

KBC PedalPress

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club February, 2017
www.kalamazooobicycleclub.org

THE NEXT KBC MONTHLY MEETING IS FEBRUARY 14, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. at the Kalamazoo YMCA on Maple Street, 1st floor. All KBC members are welcome to attend.

IF YOU HAVE AN ARTICLE, AD, ETC. to submit for the *Pedal Press*, e-mail it to editor@kalamazooobicycleclub.org by the 20th of the month before its intended publication. Mr. Editor would be happy to hear from you!

President's Letter:

Wow, what an amazing Recovery Party! Well, I'm predicting it was as I write this a few days before. I'm sure it was wonderful with lots of good food and drink. Thank you to John Idema for organizing such a great event and to all who volunteered bringing together the membership of KBC. If you were not able to attend the party or would like a recap, please see related article that follows.

In January, the Executive Committee (EC) met to review KBC's 2016 Goals and to set new goals for the coming year. We solicited help from the Board members and asked each one to share how they felt KBC did accomplishing the 2016 goals and what they'd like to see KBC focus on during 2017. Below are the results of our meeting. Thank you John, Val, Mike and each board member for your input, insight and responses.

A Look Back – 2016 Goals

In 2016, after reviewing membership survey results from the previous summer, KBC's EC identified four main goals and areas of focus for the year: *Perception, Rides, Volunteers, and Web* (additional details on these can be found online in the [February 2016 PedalPress](#)). Throughout 2016, KBC's Board focused on these four areas striving to achieve laid out objectives along the way. We are encouraged by one KBC board member who stated – "I think the club did a pretty decent job of at least addressing, and in some cases meeting, all four 2016 goals." Below are a few other comments on each goal:

- *Perception* – KBC did a good job improving public perception through items like its financial contributions, response to the June 7th tragedy, and playing a leading role in getting the 5 foot ordinances passed.
- *Rides* – KBC established a Ride Committee with a Ride Captain at the helm and better addressed the interests and needs of all club riders.
- *Volunteers* – With the addition of new Board Members and increased interest in volunteering at KBC events, not to mention the large volunteer turnout for KalTour, strides have been made here.
- *Web* – A new user and maintenance friendlier website was launched for KBC and second webmaster added to the team.

Each of the 2016 goals were achieved at differing levels. KBC will continue to work on these goals as needed by incorporating them into the new goals we're setting our sights on for the coming year. Goals only get achieved

when inspired, hardworking, and devoted KBC members contribute their time and efforts towards accomplishing them. So a huge THANK YOU to all the members who helped the Board achieve these 2016 goals!

Rolling Forward – 2017 Goals

KBC's EC reviewed input from Board members and progress from last year's goals to generate goals for 2017 that focus on these four areas: *Communications, Community, Members, and Processes*. While some of these goals are currently more defined than others, the EC will work alongside the KBC Board and Members to map out and implement objectives to achieve these goals throughout the year. Below is a little more insight of each goal:

1. **COMMUNICATIONS – Ensure Club Communications are Relevant and Current**
 - Teams will ensure KBC website contents are up-to-date and responsive, complete and print a new KBC Brochure and develop ways to promote bicycle safety.
2. **COMMUNITY – Strengthen Community Relationships**
 - Teams will connect with other organizations that share common interests when practical, continue bicycle advocacy work in our community, and explore ways to 'normalize' biking in our community (perception of bicycling as a normal part of the overall transportation landscape).
3. **MEMBERS – Enhance Membership Experience**
 - Teams will explore ways to increase KBC Membership value, continue to improve and enhance KBC Rides, expand and improve KBC volunteerism, and strive to hold meetings within posted timeframe.
4. **PROCESSES – Improve KBC Administrative Processes**
 - KBC's Board will work to establish an annual budget and streamline financial processes, explore ways to improve management of membership information and simplify monthly newsletter distribution process.

To learn more about these or other exciting things your club is working on, we invite you to join us at our next monthly meeting being held Tuesday, February 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Kalamazoo YMCA. There may even be a special treat! Plan to attend and join KBC in 'Rolling Forward' this year!

As we envision the year ahead, it's clear that we have the opportunity to make a great impact in our community with regards to bicycling. There are so many different and unique ways our members can share their love for cycling in addition to going on rides. Volunteers are the heart and soul of KBC. We are very fortunate to have a diverse team of amazing volunteers that do an exceptional job week in and week out helping the club succeed at its mission, sharing their passion of cycling with others and having fun along the way. Please consider joining our team and making an impact!

