

PRESIDENT'S LETTER — DOUG KIRK

I hope you have been able to get in plenty of fall riding. The fall colors seem especially vibrant this year. For sure fall is a great season for gravel road riding. If you look at the Ride With GPS website—either through the KBC website or through your own Ride with GPS link, and use “gravel” as the keyword when searching routes, you’ll find at least 20 gravel routes with distances ranging from 20 to over 100 miles that start near Kalamazoo.

In general, we’ve found dirt roads are in the best condition in the fall. We’ve ridden north, south and west of town lately and the dirt roads are in great shape—even the infamous Mann Road (of Melting Mann fame) west of Three Rivers.

KBC meetings have been outdoors the last two months! Not bad at all under the pavilion at Texas Drive Park so far.

UPDATE: On October 29th, the Executive Committee unanimously agreed to cancel the November meeting due to Covid-19 concerns. It’s too cold and dark to hold a meeting outdoors, large indoor meetings are a bad idea, and we have not been able to locate an indoor facility that would work.

Normally the November meeting hosts the annual election of Executive Committee members. But since all candidates are running unopposed a vote serves no purpose we couldn’t see any reason to arrange a virtual meeting.

IN ADDITION the Committee has decided unless something significant occurs relative to the Covid-19 situation, the club’s annual January Recovery Party is cancelled as is the regular December meeting.

If you have any questions or issues with these steps, please email president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org. I would be happy to hear from you.

Our current treasurer, Pam Sotherland, and secretary, Stacie Ballard, will continue in their positions. And you are stuck with me as president for another year.

But I’m truly pleased that we have a new vice president joining the executive committee. Many of you know Paul Guimond. Besides also being a member of team Team Clark Logic, he’s been commuting to work all year around—weather be damned—for years. He rides gravel, does loaded touring as well as the “A” rides on Mondays and Wednesdays. He’s totally into Zwift—even when it’s nice out—and takes his dog for “walks” on a unicycle. Truly an all-rounder. Better yet, he’s already made a couple of really good suggestions relating to building KBC.



APPEAL FOR STORIES, PHOTOS, AND CYCLING DISPATCHES

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 picture or send a report of a ride for others to enjoy. You can send them along to:

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

President's letter Cont.

Paul will be replacing another Paul, Paul Sotherland, who has done a truly terrific job the last two years—filling in for me at meetings, arranging to meet at Shakespeare's Pub (hopefully we can get back to that before too long...) and routinely coming up with KATS and the Road Commission to create the area-wide Bike Route Map showing the best (paved) bicycling roads in the area. Take a look at it: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=78c39c7330d04deb98a2f60fb6bc7b85> Paul's measured, thoughtful approach to looking after the club's interests has been a terrific benefit, and I hope he will continue to be involved promoting KBC's interests. Thank you, Paul!

KBC Membership Stats – Look for your name here

Total Memberships: 262

Total Individuals: 470

New or Renewed Members: Nick & Kelley Hampton; Mike Hughes; Shawn Kloha & Family; Tim Krone; Kerri Langdon-Fischer; Dan Murrin; Jacinda Roedel

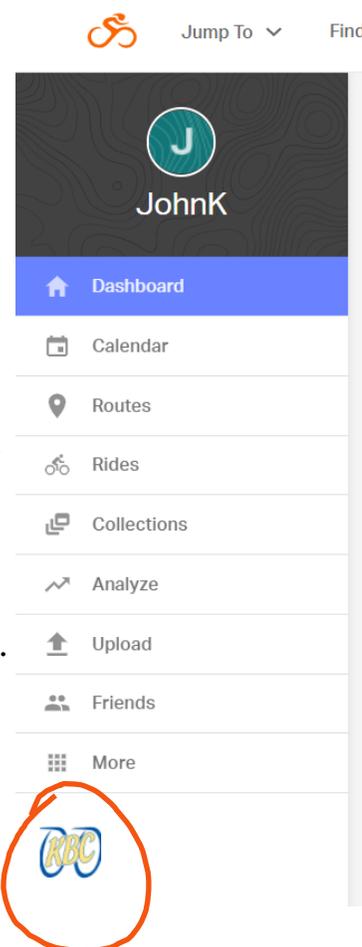
November Expiring Members: Amy & Chris Chopp; Aliceanne Inskeep; Jeffrey Pregonzer & Family; Colleen Prichard & William Rantz; Nick Yetter

Ride with GPS Reminder and Request

Within the past month RWGPS released a new feature called "Heatmap." The heatmap color codes routes and roads with actual RWGPS user data. Roads that get little or no recorded trips remain grey. Low usage roads are blue, more trips turn a road dark blue. Then red, and finally roads and trails with the most RWGPS recordings are dark, thick red in color. You might recognize Fort Custer MTB trails near the eastern edge of the county, and some of your favorite Monday or Wednesday night routes on the west of the county.

