

PRESIDENT'S LETTER: PANDEMIC PEDALING — DOUG KIRK

Everyone seems aware that KBC rides are suspended indefinitely. But lots of people are riding anyway. Some only ride alone. Some only ride with people in their “pods” (which seems to be the term for folks you live with or see so regularly you’ve given up on wearing masks when together).

Some folks (and I am one of them) don’t seem too worried about the coronavirus when riding their bikes with a few friends. There were easily 20 riders splitting into groups last Monday at Texas Drive Park and 30 last Wednesday at the Kal-Haven Trailhead. And we’ve been holding Tuesday Night Time Trials every week since late May with no issues.

I still think groups should be small and generally all friends with one another. From what I read it’s very unlikely one could acquire the virus riding in small groups. I suspect hanging out in the parking lot is more dangerous than riding in a small group of friends, so it’s important to pay attention to social distancing since hardly anyone wears a mask preparing to ride.

KBC’s entire Executive Committee hasn’t felt comfortable holding a regular meeting for months. At a meeting we’d all be in the same space for an hour or more. And it’s hard to speak to a group wearing a mask. I’m pretty sure I speak for most of us when I say there aren’t that many people I want to sit six or eight feet from for an hour—regardless of masks.

Truly strange times when holding a club meeting seems more dangerous than riding in traffic! Yes, there’s always the possibility of a virtual meeting via Zoom, but KBC meetings are supposed to be fun, not torture. And sadly, as long as the primary function of the club is cancelling rides, there isn’t much to meet about anyway. For sure no one is sending me any subjects for a meeting agenda (other than treasurer Pam Sotherland’s wonderfully detailed reports).

So as much as we would like to restart regular KBC rides, it just isn’t the right thing to do—despite the large number of riders turning up for group rides (still less than half the normal number). Better to pick your own groups and ride with people you know and trust.

If you have questions or issues about any of this, I’d be happy to hear from you. I am not on Facebook so please feel free to contact me directly at president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org



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@kalamazooBicycleClub.org

From Paul Wells, KBC Education Chair:

The League of Michigan Bicyclists, our statewide bicycle advocacy organization, of which KBC is a club member, recently released "The Legal Rights and Responsibilities of Michigan Bicyclists," a short and concise, 10 minute training video designed for law enforcement officers. Those of you who are LMB members may have received this in your email, but if not, I would like you to view it, and forward it to anyone (everyone?) who could benefit from better knowledge of cycling law in Michigan. <https://www.lmb.org/2020/07/the-legal-rights-and-responsibilities-of-michigan-bicyclists/>

I am all too aware that many, or most drivers and cyclists do not know the Michigan Vehicle Code specifics regarding bicycle use on the road. I think this video is one of the best I've seen to cover the main parts of it. Of course there has been no time or effort put into educating the public of the laws, and drivers training doesn't do nearly enough to cover it. There aren't any bicycle brochures or info at all at the Secretary of States office

If no one else is doing enough cycling education, I guess we should do it. This video can give us a review of the essential parts of bicycle law, and make each of us a bit of an expert. So we should all do a bit of question and answer with our relatives, friends, co-workers, etc. to educate them. Just explain that your life depends on it!

Know the Rules | Ride the Rules | Ride Bright | Ride Defensively | Ride Safe!

The 2020 Ride to South Haven Will be Cancelled (Sighhhh)

The Ride to South Haven will not be held this year, yet another casualty of COVID-19. Social distancing is difficult to do while riding in a group and converging on convenience stores and on the traditional sub stop in South Haven isn't a particularly wise idea. So, we'll wait until next year and think happy thoughts of past Rides to South Haven in order to get us through the next few months.

