

# KBC PedalPress

[www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org](http://www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

December 2004

## President's Farewell Letter:

I've been voted out of office. In fact, I withdrew once Mike Boersma threw his helmet into the ring. I think my presidency will be remembered for being similar to Dwight Eisenhower's two terms—lots of growth going while I look on benignly and do very little.

In addition to possessing good organizational skills, the ideal President would also be one of the strongest riders and also keenly aware of what's going on throughout the pack—fast enough to drop back and tow up riders who've fallen off the back of the pack or sprint to the front to tell some hammerheads to cool it for a few minutes, and more importantly willing to do so. Sad to say that most days I fail at one aspect of this or the other.

Frankly, about all I've done as your President is emcee KBC's monthly meetings, write this column, and help out with the annual Recovery Party. KBC needs and deserves better. Kathy & I ride lots of miles and I guess most all of our bicycling inspiration gets used up on the road.

If I'd had more time and inspiration, I might have continued working with the road commission and the cities for more, better bike routes. Finding time to working with the *Gazette* for more coverage of biking and our rides would also have been nice. I guess my greatest failing has been not doing more to help new riders by working to create more rides that cater to their needs.

I'm optimistic that the youth and energy Mike brings to the cause will result in a distinct lack of nostalgia for the Kirk era. Mike's much newer to the club and to riding in general, and I think that puts him in a better position to relate to a broader spectrum of riders than this old wheelsucker.

Still, a few good things have occurred on my watch—most importantly continued growth in attendance at KBC rides, and to a lesser extent, increased attendance at KBC meetings. Axel Kleat suggested last month that the Hammerfest has come of age, and maybe he's right—about Club rides in general. The turnout at our weekday rides the past couple of years is simply remarkable.

One thing I'm not too sure about is the upcoming switch to an electronic format for this newsletter. Frankly, I opposed the change, but the biggest problem is finding people willing to laboriously fold, staple and stamp the paper version every month. I've done this task in the past, and it's no fun. Volunteers are becoming increasingly hard to find, and that's what tipped the scales for me.

Yet I'm hopeful that in the long run, getting KBC members used to the idea of going straight to their computers to get the facts about club rides and activities will be a good thing. The key to increasing the size and number of our rides, it seems to me, is having a good, easy source of up-to-the-minute information of when and where rides are happening. Going electronic ought to facilitate this.

Please join me in welcoming Mike Boersma as your new President.

Doug Kirk, ex-KBC President

## Important Notice Concerning Your Mailing Label and the Electronic KBC *PedalPress*

Right now, while you're thinking about it, please check the mailing label on this issue of your KBC *PedalPress*. Does it say, above the mailing address: Email address unknown?

If it does, you will not receive notification that issues of the new, electronic *PedalPress* are available. In February traditional, mailed hard copies of the *PedalPress* are going the way of American-made Huffy bicycles. In other words, extinct. You will not be mailed a hard copy of the *PedalPress* after January.

Instead of mailing the *PedalPress*, we're going to be presenting it online. So we need your email address in order to alert you that the next issue is available.

No, we're not going to send you the entire *PedalPress* each month and possibly overload your email box. Members will receive via email on or around the first of each month a brief notification that a new issue is available, along with a link that will take you directly there.

But this system will not work unless we have your working email address. So far we've gleaned about half KBC's membership's email addresses. But we need the rest of you to sign up quickly so database manager Paul Bruneau can get this thing working the way it should. Please contact him at [paul@ethicalpaul.com](mailto:paul@ethicalpaul.com), or 343-6016.

For those of you who do not have email addresses, hard copies of the *PedalPress* will be printed and made available at the monthly club meetings and other events. However, the cost and labor benefits of online delivery quickly go south unless the bulk of the membership receives the *PedalPress* via the internet. *In any case, the PedalPress will not be mailed after January's issue.*

So please, if your mailing label labels you as one who has not yet signed up with Paul, do so at your earliest opportunity. We know you don't want to miss any of the club's news, and we don't want to have to chase you around to deliver it.

We'll only use your email address for new *PedalPress* notification delivery. And be assured that we will never sell, give away, or have wrested from us your email address. We know how irritating it is to have spam delivered to our own email inboxes.....

