

## CYCLING AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE— EDITOR’S LETTER

Black Friday was imposed on us recently, just like it is the day after every Thanksgiving. Honestly, I don’t recall ever visiting a mall or retail store on Black Friday, and it seems that the country might be starting to leave the mania behind. You might recall that in 2008 a temporary Wal-Mart employee was trampled to death by a crowd in New York. Wal-Mart had advertised several “Doorbuster” deals and by 5 in the morning the crowd had swelled and tired of waiting to the point where it literally broke down a door. Jdimytai Damour had been trying to hold the doors closed until the official opening time but died as a result of being crushed by the throng. That was more than a decade ago, in the depths of the great recession. Economic anxiety was running at eleven on a one to ten scale. Fortunately things have changed and most people feel more economically secure.

However, it seems our collective anxiety hasn’t really gone away. Rather we have just moved it over to the “politics” bucket. In my other job (not editing the Pedal Press) I get to guide people as they make financial and life decisions. Some clients I have worked with for more than two decades and we speak to each other several times each year. People share their dreams, hopes, and concerns with me. The overwhelming leader in the concern department right now is about politics and the caustic, divisive nature of our current public discourse.

I have observed people trying many different tools and techniques to manage anxiety, whatever its source. Some people try to eat their way through it. Drinking is also pretty popular. Binging Netflix, movies, TV and now Disney Plus is the number one remedy in other anxiety medicine chests. Meditation and prayer are probably more constructive methods. Spiritual leaders throughout the ages and from virtually every religion and philosophy have suggested meditation and prayer, so this should probably stay in our toolkit. Gautama Buddah, Mohammad, Moses and David, and Jesus of Nazareth all instructed their followers to set aside time for personal prayer, meditation and introspection. However, not one of them explicitly suggests outdoor exercise. And why not?

Until about eighty years ago almost everyone walked or rode a horse almost everywhere. Since personal motorized vehicles didn’t exist, wise men and women of the past didn’t need to tell their followers to walk or exercise outside! I am most familiar with the Christian tradition and while Jesus of Nazareth taught his followers on prayer and how to deal with anxiety, he never mentions exercise. However, the Bible does record him walking all over the place! He walked from Galilee to Jerusalem and back, then to Tyre and Sidon, around the Decapolis and beyond. First century Roman citizens typically walked about 16 miles per day just doing their daily business, not to mention journeys to other provinces. There was no need to prescribe exercise because it was built into life until the last century.

I find that exercising has an incredible positive impact on my attitude, mental health, clarity of thinking, creativity, problem solving



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Do you take pictures? Send some cycling pics for inclusion in future PedalPress issues!

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ability, and mood. Occasionally during the work day I will leave my office and take a walk around the neighborhood. It seems clear that we evolved (some say) or were designed (my preference) to enjoy a lot of outdoor exercise.

So, back to Black Friday. Outdoor retailer REI was closed Thanksgiving day and Friday. They offered discounted prices Monday through Wednesday of Thanksgiving week. And then they encouraged their customers to “Opt Outside.” In other words, buy some cool new gear and then go use it instead of shopping. Closer to home, Pedal Bicycle closed both locations on Friday and instead of selling stuff, invited their staff and customers to come out for a gravel road bike ride. There were two distances, 22 and 34 miles followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Julie and I have done the ride a few times and this was the largest crowd by far. I estimated at least 50 people at the start! Instead of stoking their anxieties scrambling for deals, this crew decided to go outside and exercise in 39 degree weather. Plus we got to ride up Wetherbee Road’s camel humps!

If we could get inside the heads of the wise ones of the past who gave us great techniques for living a good life, I bet they assumed that outdoor exercise was part of the package. Smart trainers seem great, and cool and high tech and all. But exercise – outdoors – is as important as prayer and meditation for this guy. And one of my secrets is that you can pray and meditate at the same time as you are riding your bike outdoors! Praise and thanksgiving seem to well up spontaneously as I ride and drink in the creation. Stress, anxiety and problems get left behind somewhere in the ditch.

How about you? Is bicycling a part of your spiritual discipline? Could it be? In any case, thank you for being a cyclist and one who, at least sometimes, seeks wholeness in outdoor exercise.

John Knowlton, [editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

## Road Problem Hotline

From Doug Kirk, President of KBC:

I just learned that the **City of Kalamazoo** is opening a hotline for people to report problems that the City needs to address--and in particular ROAD PROBLEMS--like potholes, broken glass, debris, etc. THE NUMBER IS **337-8601**.

