

# *KBC PedalPress*

The Newsletter of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club for September, 2017  
[www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org](http://www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

**THE NEXT KBC MONTHLY MEETING IS September 12th, 2017 at 7:00 P.M.  
at the Kalamazoo YMCA, 1001 W. Maple St. All KBC members are welcome to attend.**

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## **KBC Anniversary Ride Set for September 16, 2017**

It's hard to believe that the KBC Anniversary Ride is less than a month away! Where in blazes did summer go? So circle your calendar for the third Saturday in September (September 16, 2017), and plan on a fun day

As in the past, we will start and finish at the Kal-Haven Trailhead on North 10th Street, then party and enjoy a well-earned meal with your favorite bike-buddies at the pavilion there. Plan on rolling out at 10:00. We will have routes and paces to accommodate various abilities. Ride maps will be available at the start.

You will want to pick a route and a pace that will have you back at the Trailhead by noon because that's when the potluck will begin right at 12:00. We will provide pizza, drinks, plates, cups, napkins and flatware. Please bring a side dish or dessert to pass to replace all those calories you burned on the ride! Invite a friend to join us as well, and we'll see you at the Trailhead!

--John Idema, [socialdirector@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:socialdirector@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

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## **Vice-President's Letter:**

When preparing an article for the *PedalPress* I try to think of something of interest to club members and give you something to think about. This month I'd like to share a couple of things that have been on my mind lately, and I imagine on many of your minds as well.

There have been way too many crashes on our roads and streets and way too many have involved bicycle riders. We know the details of most, if not all, of the higher profile tragedies, especially when the results are fatalities or serious injuries. We generally know very little or nothing about the other, lower profile crashes.

Recently I found that Traffic Crash Reports are readily available and it's easy to find them. You can go to <https://www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/> and use the query tool to get details of crashes from all over Michigan. Looking only for crashes involving bicyclists in Kalamazoo County in 2016, I was surprised there were 67 collisions—all in 2016—where a Traffic Crash Report was submitted and a bicyclist was involved. 67 in a single year in Kalamazoo County is significantly more than I would have guessed, and I'm sure there were more that went unreported. Here are excerpts from the police officers' narratives from a few randomly selected Traffic Crash Reports:

- Unit 2 was attempting to turn right from E Kilgore onto Lovers Lane. Unit 2 turned and hit Unit 1 (bicyclist). Unit 2 then fled the scene.
- The rider did not appear injured only intoxicated.
- Unit # 1 darted out from behind the truck attempting to cross to the north side of E Michigan. Unit # 2 struck Unit # 1 and stopped briefly to speak to the victim.
- The driver of vehicle 1 stated, "I never saw the bike" as he was approaching bicycle 2 from behind. Vehicle 1 struck bicycle 2 along the front bumper driver side, in the rear tire of bicycle 2.
- Unit 2 informed she did not know what the hand signal meant. Unit 2 noticed Unit 1 made his right turn and she struck him. Unit 1 struck his head on the windshield. Unit 1 did lose consciousness. Unit 1 suffered injuries to the right side of his body including his knee, hip, elbow, and head. Unit 2 was cited for failure to yield causing an accident, violation of TIP by not having a licensed driver in vehicle, and for no proof of insurance,
- He was straddling his bike and after vehicle 1 stopped and he thought she had seen him he started to ride. At the same time the driver of vehicle 1 started her turn and collided with the front of the bike.
- He got off the bike, unwedged it, and carried bike to side of road due to minimal damage. SV1 driver described as older WF, short curly hair, plate of MI MBJ3812. Later SV1 driver admitted to being in area at time but did not know she'd hit the bike.
- Unit two was traveling east on East Gull Lake dr and was struck by unit one as unit one was turning left from westbound East Gull Lake dr into a private drive. Driver of unit one did not see unit two due to the sun's glare in relation to the partially shaded area where unit two was traveling.
- The driver of vehicle 1 told me that he looked in both directions several times, did not see anything, then proceeded into the intersection. Vehicle 1 struck the front tire of the bicycle. The rider hit his hip on the vehicle, bounced off striking his hip on the ground. The driver of vehicle 1 was issued citation #z448514 for failure to yield—accident--, no proof of insurance, and driving while license expired.