### December Birthdays:

Taylor Birmann  
 Mike Boersma  
 Al Cergol  
 Joseph Dill  
 Judah Gusmondo  
 Sherry Higgins  
 Mike Jones  
 Dan Kallewaard  
 Stephanie Kennedy  
 Dale Krueger  
 Ruth Krueger  
 Amy Lehman  
 Doug McDonnell  
 David Mitchell  
 Donald Mitchell  
 Rob Nicey  
 Charles Page  
 Paul Stevens  
 Richard Wolf

### December Expiring memberships:

Bruce Dedee  
 Scott Freer Family  
 Ray Murphy Family  
 David & Karen Watt

### December New Memberships:

Mr. Nobody

## Recovery Party Information:

KBC's annual Recovery Party will be held on Saturday, January 22nd, 2005, at the home of **Chris and Marian Barnes**, 6705 Evergreen, in Portage, from 7-10 PM. Club social Directors **Michele Intermont** and **Megan James** will handle the entrees and drinks (soft drinks, beer and wine), and ask that you bring a dish to share. Also, they could use a little help before and after the party to help set up and clean up after everyone's gone.

To avoid a possible pileup of similar types of food, how about we divide everything up? **If your last name starts with the letters A-H, could you bring a salad? I-O, a dessert; P-Z, an appetizer.** The potluck concept has worked very well at past Recovery Parties and insured a wide (and large!) variety of food for the attendees.

Local bike shops are contributing schwag to give away at a raffle held at the party, and there will a slide show and perhaps even videos of local KBC riding events. Chris Barnes suggested setting up a "swap table" as well. All in all this is a great night to connect with your biking friends – it's the social event of the season. See you there!

## NOVEMBER, 2004, KBC MINUTES

KBC's regular monthly meeting was held Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 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, Kathy Kirk, Chris Howard, Terry Florian, Paul Bruneau, Jim Kindle, Zolton Cohen, Mike Berry, Chris Barnes, Tom Keizer, Brad Fry, Mike Boersma, Randy Putt, Bob Keller, and Victor Van Fleet.

The November meeting began with the election of the 2005 KBC Executive Committee. **Mike Boersma, Jim Kindle, Mike Berry, and Tom Keizer** were nominated to run for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively. All candidates were unanimously approved by those KBC members in attendance and will begin serving their terms at the December 2004 meeting.

Next, **Brad Fry** reported that **David Sperry** was interested in organizing a race team affiliated with KBC. The team would focus on local and regional road races, criteriums, and time trials, and be open to club members of all abilities. David will be invited to the December meeting to further discuss his proposal, and the level of support required from KBC.

The KBC Recovery Party has been scheduled for Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 at the home of **Chris and Marian Barnes**. KBC Social Directors, **Megan James and Michelle Intermont**, are planning the event. **Randy Putt, Chris Barnes, Doug Kirk, and Bob Keller** agreed to solicit swag from local bicycle shops for the occasion. Further details will be published in an upcoming *PedalPress*.

**Tom Keizer** reported that the 2005 Flowerfest event would be added to the *Gazelle Sports* 2005 events calendar. Tom also noted the organizing committee is still in search of volunteers for Flowerfest.

**Chris Barnes** provided a summary of the 2004 TNTT series. Chris noted that the series attracted a total of 56 riders, with an average attendance of over 20 cyclists at each event. Several new club members also joined as a result of this past season's TNTT series. Chris will return next year to direct the 2005 TNTT series, and hopes to begin the season as early as May 2005.

**Randy Putt**, KBC Ride Captain, reported that several women were interested in starting a weekday ride held during the day. Other club members who are interested in leading a new ride are encouraged to contact Randy.

**Victor Van Fleet** presented several opportunities to enhance cycling in the Kalamazoo area. Victor will draft a summary of these proposed improvements for inclusion in a future *PedalPress*. These opportunities will be discussed at future club meetings.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. **Next meeting: Tuesday, December 14, 2004, 7:00 PM, Kalamazoo YMCA on Maple Street.**

Respectfully submitted, Brad Fry, KBC Secretary

## Editor's Letter:

I dunno about you, but methinks departing president **Doug Kirk** sells himself short on the front page of this newsletter. He did a lot for the club during his tenure as president, and not just in this last year.

For one thing – the main thing - he kept the club going. That's an accomplishment in this day and age of diminishing volunteer assistance. He stepped up at a time when no one else wanted to take the reins of the club, and he saw it through some controversy and times of great change – including the upcoming switch to an electronic newsletter. And you'll never find a more enthusiastic proponent of the pedal sport than Doug.