NOTE THAT THIS HOTLINE ONLY APPLIES TO ISSUES **WITHIN THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO**. I have already reported a couple of problems and in theory the City will report back to you about the issue, and tell you . what they are going to do about it.

I would be interested in getting feedback from you about what results you get using this resource, so please let me know at [president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)



**NEXT KBC CLUB MEETING IS DECEMBER 10,  
2019 @ 7:00 P.M. AT SHAKESPEARE’S PUB; TOP  
FLOOR, BACK LEFT. FREE POPCORN AT THE BAR.**

## KBC MEETING NOTES—NOVEMBER 12, 2019

Finance report, Mike Boersema:

PNC Checking: \$8450.09

PNC CD: \$6182.29

PayPal: \$2643.36

Included in the numbers above are assets designated as follows:

Education funds: \$2206

Jeremy Smith: \$560

## KBC MEETING MINUTES

### NO MEETING IN AUGUST. TRY GOING FOR A RIDE INSTEAD!

KBC's regular meeting takes place on the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be **September 10, 2019 at 7 p.m.** Enter Shakespeares and go to the back left.

**The Kalamazoo Bicycle Club** is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and donations are tax deductible. You may donate by holding Ctrl and clicking [here](#).

You may also designate how you wish your donation be used: general KBC activities, 5 foot passing education, or the Tuesday Night Time Trial series. You may also donate by check by sending your donation to Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, P.O. Box 50527, Kalamazoo, MI 49005. Please write "Donation" in the memo line.

Thank you, Mike Boersma

KBC Treasurer

### Executive Committee reports

President, Doug Kirk: We have a new communications director, Charlie Eaton. Charlie introduced himself and shared that he started working at Pedal in 2014 that he's been on Team Clark Logic for a year. Dale Abbott will help get him as he transitions into the role.

In December, Pam Sotherland will replace Mike Boersma as Treasurer and Stacie Ballard will replace Valerie Litznerski as secretary. Mike needs to be removed from the signature cards and Pam needs to be added.

### Directors' reports

Paul Wells, Education: there will be an additional meeting following this meeting. Please join the education committee if you are interested and reach out to others that you know that might be interested in contributing to the club's outreach efforts. Currently there are about 5 members, but the committee would like a few more.

Gordy Vader, Ride Captain. There were 30 MNR and 26 WNR out of 34 possible weeks to ride. There was a bump in attendance in the slower rides in WNR early in the season and increased participation throughout the season, especially among women. The Tuesday Night Women's Ride continued to be well attended this year. There has always been a ride leader summit after the season in the fall. Paul Sotherland and Doug thought we should do something in the fall if not also the spring. Gordy asked if someone was able to host and Doug offered to host on the Tuesday **after** Thanksgiving (December 3rd).

Paul Runnels announced that East Michigan will likely remain closed until Spring but most of the other projects are finished. Riverview is finished. On the East Side of the county, 36th is nearly finished as well.

Tim Stewart, Race Team. It has been a very busy year, with lots of racing and new members. New kits will be ordered for the team soon. On the team, 19 members raced Iceman and 11 were on the podium. Conditions were very challenging this year but participation was really high. There was lots of waiting and walking for many of the riders who came through sections later in the race, but the team members mostly positioned themselves well and minimized delays.

## KBC MEETING NOTES CONTINUED – JULY 9, 2019

Mike Kirscher, KalTour: the ride will take place on the last Sunday in June, since the club members seem to prefer Sundays. The ride will start in Schoolcraft again, and the committee will start planning the course which will likely be similar to last year. Gordy asked about a 50 mile route which might appeal to some newer riders who want to go farther than 35 miles but aren't ready for a metric century. Mike stated that the prices won't be increased. We also hope to have an advertisement in the LMB ride calendar this year (since it was paid for last year).

Paul Idema, Recovery Party will take place on January 11th. We can have it at Eckert Wordell, but there is no longer parking close to the location. Consensus was that we should approach Jamie Clark about availability at Wind & James.

Pam Sotherland, Friend of Bicycling Award. Reminded everyone that the vote will take place at next month's meeting. Information will be published in the Pedal Press. Pam also reminded everyone that voting must be done in person.