It's clear to me these were all avoidable. It's also clear that any of these incidents could have easily ended up tragically and it could have been one of us if we let our guard down and lose focus on what's happening around us. We have drivers that can't see because the sun is in their eyes, drivers that don't understand the rules of the road, drivers who aren't aware of their surroundings, and drivers who are not licensed to drive.

Going through many of the crash reports gave me a renewed appreciation for the dangers that bike riders face every day. It also renewed my motivation to keep a critical eye focused on my surroundings to be better able to identify dangers so I can do what I can to avoid them. I hope you have a similar reaction.

All this begs the question why, since it's so dangerous, am I participating in bicycling activities? The answer is really pretty simple. I ride a bike for fitness, recreation, and having fun in ways I can't doing other activities. I participate in the club because that's where I find like-minded folks that do the same. Although there are no guarantees, I believe by following the rules we all know and making unfailing awareness second nature I can stack my own deck in favor of staying safe. When faced with the seriousness of the tragedies we've seen and knowing how high the stakes can be, and when reading emotionally charged postings and comments, it's easy to forget that bicycling is a basic childlike activity. It's just about having fun by myself and with others. Be safe and ride defensively!

--John Olbrot, [vicepresident@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:vicepresident@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

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## **Maple Hill MTB Trail at Markin Glen Park Celebrates Grand Opening**

The Grand Opening of the Maple Hill Mountain Bike Trail at Markin Glen Park on N. Westnedge Ave. took place August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017. That's right, the roughly 6-mile long, professionally designed and built trail is open to the

public (though you do have to pay the standard Kalamazoo County park user fee). It is literally only a couple of miles from downtown Kalamazoo.

For sure the group that really worked...and worked...to make this happen is the Southwest Michigan Mountain Biking Association (SWMMBA). Everyone at KBC owes them a big, big **Thank You!** In addition, the Maple Hill Subaru-Volvo Auto dealership is the title sponsor of the trail, which includes a clothes-changing area and other amenities. This is a wonderful addition to our community!

Since KBC also donated \$2,500 toward this wonderful recreational asset, and with the very recent addition of a mountain bike rider to the KBC insurance policy, I wanted to attend the Grand Opening. I was joined by numerous KBC and Southwest Michigan Mountain Biking Association (SWMMBA) members. Over 200 riders and friends gathered at the trail head for the opening ribbon cutting ceremonies before riding a loop or two then meeting at the pavilion for a few short speeches by local political representatives to recognize the sponsors' generous contributions of time, funds, and materials—as well as the Kalamazoo County Parks Department!

SWMMBA hosted the Grand Opening. Old Mill Brewpub and Imperial Beverage provided food and a European style “radler” mix of lemonade and beer, plus other beverages. Maple Hill also provided gift bags of swag for each attendee. Jim, the Maple Hill representative, stated that Subaru was particularly happy to support the new trail so riders did not have to go to Fort Custer or Yankee Springs to ride the trails. Now we have a great, professionally constructed trail in our own backyard, literally a couple of miles from downtown Kalamazoo.

Overall, the grand opening was very successful. SWMMBA also had their club merchandise like t-shirts and hats available for viewing and sale. Pedal Bicycles was on hand with demo mountain and fat-tire bikes available for test rides.

I borrowed a mountain bike from Pedal and rode the trail. I do not have a mountain bike, so riding one on this trail was an all-new adventure for this dirt donk! The trail flows beautifully between trees, over boulders, berms and banked hair-pin turns. When combined with surprising elevation changes the result was an intense adrenalin rush and a whole lot of fun! The more intimidating features have bypasses that allow nearly any skill level to enjoy the trail. Speed control was my biggest challenge and my heart was pounding long before I returned my bike.

My first true mountain bike trail ride was an eye-opener! And what a great way to add to my biking skills! KBC and the many other contributors that helped make this trail happen all made a wise investment, and the addition of the mountain bike insurance rider is another big plus for KBC members.

**--Terry O'Connor, KBC Insurance Coordinator**

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## **AMBUCS & KBC Donate Bike To Disabled Veteran**

AMBUCS gifted an AMTRYE donated by KBC at the Bell's Bikes & Beer after party Saturday August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The bike went to Michael Morehouse, a disabled Iraq war veteran, who is pictured below with our own Terry O'Connor. The ride also benefitted the League of Michigan Bicyclists.