Request: Please use the new heatmap feature over the next few weeks. Try it out and see how you like it. Write down any tips or tricks you find as you explore the tool. Then send your impressions along for inclusion in the next Pedal Press so all the members can benefit. Submissions should go to editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org. Thanks! -Ed.

To the right is a screenshot of my RWGPS dashboard. You can see the KBC logo near the bottom. Clicking that icon takes you to the KBC Route Library! Find a route that you like, "Pin" it, and it can be sent wirelessly to your GPS enabled cycling computer. Very cool!



KBC Meeting Notes—October 13, 2020

Finance report, Pam Sotherland as of 10/12/2020:

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) AC-COUNTS: \$14,973

Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$547

Monthly EXPENSES: \$291

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$15,229

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$6,940

Education Fund: \$6,380

Jeremy Smith Fund: \$560

TOTAL ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$1,000

KRVT Pledge: \$1000

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6187

KBC Year to Date Summary as of 9/30/2020

Total Income: \$6,578

Total Budgeted Exp: \$5,118

Total Unbudgeted Exp: \$1,431

Due to COVID-19 safety protocols, the October meeting was held outdoors at Texas Drive Park.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS & BUSINESS

President: Doug Kirk

The primary purpose of the October meeting is to nominate members for the executive committee with elections happening at the November meeting. Doug Kirk nominated Paul Guimond for Vice President, Pam Sotherland for Treasurer, and Stacie Ballard for Secretary. Paul Sotherland nominated Doug Kirk for President. When asking for any other nominations, there were none. It was discussed there would be no need for ballots in the next meeting, especially in the pandemic. Elections will take place at the November meeting.

NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Communications Director: Jillian Howland

KBC is now on Instagram and Jillian discussed more ideas about utilizing Facebook and Instagram to bring in more members. She will be sending more information out about how to find the Instagram page. Send Jillian an email, call, text her, if you have content ideas the club could share on these platforms.

Membership Director: Rick Whaley

Rick sent out an email to those who had expired memberships earlier this year, 6 people renewed out of 101 messages that went out. Everyone gets an email one month out, the week before, and one message when their membership is expired. When asking for other ideas, it was suggested it could be an issue because group rides were/are not happening. The idea to approach it in a multi facet way – word of mouth, signs, etc. was discussed but it might have to be tabled at the moment due to the pandemic. A plan was made for individuals on the board of directors and executive committee to contact people they know. Rick will compile a list of names into a shared Google document in which the board/executive committee can begin contacting people about expired memberships.

ATTENDANCE

Shaun Ballard	Charlie Grdina	Doug Kirk	Paul Sotherland
Stacie Ballard	Paul Guimond	Michael Krischer	Gordy Vader
Clark Bennett	Jillian Howland	Renee Mitchell	Paul Wells
Thom Brennan	Valerie Litznerski	Paul Selden	Rick Whaley
	Mark Irwin	Pam Sotherland	

KBC MEETING NOTES CONTINUED – OCTOBER 13, 2020

Education Chair: Paul Wells

Paul provided an update on the Smart Cycling and League Certified Instructor (LCI) training that KBC has been working on for several months. Five KBC members, Jennifer Johnson, Bill Surna, Gordy Vader, Clark Bennett, and Paul Wells completed the one day Smart Cycling course this past Saturday at Portage City Hall. Instructors were Renee Mitchell and Al Lauland from the east side of the state. There was an online portion, a classroom portion on cycling law, and safely riding on the road, followed by a skills and drills and road ride portion on their bikes.



The \$50 fee for the class was paid by each of us. Paul Wells proposed that KBC would reimburse these people if they agree to meet some criteria for KBC in 2021, and possibly 2022.

Proposed list of criteria:

1. Assist with Bike Camp 2021, in presentations or ride assistance.
2. Volunteer to be a ride leader on KBC weekly rides.
3. Agree to be a member of the KBC Education Committee.
4. Will be eligible to apply for LCI training (Smart Cycling is the prerequisite) hopefully to be held in our area sometime next year (cost in \$500 per person).

As a recipient of funds from the Chain Gang Memorial Fund, we have the ability to pay for this training so that KBC has "official" certified instructors for Bike Camp and other educational projects we may undertake in the future.

Renee Mitchell suggested the Smart Cycling curriculum be integrated into Bike Camp with the addition of presentations and some additional skills and drills. Any Bike Camp participants who desired this could get League of American Bicyclists Smart Cycling certification.

Miscellaneous

Kudos to Val Litznerski, Carolyn Douglass, and Jillian Howland for participating in a 3-person relay across the state of Michigan and back. Each rider took about 2-hour shifts, completing 425 miles in under 24 hours. They are awaiting the results from the World Ultra Cycling Association (WUCA) on stating the record has been set.