So I'm not buying his line that he didn't do much else other than show up. Even if that were the case – and it's not - it's a lot.

KBC owes a debt of gratitude not only to Doug, but also to the other departing Executive Board members: **Brad Fry**, Secretary; **Terry O'Connor**, Treasurer; and **Mike Boersma**, Vice President. Mike, of course, will get his chance to shine in the year to come as the newly elected president. But let us also acknowledge Brad's and Terry's contributions as well.

Brad is the one who faithfully attended club meetings and wrote the accurate notes you read in the *PedalPress* every month. I give my thanks for that, because, as newsletter editor, it sure made my job easier to know I could count on Brad's clean text coming through each month, on time.

And another good thing about Brad that has nothing to do with his duties as Secretary: He sure knows how to shut up on the bike. I've ridden alongside him for miles and miles and neither of us has said a word. There are times on the bike when the wind in your ears is just about all you'd like to hear. Brad's a great partner for that.

Terry's steady hand on the club's finances and insight into how the club should spend its money wisely should be a comfort to everyone who is a dues paying member. Know this: nothing got past Terry in his tenure as club treasurer. Every dime has been accounted for.

Thank you, loyal club volunteer leaders. KBC would not be what it is today without you. And don't be strangers! Please. There's nothing like the voice of experience to help smooth the way for the new Board. We welcome your continuing attendance and input at club meetings, as well as at rides and in the biking community at large. Kick back, but not too far...

Though the KBC bike season is over, it's surprising how often in the late fall and early winter (and, some hardy riders would say, even through the snow as well) there are days fit for riding. If you've got a flexible schedule, with the sun out from noon on into the late afternoon riding even on chilly days can be pleasant, stimulating, and worth the time and effort it takes to prepare for the journey.

The world looks – and is – different at this time of year. With leaves and other vegetation dead and brown, with the sun low in the sky, things are not the same as they are in mid summer. Though the roads we ride on are still the same, you see new things that aren't usually visible through the thicket of leaves and other plants.

And speaking of extending the riding season, for a number of years after the regular road riding season is over some hardy bikers have been riding late in the fall and into the early winter on the Kal Haven Trail on Wednesday nights. The time is 6:00 PM sharp, and the order of the day is mountain or cyclocross or commuter bikes, regular winter riding gear, and lighting equipment. Those who show up can decide how far to go on the out-and-back route. The main group usually rides to Gobles and back – a round-trip distance of about 27 miles – at speeds averaging about 18-19 mph, but other groups may form up to ride at a slower pace, or a shorter distance.

Some riders prefer mounting lights on their handlebars, others like them attached to their helmets, in order to direct the beam where they're looking. But the important thing is to have enough battery power to last through the ride. It gets very dark out on the trail on cloudy nights.

And you and your bike must be in good riding condition if you intend to do this ride. It's one thing to break down on a summer road ride; it's quite another to do so when it's 30 degrees and pitch black, ten miles out on the trail. If you wish to participate on this ride, make sure you carry your own tire and tube replacement and inflation equipment – and know how to use them. Don't make the people who stop to help you wait around in cold, wet clothing while you fumble through the fundamentals of changing your bike's flattened tube.

The Kal Haven Trail is in good condition at this time of year. Most of the leaves have either been blown off to the sides of the trail or have been ground into dust under foot and tire. Still, branches can and do fall onto the trail, so you'll need to be alert for those – and wildlife as well. Deer sometimes crash through the underbrush and across the trail very close to the riding group, and we've nearly run possums and 'coons down from behind on a few occasions.

*(next page)*

A week ago, before the Wednesday night ride, I went exploring on the new trail extension east of the 10th Street parking lot. The tunnel under 131 is complete and the approaches from both ways into the tunnel have been paved with asphalt. I rode down the western approach, gathering speed, and was into the middle of the dark tunnel before I realized that that was probably not the best of ideas. What if a worker had left a wheelbarrow or pile of concrete blocks in the middle of the path of my descent? I switched on my headlight quickly and was relieved to find the way clear.