## KBC Members Organize Memorial Ride for Jeremy Smith

Kudos to Terry Butcher, Kathy Kirk, and Robin Sides for creating and organizing the memorial ride for Jeremy Smith, a young bicyclist killed in a collision with a motorist on August 7. Scores of cyclists turned out on Monday, August 21, for the 15-mile ride, from 12<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School in Portage to the crash site and then back to the school.

At the crash site, on Portage Road across from Pfizer, members of Jeremy's family, friends, and cyclists gathered as several people offered words of commemoration and support. Jeremy's parents spoke about Jeremy and voiced gratitude for KBC's expression of support through the ride. And Senator Margaret O'Brien's assistant addressed the importance of supporting legislation to protect bicyclists that is before Michigan lawmakers. After the brief ceremony, many of the cyclists stood in line to pay their respects to Jeremy's family.

All involved in the memorial ride are grateful for the police escort provided by Portage Public Safety, for parking/staging provided by Portage Public Schools, and for Pfizer's unequivocal support of the event.

--Pam Sotherland, [awardscommittee@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:awardscommittee@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)



(Photos courtesy of Paul Selden.)

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## KBC Monthly Meeting Notes for August, 2017

**In Attendance:** David Jones, Rick Whaley, Scott Barron, Scott Powers, Tom Keizer, Doug Wales, Paul Selden, Marc Irwin, Tim Stewart, Robin Sides, Thom Brennan, Terry O'Connor, Michael Krischer, Kathy Kirk, Mike Boersma, Renee Mitchell, Valerie Litznerski

After introductions, **President Renee Mitchell** encouraged residents of Texas Township to reach out to their the Township Trustees to encourage passage of a 5-foot passing ordinance as they recently declined to pass it. She also reported the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's office thanked us for our support of Silent Observer and CyclingLawyer.com thanked us for our support of the Criterium at BTR park. She also asked if there was any interest in KBC attire, e.g. t shirts.

**Vice President John Olbrot** was not in attendance as he was on vacation in Wisconsin riding his bike with KBC's Education Chairperson, Webmaster, and *PedalPress* Editor.

**Secretary Valerie Litznerski** reported that Rotary International could match our donation to AMBUCs in future KalTour rides. For our Facebook Events for Free Members-Only Rides includes all details for the rides and are

visible to Facebook members who are current KBC members and non-members. She asked if we should take steps to limit the visibility of these events. **Scott Barron** suggested we invite non-members to make donations and that this might encourage people to join KBC. **Mike Boersma** expressed concern that participants might not be covered by our insurance. Valerie appreciates the openness of these rides and likes the honor system, but has some concerns. **Renee Mitchell** mentioned that we should have a waiver at these rides for non-members and that we should encourage all participants to join KBC. Renee suggested that we keep these rides available to all members. **Scott Baron** offered to help with social media.

**Treasurer Mike Boersma** reported our Paypal account has \$5,309.25, our checking account has \$8,882.48 including \$2,700 of restricted use funds from the DALMAC grant to be used to educate the public about safe bicycle passing and the new ordinances. The Club's CD has \$6,168.41 There are still some outstanding expenses for KalTour, including the LMB \$1 per rider donation and the AMBUCs donation. We are waiting for pay for a new insurance rider to cover MTB rides (which are yet to be established). Riders must sign a paper waiver for each ride. Finally, we have exceeded the \$10,000 threshold for total credit card transactions. We are going to look at options to reduce the fees we are paying for these transactions.

**Director of Road Safety Paul Selden** spoke of **Jeremy Smith**, the bicyclist that was just killed on Portage Road. There have been efforts to add a multi-use path to the stretch of road for years. Paul called the Portage City Manager's Office and met with the director of Parks and Recreation, to discuss accommodating cyclists there. Paul suggested that we write a respectful letter to Pfizer to encourage them to consider the safety of cyclists and for the club to offer any assistance in these efforts. The members in the room supported this idea, so Paul and Val will work on a letter. Paul will hold a meeting later this month to discuss how to handle the negative feedback that we are getting from the community right now. **Marc Irwin** mentioned that riders present a cultural affront to motorists, and they feel insulted and scoffed at by the act of cycling.

Paul also talked to the superintendent in Texas Township, and found that the township is concerned about slowing down traffic on narrow roads during rush hour to accommodate cyclists. There are unstated reasons from Texas Township that show an anti-cyclist bias from the community leadership. Paul asked that bicyclists speak out more about the treatment of cyclists by drivers in Texas Township. Paul complimented **Doug Kirk's** article in last month's *PedalPress* about the ordinance.