Safe cycling!

--Renee Mitchell, KBC President

Yet Another Great KBC Recovery Party

The 2017 Recovery Party was January 28th and was another unqualified success. As always, this event is the largest gathering of KBC members each year. Once again we filled the offices of Eckert & Wordell with somewhere between 75 and 100 bike-loving folks. (And once again, a big Thank You to **Dave Jarl** for making this beautiful space available.)

KBC members brought a wide array of truly tasty quiches, soups, salads, appetizers, breads and desserts to go with sandwiches and beverages provided by the club. We gave away schwag from Alfred E. Bike, Zoo City Bicycles, Pedal and Village Cyclery. Once again a big Thank You to these great shops for their loyal, ongoing support.

We also gave the annual “Lemonade from Lemons” award to both **Chris Barnes** and **Terry Florian** since both of these long-term, high mileage riders have undergone serious, open-heart surgery and are back riding their bikes very well indeed. In addition, we gave the Most Improved Rider award to **Chris Howard**, who has made terrific progress on the women’s rides in the past year and a half. President Renee selected **Paul Sotherland** as Volunteer of the Year

Several people told me in the course of the evening this is a highlight of their winter every year because of the food, the atmosphere, and the opportunity to talk to so many friends we’ve all made through bicycling. I couldn’t agree more.

--Doug Kirk, editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

Alfred E. Bike Closing Its Doors

Alfred E. Bike is closing its downtown store permanently according to Doug Stevenson, who has owned the business together with his wife, Bernie, for 44 years. Alfred’s, as it is often called, first opened in 1972 in the basement of the Marlborough Building on W. South St. A few years later it moved into the space now occupied by Gonzo’s Bigg Dogg brewpub on S. Westnedge Ave. before moving to its current location at 320 E. Michigan Ave. in the late 1980’s.

It’s amazing to think of all the changes that have happened to bicycles and bicycling since the shop opened during the “10-speed Craze” of the early 1970’s. Back then, “10-speed” meant ten speeds total, like a Schwinn Varsity, not 10 cogs just in the back! A light, really good racing bike like a Paramount or a Colnago weighed 26 lbs—10 lbs. more than racing bikes today. Clipless pedals were at least 10 years away. Mountain biking barely existed, and only in California. The sport of triathlon did not exist. Virtually all frames were made of steel. Trek, Cannondale, Specialized and Giant either didn’t exist or were tiny companies.

One thing’s for sure: After 44 years, their retirement is well deserved! We understand the online store will remain open until sometime in late February. We hope to publish an interview with Doug & maybe Bernie in an upcoming issue. Remaining stock is being auctioned on February 7th online. You can view it at [http://www.biddergy.com/Browse/R37285686/retirement sale - alfred e bike of kalamazoo](http://www.biddergy.com/Browse/R37285686/retirement_sale_-_alfred_e_bike_of_kalamazoo)

How many miles did you ride in 2016?

Lots of you keep track of the miles you ride. Again this year, we are asking that you let us know how far you rode. Maybe you have every ride on Strava, maybe you just look at the computer on your bike, or maybe you just write it down once in a while.

However you keep track, we want to know. Estimates (“about 750 miles”) and reasonable rounding are okay, and whether you include indoor/trainer miles is entirely up to you. This is just for fun—no prizes. Your report may inspire others to get out there and ride, too. If you are a current KBC member, please submit your name and 2016 total by February 20 directorroadsafety@kalamazoobicycleclub.org.

We’ll organize the results and publish them in the March *Pedal Press*.

--Paul Selden

KBC Comics

Mr. Editor is gets a little stir-crazy this time of year. Biking-related news is a little slow. No monthly meeting notes, no race reports. So why not print a couple of funny pictures? No idea what the origin of the picture on the left might be, but as the roads around here crumble as they always do this time of year, all three warnings seem appropriate. The cartoon on the right came from *The New Yorker*, but I'm pretty sure the folks on the right in the cartoon are **Barb & John Hart**.



A Really Interesting Map

(Ed. Note: This article ran last month, but it's important enough that we decided to run it again.)

