

PRESIDENT'S LETTER—DOUG KIRK

Some of you know that Kathy & I spend a chunk of our winters in Florida now, just not the Florida that your imagination conjures up. No beaches, retirement communities or beach condos for us.

We stay in Monticello, a small town barely south of Georgia we found when we biked across the country 10 years ago. Why there? Because it has some of the nicest roads—both paved and gravel, and with the least traffic—we've seen anywhere short of Tuscany. And because the drivers, like most everyone we've met here, are very polite, even to transplanted Yankee bicyclists.

Some of you also know that I really, really like working on bikes. So a few years ago, when a friend here suggested maybe we could fix up a few bikes while we're here and give them to disadvantaged kids, I signed right on.

This has taken on a life of its own, and I found roughly 50 decrepit bikes waiting for me to breathe new life



into them this year. Nearly all of them are Walmart-quality bikes, the most outstanding feature of which is how incredibly heavy they are. (I swear a Walmart dual suspension kids' bike weighs over 50 lbs.!)

But the nice thing about department store bikes (with steel frames, wheels, handlebars, seat posts and brakes, and big, thick tires) is that they withstand a truly remarkable amount of abuse.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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

editor@kalamazooBicycle
Club.org

2020 FRIEND OF BICYCLING AWARD RECIPIENTS

The 2020 Friend of Bicycling Award recipients are . . . Larry Shaffer, City Manager, City of Portage, AND Ministry with Community/ZooCity Cycle & Sport Bicycle Donation Program

Each year, KBC members who attend the club's December meeting vote for the recipient of KBC's annual "Friend of Bicycling" award. The slate this year included a wide variety of nominees and the vote resulted in two winners for the 2020 award. The winners of the 2020 Friend of Bicycling Award are Larry Shaffer, City Manager, City of Portage and Ministry with Community/Zoo City Cycle & Sport.

Larry Shaffer, City Manager for the City of Portage, retired on November 3, after serving in that position for five and a half years. During his time as Portage City Manager, Mr. Shaffer supported a wide variety of efforts to make the community more bicycle-friendly. He wrote letters in support of improved signage to raise motorists' awareness of bicycle riders on the roads. He organized and hosted a public meeting on issues pertaining to bicyclists and motorists. Mr. Shaffer also lent his support to a number of resolutions including those that lead to the passage of the five-foot passing ordinance in Portage. These are just a few of the many ways in which Mr. Shaffer has been an advocate for bicyclist during his time with the City of Portage.



The Bicycle Donation Program, which is a partnership between Ministry with Community and Zoo City Cycle & Sport, advances bicycling as a viable and sustainable means of transportation for members of the Kalamazoo community. This program provides a way for people who need sustainable and low-cost transportation to maintain their employment throughout the year. Together Ministry with Community and Zoo City are advocating for people who need and use bicycles as their means of transportation.



Despite its current level of amazingness, the Pedal Press could be even better with your help! There are stories we don't have time to write, features we don't have time to report, and member profiles that need to be written. Please contact the editor to express your willingness to help keep the club strong through even better communication. I'll be glad to give you suggestions and constructive editing!
Thanks, John. editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED

They have to because of who's riding them: KIDS! Do you remember what sort of care (if any) you took of your bike when you were a kid? Leaving it out in the rain? Bouncing it off curbs—with flat tires? Never oiling the chain? Not really understanding how to use a tire pump? Riding two-up?

Or locking up the rear brake over and over—just for laughs? I remember being quite surprised roughly 60 years ago when my rear tire exploded one day while practicing fishtailing with the coaster brake locked solid. Turns out the tube doesn't last too long once you skid your way through the entire thickness of the tire!

All of which is to make the point that bikes are wonderful things for kids, and every kid ought to have a bike. It makes me sad when I realize how few kids I see out and about riding their bikes anymore, but it makes me glad that we have Open Roads in Kalamazoo and that I can help put kids on bikes here too.

—Doug Kirk President@kalamazoobicycleclub.org



How many miles did you ride in 2019?