**Race Team Delegate Tim Stewart** reported several team members participated in the Make-A-Wish ride. Also, the Tuesday Night Time Trial in the first week in August was a big success, and Tim will run the last TNTT in August. The Meijer State Games, Corktown Crit and the Grand Rapids crit had/will have many team members racing. Mountain bike racing and cyclocross races will pick up soon.

**KalTour Director Mike Krischer** gave a **KalTour 2018 update**: A survey was sent out to the membership to gather feedback about routes, start locations, and general experience of the ride. The questionnaire didn't mention a mass start / Gran Fondo format. The survey will be open until the 25<sup>th</sup>. Mike would like to have a meeting Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss next year's KalTour. **Paul Selden** said KalTour is vital to AMBUCs and is very appreciated.

**Old Business**: **Dale Abbott** has with **John Olbrot** to create a club account on Ride With GPS. With a club account, a library of club rides and routes can be created for members. Club members will be able to retrieve maps and download them to their devices and share routes as well. The club level membership is \$250 a year and will make premium benefits made available to all KBC members. There is no limit on the number of members through the club membership. There was spontaneous and unanimous support. **Marc Irwin** motioned to join as a club. Scott seconded it. No one was opposed. The club will get this benefit of membership up and running over the winter.

**New Business**: **Mike Boersma, 5' Passing Resolution**. Mike received a letter from **Margaret O'Brien**, his state senator, and shared it with the room. Mike discussed the 5' passing and vulnerable roadway user laws in detail.

Mike suggested sending the letter to state representatives and counties where the club holds rides. Thom motioned to present this for a vote and Scott seconded it. Everyone supported the resolution.

**Terry O'Connor** mention the Walden Woods is expanding their development. The director of the development and Pastor Dale are requesting the club's support of a connector between the Linden Grove Middle School and Central High School and Arboretum Boulevard and the end of Leisure Lane per **Pastor Dale** and **Tom Thornburg**. Tim Stewart suggested that the request is sent to the city. Tim's company has designed seven of the eight segments of the KRVT and are working on trails in different counties. They also designed the roads for Arboretum Parkway and the Walden Woods neighborhood. Valerie thinks this is a great idea and would benefit several people who live in the neighborhood and who will occupy new developments.

**Scott Barron**: Some information in the website is out of date, and he hasn't received responses to the contact form that he has sent out. **Marc** receives the messages and hasn't seen anything from Scott. He also asked that we spell out the email addresses on the website.

**Rick Whaley** said there was a great turnout for the Ride to South Haven, which broke up into two groups for the ride. There were 30 participants, of which 11 did half of the ride and 19 did the full century. The meeting was adjourned.

–Val Litznerski, [Secretary@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:Secretary@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

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## **Kalamazoo Strong/KBC Jerseys STILL Available to Order Online**

**Last chance!!! These awesome, one of a kind, jerseys will be available for only a short time so order yours before it's too late!**

### **20% Of Your Purchase Price Goes to Kalamazoo Strong**

**Sales of these jerseys have netted at least \$1,493.36 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/>

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## Submit Your Own Kudos

Do you appreciate something that an individual or organization has done for bicycling? Submit a “Kudos” to the *PedalPress* and to the Awards Committee! KBC members are encouraged to give a shout out to an individual or organization that has promoted bicycling within the community. Kudos submissions should be sent to the Newsletter Editor for possible inclusion in the *PedalPress* AND to the Awards Committee as a possible nominee for KBC's Friend of Bicycling Award. Your submission should include the name of the individual/organization, what work was done, and how that work promotes bicycling within the community. Indicate in your submission if you would like to be acknowledged for the submission. Submissions can also be submitted from the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club website under the Kudos section, found at – ABOUT KBC – Community. Here's the link <http://www.kalamazoobicycleclub.org/about/community/>

Because KBC has its own awards for members, the Friend of Bicycling award is intended for organizations and individuals who do not belong to KBC.

--Pam Sotherland, [awardscommittee@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:awardscommittee@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

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### Editor's Letter: Good and Plenty

In what might be described as a mass exodus of KBC mucky-mucks, Vice-President John Olbrot, Education Director Paul Wells, Webmaster Paul Sotherland and I spent a week cycling in northern Wisconsin last month. We were parallel with Munising, up there far enough to be, as the locals call it, in God's Country.