**Election of 2020 Executive Committee.** There were no ballots for the executive committee positions, since there was only one candidate for each position, except for the Vice President position. Since no one stepped up at the meeting to fill the position, Paul Sotherland agreed continue for another year. The candidates were unanimously supported. The new executive committee follows:

Doug Kirk, President

Paul Sotherland, Vice President

Pam Sotherland, Treasurer

Stacie Ballard, Secretary

**Announcement of major donation to KBC.** Paul Runnels, representative of the Chain Gang, announced that the memorial for the Chain Gang riders has been completed. There were some extra funds left over after the construction and the installation of a fix-it station. The Chain Gang appreciates the emotional support for the community and especially from the club. The club members also participated in and supported the Chain Gang rides. The committee met and decided to donate \$5,000 to the club's education committee. The Chain Gang wanted the funds directed to something that would be enduring and educational rather than physical or ephemeral. Doug thanked the Chain Gang on behalf of the club for their generosity.

**New Business:** Paul Sotherland and Doug Kirk previously discussed the clubs assets. Doug suggested installing some additional outdoor repair stands. Specifically he proposed the trailhead and Texas Drive park. There is one in the Vine Neighborhood. Doug suggested that we could buy the repair stands and the parks committee would install it. Mike Boersma mentioned that there was one installed at the trailhead, but it doesn't have a pump. Mike also added that the pump adds about \$500 to the cost of the repair stand. At Markin Glen the pump is independent of the repair stand. Marc added that the pumps often don't work in these stands and the pumps need to be maintained. Paul Selden voiced his support. Paul Runnels added that the pumps often disappear, so the Parks Department plans to replace pumps rather than investing in very nice pumps. Terry Butcher added that he thought that it was a great idea and that the pumps should indicate that they are from KBC so everyone knows the club installed them. Doug added that the pumps are installed for less prepared cyclists and that it's the right thing to do to help them out. He also added the the club could cover the entire cost of the pump for the Jeremy Smith memorial. John Olbrot

### ATTENDEES:

Doug Kirk

Paul Sotherland

Paul Runnels

Gordy Vader

Paul Wells

John Olbrot

Shaun Ballard

Stacie Ballard

Ed Maring

Bill Surna

Dan Goldberger

Kathy Kirk

Pam Sotherland

Ryan Heidenfeld

Terry O'Connor

Charlie Eaton

Marc Irwin

John Idema

Rick Whaley

Mike Krischer

Terry Butcher

Timothy Stewart

Valerie Litznerski

Paul Selden

Mike Boersma

Thom Brennan

Your name could be here, too, if you attended the KBC monthly meeting!

## MEETING NOTES CONTINUED

asked if we could pay for the installation, but Doug added that he would rather take on the maintenance. Dan Goldberg asked if we should start with just one. Doug asked if there was any opposition. The members present fully supported the purchase of the repair stands. Mike reminded everyone that we may need to wait until after the club's insurance payment before the pumps are purchased. Doug also added that we will need support of the governmental agencies before we proceed with any purchase of the pumps. Thom Brennan will approach Texas Township park.

Ryan Heidenfeld, N24HC: On behalf of the board of the National 24 Hour Challenge, would like to request \$500 for the race. The donation was unanimously approved. There are some exciting changes for the 2020 race and everyone is encouraged to support the event, by riding, volunteering, spectating or supporting the many club members that will be out there racing.

Paul Selden asked that the outgoing Treasurer and Secretary were thanked for their years of service. Doug thanked both of us on behalf of the club. Paul wanted to thank the club for their participation in Bike Week and is looking forward to Bike Week again in May of 2020.



### **KBC Club Statistics — Check for your name here!**

Total Memberships: 332 | Total Individuals: 543

**November Expiring Members:** Ryan Heidenfeld; Gary Solomons

**New or Renewed Members:** Paul Bonar; Adam Cefai; Ray Fulkerson; Jessica Parise; Gabe Rice; Matt Wells

## **KBC 2020 Friend of Bicycling Award Nominee Information**

All current KBC members are invited to the club's meeting on Tuesday, December 10th, 2019 to vote for KBC's annual Friend of Bicycling award. Please note that you must be present at the club meeting to vote. Valid nominees submitted by the November 12 deadline and listed in randomized order are:

### **St. Joseph County Parks & Recreation**

Development of the Warnaar trail at Meyer Broadway County Park, just west of Three Rivers. This is a 6+ mile bi-directional mountain bike trail which is a joy to ride. The county has clean restrooms and a bike repair station near the parking lot as well. This trail serves the cycling community with an excellent off-road recreation facility.

### **Jeremiah Beorman and Gear Grinders**

Jeremiah Beorman started a mountain bike skills group called Gear Grinders. He started out with the youngest riders on balance bikes the youngest being 2 1/2 years. There were 4 different groups meeting at Texas Township Park on Tuesday Nights back to back in the month of June. Then he did it again in August. He had 10 Boys and Girls in the beginner group meeting at Lexington Green Park and about that many in 3 more groups. Sign up was done through Pedal South Bike Shop. He has so much enthusiasm for biking and is a wonderful person.

