

PRESIDENT'S LETTER: GROUPTHINK RUN AMOK — DOUG KIRK

On June 10th the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors met—outdoors—and decided that consistent with Governor Whittmer's Orders we could cautiously start KBC group rides on Monday, June 29th with some restrictions—primarily staying well dispersed in the parking lots, riding in groups of no more than 6 and carrying a mask to use if necessary (but not while riding). People would decide for themselves how much distance they needed to maintain while riding.

After the meeting I wrote up what we agreed to and sent it to the group for editing. Instead of folks correcting my grammar I got replies from several (but not all) involved either waffling or backing out of what we all agreed to. They worried about how close is too close to draft another rider, about having enough ride leaders for the larger number of smaller groups, and about ride leaders having to lead rides where they don't know the riders very well. In short, as individuals they were second-guessing a group decision.

At first I was peeved that I'd written up what we had all decided only to have folks back out individually once they got home. Then I realized it was exactly the same behavior I've witnessed dozens of times when the weather's iffy at the start of a ride. People consult the radar and study the clouds and peer at the horizon. Nobody wants to be the first to chicken out so the group heads out...and gets soaked. And you just know deep in your heart that if there had been no group—if it was just you deciding whether to ride—you'd never leave the house.

And so it goes with this damn virus. No one knows what's safe for riding. No one knows what's not safe either. I know I don't have the virus (at least I'm pretty darn sure... except what about that last trip to the store...or the neighbor kid that stopped over?). What's that you say? Oh, my cough?...No worries, that's just my allergies!

And what about you? Can I trust you? I'm pretty sure I can, but who snuck into your personal space—or your partner's space—yesterday...or 4 days ago? What's your temperature? And how do you feel about that person over there—doesn't seem to be a part of any group. We can't just leave



APPEAL FOR PHOTOS

As the stay home orders continue to be extended, more and more cycling events are cancelled.

However, I still see many cyclists at the trails and riding on roads. Since we aren't meeting in groups we are missing each other more often than not.

Please take a selfie or a shot of a friend on a ride.

Help us remain a connected community through the magic of smart phone images! You can send them along to:

[editor@kalamazooBicycle
Club.org](mailto:editor@kalamazooBicycleClub.org)

PRESIDENT'S LETTER, CONT.

them there, can we?

What'll we do? Here's what: As long as you're healthy go ride your bike. Ride when you want. Where you want. With whomever you want. Create your own group rides. Heck, we've been running the time trial for 3 weeks now with over 20 riders milling around in the parking lot and no problems.

Or go ahead and show up at Texas Drive Park on Monday at 6:15 or the Kal-Haven Trailhead on Wednesday at 6:15 and see who's there. Or maybe Pedal or the coffee shop. Make your own group with its own rules.

I'm no virologist, but my soul tells me I'm not going to get sick riding my bike outside in fresh air with a few good buddies. Fresh air and exercise are good for my heart, my lungs and my soul. I've been doing it for over a month now. And not just me—nearly every bicyclist I know. Just use your head, keep the groups small, social distance in the parking lots, and for heaven's sake, spitting, hacking, coughing and snot rockets only at the back.

KBC Membership Stats — Look for your name here

Total Memberships: 275

Total Individuals: 483

New or Renewed Members: Keith Boneburg; Kevin Cleary; Kevin Douglass; Kitty Flatland; Dan & Jane Goldberger; Matt & Kristy Gunderson; Joshua Kling; Martin Knop; Julie & John Knowlton Family; Amy Kuchta; Jonathan Langworthy & Family; Cindy Little; Ryan Maguire; Jeanine Michael; Don Reeves; Pam & Paul Sotherland; Gordy Vader; Angie Veneklase; Ric Weissner & Family; Joe Williams

July Expiring Members: Deborah Bauer; Jake Biernacki & Family; Shari Dinneweth; Michael Foley & Monica Elfring; Erin Fouts; Joao Graca Lobo; Andrew Graham; Billie Jo Mundy; Donn Raseman; Corrine & Kelly Sallaz; Daniel Sample; Lindsay South & Jim McKim; Ben Shields

NEXT KBC CLUB MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR. . .