Rick Whaley, Ride to South Haven Ride Leader



KBC Membership Stats – Look for your name here

Total Memberships: 270

Total Individuals: 477

New or Renewed Members: Michael Gibbons; Steve Glista & Family; Gary Greenop; Jillian Howland; Val Litznerski; Michael Miller; Ken Mohney; Billie Jo Mundy; Jeremy Sikkema; Lindsay South & Jim McKim

August Expiring Members: Ann Marie Butler; Carolyn Douglass; Carl Fried; Steve Groetsema; Mike Hughes; Daniel Lam; Leslie & Tim Scheffers; Matthew VanMiddlesworth; Greg Worsnop; Molly Yoshikawa

NEXT KBC CLUB MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR. . .

Good question! At this time there is no KBC Club meeting scheduled.

KBC Business

Due to COVID-19 and the Stay Home order, there was no KBC membership meeting in July.

Note from Pam Sotherland, KBC Treasurer:

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their KBC membership or become a new member recently! The financial support provided by your membership dues has been critical this year. The only other source of income for the club is our annual KalTour. Although it is not primarily a fundraising activity, after expenses and our donation to AMBUCS, KalTour usually generates about \$1,100 which goes into the club's coffers. This year, because KalTour was cancelled, we did not have the income. So dues are more important than ever.

Over the years the club has been fiscally responsible and as a result we have been able to cover our expenses out of our cash accounts, with a bit of belt-tightening. Below is my projection for the club's finances for the remainder of 2020. Assuming that we continue to receive revenue from memberships at the same level as in previous years we will end this year in pretty good shape. We will also be able to cover the first quarter expenses. For a comprehensive review of the club's finances as of June 30, 2020 please refer to the KBC 2020 SemiAnnual Finance Report.

Once again, thank you for your continued support!

KBC ANTICIPATED FINANCES for July - December 2020

Assumptions:

Following events take place:

Anniversary Ride - **\$200**

Fall Foliage Fest - **\$100**

KalTour 2021 deposit - **\$675**

Recovery Party 2021 deposit - **\$400**

Other miscellaneous expenses incurred by KBC - **\$1,950**

6/30/2020 BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS (PNC Checking + PayPal): \$14,361

Estimated RECEIPTS (Cash Income from Dues): July 2020-December 2020: \$2,527

Estimated EXPENSES: (from above) July-December 2020: **\$3,325**

ESTIMATED 2020 ENDING BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$13,563

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$6,868

Education Fund: \$6308

Jeremy Smith Fund: \$560

ESTIMATED AVAILABLE FUNDS at end of 2020: \$6,695

(Estimated 2020 Ending Balance MINUS Total Designated Funds)

TOTAL ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$1,560

KRVT Pledge: **\$1000**

Repair/Air Station for Portage: **\$560***

*contingent upon receiving a grant to cover the balance

ESTIMATED 2020 YEAR-END BALANCE: \$5,135

(Estimated Available Funds minus Total Encumbered Expenses)

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,184

Estimated Expenses: January - March 2021: \$3,800

Includes the following:

Bike Camp: **\$465**

General Club Expenses: **\$50**

Friend of Bicycling Award: **\$75**

Recovery Party: **\$450**

Insurance Payment: **\$2,500**

League of American Bicyclists Membership: **\$100**

League of Michigan Membership: **\$100**

Website: **\$60**

Assuming zero income from membership dues during the first three months of 2021, the \$3,800 in estimated expenses could be covered by what remains in KBC coffers at the end of 2020. In this worst-case scenario, acknowledging that the club remains in the black is of utmost importance.