If God rides a bike, he's got it good. Roads are in great shape, hardly any traffic (hardly any people either), and lots of gorgeous lakes and rivers. We spent hours and hours every day on roads winding so deeply into national and state forests that if the wind was blowing, we couldn't feel it.

But there's a catch, even in God's country. There aren't very many roads—paved roads, anyway. (I imagine one could get gloriously lost in the woods pretty much indefinitely up there on a mountain bike.)

Only a few paved roads isn't a problem when touring for a week or two, but if I lived up there it wouldn't take long before I tired of riding the same roads again and again, no matter how great the pavement is or how deep the woods are. I'm reminded of a woman we know who moved to the Upper Peninsula near Lake Superior a few years. The Pictured Rocks are right close by. God's country for sure. She loves to ride and is very strong, but she literally has two choices for road riding, and one's a state highway. Dirt roads and trail riding are both great, but she doesn't feel safe in the middle of nowhere alone, and I can't say I blame her. God's country has its limitations.

Then last week, four of us did a three-day tour a bit further south, including pieces of Kalamazoo, Barry, Kent, Ionia, Eaton and Calhoun counties. Not exactly God's Country. We rode through six counties, three with well-maintained roads and three with terrible roads. (Which are bad, you ask? Kent, Ionia and Calhoun.)

Our tour ended in Kalamazoo, where it started. And yes, there are quite a few roads that could stand improving—especially in the Kalamazoo proper. But the fact is that once out of town around here we have literally dozens of great, rural cycling roads going every direction.

And that's the key, the key to why this is a great place to live and ride: We have lots of different roads to choose from no matter which direction we want to go, and we have a pretty varied choice of terrain as well. In addition, we now have four great mountain bike venues within 25 miles (two within a couple of miles of Kalamazoo), and great gravel road riding no more than half an hour's ride north or south. In addition, both Portage and Kalamazoo now take the creation of safe bicycling routes seriously.

In general the roads in Kalamazoo, Van Buren, St. Joseph, Barry, Allegan and Eaton counties are in pretty good shape (tar & gravel notwithstanding). The contrast to road conditions in some other counties is striking. Sure, things could be better (and I think we're moving in that direction). But folks, we've got it pretty good.

--Doug Kirk [Editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:Editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

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## SEPTEMBER KBC STATISTICS

**Active subscriptions: 360 Active Members: (Includes family members):600**

### New members:

Mike Albright • Edward Aurand • Jacqueline Aurand • Jen Aurand • Christine Bartholmey • Chris Hamilton •  
Brian Rhinesmith • Phillip Timko • Dean Vuckovich •

### **September Expiring memberships:**

Hank Apotheker • Michael Brus • Tyson Gilmore • John Letts • Ken Schnider •

### **Renewed memberships:**

Jeff Robertson • Terry O'Connor • Kathy Rubino & Dave Dunlap • Molly Yoshikawa

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## YOUR LOCAL BIKE SHOPS:

### They support us so please support them

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

**Custer Cyclery, 104 North Augusta, Augusta, (269) 731-3492, [www.custercyclery.com](http://www.custercyclery.com).**

**Gazelle Sports, 214 South Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo, (269) 342-5996, [www.Gazellesports.com](http://www.Gazellesports.com).**

**LADIES! Visit Gazelle Sports for Fall Refresh Weekend - September 21-24. Check out the latest women's wear from our favorite vendors. Register to win a pair of Brooks shoes, a Lolë outfit or a head-to-toe outfit from New Balance!**

**Kzoo Swift, 445 Forest St, Kalamazoo, (269) 929-8053, [www.kzooswift.com](http://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](mailto:info@pedalbicycle.com) and [www.pedalbicycle.com](http://www.pedalbicycle.com).**

**Trek Bicycle Store, Battle Creek 22 West Michigan, Battle Creek, 1-800-841-9494,  
[www.trekstorebattlecreek.com](http://www.trekstorebattlecreek.com) (Team Active has changed names but not owners).**

**Village Cyclery, US 131 in Schoolcraft, (269) 679-4242, [www.villagecyclery.com](http://www.villagecyclery.com).**

**Zoo City Cycle, 4328 South Westnedge, Kalamazoo, (269) 552-3000, [www.zoocitycycle.com](http://www.zoocitycycle.com).**