More information coming regarding a potential bike club meeting. July 9 was the tentative date planned as Time Trials are happening on Tuesdays this summer. This meeting may be opened to the general bike club as an idea was tossed around to reserve Texas Township Pavilion. If cost of renting the Pavilion and/or it is not available, the meeting may consist of only board members in order to maintain proper social distancing. Stay tuned!

KBC Business

Due to COVID-19 and the Stay Home order, there was no KBC membership meeting in June. There was an executive meeting June 10, appropriately distanced in the cul-de-sac in front of the Kirks' home at 7:00 p.m.

In attendance: Stacie Ballard, Mike Boersma, Thom Brennan, Paul Guimond, Doug Kirk, John Knowlton, Mike Krischer, Pam Sotherland, Paul Sotherland, Gordy Vader, Paul Wells, Rick Whaley

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) REPORTS & BUSINESS:

President: Doug Kirk

Time Trials (TT): The first Time Trial (TT) was in Vicksburg on June 2, 2020. Approximately 22 people showed up to participate. There was a consensus regarding too much traffic and the TT was moved to the original location on 29th and Q. Weather was questionable on June 9, 2020 for the second TT, yet approximately 12 people showed up to ride. No one ended up being able to ride because lightning started before 6:30pm. Parking is a concern at this location because there is not a large parking lot. The club will continue to host the TT every Tuesday at this location as riders seem to be interested.

Group Rides: The majority of the meeting was spent discussing if/when/how group rides could begin again. The board discussed how some individuals are starting to ride with friends, but the main purpose of the discussion at the meeting was to discuss club rides resuming on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday morning. A variety of ideas were tossed around including a rider sign up to ensure rides are kept small, having rides leave from different locations in Kalamazoo each day to naturally break up the group size based on who shows up to each location, have a large number of ride leaders to ensure groups of 4-6, posting signs in the parking lot to distinguish pace groups as early as when riders pull into the parking lot, etc. At the meeting, the group came to a consensus in which rides could begin the last week of June/first week of July with specific guidelines for safety recommendations posted by KBC that coincide with the League of Michigan Bicyclists recommendations. [Please see Pres. Kirk's letter for an update to these notes.—Ed.]

"Bicycles Use All Lanes" signs: Doug has asked anyone to email him regarding where it makes sense for these signs to appear. John Knowlton suggested during the meeting every round about in Kalamazoo should have one of these signs.

Southwest Michigan Bike Route signs: It was decided after discussions with the board the Executive Committee will discuss the matter and determine what actions to take regarding the best stance for the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

Black Lives Matter: Discussions were had regarding how the club could grow in the area of inclusivity as well as welcome and celebrate cyclists identifying as minorities, specifically Black cyclists. The board was encouraged to think about this to revisit, but the first action step will be to talk with the local bike shops. [See Editor's letter for further discussion of this issue. —Ed.]

Finance report, Pam Sotherland:

KBC FINANCIALS as of 6/9/2020

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) ACCOUNTS: \$11,012

Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$3,247

Monthly EXPENSES: \$366

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$13,893

3 TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$6,850

Education Fund: \$6,290

Jeremy Smith Fund: \$560

TOTAL ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$1,000

KRVT Pledge: \$1,000

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,184

Team Clark Logic generously refunded KBC's sponsorship of \$1,000 for 2020 as many races have been canceled. The club was also refunded \$675 from Schoolcraft because of KalTour being canceled.