Semi-Annual KBC Finance Report—Treasurer Pam Sotherland

DESCRIPTION	2020 Budget	1st Qtr (Jan-Mar)	2nd Qtr (Apr-Jun)	January-June
INCOME/DEPOSITS				
AMBUCS Donation			200.00	200.00
Bike Camp	2,000.00	195.00	0.00	195.00
Donations		323.00	550.00	873.00
Education (grants/donations)				
Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ShopJars	200.00	0.00	99.00	99.00
KalTour	8,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
KBC Membership Dues	6,500.00	1,630.00	2,343.00	3,973.00
TOTAL INCOME/DEPOSITS	16,700.00	2,148.00	3,192.00	5,340.00
EXPENSES				
Bike Camp				
Operating	1,475.00	680.00	-25.00	655.00
PayPalFees	25.00	5.00	0.00	5.00
Bike Week	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education	700.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
General				
Book Keeping	80.00	88.00	0.00	88.00
Corp. Filing Fee	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Marketing/Promotion	0.00	46.00	0.00	46.00
Operating	150.00	46.00	18.00	64.00
PayPal ChgBack Fee	80.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PayPal Fees for Dues	200.00	50.00	68.00	118.00
Tax Preparation	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
US Postal Service	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gifts/Awards	100.00	133.00	0.00	133.00
Grants	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00
Insurance				
American Specialty Insur.	2,400.00	2,334.00	0.00	2,334.00
League of American Bicyclists	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
KalTour				
Ambucs donation	1,080.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Insurance (non-members)	900.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LMB - \$1/rider donation	290.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Operating	4,500.00	0.00	-675.00	-675.00
PayPalFees	150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LMB Membership	100.00	200.00	-100.00	100.00
Race Team	1,000.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.00
Social Activities				
Anniversary Ride	200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fall Foliage Fest	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Recovery Party	800.00	482.00	0.00	482.00
Subscriptions	300.00	0.00	85.00	85.00
Website	600.00	547.00	290.00	837.00
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	16,480.00	6,211.00	-1,339.00	4,872.00
NOTE: Negative values in expenses indicate refunded payments.				

A Summer Cycling Project — Zolton Cohen

When schools shut down in the Kalamazoo area this spring because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, a lot of kids were left with not much to do and a lot of time to do it in. That type of situation can lead to some bad outcomes. But to some middle and elementary school biking enthusiasts in and around Kalamazoo's West Main Hill Neighborhood, it presented them an opportunity to do something constructive – and fun.

The heavily wooded eastern end of the neighborhood's Academy Park had, for decades, been a repository for leaves, limbs, wind-blown litter and other trash. A visionary cadre of young cyclists took to that area with rakes, shovels and lots of enthusiasm, and the result is a mini BMX/mountain bike venue that has turned into a popular gathering spot over the course of the summer.

The course starts out at the top of a small but steep hill and winds down along a short, packed dirt trail lined with artfully arranged dead tree limbs and broken paving bricks. On one side of the trail a pink pool noodle affixed to a utility pole guywire serves as both warning and cushion. The trails are as neat as a landscaper could have accomplished and feature several dirt mounds that serve as launching ramps.

The entire course is compact: a circuit can be completed in less than half a minute. But it seems to serve its constituents, who can choose to either jump over logs piled at the base of the trail or go on to complete a tightly-turned loop that takes them back to the base of the starting hill.

When asked on a recent sultry day about what type of bike is most suitable for use on the course, several of its denizens volunteered the attributes of the pure BMX-type machine: "They're heavy duty and you can use them for jumps." Other cycles in attendance that day were mountain bikes and what their owners called "city cruisers" - hybrids.

Watching the kids ram around the little bike park they created can induce a strong sense of nostalgia, and envy. Cheapo, indestructible bikes; friends to make fun with – and of; the freedom of complete absence of parental supervision; sweaty days in the sun and the shade. No shirt, no helmet, sometimes no shoes! And all day to do exactly what you want.

Giddy laughter was the response when the crew was asked if anyone ever fell or was injured while traversing the trail. "Yeah, sometimes you fall. But then you get back up!" "You can get your fingers busted and bent pretty bad, but mostly it doesn't hurt too much."

Something that does not escape one's notice: None of the riders interviewed had on a helmet. When queried about that, a range of replies spilled forth. "Mine's at my dad's and it's too far to go to get it." "My brother is using mine." I've never worn a helmet and I never will."

So, the kids have completed their summer bike project and done a fine job of it. Perhaps mine will be to devise a way to gently introduce the concept of donning head protection - without ruining the fun and spontaneity demonstrated by this bold band of bikers and builders.