Though the trail east of the tunnel has not yet received its final surfacing material, clearing has been done, and the path is rideable, but is rutted and muddy. Richard Skalski, senior construction engineer for the City of Kalamazoo, reports that the trail from the 10th Street trailhead through the tunnel will be completed this year, but that the continuance of the spur to Douglas Avenue will be finished up in 2005.

Zolton Cohen

## Improving Bicycling in Kalamazoo

Dale Krueger is working with Victor Van Fleet to come up with some ways of improving the bicycling environment in and around Kalamazoo. Dale's interest was piqued for this project when he read an article in a recent *Bicycling* magazine on how to make your town more "bike friendly." Victor's concerns lie primarily with today's overweight youth and adults.

There are, it seems, many ways in which Kalamazoo can improve in this realm, including advocacy for comprehensive, well marked bike routes that actually go somewhere, developing educational programs for both motorists and bicyclists to teach road etiquette, providing maps for bicyclists showing existing trails and routes, and lobbying for bike lanes on new and exiting roadways.

If you are interested in working with Dale and Victor on this project, please contact them at: [dalekrueger@charter.net](mailto:dalekrueger@charter.net), or [vvanfleet@core.com](mailto:vvanfleet@core.com). Details of their plan of action will follow in an upcoming *Pedal-Press*.

## Racing Update

Great job to all those racers who stuck out the long racing season to compete in the Iceman! This race did NOT live up to its name this year with balmy temperatures and nicely packed sand making for the fastest race ever on this course. The Iceman is drawing more and more pro's each year as it attracts national attention in places like [cyclingnews.com](http://cyclingnews.com). The top ten women were all pro racers, including our old friend Kelli Emmett, who took second after dropping her chain with just a couple of miles to go. This is a great race to compete in, watch or just ride with a group!

The Iceman marks the end of the race calendar for most of us as we all begin those base miles and hit the weight room in hopes of getting faster for next year. The off - season is where our greatest gains are made, since the race season is filled with racing and recovery. So, make the best of your winter with good training and nutrition and we'll see you at the races next year!!

If I've missed your race results, please email me at [caolson@mei.net](mailto:caolson@mei.net). With so many events on the local calendar it's hard to find them all without a bit of help!

### ICEMAN COMETH 2004

EXPERT 30-34: Kevin Vichinsky 9th; Jeff Hamilton 11th

EXPERT 40-44: Scott Steurer 7th

SINGLESPEED: Michael Birmann 9th; Richard Neumann 11th; Joe Kucharski 12th

SPORT 35-39: Robert Gray 36th; Scott McAllister 61st; Gary Lehman 136th

SPORT 45-49: Jim Walhout 80th;

ALL MEN 55-64: Terry Hutchins 26th; David Bishop 43rd

ALL MEN 12-14: Taylor Birmann 6th

BEGINNER MEN 30-34: Jim Eckert 21st

### COMING EVENTS

December 5th: Cyclo-Cross Munson Park, Monroe ([www.tailwind.net](http://www.tailwind.net))

December 12th: Cyclo-Cross Manhattan Park, Grand Rapids ([www.kisscross.com](http://www.kisscross.com))

## RAMBLINGS FROM THE RIDE CAPTAIN

The 2004 ride season has slowed to a crawl with cooler temperatures and shorter days. As long as the roads are not snow covered and temperature is not too cold you can still ride comfortably. You just have to put on few more clothes to stay warm. The weather is gorgeous today with clear skies and cool temperatures in the 40s. Of course, it can change in an instant. The temperatures are scheduled to be in the 50s tomorrow and into next week, not bad for mid-November. Keep the bike ready to go. I hope you are able to get out and ride. Take advantage of these glorious fall days.

We had yet another great summer of riding. The attendance at the regular weekly club rides exceeded my expectations once again. There are numerous new riders who have become regulars at the rides. Also, the six special weekend rides were well attended and a lot of fun. There was the W Ave ride in May, the Ride to South Haven and the 2nd Annual Barnes Family Ride in Richland in July, the Ride Around Kalamazoo County in August, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Ride in September, and the new Fall Ride in October. Unfortunately the Old Car Ride in June was rained out for the first time since its inception. We plan to continue these rides next year.

One person or a small group who wanted to go for a ride started all these rides. For example, this year **Knute Jacobson** and I decided to try a ride in October from St Timothy's Church near Gull Lake. Knute mapped a route and I publicized the ride. We had a great turnout on a cloudy fall Saturday with sub sandwiches and socialization at the completion of the ride. Hey, it's more fun to ride with a group, so we now have 7 special weekend rides. Other ideas for weekend rides are always welcome. All it takes is one person to get it started.