On behalf of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo, Paul Selden spoke about the many members of KBC who participated in the Fall Bike Celebration – the BFK Board approved a donation to the KBC for \$425 during a very difficult year. This donation was presented to the club during the meeting as well as an announcement about the Bike Booster Mini Grant. Mike Boersma applied for this grant and the club received \$1,500. This grant will accompany the Jeremy Smith fund which will cover the new bicycle repair stand and installation. KBC is working with the City of Portage for a best place to install. A plaque will also be on the stand.

The Next KBC Meeting: See President's letter on page 1 for details.

Did You Know???

As suggested by Paul Guimond, the KBC Education Committee is starting a new column in the PedalPress called “Did You Know?” that will cover topics including cycling law, road riding safety or group riding protocol. I’ll take my turn first and then invite others to say their piece.

I recently participated in The League of American Bicyclists course called Smart Cycling that was taught by League Certified Instructors (LCI) Renee Mitchell (Past KBC president) and Al Lauland, from the east side of Michigan. KBC members Clark Bennett, Jennifer Johnson, Bill Surna, Gordy Vader (KBC Ride Captain) and I participated. Some of what we learned was a review, as we are all seasoned road cyclists, but there were several new insights gained from participating in this well-run course.

So, my “Did You Know” for this month focuses on lane placement. That is, how far right in the traffic lane is “as far right as practicable” for a cyclist riding on a road-way? After decades of riding thousands of miles I learned that I tend to ride just a little too far to the right, as Renee and Al pointed out on our road ride. The official League rule is to ride on the right tire track of the lane you are in, unless there is a bike lane. On some narrower roads, riding too far to the right encourages drivers to squeeze by to the left of a cyclist. I have never hugged the curb, not at all. Rather, I ride out far enough that I have space to react to debris, obstacles, or pot holes in the lane, and to make myself noticeable and visible, while allowing drivers to pass. I now know, thanks to the Smart Cycling course – that by riding a little too far to the right I have been inviting drivers to pass when it isn’t safe to do so.



On roads that are too narrow to allow drivers to pass at five feet or more, without crossing the centerline, it is legal, and safer, to ride farther to the left, taking the lane so that drivers can’t and won’t pass into oncoming traffic. It takes some guts, and practice, to do this, but it is the correct, and probably best, way to keep everyone safe.

That’s my inaugural contribution to the PedalPress “Did You Know?” column. Please submit your ideas for or contributions to this column to editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org for future editions of PedalPress. John Knowlton, PedalPress Editor, reserves the right to edit what’s submitted for facts and accuracy. (Remember those?)

Thanks for reading, Paul Wells, Education Chair

Am I a Sellout? - Julie Knowlton

About a year ago John brought up the idea of getting me a gravel e-bike. My initial reaction was, “No way! I’m too young for that and I’m not going to be a sellout!”

Although e-bikes are gaining in popularity, I did not feel ready to go there. I am only 50 and am still in fairly good shape. However, I am slow. In fact, I am so much slower than John that we rarely ride singles together. If we do, I am usually whipped by the end of the ride and he has barely worked up a sweat. It really wasn’t fun for either of us.

But we really like each other and want to ride together! Our initial solution for this issue was a tandem. A few years ago we purchased a beautiful Co-Motion Speedster and have thoroughly enjoyed riding it together. The challenge with a tandem is that there are some rides that are difficult to do, especially long gravel rides with lots of steep climbing. I’m sure there are many couples that do those but, frankly, they don’t sound very fun to us.



A happy looking Sellout!

Thus, the idea for a gravel e-bike. In theory, this would allow us to go on long rides together, manage major climbs, keep up a faster pace, and be fun for both of us. Last weekend, we had an opportunity to test that theory.

After having to bail on a tandem ride due to a mechanical, we borrowed a Specialized Creo from Pedal Bicycles. The Creo is a gravel-specific e-bike with power assist, meaning you have to pedal in order for the motor to work. On their website, Specialized describes the Creo as “It’s you, only faster.” I was skeptical...

When we started out, I did not have the motor on; the power was entirely me. Then I pushed the power button and WOW! I think I might have actually heard angels singing! I could easily keep up with John and, in fact, leave him in my dust! I only did that a couple of times, though, because, of course, the entire point was to ride together. The 20-mile gravel ride took 1 hour and 11 minutes. We had averaged 16.7mph, which is about 2mph faster than I can do on my own.

But how about my effort? I had the fear that the e-bike would be too easy and not give me a good workout. Fortunately, I would have data for this since I always wear a heart rate monitor and record my rides. On this one, I had burned 631 calories and my average heart rate was 161. Very comparable to a similar ride on my Specialized Ruby.

