

KBC PedalPress

www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club November 2004

President's Letter:

Dear Senator McManus (senmmcmanus@senate.michigan.gov):

I recently became aware of your proposed legislation, Senate Bill 1389, to outlaw bicycling two abreast on Michigan roads. I suspect that if you were to talk with someone such as Lucinda Means, the head of the League of Michigan Bicyclists, which is located right in Lansing, you would find an articulate and knowledgeable bicycling advocate who would happily explain the importance of being able to bicycle two abreast. In the meantime, I'll take a stab at it from my position as President of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

When I go riding with my wife, we like to talk—just like many busy couples do after working all day. Your bill would require us to ride single file, shouting back and forth at one another rather than having a pleasant conversation, even if we were on a deserted county highway without a car in sight. Where is the sense in this? When you go for a walk with your friends, do you walk single file? I suspect not.

If you had ridden many road miles on a bicycle, you would understand the value of actually being able to take up an entire lane when safety demands it, not to mention the value of drafting in echelons when riding in unfavorable wind conditions.

Forgive me if I am wrong, but the fact that you have introduced such legislation is strong evidence that you are not a seasoned bicyclist, otherwise you would understand that what you propose is counterproductive to bicycling safety. Further, public policy ought to be to encourage bicycling as a valid and healthy alternative to clogging our roads with wasteful, polluting oversized vehicles, most of which contain one occupant who, statistically, is most likely overweight and in terrible cardiovascular condition.

In short, we ought to be encouraging people to use their bicycles for exercise and transportation, not proposing legislation to further marginalize bicycling.

When trying to imagine what could possibly motivate you to introduce such legislation, I can only visualize you being delayed for a few seconds in your car by some bicyclists who wouldn't get out of the way so that you can zoom unimpeded to the next stop light, the bumpers and mirrors of your two-ton projectile inches from our fragile bodies.

I would like to think that before you—or any legislator—introduces any legislation, you first listen to what the experts in the relevant areas have to say, or even get some first-hand experience. So allow me to offer my skills and experience in the area of bicycling. I'd be happy to meet with you, or better yet, go for a ride with you. We have many lovely roads here. I look forward to hearing from you.

Doug Kirk
President
Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

Important Online *PedalPress* Delivery Information:

There are currently 225 active subscriptions in the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club. So far, KBC database manager **Paul Bruneau** has 129 confirmed email addresses from this list. That means close to 100 members do not have current email addresses on file.

Starting in February, the *PedalPress* is moving to an electronic format. Members will be sent an email notice containing a link that, when clicked, will take them to the newsletter for that month. If you do not have your email address on file with KBC you'll miss this contact - and thus your notification of the *PedalPress* issues.

Please contact Paul Bruneau at paul@ethicalpaul.com or 343-6016 to get your email address in the database. The more addresses we can get on file before February, the less trouble will have when the electronic *PedalPress* debuts in February. The volunteer staff of KBC thanks you!

Recovery Party Date Set:

As you'll read in **Brad Fry's** October meeting minutes on page three of this issue of the *PedalPress*, the date (January 22nd) and place (home of **Chris and Marian Barnes**, 6705 Evergreen, in Portage) for the **2005 KBC Recovery Party** are taking shape.

Social Directors **Michele Intermont** and **Megan James** are planning on a format similar to Recovery parties in the past; food (both provided by KBC and potluck), drink, conversation, fun, and give-aways of valuable biking equipment from local bike shops.

Details about the party will be forthcoming in future *PedalPresses*, but we wanted you to circle that date on your calendar early so you can reserve that evening. In the gloom of a Michigan winter, spending time at a lively party with your biking pals sure can lift the spirits.

Classified Ad:

LightSpeed Titanium Catalyst, 56 cm, new aero bar shifters, 105 Shimano components \$2,400 new, sell \$1,200, 327-0387.

