't need no stinkin' pizzas! There was so much food at the party that anyone who didn't eat to bursting either wasn't paying attention or isn't a true biker. KBC members really came through in this aspect of the Recovery Party. Great food, although sorrowfully, that promised "fresh garden salsa" Tom Noverr said he'd bring never made an appearance. According to KBC Treasurer Terry O'Connor, due to the great food showing and the "loan" of Newman's house, the Recovery Party expenses came to only \$170.00.

President Kirk presented **Amy Lehman** the Volunteer of the Year Award, deservedly so. Amy has been working behind the scenes at KBC for some time, helping to make the club go.

Other awards went to **Tom Cross**, for starting up the TNTT series and running it so successfully, and to **Rick Whaley**, who did not one, but two 24 hour Challenge races this year. Doug and Kathy also gave out numerous "gag" awards, and our local bike shops donated many, many great product prizes. Thanks again to those shops for your support and generosity not only for the party, but also throughout the year.

Kirk Convenes Constitutional Convention!

As announced in the last *PedalPress*, President Doug Kirk has recommended to the Board of Directors that the current KBC Constitution be updated. So, there will be a gathering of interested parties directly following the regularly scheduled monthly KBC meeting (**new meeting day and place! Second Tuesday of the month – March 11th – at 7 PM, YMCA building on Maple Street, first floor conference room**).

At this meeting, anyone can offer suggestions concerning the KBC constitution (a copy of which can be found online at the KBC website). Or, if you cannot attend this meeting, please email suggestions to Doug, or call him prior to March 11th at the address or phone number listed on the back of this newsletter. The proposed changes will be posted for approximately a month on the KBC website, suggestions taken, and then the new constitution will be voted on during the subsequent (April 8th) KBC meeting. This is important business, so please make it a point to at least read the current document organizing our club, and if you have any suggestions about how to improve it, please contact Doug Kirk.

Finally, some of you may have been confused when a February *PedalPress* failed to show up in your mailboxes. I forgot to mention that there is no issue published for that month. We save about 200 dollars by not publishing in February (there's not much going on in local biking then anyway), and frankly, the editor needed the break! Zolton Cohen

Editor's Letter:

In putting the PedalPress together this month I've been quite impressed hearing the recent exploits of some of our fellow bikers. My initial reaction is one of respect when I get an email saying something like, "We did 26 miles this afternoon. 22 degrees, but it was fun."

Then I think - Are they kidding? Fun? At 22 degrees with who knows how much wind chill? 22 degrees is cross country skiing or snowshoeing weather; it ain't for biking. But, as you'll read in **Axel Kleat's** column this month, there are those who insist on going out in the frigid cold. Fanatical bikers. I tip my helmet to them - the helmet I haven't worn since November. It's still too cold to bike!

I'll get back on the bike in due time. Right now I'm trying to engineer a "grand slam" day - a duoathlon type deal where I can ski in the morning and bike in the afternoon. So far the skiing has been reasonably good, but the weather has to get just a tetch warmer before I'll venture out in it on a bike.

If you want to see really tough, really crazy bikers, go to Chicago some winter. I was there in late January, and a digital clock on a bank said the temperature was minus one degree. The wind howling through the skyscraper canyons threatened to rip my face off. Even in my best high tech clothing, walking briskly along, I could not get warm. But bike messengers were zooming about, weaving in and out of traffic, skidding on icy patches, and making their deliveries. That's got to be a hard way to make a living.

With every new administration in all walks of political life there is a feeling of optimism when a new cadre of leaders takes the helm. So it is in KBC when a new board is elected. And with good reason. New members in leadership positions bring new ideas, fresh perspectives to the "business" of running the bike club. **Doug Kirk** (I always have to resist calling him "Captain Kirk"), **Jeff Newman**, **Brad Fry**, and **Terry O'Connor**, even in the first meeting of the new year, demonstrated that this will be an active board running an active bike club.

Which segues into my last point. We're on the mailing list of some other bikes clubs around the country, so we get their newsletters. I read one the other day - "Outspoken", from Lexington Kentucky. Cute name for a newsletter, but for a bike club serving a relatively large urban area, in a climate that would support warm weather biking for much longer than we enjoy it around here, I noted a peculiarity. At their annual banquet, a Mr. Dave Scott was awarded a prize for "most miles ridden" in the club last year. How far did Scott ride to receive this honor? 2,832 miles. Heck, isn't that what about what Doug and Kathy do on a week-long vacation trip in the summer? Or what **Rick Whaley** knocks off training for a couple of 24 hour challenge rides? I don't wish to denigrate Scott's achievement, but compared to what many KBC bikers do... well, it just isn't that many miles.