### **Ministry with Community and Zoo City Cycle & Sport Bicycle Donation Program**

The Bicycle Donation Program is a partnership between Ministry with Community (MwC) and Zoo City Cycle & Sports. Together these two organizations are advancing bicycling as a viable and sustainable means of transportation for members of the Kalamazoo community. The goal is to provide a way for people who need sustainable and low-cost transportation to maintain their employment throughout the year. About 15 years ago members of MwC recognized the need for transportation and came up with a solution – bicycles. Collaborating with Zoo City helped make this solution a reality. Each time a bicycle (in good working order) is donated to MwC it is taken to Zoo City and given a once-over. Necessary repair work (typically \$50-\$150/bike) is provided by Zoo City at no charge to MwC. When the bicycle is good to go it is picked up by MwC and stored for distribution. After visiting with a social worker to discuss how the bike would be used, a potential recipient may be granted a bicycle. The recipient must invest in the transportation relationship by providing a lock for keeping the bicycle secure when not in use. Once this is in hand the bicycle is given to the recipient at no cost. In partnership, Ministry with Community and Zoo City Cycle & Sport have received and distributed approximately 20 bicycles each year.

### **Larry Shaffer**

City of Portage City Manager Larry Shaffer, retired on November 3 after serving the City of Portage for five and a half years. During that time he has personally: written letters in support of including the "Bikes May Use Full Lane" sign in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the use of the Southwest Michigan Bikeway "M1-8a" sign recommended by the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club and many other groups; made sure that the first Southwest Michigan Bikeway route using that sign was installed in Portage on Oakland Drive in time for Bike Week 2019; hosted the November 2016 meeting holding a public dialog on issues pertaining to bicyclists and motorists; lent his support to resolutions leading to the passage of the five foot passing ordinance in Portage, the resolution to sign KATS "Map 7" (now known as the Southwest Michigan Bikeway) in Portage, and the resolution supporting an annual bike light campaign during the darker hours of the year; and, has given his support for a number of memorial rides that KBC has either organized or participated in, to name some of the many ways that Mr. Shaffer has helped to make the greater community even more bicycle friendly over the years. For these rea-

sons and for the collegial way in which Mr. Shaffer took the initiative and displayed the leadership to make all of this happen (with the Portage City Council's and his staff's support as a team), Mr. Shaffer deserves this personal award.

### **Kalamazoo Regional Bike Route Committee**

The KRBRC initiated the development of a network of cycling commuter routes to develop and promote safer cycling throughout the region. The routes have been years in the making based upon Map7 produced by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study. The committee's work has resulted with of all communities involved committing to produce the signage necessary and all but the two largest promising to complete the project during 2020. a potential recipient may be granted a bicycle. The recipient must invest in the transportation relationship by providing a lock for keeping the bicycle secure when not in use. Once this is in hand the bicycle is given to the recipient at no cost. In partnership, Ministry with Community and Zoo City Cycle & Sport have received and distributed approximately 20 bicycles each year.

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**Remember to attend the club meeting, 7:00 p.m., December 10 at Shakespeare's to cast your vote!**

## Important news from the Education Committee:

The KBC Education Committee **is receiving a donation from the Chain Gang Memorial Committee for \$5,000.** This committee was formed to create the Chain Gang Memorial at Markin Glen Park on North Westnedge, very near the crash site that involved nine Chain Gang members. The \$5000 donation comes from funds raised through donations from individuals and institutions that is in excess of what was needed for the memorial. The Chain Gang Committee, chaired by Paul Runnels, (also a KBC member,) wants our KBC Education Committee to use this money to educate the general public, and cyclists, about the rules of the road pertaining to bicycles. This is an important opportunity and responsibility to be entrusted with the use of these funds to advance cycling education in the Kalamazoo area. Bike Friendly Kalamazoo (BFK), and Open Roads will also be receiving donations from the Chain Gang Memorial Committee.