Michael J Higgins
628 Sunbright, Portage MI 49024-2758
1-269-327-0387

November Birthdays: New members:

Betsy Barnes
Brian Bigelow
Carl Clatterbuck
Sheila Clothier
Alan Dahl
Beth Davis
Bruce Dedee
Maddie Fouts
Polly Freer
Jeff Harrison
Kathy Hutchins
Sheri Jones
Jason Kalkman
Jordon Kalkman
Michael Krischer
Frank Machnik
Tom Nehil
Jeff Newman
Cindy Noverr
Anne-Marie Olbrot
John Olbrot
Jim Patton
Juli Peterson
Mike Peterson
Ann Richmond
Barbara Sneath
Victor Van Fleet
Dan Van Sweden
Kevin Vichinsky
Kevin Vonderfecht
Darlene Wolf

Joan Bennett
Joel Dinda
Edwin Micalizzi
Charles Tansey

November Expiring memberships:

Christopher Barnes Family
Jack Bley
Terry Florian Family
Dan & Hannah Kallewaard
Tim Mitchell
Susan Peterson
Randy & Jenny Putt
Victor Van Fleet

Meeting Minutes:

OCTOBER, 2004, KBC MINUTES

KBC's regular monthly meeting was held Tuesday, October 12th, 2004 at 7:00 pm at the Kalamazoo YMCA located on Maple Street. KBC president Doug Kirk led this monthly meeting. Present were Doug Kirk, Brad Fry, Tom Keizer, Chris Howard, Mike Boersma, Mike Berry, Paul Bruneau, Zolton Cohen, Ken Fouts, Jim Kindle, and Dale Krueger.

This month's meeting began with nominations for the 2005 KBC Executive Board positions. Nominees included **Mike Boersma** for president, **Jim Kindle** for vice-president, **Mike Berry** for secretary, and **Tom Keizer** for treasurer. Elections are scheduled for the November monthly meeting, and club members are encouraged to attend and vote on the nominees.

The KBC Recovery Party has been scheduled for Saturday, January 22nd, 2005 at the home of **Chris and Marian Barnes**. KBC Social Directors, **Megan James and Michelle Intermont**, are planning the event. **Paul Bruneau, Doug Kirk, and Chris Howard** volunteered to assist with entertainment at the party. Further details will be published in an upcoming *PedalPress*.

Ken Fouts announced plans for a KBC cyclocross clinic to be held on November 13th at 2 pm at St. Timothy's Church in Richland. The clinic is targeted at both newcomers and veterans to the sport, and will feature a one-kilometer course consisting of dirt and pavement. Ken will compose a short article on the event to be included in the *PedalPress* and posted on the club website. Ken will also coordinate insurance requirements required for the clinic with KBC treasurer, **Terry O'Connor**.

Tom Keizer announced that **Dave Jones** is the new chairman for the 2005 Flowerfest organizing committee.

Zolton Cohen reported that plans are still proceeding to publish the *PedalPress* online beginning in February. **Paul Bruneau** is working to verify club member email addresses. These addresses will be used to alert members to when new copies of the *PedalPress* are available online.

Doug Kirk noted that the club's bike box is in poor condition, and should be replaced. In lieu of purchasing a new bike box for traveling club members to rent, **Dale Krueger** volunteered the use of his bike box or bike bag. Rental fees will still apply. Dale will charge \$30 per week for use of his box or bag, and a \$100 refundable deposit.

Brad Fry reported that **David Sperry** is interested in establishing a USCF racing team affiliated with KBC. David will be invited to the November meeting to present details on his proposal.

Dale Krueger is interested in working with the club to promote a more bike-friendly environment in Kalamazoo. Dale was encouraged to develop a proposal and present it at a future club meeting. **Mike Boersma** noted that the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) Citizen's Advisory group was meeting on October 28th, 2004 at the Metro Transit office on Rose St. This group helps advocate non-motorized transportation alternatives in the community.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. The next KBC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 9th, at 7 PM at the YMCA on Maple Street in Kalamazoo.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Fry, KBC Secretary

Michigan Senate Bill #1389 of 2004 – Bad Idea or Just Terrible Law?