Time Trial Photos! - Tory Cane



Waiting for the start



Doug & Kathy Kirk Reading Results after the TT

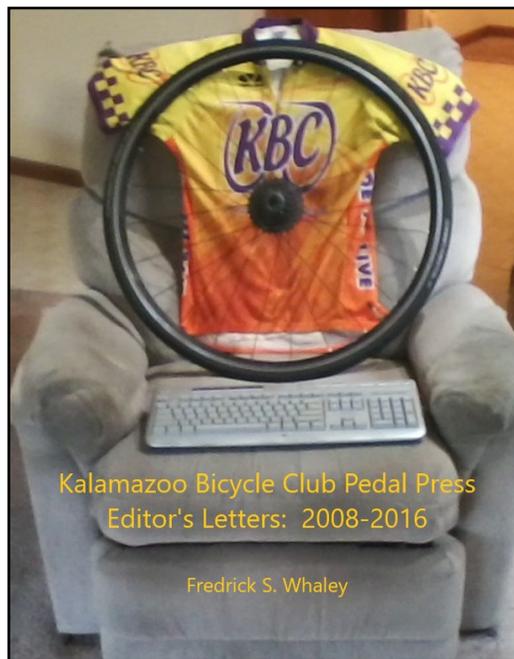
A Shameless ebook Plug

My shelter in place COVID-19 project this year (and my only yearly COVID-19 project, I hope) was to finally get around to compiling my Editor's Letters during the time that I was the Pedal Press Editor, do some minor editing, and create an ebook of these 98 letters. I call it "Kalamazoo Bicycle Club Pedal Press Editor's Letters: 2008-2016." Not the catchiest of titles, but it has the virtue of accuracy. I created this on NOOK, as opposed to creating this on Kindle, in order to make the ebook free to download using the NOOK app. If you go to the Barnes & Noble website www.barnesandnoble.com, click on the ebook tab, and do a search on a phrase like "Kalamazoo Bicycle Club," you'll find my ebook. The NOOK app is available at www.nook.com/nookapp and can be downloaded from the Apple Store, Google Play, or the Windows Store. It can now be downloaded using the Windows 10 platform, unlike a couple of weeks ago.

And while you're at it, there are two other ebooks from KBC members worth checking out, both available via Kindle. Marc Irwin's ebook, "Ride Places not Miles," is a guide to bicycle traveling. Doug Kirk's ebook, "The Spin," that he wrote several years ago, is a novel about bicycle racing set in the near future. (I suspect that Doug may also have some paperback copies of his book, as well.) I have read both of these books and they are well worth reading.

So, support your KBC authors and make them rich beyond their wildest dreams. (Oh, that's right, my ebook is free)

Rick Whaley



Season of Suspicion — John Knowlton

The calendar says summer, but the chill in the culture indicates we are deep into the season of suspicion.

This season has many sources.

A relatively benign source is the acrimony between Major League Baseball owners and the players union, MLBPA. Here we have millionaires arguing with billionaires about 50 games vs. 60 games; full prorated salaries vs. partial prorated salaries and other issues that appear minute in the context of the reported billion-dollar television contract reached between MLB and Turner broadcasting on June 13. Meanwhile, a country desperate for a sense of normalcy continues to wait for America's pastime. [Since this essay was written, the two sides have come to terms and the season will begin in late July.]

The police killings of George Floyd, along with countless others, has awakened a sleeping giant. It seems that many people are becoming aware of the way minority Americans have been treated in some of their interactions with some police officers. And this awareness is leading to greater scrutiny of how we deal with each other throughout society. Awareness is bringing issues to the surface which have previously been ignored and that heightened recognition results in suspicion, angst and rancor.

Another source of suspicion is our quadrennial jump into the electoral snake pit. Democrats suspect the Republicans of trying to squash individual rights in pursuit of profit while Republicans are sure the Democrats want to lead the country into a Socialist pogrom. We third partiers join Shakespeare's Mercutio in declaring, "A pox on both your houses."