Do you wonder what bike routes, bike paths or other improvements our local governments have in mind for cyclists over the next 10 or 20 years? Would you like to make your opinions known about what those plans are—maybe let them know about a road that really needs bike lanes that they've missed, or even let them know what you believe a good bike route should look like? You can do all that and more without leaving the chair you're sitting in right now. Point your computer at <http://www.communityremarks.com/KATS/index.php>

You'll find a very interesting, interactive map created by KATS (the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Authority) working with local governments, MDOT, local citizens—and a few KBC members—that shows both current bike routes, bike paths, and shoulders as well as proposed future routes for Kalamazoo County and eastern VanBuren County. Current and proposed routes are layered on the map in various colors so you can see any combination of bikes lanes, shoulders and multi-use paths (KRVT, etc.). And you can email your ideas, comments and opinions to the people who actually plan this stuff. There's a link on the same page.

This is a valuable resource. YOU can increase its value by taking some time to look it over and send in your own valuable comments. We have an opportunity here to really make our bicyclists voices heard, and make the roads we ride better and safer for us all.

--Doug Kirk Editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

Open Roads is looking for Board Members

Interested in helping to get young people into bicycling? Want to help build a stronger bicycle culture in Kalamazoo? Here's how!

Open Roads is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that teaches young people—often at-risk youngsters—bike mechanics and social skills in order to better prepare them for their future. They also can earn themselves a bike in the process. Open Roads is looking for board members who are passionate about cycling, interesting in supporting youth, and have skills in the business and/or non-profit world.

Information is available at www.openroadsbike.org. A link to a description of the board members' duties may be found at: <http://www.openroadsbike.org/become-a-board-member.html> Inquiries can be made directly to **Ethan Alexander** at Openroadsbike@gmail.com.

Kalamazoo Strong/KBC Jerseys STILL Available to Order Online

20% Of Your Purchase Price Goes to Kalamazoo Strong

93 of these jerseys have been sold through December 30, netting an additional \$1,267.56 for Kalamazoo Strong



Kalamazoo Strong inspired KBC jerseys are available to order direct from Voler, the jersey company that produced KBC's 2010 jerseys. The design is the club's most recent jersey design with the red Kalamazoo Strong bicycle chain heart replacing the star where Kalamazoo is located on the jersey.

Cost is \$70 plus shipping (or order with a bike buddy and save shipping costs, orders over \$75 ship for free). 20% of the cost of each jersey will be donated to Kalamazoo Strong to benefit families of the June 7, 2016 cycling tragedy.

Jerseys are custom made and ship about 7 days after your order is placed and payment is verified. Here's a link to the online store where you can order the jersey:

<http://www.voler.com/browse/collections/details/li/KalamazooStrong/>

Winter Weather Riding Tips

Warmer than usual winter weather means more bicyclists will be heading out to enjoy snow-free roads, so here's some winter-riding advice. First and foremost, assume that motor vehicle drivers are "driving distracted" so do all you can do make yourself stand out.

Go ahead and splurge on those brighter headlights or taillights you've been meaning to get. You're worth it! If you get caught in the dark, a headlight strong enough to illuminate ice, potholes, fallen limbs and joggers could save doctor bills later. And taillights have become much brighter the last couple of years. Get a really good one and use it. Make sure your batteries are fresh.

Maybe you wear a bright jacket. But if you wear a backpack or an extra jacket for warmth, it may cover up your bright jacket, so think about what drivers will see when approaching you. Be predictable and follow the rules of the road.

Watch out for motorists who don't have good winter driving skills. Similarly, avoid riders who exhibit poor riding skills. A vehicle (or bicycle) that hasn't turned on its lights may not be visible in your mirror. Look back for overtaking traffic before changing lanes.

I've fallen a couple of times on black ice that looked like ordinary wet asphalt. I've also fallen on icy diagonally running railroad tracks on a warm February day. I turned my front wheel to take them at a right angle an instant too late, and down I went. Another time I fell on a bridge with a diagonally planked wooden surface. Wet wood—and wet leaves—can be every bit as slippery as ice.

Finally, if you are serious about riding in winter conditions, consider studded tires! They aren't legal for your car, but they are for your bike and they make a huge difference. For more safe riding information point your browser to <http://www.lmb.org>

--Paul Selden, Director of Road Safety

Editor's Letter: Miscellaneous Ramblings

On January 21 it was 60 degrees, sunny, and generally beautiful. No worries about the sorts of problems mentioned in the last article, that's for sure! A group of us rode 60 miles—to the Covered Bridge just north of Centreville, then over to Three Rivers before turning for home. Most of us rode with bare arms or legs. It was still over 8 weeks till the first day of spring. We'd be happy with a day like this in mid-May—16 weeks—nearly a third of a year—from now! Selfishly speaking, as a cyclist living in Michigan, shockingly warm January is a wonderful thing. But as a 64 year old Michigander who remembers the winters of his youth being a whole heck of a lot colder and snowier, I can't help but worry about what the climate will be like 50 years from now.