We did a second test the following day doing the Lawton Route, one of the standard Monday night club rides. Here are actual results compared to a nearly identical ride on my Ruby from a few months prior:

<u>Bike</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Average Speed</u>	<u>Calories burned</u>	<u>Average HR</u>
Creo	1:47	16.6mph	779	149
Ruby	1:59	14.5mph	1091	159

Over two miles per hour and 12 minutes faster! Granted, the calorie burn was less on the Creo but so was my average heart rate; I had not pushed myself as hard as I could have. But the data was there: I had burned a significant number of calories and gotten a great workout on both rides. Incredible! It really *was* me, only faster!

So, am I a sellout? No way. How can staying healthy while having a blast with your best friend be selling out?

Editor's Letter: Lost and Found Newly Appreciated — John Knowlton

Twenty-Twenty has been quite a year! So momentous that it deserves to be spelled out. It occurs to me that most people I know are experiencing varying degrees of loss. And the losses continue to accrue, like a Detroit Tigers season of recent years. While I haven't had a loved one pass or even get sick from COVID, we all miss the old normal. Here are some of the cycling-specific losses I have noticed:



Group rides. I am not a particularly fast rider, but I am much faster when I am one of a dozen people trading pulls at the pointy end of the group. Physically, group rides are exhilarating. I get my best workouts on Monday night: Pushing through the early rollers on R Avenue, grinding up the hill on Nursery Street, and riding on the limit for five miles coming back into Kalamazoo County, then another five north along 8th Street up to the final sprint as we approach Texas Corners. Socially, group rides are connecting. I often lead the 18 mph Monday Night Lawton ride and we tend to be a single file down 8th Street. Once we turn west onto R Avenue I like to float back along the line, saying hello to everyone, introducing myself to new riders, and trying to remember everyone's name. This is also where I get my headcount to ensure that everyone is with the group at the stop signs. I miss both the physical and social elements of group rides.

Events in general. From spring to fall Julie and I often have about one cycling event per month. Of course, we don't know everyone, or even a small fraction of the people at big events, but we dig the energy of a crowd. There's nothing like a bunch of people who all share a common enthusiasm. Events, whether races or tours, serve as celebrations of our "thing." Okinawans talk about the importance of *Ikigai* – one's reason for being. While cycling isn't the only reason we exist, it is an important part of our lives and events remind us that we have fellow travelers on this path.

Far flung travel for cycling. I have written in this space about my plans in July of this year to ride in the Italian Dolomites. That was to have been preceded by events in Michigan, Indiana, and the Carolinas. Destination travel on the calendar is proleptic: it reaches into the present from the future and pulls us along. As you know, those trips didn't happen and there isn't much prolepsis in my cycling life right now!

So the losses are real, though mild in consequence compared to more than 200,000 Americans who have succumbed to Covid. But there are a number of positive surprises as well. Most of these aren't new, but rather newly appreciated. Perhaps this list will help you reappraise some things in your life, too.

Long solo rides. This whole year has turned into a protracted "base mileage" season. I will probably end the year with more than 4,000 miles ridden, which is my biggest year ever. But there have been no races, no physical breakthroughs, and no speed records. Instead I have taken a number of long, solo bike rides, often unsupported. I really like rid-

Lost and Found (cont.)

ing rural gravel roads and can ride 60 miles without passing a store or gas station. My pattern is not to listen to music or podcasts on these rides. I have the wind and my thoughts and an opportunity to listen for what God might be saying. Paul of Tarsus said that the invisible qualities of the divine can be clearly seen in the creation. Four or five hours alone on country roads give me space and place to encounter grace.

Deeper appreciation of familiar routes. We live in Texas Corners and sometimes I feel that 8th Street is a section I have to get through in order to get somewhere else. Slowly I am learning to savor the familiar. To notice how the water level changes in the marsh around Harrison Lake. To observe how many frogs commit accidental self-murder in front of cars as they seek to learn firsthand if the pond is really greener on the other side of the road. And to wonder at the changing composition of TU's dirt/gravel/mud/soybean/dust/corn top layer.



Connection to family. This is among the most important re-discoveries. We still like each other! With baseball cancelled, group rides cancelled, in-person church cancelled, etc. we have had a lot of time together as family. And Julie and I have been on bikes together perhaps more than usual. As you can tell from her "Sellout" column in this issue, she has found it in her heart to not just tolerate, but actually enjoy her time with me. That is not a foregone conclusion and I find myself reassured and relieved. Among its many other benefits, cycling also helps our marriage remain vibrant.

This column concludes with a question for you: What have you rediscovered or confirmed or found new appreciation for in your life this strange year?

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Dropped like an ugly porcupine

Julie tested an electric assist gravel bike. (See her column "Am I A Sellout?") We rode singles together and she kicked my butt! It was great fun to draft off my wife at 27 mph for a very short stretch. She could keep the pace, but my mortality asserted itself pretty quickly. However, it was the closest thing to a group ride that I experienced this year and I really look forward to following her around next spring. –Ed.