The most novel source of the season of suspicion is COVID-19. In this pandemic we face a silent invisible pathogen apparently transmissible in the absence of symptoms. As of this writing the US has 2.2 million confirmed cases and about 120,000 deaths from the disease. That is a 5% fatality rate. Many of us have decided to wear masks, avoid normal activities and maintain social distance from other people. By the way, the phrase 'social distance' is a terrible choice of words. I imagine it was selected by someone who has a much better understanding of virology than psychology. I am gravely concerned that our suspicion of every other person as a possible source of infection is a dangerous infection of its own. It infects the mind and the soul and the human heart. Our fellow humans are supposed to be a source of strength and belonging. We are social creatures who need each other for community, comfort, commerce and competition.

There is only one cure for suspicion. The one force powerful enough to lever us along the ecliptic and into a fresh season is finding common cause. For many readers of the Pedal Press, the bike is our common ground. I have ridden with dozens of KBC members and don't know how almost any of you vote. Your allegiance (if any) to baseball's American or National leagues is completely opaque. We seem for the most part to stick to the common ground of exercise, bikes, gearing and gear. Common ground for cyclists indeed. And even the ever-divisive topic of disc brakes on road bikes seems to bring us together at least in our agreement that bikes should be able to stop effectively.

We won't be hosting Club rides for a while. We suspect that COVID may be transmitted to us, or by

Season of Suspicion – Cont.

us in a group setting. We have concerns over congregating in parking lots and breathing too closely while fixing a flat or administering first aid. So we will continue to ride solo and ride safe. Or at least in small groups that aren't officially sanctioned by the Club. And in this way we hope to keep each other safe and free from disease. But do we risk letting the infection of suspicion propagate amok?

One suspicion we have not addressed as a Club manifests in the relative lack of diversity among our members. I understand that dealing with ethnic diversity is fraught. It seems so easy to step on a landmine that you didn't know was there. While some people see majority Americans joining Black Lives Matter marches as a sign of solidarity, others suspect "trauma tourism." And most of us would find it incredibly awkward to ask someone to join a Club ride because they are African American. Breaking through suspicions built on 400 years of history? Nothing easy about it.

Consider if you were developing an interest in basketball. And that you're white. How would you feel about driving down to Paterson Street on Kalamazoo's north side and trying to join a pick up basketball game at LaCrone Park? Would you be welcome? Would you know the unspoken rules? Would there be a beginner's game for you to join? Who would you even ask?

Now imagine that you're African American with a developing interest in cycling. How would you feel about driving down to Texas Drive Park on a Monday night. Would you be welcome? Would you have the right kind of bike and clothes? Would there be a no drop ride or at least a map so you wouldn't get lost? Who would you even ask?

And yet I stick to my thesis that common ground is the only way to banish suspicion. Well aware of the risk of being pedantic or holier than thou I will share my simple approach: Be a friend to cyclists. According to the empty racks at local bike shops and lots of media reporting, many people are turning to cycling as a way to cope with COVID. WOW! This is so cool! Of course, it is harder to get my stuff fixed. And the shoes I ordered two weeks ago still aren't here yet. But wow, what an amazing opportunity for the people discovering cycling and the existing community. So, as the region experiences a bunch of new cyclists, can you and I find a person or two to befriend? Someone to take on a ride? At their pace? To show how to fix a flat, lube their chain and inflate their tires? Can we buy them a helmet? Can we show them how Strava works? Can we encourage them to add a couple miles to their longest ride yet, and then do the ride with them? That's what I am doing. And some of my new cycling friends happen to be Black. I would love for them to experience the joy of riding in a group, of finding a band of two wheeled brothers and sisters. So, whenever they come to their first group ride (and second and third) I won't be leading my normal ride at 18 mph. We'll be going at whatever pace my friends want to ride. For as many weeks, months or years as it takes until they start to make their own friends in the club.

May I ask that you join me in this project? Find new cyclists and meet them on the common ground of riding bikes. Seek out people on bikes who appear to be new to the sport. Let's end the season of suspicion by force of will and intentional effort.

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