I would like to thank the ride leaders again for the great job they have done this year. The following people led weekday and/or weekend rides during the 2004 ride season: **Marion and Chris Barnes, Zolton Cohen, Mike and Sherry Higgins, Knute Jacobson, Fred James, Dave Jones, Doug Kirk, Terry O'Connor, Randy Putt, Tim Stewart, and Rick Whaley.** Other riders (Jan – Sorry I don't know your last name, Larry Kissinger, Greg Lawford, Victor Van Fleet, Paul Stevens, Cliff Muller, and others I am not aware of) filled in several times throughout the ride season. Thanks to all of these conscientious riders. My apologies if I missed any of riders who filled for absent ride leaders. I hope you can all come back next year.

Also, give a special thanks to social directors **Megan James and Michele Intermont** for their efforts in organizing the food for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Ride. Let's not forget hard work by the **Barnes Family** to continue the Tuesday Night Time Trial again this year. It was a great success once again. There were numerous riders who helped with this event, especially **Zolton Cohen.** I'm sure I missed a couple of volunteers.

There are no regularly scheduled rides for the rest of year, but there are likely to be periodic impromptu rides, even in December, January, and February when the weather cooperates. The ride schedule will resume on a limited basis in March 2005.

If you would like to lead an impromptu weekend ride at some time, give me a call, send me an e-mail (sterling.r.putt@pfizer.com) or send a note via KBC group email and I would be more than happy to forward information about the ride to my biking e-mail list. There are always riders ready to go. If you would like to be on my ride list, send me your e-mail address.

It is never too early to start planning the ride schedule for the 2005 ride season. We plan to continue the Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday rides as well as the special weekend rides. In addition there is interest in establishing a weekly Saturday ride at St Timothy's Church on BC Ave between Gull Lake and M-43. **Paul Raynes** and Knute Jacobson are interested in leading this ride. Also, **Renee Mitchell and Jelania Haile** have expressed interest in establishing a weekly morning ride next year. Stay tuned for more details in the spring. What rides are you interested in doing? We want to hear from you.

If anyone has any ideas on how to improve upon our ride schedule or the rides themselves, please contact any KBC officer or me.

## Travel to the Tour, With a KBC Discount!

Last year 750,000 visitors witnessed Lance Armstrong win the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Dodge Tour de Georgia** ([www.DodgeTourdeGeorgia.com](http://www.DodgeTourdeGeorgia.com)). It wasn't without effort, as portions of the Southern Appalachians wreaked havoc on the peloton with steep uphill grades of over 20% on Brasstown Bald separated the men from the boys.

The third annual event, again sponsored by Dodge, is expected to draw more people, more coverage, and another top notch field of teams. The race is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> in Augusta, GA (home of The Masters) and conclude on Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> in Alpharetta, GA (A northern suburb of Atlanta). The race will have seven stages, including a world-class time trial course in Rome, GA and two significant mountain stages through the Chattahoochee National Forest. Fans who lined the ascent to Brasstown Bald truly engaged in a domesticated version of Alp d'Huez in France, with crowds reaching three and four people deep for the brutal two mile climb.

The Dodge Tour de Georgia organization has licensed Discover Adventures, a tour operator based in Atlanta, GA to provide several events and tours associated with the 2005 DTdG.

To kick off your Spring training, **Frankie Andreu** will be directing the **P.R.O. Series – Part I (Proficient Riding Outdoors)** designed for recreational riders desiring cycling savvy. Base camp for the 6 day, 5 night spring training clinic on March 13-18<sup>th</sup> will be at one of Georgia's most beautiful state parks, Unicoi State Park & Lodge. The daily rides will be 3-4 hours long, encompassing many of the same roads the 2005 Dodge Tour de Georgia will be on a month later.

The P.R.O. Series will feature several of Frankie's colleague's from the US Postal Service team to fill out the coaching roster. In addition to the daily rides, there will be lectures, massage therapy, one-on-one coaching with Frankie, video taping sessions, and group coaching sessions as well.