We've got a lot of good riders in this club, and a good organization backing it. The number of things this club is able to do during a riding season would astonish many other bike clubs. Attendance at the KBC meetings continues to grow, and volunteers other than the usual suspects are starting to show up to help mold and guide the club to even greater accomplishments. It's going to be a wonderful summer for riding, and you can help that along by participating in *your* bike club.

KBC didn't get to be this size and condition with no effort. A lot of people put in a lot of hours to put on rides, parties, Flowerfest, and other events. It takes man and womanpower to run a bike club. There's always room for you. Won't you come and join us at the **next KBC meeting on March 11th, 7:00 PM at the YMCA on Maple Street?** If nothing else, you'll get an opportunity to see the people you bike with *not wearing helmets*. And that, my friends, is worth the trip right there.

Zolton Cohen

February Birthdays

Zolton Cohen
Rachel Fouts
Terry Hutchins
Celine Keizer
Joe Kucharski
Rand Loga
Jason Machnik
Mike Miles
David Moore
Ann O'Connell
Megan Smothergill
David Sperry
Zachary Teel
Gordon Vader
Gary Wank
Rick Wank

March Birthdays

Jamie Clark
Morgan Clothier
Denise Dickerhoof
Ron Doering
Rebecca Gaff
Henry Kalkman
Grant Kasten
Gary Lehman
Cole Lehman
Jenni Martin
Mark Olson
Christine Raible
Ron Rutgers
Laura Steurer
Barb Updike
Cheryl VanDer Meer
Ed Wilson

New Members

Paul & Linda Bruneau

March Expiring Memberships

Greg Bouwman Family
Al Cergol
Steve Secondi & Karen Sue
Mackaluso
Diane & Megan Place
Ron Rutgers Family

February, 2003, KBC Minutes

KBC's regular monthly meeting was held Thursday, February 13th, 2003 at 7:00 pm at the Borgess Fitness Center off Gull Road. Present were Doug Kirk, Kathy Kirk, Emily Mattes, Jeff Newman, Brad Fry, David Newman, Matt Siebert, Zolton Cohen, Rand Logga, Tom Keiser, Terry O'Connor and Kyle Walker.

The meeting began with a serving of chocolate cake and milk for those in attendance to celebrate Zolton Cohen's and Rand Logga's birthdays. A special thanks to Rand for supplying the cake and drinks.

First up on the agenda was the announcement by **Doug Kirk** that all future meetings will be held at the YMCA located on Maple Street in Kalamazoo. In addition to the meeting location change, future monthly meetings will now be held on the second Tuesday of every month, instead of the second Thursday. These changes will be effective beginning at the next club meeting scheduled for March 11th. The 7:00 pm starting time will remain the same.

Next, Doug Kirk proclaimed that the KBC Recovery Party was a resounding success. He noted that at least 66 members were in attendance. **Terry O'Connor**, KBC Treasurer, reported that approximately \$170 was spent on the party. Special thanks went to **David Newman** for opening his house for the party and to **Emily Mattes**, KBC's Social Director, for planning the party.

The next agenda item focused on revision of the KBC constitution. During the December 2002 monthly meeting, it was noted that the KBC constitution required updating. Meeting attendees agreed that editing of the current constitution would occur immediately after the March 11th meeting. Changes made at the March meeting will be voted on at April's KBC monthly meeting.

Doug Kirk recounted that he is continuing to "struggle" with the IRS in an effort to obtain tax-exempt organization status for the club. His efforts in that regard will continue. Terry O'Connor reported that the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club is incorporated. Doug Kirk and those in attendance authorized Terry O'Connor to make the \$15 payment to the state to remain incorporated.

Doug Kirk then solicited suggestions for proposed ride schedule changes. Although no changes were forwarded, members did discuss the possibility of re-adopting the Wednesday night Hammerfest ride. During the past few years, the club has distanced itself from this ride due to safety concerns. It was remarked that many club members rode the Hammerfest ride, and officially sanctioning this ride may be one way for KBC to reach out to riders who may not be current club members. Official action regarding this topic may be

taken at a future meeting. **Matt Siebert** also announced that the **WMU Cycling Team** may be organizing a Thursday night ride this season. This ride is proposed as a recovery ride. The meeting location, starting time, and route and will be announced at a future date.