RCKC Report by Mike Boersema

In March of 2019, Thom Brennan and myself were appointed to the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC). The RCKC is responsible for the maintenance of 1269 miles of road in the 15 townships of Kalamazoo County, essentially all of the roads outside of the jurisdictions of the Cities of Galesburg, Kalamazoo, Parchment, and Portage and the Villages of Augusta, Richland, Climax, Schoolcraft, and Vicksburg.

Funding for the RCKC comes primarily through fuel taxes collected by the State – Act 51. RCKC is directly responsible for paying for the maintenance of Kalamazoo County Primary Roads (major trunk line roads such as Drake Road, 8th Street in Texas Township, Michigan Avenue in Comstock Township, etc.). RCKC partners with the 15 Townships to pay for the maintenance of local roads (roads such as Sunnywood Drive in Oshtemo or AB Avenue in Alamo Township). RCKC gives a sum of money to each township based on a formula which includes population, miles of local road, and the number of vehicle registrations in each township. Townships are required to match this sum for any proposed projects. Many townships have millages or special assessments to provide this match.

As many KBC members are aware, Act 51 requires recipients to use not less than 1% of the money that they receive on non-motorized facilities. This is not extra money. RCKC is subject to this requirement. The RCKC has a budget in 2020 of \$37m (this includes \$2m withdrawn from RCKC's fund balance to cover shortfalls related to COVID-19). 1% of \$37m is \$370,000. In 2020 RCKC will actually be spending around \$2.9m (around 8%) on non-motorized focused projects, including the KVRT extension in Galesburg, the Drake Road pathway in Oshtemo, and non-motorized facilities on Nichols Road in Kalamazoo Township.

The KBC, the RCKC, and the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS, a metropolitan transportation planning organization), have partnered to produce a map of bike routes in Kalamazoo County. This product is finished and should be available to the public soon.

A note on Bike Routes and the RCKC: the KBC does almost all rides on public roads and the KBC expends a considerable educational effort reflected in Bike Camp and with experienced ride leaders to make riders comfortable and safer on public roads. There are members of the public who don't ride bicycles as adults and who have the perception that riding a bicycle on a public road is dangerous and, as a result, roads should meet certain criteria before they are considered as bicycle routes. This tension between perspectives influences where bicycle routes are located.

I can say for myself, and I think Thom will agree, that I came to the Road Commission a skeptic. I needed to be convinced that the RCKC had a commitment to fully include non-motorized projects in its overall mission. I can say that I have been pleased to learn that the RCKC is fully committed to non-motorized projects as part of its overall mission. The RCKC has extremely competent fiscally responsible management and a dedicated professional staff. Compared with road agencies in neighboring counties, RCKC is a leader.

Requests for service (potholes, missing signs, etc.) can be reported to: <https://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/contact.php>. –Ed

E-Assist Bike Time Trial | By Thom Brennan, your KBC Insurance Coordinator

Early this spring, just before the shut-down, I made the plunge and purchased my new Cannondale Evo Neo in Battle Creek. That's right, the latest evolution of the battery assist road bike. The spec says 19 mph for 60 miles! So, I have put it to the test.

From the first ride I knew this was the bike for me because I can climb hills faster and go much more smoothly and further distance without fatigue. I feel like a kid suddenly 20 years younger in my ability to sprit with ease. The only problem now is I have to manage the good-natured harassment from my cycling buddies. But my suggestion is to try one and then see what you have to say!

Let's fast forward to our current situation where group rides and our single or multi-day tours are discouraged or cancelled, and we look for new ways to get out and enjoy the fun of cycling.

Recently the KBC Board decided to start time trials as a Covid-19 safe opportunity to ride and join with other club members. I thought this was a great idea for our "serious" riders but not really for the old slow guys like myself. On past Monday nights I lead the Bike Campers and other new riders on a 14-15 mph 25-mile Schoolcraft loop. Well, fellow cyclist having an E-assist bike has changed the "ball game".