KBC President **Doug Kirk**, in his president's letter this month, writes to Lake Leelanau-based Michigan Senator Michelle McManus to protest her sponsoring a bill amending the Michigan Vehicle Code of 1949. One of several proposed changes in her bill reads:

A person riding a bicycle shall not ride abreast of another person riding a bicycle, electric personal assistive mobility device, motorcycle, or moped, except as otherwise provided by state law or local ordinance.

If passed, this would represent a significant change from the current law, which allows bicyclists to ride "no more than two abreast" on the road. And - again if passed - it would represent a huge change in the way bike clubs all across the state conduct their rides.

Being forced to ride single file in order to conform to this newly proposed law, as Doug partially pointed out in his letter, would eliminate pacelining, social rides, bike racing on public roads, or (to get technical) one bike rider passing another.

It shouldn't be difficult to imagine the trouble this would cause not only with KBC, but with other bike clubs as well.

If you would like to add your input to this issue, please contact Ms. McManus at:

Senator Michelle McManus
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
(517) 373-1725
fax (517) 373-0741

Senator Tom George, of the 20th District, which includes all of Kalamazoo County, and Paw Paw and Antwerp Township in Van Buren County would also be interested in hearing from you. He can be reached at:

Senator Tom George
PO Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
(517) 373-0793
fax (517) 373-5607

Both senators can also be emailed. Go to www.michigan.senate.gov/ to find their homepages and email contact information.

Tom George is a medical doctor and would likely be responsive to the health and fitness aspects biking provide. So if you do write him, it might be a good idea to mention those benefits to bicycling.

People in public office do listen to what their constituents have to say. They have to; we provide the votes that keep them in their jobs. I've already sent the first of what probably will be many strongly worded email messages to Senators McManus and George. If you care about your rights as a bicyclist in Michigan, perhaps you'll take the time to do the same.

Zolton Cohen

New KBC Website Up and Running:

The KBC *PedalPress* caught up to Kathy Kirk recently in order to query her about the rollout of the new KBC website. She and the Communications Committee have been working hard at reconfiguring the old site, and last month the new site emerged from the shadows. Here's what Kathy had to say about www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org.

PP: What will viewers see when they go to the new KBC website that is different than the old site?

KK: Organization! The home page now has current items; next meeting date/time/place, items that have come to our attention, items that the club wants to focus on. With the new format, similar items are grouped together making it easier to find things. For example, all the ride information is accessible from one page.

PP: Do you anticipate adding features to the new site as time goes on?

KK: The site will be in a constant state of change. It'll be like the performers on Ed Sullivan who put plates on the end of vertical poles, jiggle the pole a little to get the plate spinning and keep it in the air. The first plate was to get the site up and running, organized with accurate information. That plate's up now. While keeping that plate in the air, the next focus will be to dress it up. Add color, graphics, and other elements of interest.

PP: Will there be an opportunity for viewer input on content?

KK: Absolutely. There are a couple places on the site where folks can contact the webmaster with ideas, comments or suggestions. A couple good ideas from users have already been implemented.

PP: Will there be an archive of previous KBC *PedalPress* issues?

KK: The current plan is to have an archive of *Pedal Press* issues.

PP: Is the site in its final form at the moment, or can and will it change?

KK: As mentioned earlier, the site will be in a constant state of change. Web sites require lots of maintenance to stay fresh and useful.

PP: How often will you update the site with new information - for spontaneous rides, party or gathering announcements, or other timely items?

KK: The web site will be updated when necessary...sometimes that's weekly, sometimes more often, sometimes less. It just depends on the time of year and what's happening with the club. The home page is a perfect place for up-to-date information that riders can quickly access for anything new. One goal is to have our membership count on our web site for this type of information.

PP: Is Axel Kleat going to be on the KBC website? Will there be an archive of his old columns?

KK: Axel's getting his own site!

So get on your 'puters and check out the new KBC website! It's up and it's working for you.