Terry O'Connor reported that the club is financially sound. While on this discussion, questions arose regarding club insurance paid for by membership dues. This insurance is provided for the protection of club members participating in club activities. **Zolton Cohen** will investigate educating club members about this insurance through a *PedalPress* article.

Finally, Emily Mattes spoke about plans for a new member party to be held in May. She will continue to coordinate planning for this event. A date and time will be announced in a future *PedalPress*.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Fry, KBC Secretary

World Road Cycling Championships Coming!

Editor's note: This exciting news recently came our way from KBC's Steve Cox...

The 2003 world cycling road championships will almost be in our backyard: **Oct 6-12 in Hamilton, Ontario!** In case you haven't already seen it, the official website for the championships is the following:

<http://www.hamilton2003.com/Hamilton2003/>

The website lists the schedule of events, course maps, etc. All of the race courses are entirely within Hamilton's city limits. If I remember correctly from driving through Hamilton, the course (ca 12km) has a nasty hill that the elite men will climb 21 times (250km race). A link to the Hamilton tourism bureau is: <http://www.tourismhamilton.info/>. This site lists hotels, motels, B&B's, campgrounds, etc.

The 2003 world road cycling championship races may be the only time that we can see Lance race at near peak condition in North America. Perhaps we could put together a big contingent of KBC folks in Hamilton this fall. It's only about a six to seven hour drive away.

Steve Cox

MARCH RIDE SCHEDULE

Considering the cold winter we have had so far, I don't know if there will be any decent riding weather in March or not. But I guess I'm an optimist, so let's plan some informal rides for March in preparation for the 2003 riding season. Although there will be no official rides scheduled for March there will be riders ready to ride if the weather is suitable. When the weather cooperates, impromptu rides will most likely materialize in the next couple of months.

- Meet at 12 PM on Saturdays in the SW corner of the KVCC parking lot near the tennis courts in March
- Meet at 12 PM on Sundays in the SW corner of the KVCC parking lot near the tennis courts in March
- 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 Street
- Meet at 5:30 PM on Fridays at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg

The riders who show up at any of these locations can determine the length and pace of the ride. There will no official ride leaders or maps provided in March.

Wear the appropriate clothing and 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 or use the **KBC-General** group e-mail list. 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 my e-mail list, send your e-mail address to me (srbike@aol.com or sterling.r.putt@pharmacia.com).

BE A RIDE LEADER

Not much warm weather so far this year, but I hope everyone has been doing some sort of off-season training. I know a few of you have ridden in spite of the cold weather and slippery roads. Today, in mid-February the sun was shining periodically with the temperature between 15 and 20 with a strong NE wind. I certainly did not feel like riding outside today. Nevertheless, I'm starting to think about the upcoming riding season. Is spring really just around the corner?

KBC had a great group of ride leaders last year and the 2002 ride season was another great year. Attendance at the rides continued to increase. With the increased ride attendance we need more rider leaders for the 2003 season to accommodate the larger groups. We especially need leaders in the 17 mph and under groups. The more ride leaders we have the better. Please volunteer to lead some rides. It's fun. The routes are well established for the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday rides. Route maps are available on the KBC web site (www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc). Give it a shot. The club will be happy to help get you started.

During the past several years there has been sizeable rider participation in the 16+ mph ride groups and these groups are well established for the three weekly ride nights. There were 2 - 6 groups in the 10-15 mph range on Monday evenings depending on the time of year, and there was periodic participation from this group on Friday nights. In order to 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. If you are planning to take a ride anyway, why not invite others along and do the ride during one KBC's normal ride days? Once a group gets started it feeds on itself. Riding with a group is great fun.

If anyone is interested in leading rides this year, please give me a call at 649-1814 or email me at (srbike@aol.com or sterling.r.putt@pharmacia.com). 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. You do not have to wait to be asked. No experience is necessary; you just need the willingness to ride with a great group of people who enjoy riding their bikes.

PROPOSED YEAR 2003 RIDE SCHEDULE

Descriptions of the regular weekday rides are listed below; **the full ride schedule will start in May, with rides starting at 6:15 PM.** KBC plans to offer at least a partial weekly ride schedule (**with rides starting at 6:00 PM**) in April as the weather permits. Look for details in the April Newsletter.