After much "encouragement!!!!?" from my friend Terry O'Connor, I agreed to roll out the new e-bike for the time trial on Tuesday, June 23, 2020. At Terry's suggestion I arrived early to give us time to drive the course so I could get a visual and feel for the landscape, corners with no gravel, areas to really push, and where other riders might be passing me.

The quick tour of the course sounds simple but when you are being timed with your head down and cranking for all you are worth, and sucking air, you have to remember that each 10th of a second counts even on an e-assist bike.

So, after a simple mile warm up I was lined up ready to go with the other riders with a 30 second interval start.

I had no idea that I could max out my heart rate in less than a minute (or was it the adrenaline or the 5-hr. energy boost) but that's exactly what happened. Unfortunately, I slowed down.

Managing to make it half-way around the course I started to question my sanity, but I did keep the bike wide open and I cranked as hard as I could to achieve my goal of 30 minutes or 20 mph. Somehow 30 minutes plus seconds later, I managed to roll across the finish line without passing out. I was stoked!

What a thrill! This was my first time-trial ever and the club's first e-assist bicycle category contestant, but it certainly will not be my last.

Next time I know what to expect. Those riders passing me will now be my "rabbit" to chase down and I will forget the heart monitor and keep in the highest gear wide open to break that 30-minute barrier!

I encourage all KBC riders to come out on a Tuesday evening at the Pavilion and give it a try. You have no idea what fun and excitement you are missing.

Diversity & Bicycling: Leaders Virtual Meet & Greet

August 27 - by Paul Selden

A virtual meeting on August 27 starting at 6:30pm will provide an opportunity for bicycling leaders to exchange information with other community leaders who have the resources and the interest to explore opportunities to expand diversity and bicycling in greater Kalamazoo.

Those presenting will exchange contact information to facilitate further off-line conversations. Bike Friendly Kalamazoo is hosting the meeting and will publish the contact information so others who may be present (virtually) -- whether presenting or not -- can join in following up.

The speaker/leader invitation list is aimed at those who are already motivated to explore ways to expand diversity in the bicycling community. The pace of the 3-5 per presenter introductions will not offer time for general lectures on the topic of diversity or for persuading each other of the benefits of diversity, *per se*, but those interesting in exploring such topics may join in Kalamazoo Valley Community College's multi-day Summit on Racism later this Fall.

Information on registration for the August 27 virtual meeting will be posted on Bike Friendly Kalamazoo's meetings web page at <https://bikefriendlykalamazoo.org/about/meetings/>, on their Facebook page @bikefriendlykalamazoo and is likely to be shared and posted to Kalamazoo Bicycle Club's discussion page as well.

Current Presenting Organizations/Special Hosts:

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo

Chain Gang

City of Kalamazoo

City of Portage

County of Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

Open Roads Bike Program

Portage District Library

Stones Church (represented by Pedal Press Editor John Knowlton, FYI)

Letter TO the Editor: Blinky Lights Work!

Instead of a letter FROM the editor, this month I am running a message we received on the KBC website comment form. I have received permission from Mike Miller to publish his words:

Just wanted to say that I have seen a lot of bikers with high intensity rear red and front white lights on their bikes and I highly recommend them! I am a career Fire Captain for Portage Fire Department and also an On-Call Captain for Texas Township Fire Department. I live in Texas Township and with that we have a lot of roads that are great for biking, hilly and a great workout.

Recently I was traveling west on a back road in the evening (sun in my eyes) and encountered a biker. I am not sure I would have seen them in advance if it were not for those lights. In my 20 years of service I have seen all too often the results of car vs. cyclist crashes. Not sure who else to put the word out to, but those things are great! Feel free to pass it along, and enjoy the road!



A great shot of a recent unofficial FMLR (Friday Morning Ladies Ride)! Thanks, Julie Knowlton for the submission.

You too can be memorialized in the hallowed pages of the Pedal Press! Send your cycling pics to editor@kalamazoo bicycleclub.org