A Boy, A Bike, A Parking Lot

There is a boy lurking around the parking lots on WMU's campus; a boy with a bike.

His bike is not a bike like you and I know bikes. Not built of carbon fiber, titanium or aluminum. His is constructed of steel pipes as heavy as those found conveying water in older homes. No skinny tires, ultra light-weight alloy rims, clipless pedals, or even caliper brakes.

This boy's bike looks to be something an eight year old would ride. It's certainly too small for him – too small for any serious riding that is, riding like you and I know riding. He has to squat to ride it, and his knees hardly bend as he pushes up and down on the pedals going from place to place. It's the most inefficient and uncomfortable looking riding position anyone could ever imagine.

The boy never wears a helmet, of course. In fact, his riding attire and personal appearance almost make him look homeless. Loose, baggy jeans that hang down so low from his scrawny waist that his boxer shorts billow up above the belt loops. The pant legs drag on the ground when he happens to set his feet down.

Hair unkempt; long and shaggy, greasy and straggly. His oversized, worn out sneakers mold themselves over and around the silly little platform pedals that stick out from his bike's scarred cranks. The shoes are often untied, and his shoelaces drag on the dirty pavement where he rides.

But the boy is a magician on a bike. A true artist. He performs balancing acts that stand on its head the concept of bicycle riding – at least bicycle riding as we know it. Welcome to this boy's world of trick riding.

There are solid steel pegs that protrude from the front and rear axles of the boy's bike. That's where he stands when he does his tricks. And he mostly rides the bike upside down.

Turn your bike over so the seat is facing downwards and you're holding the front tire in your hands. Stand on the axle peg. That's how he rides. Propel yourself by laying one soft sneaker tread on the rear tire and pushing downwards or pulling upwards. That's how the boy rides. Spin the handlebars once, twice, three times around in your hands while balancing on one foot on the rear peg of your bike. That's how he rides.

Flip the bike back upright again and make it jump in the air from a standstill and turn it around 180 degrees (remember, no clipless pedals) while in the air. Then in one smooth motion flip the bike upside down, and walk your way completely around it on the axle pegs, then flip it rightside up again. Plant your butt on the seat and pedal around the parking lot, thinking of the next trick, the next move to practice. Ingest a slug of Mountain Dew from a liter bottle lying where you left it in the shade, covered by your sweat stained and ratty tee shirt. And then get back to it.

The boy practices for hours every day, much of the time in the paved softball field parking lot on Oliver Street and Stadium Drive. When it rains he seeks cover under the parking structure by Miller auditorium, but still runs through his gamut of tricks surrounded by harsh concrete and oil stains on the asphalt, while flashes of lightning reflect off his lean and glistening body.

Why is he out there? What is he practicing for, working toward? A national trick riding title? Recognition from coeds, a scholarship offer? Who knows?

Why do any of us do what we do? Why do we show up at the same time, same place, week after week to ride the same route with the same people each biking season?

Unanswerable questions perhaps. But there must be something that keeps us coming back – us and the boy on his bike in the college parking lots.

Coming of Age

By Axel Kleat

Without a doubt the most amazing event of my season occurred one afternoon in mid August as I rolled out of the parking lot at the start of a Wednesday Hammerfest. Just as we pulled out into the road my front tire blew right off the rim with a deafening bang worthy of a shotgun. Imagine my shock when the Hammerheads all waited as I fixed it.

Although not entirely unprecedented, such civility and kindness is not exactly a Hammerhead hallmark. And though some of the rougher members may not take kindly to my saying so, their patience reveals that somewhere underneath their skinny but hard bodies a vaguely soft spot lurks in the shadows.

Although a bit less remarkable, they've also been seen waiting a couple minutes for last-minute arrivals, and even circling back half a mile into the ride to reconnect with a few lost souls who had waited for a buddy to finish his pre-ride ministrations. I do hasten to add, however, that rumors of actually stopping at stop signs remain entirely unsubstantiated, the Hammerhead penchant for taking up an entire lane remains totally unencumbered, and a mechanical once truly underway will almost certainly leave an unlucky soul bereft at the side of the road waiting in vain for neutral support unless a particularly good buddy happens to notice and drop back.