KBC plans to continue the regular Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday rides for the 2003 season. In addition, last year we offered five special weekend rides. There was the **W Ave Ride** (48 miles) in late April; the **Old Car Ride** from Vicksburg (60 miles) in June; a ride from **Kalamazoo to South Haven and Back** for lunch and some beach time (100 miles) in July; the **Ride Around Kalamazoo County** (100 miles) in August; and the **31st Anniversary Ride** in September. KBC intends to offer these rides again in 2003. We are open to other ideas for weekend rides as well. Send your suggestions to any KBC officer or Randy Putt, KBC Ride Captain.

Monday: The Monday Ride at Texas Drive Park will consist of six ride groups, one of which should provide a pace to suit riders of all abilities:

- 15-20 mile group at 10-12 mph
- 15-20 mile group at 12-15 mph
- 25-30 mile group at 15-17 mph (new group)
- 25-30 mile group at 16-18 mph
- 25-30 mile group at 19-20 mph
- 25-30 mile group at 20+ mph

The 10-15 mile groups will usually ride the same route, as will the 25-30 mile groups. The 10-15 mph groups are recommended to new riders. For more experienced riders who are new to the club the 15-16 mph group is recommended. The leaders for the 16 - 18 mph and 18 - 19 mph groups plan to keep the groups together and at a steady pace. All riders who want to push the pace please do so in the 20+mph group.

Tuesday: The Tuesday Ride starts at **Breakaway Bicycles** on Romence Rd in Portage. This ride consists of one group that rides 25-30 miles at 16-18 mph.

Plans for the 2nd year of the **Tuesday Night Time Trial** are in the works. A search for a new route a bit closer to Kalamazoo with less traffic is ongoing. This ride will meet on two Tuesdays a month, similar to last year. Details to follow in an upcoming *PedalPress*.

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

- 10-15 mile fitness group at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail
- 25-35 mile group at 16-18 mph
- 25-35 mile group at 20+ mph

We tried to initiate the fitness ride at 10-15 mph on the Kal-Haven Trail last year with little success. I recommend we try it again this year starting in May or June.

The Wednesday night **Hammerfest** will start at the Kal-Haven Trail Parking lot on 10th Street at 6 PM when daylight savings time kicks in. The average pace of the ride is typically greater than 23 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 and the riders often do not finish together. This ride is hard and is not suitable for inexperienced riders. Some riders can expect to be dropped from the main group.

Thursday: Thursday features a nice and easy social ride at Texas Drive Park and has a small, loyal group which is growing in size. Riders of all riding abilities are welcome. The pace is typically 15-17 mph and distance is 20-25 miles.

Friday:

The Friday **Tour de Gull** meets at Billy's Bike Shop in Galesburg and the pace varies depending on who shows up. We did have a 16-17 mph group periodically as well as the regular, large 21+ mph group last year. The fast group typically leads itself. The route for this ride is well established so the ride leader job is easy.

We need ride leaders for all the ride groups described above, as well as volunteers to help out at the Time Trial Series. The more volunteers the better. I'm sure some of the ride leaders from last year will return. I plan to initiate a new group on Monday nights for those riders who want to ride ~16 mph with more of a social atmosphere. Ride leaders make every attempt at keeping each group together, though the 20+ mph groups may not stay together.

An Invitation to Ride

One of the primary functions of KBC is to offer an opportunity for club members to participate in group rides with other club members. To this end, KBC offers road rides for casual riders, families, tourists, fast tourists, and racers. The club has also offered mountain bike rides from time to time. KBC offers regular rides from 10 to 35 miles at ride paces from 10 to 20+mph. There is likely to be a ride for you in this schedule. KBC also offers longer weekend rides.

If you have never ridden in a group, the weekly club rides are a great way to get started. Riding with a group is great fun. Kalamazoo County is blessed with many good low-traffic roads that are suitable for group cycling. If KBC does not offer a ride that suits your needs, contact any club board member or the ride captain and volunteer your services to lead a new ride. We will be happy to get you started.

You do not need to own an expensive bicycle or high tech clothing to ride with KBC. We do, however, insist that you wear a helmet, and recommend cycling shorts and cycling gloves. You'd also do well to bring a water bottle, a pump, at least one spare tube and a tube patch kit, and tools (especially tire levers to remove a flat tire) for minor adjustments or repair along the road.

Flats and other mechanical breakdowns do happen on occasion while riding. If you have never changed a tire on the road, there will likely be someone along on the ride who can assist you. However, you should know how to do this yourself in case you're ever stranded, and also to help speed the repair when you're with a group. Again, **WE DO INSIST THAT ALL RIDERS WEAR A BICYCLE HELMET.** This requirement is a matter of safety and common sense.