For the 2005 Dodge Tour de Georgia, Discover Adventures has posted five tours from which to choose during the race. As the official tour operator of the Dodge Tour de Georgia, Discover Adventures is afforded privileges for their guests that are not available to the general public. Each day, ride the actual race course fully supported by a seasoned guide team. At each stage finish, after riding the race route, step up to the exclusive race observation area reserved for our guests. And sit down with one of your favorite cyclists during the team dinner we're invited to.

The **Luxury Tour** is for couples only, and accommodations will be in bed & breakfasts throughout Georgia. The **VIP Tour** will be hosting celebrity riders each day whereby this group will ride and eat shoulder-to-shoulder with cycling VIP's throughout the week. Two standard tours, the **Weeklong and the weekend version**, will follow each stage and finally, on the **Economy Tour** guests will ride two stages, watch 2 stages and sleep two nights before heading home. Full details can be found online at [www.DiscoverAdventures.com/tdg.asp](http://www.DiscoverAdventures.com/tdg.asp).

Should any members of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club choose to participate in any of the Dodge Tour de Georgia events, please mention your association with your club, and Discover Adventures will credit 5% off the trip of their choice.

## Cyclocross at St. Timothy Church:

**Ken Fouts**, director of KBC's latest cyclocross event, stared out into the bright sunshine of the Saturday, November 13th afternoon and sighed. "Well, it's not exactly ideal weather for cyclocross." Cyclocross, he explained, is a bike race involving trail and hard surface biking, and pushing and carrying your bike over manmade and natural obstructions and barriers. And it is best done in wet and cold weather. "It would be better if it was about 30 degrees out, with sleet," Fouts said. "Or at least rain. That's what makes cyclocross fun."

The twenty or so people who showed up for the Fouts and **Tom Cross**-led cyclocross clinic, held courtesy of Pastor **H. Knute Jacobson** at St. Timothy Church in Richland, didn't seem to mind the mild weather though. After a brief lecture about the sport from Fouts inside the church, and a high-speed look at a videotape of a professional cyclocross race in Europe, riders were instructed by Tom Cross outside in the parking lot on mounting, dismounting, and bike carrying techniques. The idea being that the faster and smoother one can accomplish these tasks the more rapidly one can ride the course.

Then it was out on the course for some actual riding, pushing and carrying. Within a few minutes most of the participants had learned at least in a general fashion how to get a bike over the low wooden barriers and up a steep hill, though the speed, technique and skill of the riders, as could be expected, varied quite a bit.

Fouts said that cyclocross is a relatively easy event to set up and administer, as most courses are relatively short – the one at St. Tim's is about 3/4 mile in length. This also makes the sport very spectator-friendly, as bikers may pass by each barrier point or hill ten or more times during a typical one hour race. Courses usually include sections of paved roadway, fields, and trails, and thus can be set up on smaller parcels of land, as the trail can wind back and forth through woods and fields and then back out onto the open again.

Bikes made specifically for cyclocross more resemble road, rather than mountain, bikes. Most have drop handlebars and clipless pedals. Tires may run from about 25 cm to 45 or so in width and have aggressive knobs for traction on trails. Tire pressure, which Fouts say is critical to get right for the local conditions when running a cyclocross race, usually is set at about 50 psi.

One major difference between cyclocross bikes and regular road bikes is the amount of clearance left between the frame and the tires. As mud builds up on the tires it is important that it doesn't scrape on the frame and inhibit the rider's speed. The same is true of the braking system; cyclocross bikes use cantilever brakes that provide plenty of mud-space clearance.

Originally developed in Europe as off-season training for professional road bike riders, cyclocross has since become a sport in its own right, with some riders specializing in it and following a professional circuit. Though it is relatively unknown at this point in the US, Fouts and Cross hope that it catches on, given its many organizational and spectator-advantageous properties – not to mention the fun and aerobic benefits it provides participants.

There is something unique in the combination of riding, suddenly dismounting, and then running while carrying or pushing a bike that makes cyclocross bicycling cardiovascular in the extreme. Participants of KBC's Saturday cyclocross clinic would agree, as fatigue took its toll on speed and technique during the informal 30 minute race held at the end of the clinic. New KBC Vice President **Jim Kindle** was heard to pant, only about 8 minutes into the ride, "Are we at about the 25 minute mark yet?" However, given the stricken - but happy - looks on some of the faces of the riders as they climbed the hill behind St. Tim's Church one last time, it all seemed worthwhile.