The KBC Education Committee met on November 12, 2019 to discuss possible options for utilizing the funds. Here are the options that we discussed:

- **League Certified Instructor (LCI) training** by the League of American Bicyclists. Several KBC members did the LCI certification 11 years ago. Renee Mitchell, past KBC president is still currently certified. Bike Friendly Kalamazoo is planning to also use Chain Gang donation funds to provide LCI training for individuals in the Kalamazoo area. KBC and BFK could together host LCI training locally, possibly in the spring of 2020. These LCI instructors could then hold sessions to educate drivers and cyclists about cycling law and safely riding on the road. It is also important for KBC to have some members, such as ride leaders, who have credentials to verify their correct knowledge of safe, lawful riding practices.
- **Emergency response training for KBC ride leaders.** This training would give KBC ride leaders specific knowledge about how to best deal with crashes and medical emergencies on KBC rides, or any other group riding situation.
- **CPR training.** This would also be beneficial on KBC group rides to have some ride leaders and other members trained in life-saving techniques.
- **Buses and Bikes training for bus drivers.** Thom Brennan and I conducted sessions of this for Kalamazoo Public Schools bus drivers last year, and we would like to be able to find or create a video to give to Kalamazoo Metro Transit and other schools' bus drivers.
- **Press releases and public service announcements emphasizing rules of the road.** Some of this can potentially be accomplished at no cost or low cost to KBC. Other options that involve purchasing advertising could be expensive.
- **We can continue our 5' passing yard sign campaign.** We still have a quantity of these from our last order. I have been keeping the bike shops stocked and they have been collecting donations for them. We have discussed creating other cycling educational signs with another message. Let me know your ideas for short, concise messages that could be used on signs.

If any of you have other ideas, or want to help with our efforts to educate about cycling safety, please send me a note at [educationchair@kalamazooobicycleclub.org](mailto:educationchair@kalamazooobicycleclub.org).

Thanks go out to The Chain Gang for their donation to advance KBC's efforts to make cycling safer in our communities.

Paul Wells  
Education Chair

## ABOUT KBC

Recognizing that Southwestern Michigan offers a rare combination of good bicycling roads and great scenery, several cycling enthusiasts got together in 1971 to form the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

They wanted to support and encourage other riders in the area, to promote the sport of bicycling, and to have fun. As shown in the Club Mission, that tradition continues today in the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

### Club Mission

The purpose of the Club shall be to promote bicycling; to encourage and facilitate touring, races, bicycle outings, and all forms of recreational bicycling activities; to defend and protect the rights of bicyclists; to secure a better understanding and recognition of the need for safer riding conditions; to encourage the allocation of facilities for bicycling on public lands; to cooperate with the public authorities in the observance of all traffic regulations; to provide an opportunity for members to socialize with others who have an interest in bicycling; and to recognize bicycles as vehicles used for pleasure, fitness and transportation. The Club will cooperate with other organizations with a similar goal and purpose. Hold Ctrl and click [here](#) to view the constitution.

## President's Letter—Doug Kirk

There's a dusting of snow flurries on the ground. The sky is slate gray and the leaves are down. There's a cold, camp mist in the air and it's 35 degrees. Yup, barring the occasional freakishly nice day, outdoor riding is over until March or April—unless you're as tough as Paul Guimond or Paul Guthrie. I am not.

Most likely you aren't either. So...what to do? Wife Kathy has become a total Zwift devotee. She's virtually riding up Alp d'Huez with gold medalists like Chloe Dygert. And as far as I can tell, so are about half of you folks! Or maybe you're trying one of the other smart training apps like Full Gas, or Peloton.

As much as I love to ride my bike, I'm ready for a break from spinning cranks this time of year, so no Zwifiting for me—not yet anyway. As fall turns to winter I figure that in the overall scheme of things the universe is telling me to dial my riding back and do other stuff. It's time to do other activities to stay fit. I lift weights, swim, and doing some yoga/Pilates. Other folks ski, do Cross-Fit, or (shudder!) run.

The important thing is to stay active! Maintain your hard-earned fitness. It's hard work to get fit and it's too darn easy to lose it! Do something a couple of times a week that includes hard intervals to maintain your cardiovascular fitness. And do something that stresses your muscles—lots of different muscles (not just your legs) to maintain—or better yet, build up—muscle mass. You don't really want to have pencil-arms like the pros, do you?

In my old age, I've finally come to realize the genuine, true, no-fooling importance of core body strength. I don't think it's possible to put too much effort into building up every muscle from the tops of your legs to the bottom of your neck. A strong core is crucial not just to a strong body but also to good health. So use these short winter days and long, long nights to really work at taking care of yourself.

And by all means, plan to attend the club's annual Recovery Party Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at Wind & James, 555 E. Eliza St. (W. Ave), in Schoolcraft (4 blocks east of U.S. 131. The fun starts at 7:00. Hope to see you there!

Doug Kirk, [president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org)

**This would be an amazing spot for a photograph of you and your KBC friends out on a ride, or developing your core muscles! Send 'em in to [editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org). Thanks!**