As proof that the Hammerheads are mellowing a tiny bit, I offer the following true story. A couple of weeks ago, as we flew down the Timber Ridge hill at 40 mph or more, some egomaniac in an enormous corn-harvester who couldn't possibly fail to see us coming rolled right out of a field and hung a right directly into our lane. Twenty-five or thirty riders all braked hard and coasted right up behind him at his top speed of maybe 25 mph, inhaling vast amounts of dirt, dust, and bits of corn stalks until we all worked our way around him in little groups as opposing traffic allowed. No one swore at the guy. No one made obscene gestures. Instead I heard riders pondering what insecticides and carcinogenic substances we were inhaling.

Fact is that we've been doing the same route on the same day at the same time for so long that I honestly think lots of the folks out that way have actually gotten used to a genuine peloton zooming down their roads. Horn honking is minimal. There's only one dog that ever harasses us anymore, just as we all know where to look for the three-legged dog that doesn't chase us anymore. Kids wait for us in certain yards. Folks of all ages wave or point or yell or giggle. Drivers don't seem to mind when forty of us roll through a four-way stop sign right in front of them or temporarily clog a four-corners with riders inventing creative paths around pickup trucks, through convenience store lots and over curbs and sidewalks in order to avoid having to actually stop.

Maybe my optimism is a bit unbridled here, but I think that after twenty years we are starting to belong out there—in the minds of the rest of the population. When I run across someone who lives out that way, I make a point of mentioning that gang of skinny cyclists that go by on Wednesdays, and most folks know exactly who I'm talking about and what time we're in their neck of the woods.

I don't know about you, but I figure that when we've got rural Van Buren County residents thinking Hammerheads are part of the ordinary routine out there, that's big progress, and possibly even a real sign that road riding and club rides in particular are finally coming of age around here.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



LAST ISSUE: 2005.02
PHIL & JINI CARUSO
313 HORSESHOE CT
PLAINWELL MI 49080-9111

2004 KBC Officers

President: Doug Kirk.....388-5045
e-mail: kirkdoug@aol.com
Vice President: Mike Boersma.....720-1409
e-mail: m_e_boersma@voyager.net
Secretary: Brad Fry.....383-8047
e-mail: bafry@netonecom.net
Treasurer: Terry O'Connor.....342-4608
e-mail: Terry.OConnor@Davenport.edu

Other Important KBC Folks

Database Manager: Paul Bruneau.....343-6016
e-mail: paul@ethicalpaul.com
Newsletter Editor: Zolton Cohen.....344-0200
e-mail: zcohen@ameritech.net
Ride Captain: Randy Putt.....649-1814
e-mail: SRBike@aol.com
Social Director: Michele Intermont.....373-8929
e-mail: intermon@kzoo.edu
Webmaster: Kathy Kirk.....388-5045
email: kirkirk@ameritech.net

Kalamazoo Area Bike Shops

- Alfred E. Bike.....349-9423
- Billy's Bike Shop.....665-5202
- Breakaway Bicycles.....324-5555
- Team Active.....962-7688
- Village Cyclery.....679-4242

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club Membership Application

- Yearly Adult Membership-----\$15.00
- 3 Year Adult Membership-----\$40.00
- Yearly Family Membership-----\$17.00
- 3 Year Family Membership-----\$45.00
- Yearly Senior (60+) Membership-----\$13.00
- 3 Year Senior (60+) Membership-----\$35.00

Renewal? Yes No

Please Print:

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

Permission to register your name with the KBC groupserve list
and receive all the group's email messages?

Yes No

Family Member Names

Birthdates

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signature _____

Parent's Signature (If under 18) _____

Interested in working on KBC Events? Yes No

Ride Category: Fitness Casual Competitive

Send to: Kalamazoo Bicycle Club P.O. Box 50527, Kalamazoo MI 49005