I know a lot of you keep track of the miles you ride. This is a call to submit yours, in time to print in the March edition of Pedal Press. Your report may inspire others to get out there and ride, too -- regardless of the distance!

If you are a current KBC member and want to give others a sense of what you are doing mileage-wise, mail your first and last name and miles logged to pselden@aol.com. Estimates ("about 750"), reasonable rounding (if you say, "under 1000" that is close enough for me), and exact numbers ("1234") are all equally okay. In other words, this is for fun and it's very informal.

To make March's Pedal Press, reports submitted on or by February 20 will be printed. After that, I'll close the request for our "2019 KBC Member's Mileage Almanac."

—Paul Selden

KBC STATISTICS

Total Memberships: 345; Total Individuals: 558

February Expiring Members: Bryan & Kiersten Garfoot; Doug Grimm; Jeanette Holm; Dan Kallewaard; Michael Michutka; Tom Mullins & Family; Scott & Laura Oliver; Monica Tory & Jonathan Evans

New or Renewed Members: Laurie Bennett; Linda Bonzo; Molly Cartwright; Thomas Flemming; Terry & Kathy Hutchins; John Idema; Dave Jarl; Mike & Sheri Jones; Larry Kissinger; Paul Marquardt; Todd Mora; Dariush Moradinezhad & Alayna Metty; Dianna Nance; Jeff Robertson; Steve Stapleton; Mike Vandever; Eric Zahrai; Mark Zettel

THE MONEY PAGE

CHARITABLE DONATIONS TO KBC SUPPORT ITS MISSION TO PROMOTE BI-CYCLING

Inquiries about Club finances and charitable donations at the December 2019 KBC meeting led me to the “Donate” page on the KBC website.

KBC has a history of generously supporting bicycling in the Kalamazoo area. KBC donated \$30K over the past five years to AMBUCS, KalamazooStrong, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, League of Michigan Bicyclists, and the Maple Hill Trail and others.

In addition, for over a decade members of KBC have volunteered their time to put on events like [KalTour](#) and [Bike Camp](#). Endeavors such as these are sustained and enhanced by charitable donations from benefactors.

While annual revenue from membership dues and KalTour covers KBC’s operational costs, KBC depends on grants and charitable donations to fund educational and philanthropic projects that promote safe and enjoyable bicycling.

For more information about charitable donations to KBC, see the “Donate” page on the KBC website <http://www.kalamazooicycleclub.org/donate-to-kbc/>.

2019 DONATIONS:

Thank you to all those who made financial contributions to the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club during 2019:

Anonymous - \$390.00

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo - \$100.00

Brennan Consulting \$100.00

Chain Gang - \$5000.00

Patrons of the following local bike shops:

- Pedal South - \$139.00
- Pedal Downtown - \$35.25
- ZooCity - \$71.00

Dirty Donut Race — KBC Pre-ride April 25

Perhaps you have a new gravel bike or an all roader that's never left the pavement. Maybe you tried gravel riding at last year's KalTour and would like to do similar group rides or participate in a local gravel race.

If you're "gravel curious," KBC and the Dirty Donut have a ride for you! We've tentatively scheduled a pre-ride of the Dirty Donut Race for April 25 at 10:00. We'll ride a slightly shorter version of the 22-mile short course, starting from the Park and Ride lot just west of US 131 at M-222 (exit 55, which most people take to ride the KBC fall foliage tour).

Everyone is welcomed, and we'll have a supported group that will ride at a recreational pace. We're hoping to introduce more riders to gravel road cycling and encourage interested KBC members to sign up for the Dirty Donut. Gravel races appeal to a wide range of riders; while elite cyclists compete for podium positions, other riders enjoy the challenging and typically scenic courses of these events. Most gravel races have after parties, and the Dirty Donut even offers in-course donuts that magically give you a faster finishing time.

The race is offering a discount code for KBC members. When you register use the code `kalamazoobc20` to receive 10% off.

So get your gravel capable bike—and that includes mountain and fat bikes—ready to ride and join us for the pre-ride in April and the Dirty Donut on May 31.