Kudos go to Ken Fouts, Tom Cross, and H. Knute Jacobson for organizing, providing a course for, and putting on this instructional clinic. It's clear that participating in cyclocross is a good way to extend the biking season, to develop new bike handling skills, and to enjoy the outdoors in inclement weather - not to mention the usual biking benefits of aerobic fitness and camaraderie.



## Syringes and Such

By Axel Kleat

The Constitution says we're innocent until proven guilty, but that's in a court of law. We're talking about the court of public opinion here, and in particular my opinions about professional cyclists and performance-enhancing substances.

As proof of my own naiveté, I admit being totally shocked when the UCI reported that Tyler Hamilton tested positive in September—not for drugs, but for blood—and someone else's blood at that. The authorities claim that a new test just instituted this year shows that Tyler had extra blood—not his own—in his veins. Extra blood, of course, means extra red blood cells and the ability to transport more oxygen and go faster longer.

Frankly, I'd have been less surprised if they'd caught Lance with a syringe full of EPO. Tyler always seemed squeaky clean to me. There will be a trial of some kind, I understand, focusing on the reliability of the new test. Meanwhile Tyler proclaims his innocence to a thoroughly skeptical public whose opinions are jaded by dozens of other positive tests (on other riders) and the occasional race-drug bust these last few years.

What are we to make of it when our heroes turn out to be cheats? That the pressure to win, the sheer difficulty of the competition, and the money and prestige are so great that mere mortals simply cannot help themselves? Or that all these undeniably wonderful athletes are at least in one respect just like us regular folk—looking for a way to get ahead in a world where the media—and thereby the public—treats the most courageous second-place finisher as just an also-ran?

And what are the athletes to make of it when they are caught doing what they know many of their friends and foes in the peloton are also doing, but just haven't been caught? Think Tyler feels he's a scapegoat? I suspect a goodly percentage of the pro peloton goes to bed each night thanking their lucky stars they haven't been caught yet.

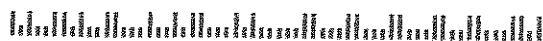
Where are we to draw the line? Caffeine sure seems to make me ride faster, and it's perfectly legal. What about withdrawing your own blood weeks or months in advance, then putting it back for the big event, like the U.S. Olympic team did in 1984? And how would vampires (the term the pros use for the blood-testers) go about testing for a person's own blood?

There's no end in sight. As the authorities develop more sophisticated tests, the researchers also develop new drugs. So it's no surprise that more than one connoisseur of the sport has seriously suggested that, at least at the professional level, we ought to quit worrying about who's using what, and just let them race on whatever go-juices science can concoct. Let the riders decide what chances they're willing to take with their bodies and their health in search of fame and fortune. After all, baseball and football players have been taking steroids for years while the leagues look the other way, and weight-lifters and body builders build cartoon-worthy bodies.

All the while, I wonder just how much of the blame should lie at the feet of the various team managers, coaches and medical staff—as opposed to the riders acting on their own. One gets the feeling that there's another race going on behind the scenes involving mad cycling-scientists in dark, secret labs distilling new, unknown elixirs of speed on one side taking on good-guy detectives in white lab coats ferreting out the latest cheaters and the newest drugs in the name of fair play and the health and safety of the athletes.

I'd like to be able to believe that races get decided by who's the strongest rider with the smartest tactics and the best team. And maybe some of them are. I hate wondering who they are, but not as much as I hate seeing my heroes exposed as cheats.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



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

**2004 KBC Officers**

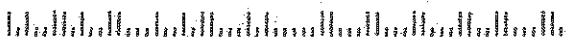
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 e-mail: m\_e\_boersma@voyager.net  
 Vice President: Jim Kindle.....382-8053  
 e-mail: remax.kindle@charter.net  
 Secretary: Mike Berry.....269 427-7204  
 e-mail: tourmalet03@yahoo.com  
 Treasurer: Tom Keizer.....382-4737  
 e-mail: tomkeizer@juno.com

**Other Important KBC Folks**

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 e-mail: paul@ethicalpaul.com  
 Newsletter Editor: Zolton Cohen.....344-0920  
 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: klkirk@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 \_\_\_\_\_

Family Member Names	Birthdates
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent's Signature (If under 18 ) \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in working on KBC Events? Yes  No

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

Yes  No

Ride Category:  Fitness  Casual  Competitive

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