How to lead a Club Ride

Ride leaders play an important role in our ride program. There is room in our monthly ride schedule for any ride. Leading a ride is your opportunity to share your cycling pleasure with other club members. It is our opportunity to learn from your experience.

There are nine easy steps in leading a ride:

1. Call the ride captain (Randy Putt) at 649-1814 and volunteer to lead one of our regularly scheduled rides, or propose a ride of your own (newsletter deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the scheduled ride; for example, the deadline for the May ride calendar is April 15).
2. Provide a map of the ride route.
3. Arrive at the starting place of the ride at the scheduled day and time.
4. Have all riders sign the KBC release form (available from the ride captain) as they arrive (KBC members need only sign once during the season, while nonmembers must sign before each ride).
5. Hand out maps after the rider has signed the release form (most of the regular club rides have established routes, and maps are available for downloading on the web page - www.angelfire.com/mi/kbc).
6. Introduce yourself to new riders and make sure they feel welcome.
7. Make needed announcements about the ride.
8. During the ride, make sure riders stay with the group, especially newer riders and slower riders.
9. And most importantly, have a great ride.

If you have any questions about ride leader duties or would like to lead a ride, call the ride captain at 649-1814.

Going Crazy

By Axel Kleat

Admit it—you've got friends who don't ride. Don't feel bad about it. Most of us know several of these unfortunate, misguided folks. Honestly, this does not necessarily reflect poorly on your character. In fact, I'll bet you've noticed certain similarities about these—let's throw the skunk right out on the porch here—wusses.

They listen as you tell ever more glorified stories about your latest, greatest epic ride, sound properly awed, then declare in a voice that leaves no room for doubt that their own tender hind quarters can't possibly endure more than ten minutes on a bicycle seat. Occasionally they ask how you sit on a bike so long, and since you know what's coming next, you gleefully describe your barely-padded racing seat, or maybe last year's big saddle sore. They shift uncomfortably in their chairs, scrunch their legs together, and maybe make a lame joke or cast aspersions about your no-doubt withered and now useless genitalia.

They ask about your weekend and you wax eloquent about your lovely ride—the fabulous fall colors, or the leaves bursting from dormant branches and the intoxicating smell of lilacs. You do your level best to impart the euphoria you experienced. Predictably, they whine that they couldn't pedal out of their neighborhood without being whipped, then maybe steer the conversation to some drive they took—on the freeway, no less. Of course, they have absolutely no conception of bicycling even 30 miles as being anything other than abject torture.

They wonder at your incredible bravery, bicycling facing all those cars out there, "Aren't you afraid you'll get hit?" They imply certain death may well await you around the very next corner. They wonder about dogs that chase, and flat tires; about the heat, the cold and the rain. About getting lost and hungry, and getting run off the road and being left for dead, lying in the ditch. They cannot understand that we know and accept these risks; that we really have thought the whole thing out.

You know as well as I do that these folks have no clue to the wonders that bicycling reveals about that great big, beautiful world out there; about the goodness of the vast majority of one's fellow man; and about the self-knowledge and satisfaction of completing a truly daunting ride. Heck, most of them cringe at the thought of having to deal with a barking dog - even with four wheels and two tons' worth of protection.

Though I'm absolutely certain the world would be a far better place if my aerobically-challenged friends - not to mention all able-bodied people - were required to ride their bikes, I've given up proselytizing about biking - at least for now. As I sit here on an 11 degree February evening, it's clear why - I don't want to explain winter riding.

Most folks just don't cotton to masochism. Hours sweating on the trainer going no place, the scenery unchanging, maybe watching last year's Tour for the tenth time or an old movie, is tough to explain. But not as hard as trying to explain sweating buckets to a pedal-till-you-puke workout video with some sadistic coach barking out gear-ratios, intervals and heart-rates.

Nope, you just can't expect plebeians to understand why we might just reach the end of our sanity this way, and develop an uncontrollable urge to ride our bikes outside, winter be damned. No way will they understand that the endorphins we crave exist only outdoors and can't be found near a trainer. Believe me, I've looked.

So there's no way they'll understand that 20 real, outdoor miles in 20 freezing cold degrees puts a big smile on my face that lasts well after I drain the hot water tank. Nope, even if I could make 'em understand the trainer (which, logically, is no worse than the treadmills some of them use to make sure they never walk more than a block or so outside), there's no way they could get a grip on needing a genuine, for-real bike ride badly enough to go when it's just plain miserable out there.

They might think I'm going crazy. But I'm going...going...gone just the same.