While there is no registration required for the pre-ride, you can register for the race at - <https://www.bikereg.com/dirty-donut>

—Susan Hubert



Gluten free donut bling!

Recovery Party ~~January 11~~ January 18!

Originally scheduled for Saturday the 11th, bad weather caused the recovery party to be moved to January 18, just in time for worse weather! No worries, though, there was a great crowd enjoying the evening. As you can see from the pictures, there was plenty of food and the blender bike was back in action.



A new feature this year was the gear swap table. This brain child of Jim Kindle allowed us to bring gently used bike gear, clothing, accessories and tools to the table for others to use. In exchange, we could take something we need. Editor John and Julie Knowlton brought 4 saddles, shoes and some clothing. We left with a chain checker tool and a women's jersey. Great idea, Jim!



There were some items left on the gear swap table at the end of the night. Vice President Paul Sotherland delivered the items to the Open Roads program where the staff



Recovery Party ~~January 11~~ January 18, Cont.

was excited to accept everything. They expressed gratitude to the KBC and said they could put it all to good use. I suspect this will be an ongoing feature of the recovery party! Thanks again to Jamie and Windy Clark for the use of Wind+James in Schoolcraft.



Thanks to Terry O'Connor for the pictures.

Next Kalamazoo Bicycle Club meeting is **February 11 at 7 p.m.**, inside **Shakespeare's**. Look for us at the back left section and don't forget your free popcorn at the bar!

Knowing other riders' names can build community. So, KBC will supply one set of helmet stickers - to each KBC member, free of charge. Thanks to John Hart's expert help you too can have your own name sticker that looks like these.

Please ctrl+click on [this link](#) to the name sticker order form and then pick up your stickers at an upcoming KBC meeting. Nearly 50 KBC members have already ordered helmet name stickers. If you have ordered stickers but haven't picked



them up, please attend the next KBC meeting to retrieve your stickers. Stickers ordered by Friday, February 7th, can be picked up at the Feb club meeting.

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.

Editor's Letter: What's Next?

Jim Collins wrote a best selling business book called Good to Great. In it he examines companies which underwent a transformation from average performance to exceptional results. Among the common factors he identified was setting what he calls BHAGs: Big Hairy Audacious Goals. BHAGs are big enough that working toward them can transform our companies or our lives. Even if you don't hit the humongous goal, the effort of working toward it can be revolutionary.

Cycling coach Trevor Connor tells all of his athletes to always have their next event on the calendar. Even if you are going to the Olympics, he wants to know what's next. He has a couple reasons for this, including the ability of the next event to pull you past a bad day.

2019 included my 50th birthday, and in response I scheduled a BHAG for July 2020. A buddy and I will spend 6 days riding classic climbs of the Dolomites. This is the Italian part of the Alps and includes roads that are often featured in the Giro d'Italia. Andy Hampsten famously won the climb up the Gavia in a snowstorm in 1988. We'll be riding that same road.

Climbing the Stelvio is also on the agenda. It rises nearly 6,000 from the base to the top, and scrapes the sky at over 9,000 feet above sea level.

One of my goals is to complete the tour and that requires not dying in the process. I have hired a coach for the first time in my life. Not to win races, but to be able to enjoy my ride in Italy. Between now and July I have a number of events to target and help prepare me for the big ride: Melting Mann and Barry-Roubaix are both local gravel races. In May I will ride 103 miles and climb 10,000 feet from Spartanburg, SC to the top of Mount Mitchell in North Carolina. Dirty Donut will land in that month, too. In June I have a couple bigger days back to back: the 100 mile loop of the Michigan Coast to Coast gravel ride in Ludington followed by the Kal Tour 60 mile gravel ride the next day.

People who learn of this project often ask if I am crazy. Nope, not crazy, just 50.

So a question for you: do cycling goals help you perform better in other areas of your life? Can the bike and all that goes with it help you be a better worker, leader, mother or father?

John Knowlton, editor (ctrl+click) editor@kalamazobicycleclub.org