Next time you're at the dentist, ask him or her for a used dental pick—that thing they poke around in your mouth with. Here's why: Any time you hear a nasty noise when you apply your (rim) brakes, you're slowly grinding up the surface of your fancy, expensive rims. Not a good thing. Your rims will last a lot longer if you have a dental pick. It's made out of really good steel and is just the thing to pick out the bits of grit or aluminum or carbon that get ground into the rubber brake blocks. Just remove the rubber brake block (it's held in with a teensy bolt, so loosen it 4 or 5 turns and slide the rubber block out the back of its holder), then sand the surface of the brake block on a piece of 100 (or so) grit sand paper for 10 or 20 strokes to get a new, smooth surface. The offending particles will be obvious, and that pick is just the thing to pry them out.

Virtually every component on a bicycle is far superior to what it was when I started riding 34 years ago, especially tires. They last hundreds or thousands of miles longer and offer better traction, but the really big difference is how tough they are. Flat tires are far, far less common nowadays even though tires are also lighter. Still any flat tire is a pain. Would you like even fewer flats? Spend 20 seconds looking at each tire after you ride. Spin each tire and brush off any debris, then take a good look at the tread while slowly rotating the tire a full circle. Every once in a while you'll find a little piece of glass or steel stuck in the tread. Grab that dental pick again and carefully pop it out before it works its way through to the tube.

And as long as we're talking about bike maintenance, replace your shift cables every year if you ride a lot (or every other year if not). If you do, you probably won't ever have to deal with a broken cable in the middle of a ride. Brake cables are bigger and don't have to go around such sharp corners. They never seem to break unless they're abused.

Be honest now—how often do you lube your chain? When you think about it? When your buddies complain your bike is squeaking? There's a bearing (technically a bushing) inside each one of the roughly 110 links of chain on your bike. Chains work hard and, unlike all the other bearings on your bike, they have no seals. They're right out in the open, exposed to sand, salt, rain, and—yeck—sweat!

I get it that chains are filthy and that you don't want to get all greasy. But a little TLC goes a long way. So go to an auto parts or hardware store and buy a box of disposable Nitrile gloves for six or seven dollars. You can usually reuse them a couple of times. They're pretty much the same thing surgeons use. Your hands stay clean and you lose practically no dexterity. Toss a rag under the chain and have at it with your choice of lube, if not every ride then every other ride—and every time you ride in dirt or rain. Well worth it, and your chain will thank you!

--Doug Kirk Editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

February KBC Statistics

Active subscriptions: 386 Active members: 676 (Includes family members)

New members: None Renewed Memberships: Dan Kallewaard

February Expiring memberships: (Is your name here?)

Jon Ballema • Paul Bonar • Mike Connelly • Jonathan Evans & Monica Tory • Keyte Family • Ervin Fulkerson • Jesse Kooistra • Andrew Louwaert • Joe Manning • James Murray • Daniel Withham • Tucker York • Brad Zapalowski Family

YOUR LOCAL BIKE SHOPS:

They support us so please support them

Billy's Bike Shop, 63 East Battle Creek Street, Galesburg, (269) 665-5202. Billy's no longer has a website

Custer Cyclery, 104 North Augusta, Augusta, (269) 731-3492, www.custercyclery.com.

Gazelle Sports, 214 South Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo, (269) 342-5996, www.Gazellesports.com.

Check out Gazelle Sports' February Footwear SALE - February 9-12.

Great deals on thousands of running shoes PLUS new markdowns on apparel up to 70% off!

Kzoo Swift, 445 Forest St, Kalamazoo, (269) 929-8053,

www.kzooswift.com.

Pedal Downtown, 611 W Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, (269) 567-3325,

Pedal South, 185 Romence Road, Portage (269) 324-5555,

info@pedalbicycle.com and www.pedalbicycle.com.

Trek Bicycle Store, Battle Creek 22 West Michigan, Battle Creek, 1-800-841-9494,

www.trekstorebattlecreek.com (Team Active has changed names but not owners).

Village Cyclery, US 131 in Schoolcraft, (269) 679-4242, www.villagecyclery.com.

Zoo City Cycle, 4328 South Westnedge, Kalamazoo, (269) 552-3000, www.zoocitycycle.com.