

PRESIDENT'S LETTER — DOUG KIRK

2020 was a tough year for everyone. It was also a tough year for KBC. No club rides, no Bike Camp, no Kaltour, no Anniversary Party. We all hope 2021 will be much, much better, as we all gain a better understanding of what our personal social distancing comfort level is and as we get vaccinated. Still, it looks like progressing to normalcy will be an incremental and months-long process.

KBC also suffered a significant loss of membership this year. Club membership is down over a third from its peak in the months following the 2016 tragedy on N. Westnedge Ave. that broke so many hearts and lives. This is hardly surprising when we had so little to offer our members once the virus began taking its toll.

It is also sad and confusing to me that membership has dropped off at the same time that bicycle sales are so high that bike shops are having great difficulty obtaining the bikes their customers want to buy.

But the fact remains that, as we contemplate our world reopening when spring approaches, KBC membership has so much to offer. Ride insurance, camaraderie, group rides and tours for sure, but do you realize that KBC is the primary voice communicating with local governments and transportation departments working to improve bicycling infrastructure in the area?

Do you realize that KBC is the primary voice informing the public about the importance of giving cyclists 5 feet when passing? The fact that the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage as well as Kalamazoo, Comstock and Oshtemo Townships have 5-foot passing ordinances is directly due to the efforts of KBC members?

The bigger we are, the more clout we have. The fact that you are reading this newsletter means you probably are a current member. But what about your friends, your family members and your neighbors? I'm asking you...and you... yes YOU do to reach out to cyclists you know in the area and encourage them to join us. Spring isn't all that far away!

president@kalamazooBicycleClub.org



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@kalamazooBicycleClub.org

KBC Information

Finance report, Pam Sotherland

DONATIONS: Thank you to all those who made financial contributions to the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club during 2020:

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo

Debra & Jim Hemenway

Doug & Kathy Kirk

Michael Beauchamp Cohen

Molly Cartwright

Paul Selden

Patrons of the following local bike shops:

Pedal South

Pedal Downtown

ZooCity

DONATIONS to AMBUCS:

Barb & John Hart

Mashall Beachler

Pam & Paul Sotherland

Thom Brennan

There was no meeting in January 2021.

The next KBC meeting will be Tuesday, February 9 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Meeting ID: 893 5019 6561; Passcode: 906108

KBC MONTHLY FINANCES as of 01/11/2021

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal)

ACCOUNTS: \$15,724

Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$940

Monthly EXPENSES: **\$213**

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$16,541

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$6,762

Discretionary Expenses: \$500

Education Fund: \$6,180

Jeremy Smith Fund: \$82

TOTAL ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$1,000

KRVT Pledge: **\$1,000**

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6187

KBC Statistics (Thanks to Rick Whaley for managing these details!)

Please check for your name here!

Total Memberships: 257

Total Individuals: 469

New or Renewed Members: Joyce Beebe & Mike Cutler; Jake Biernacki; Anne Gentz; Dan Martz; Dave Mitchell; Richard Morse; Gabe Rice

February Expiring Members: Gary Hammock; Shari & Tom Labrenz; Rebecca Martinez; Sandra Rapp; Kathy Roschek; Dennis Sinke; Lisa Vormwald; Barabara Williams

DID YOU KNOW? — PAUL WELLS

It's a new year with the same old pandemic, for a while yet. The gym is closed, the swimming pool is restricted, there are no trainer classes at Pedal, so what do we do in the dead of winter? To compound my exercise issues, we haven't had decent snow to cross country ski. Actually, I can't or don't exercise on Zwift or indoor at all. I just have to be outside. I've learned that a big part of being active for me is feeling the weather, the sun, wind, sounds, and the activity of outside. So I've been on the bike on the road and trail frequently, at least for January.

I have learned how to be "comfortable" riding in the cold. I don't ride in the snow, ice, or rain, unless I get caught out in it. But I can be happy riding in the cold, down to about freezing. Below that, it is a bit harder to keep my feet warm enough to be "comfortable." I did do a ride with my son and daughter at Ft. Custer at 19F. At the slower speeds of mountain biking the wind chill is not as big of an issue as with road riding.

Over many years I have accumulated the clothing necessary to survive cold rides. If you start from scratch you will spend a substantial sum at Pedal, Zoo City, or Kazoo Swift. But I'd bet you could get by using stuff you already have, for some items, if you just layer it up to the point you are "comfortable." Here's my list of cold weather clothing you should or could have in your arsenal to extend your riding year round, and the alternate piece that you probably already have, with some notable exceptions:

Shoe covers, or "booties." You need these if you want to use your cleated shoes. Keeping feet warm enough is the biggest challenge of cold weather riding. You can also wear your warm boots with flat pedals. Shoe covers come in various levels of warmth. Get the warmest ones if you want to ride in the cold.

Winter shoes. These are great, if you've got the dough. But you can accomplish the same for less with shoe covers, thin wool socks, and plastic bags over the toes of your shoes, under your shoe covers. The best plastic bags come to your door with your shoppers guide. Just cut off the excess length, leaving about 6-8" to cover the front of your shoes. Then put your shoe covers over the top. You clip right into your pedals through the thin plastic bag. The bag creates a wind/cold seal to add about 10 degrees of warmth to your shoe covers. You can rotate the plastic bags for subsequent rides and get about four uses out of them.

Gloves or mittens. I don't have problems with cold hands, so my ski gloves, with thin liners if it's below 40F work fine. At 30F I would use mittens with the liners inside. There are more drastic options to keep hands warm at the bike shops. Use what you have to see if you need more warmth.

Winter cycling jacket. These are expensive, as in \$200 and up. I have had one for years that makes me really happy on cold rides. It's pretty heavy duty. It's too warm if it gets above 50F. When it's below 35 I add my wind vest over the top. But

DID YOU KNOW? — CONT.

you probably have a cycling wind jacket, or a thin nylon wind breaker that you can layer under and be just fine. The benefit of the winter cycling jacket is that it will ventilate better, keeping you dryer. Under the jacket I wear a moisture-wicking base layer, then a long sleeve jersey, and another long sleeve layer if it's really cold. So if we count those up, that's five layers for really cold days.

Over my bike shorts I wear wind-front-panel tights. These can get expensive too, well over \$100, but also make cold weather riding tolerable. You can spend even more and get panel front bib tights with the pad built right in, but I've never had those as they seemed redundant when I can use my regular bike shorts and add tights for less money.

To keep my noggin warm (enough) I have bike specific head covers, with wind blocking panels on the front part. These cover your ears too. My helmet fits over the top, if I loosen the adjustment knob a bit. I have three versions of these- one with no wind proof panel on the front (50F), one with panels (40F), and one with more fuzzies on the inside, that is too warm above about 30F!)

That's it! After all my years of practice putting all this on it still takes me 15 minutes to get ready! But that's just the way it is. I'm "comfortable" for a couple hours if it's above freezing, or good for an hour if it's a bit below that. The hot shower afterward is wonderful!

So don't delay, get out there and start bragging about all the miles you've done this winter.

Paul Wells is Chair of the Education Committee

Call for Your 2020 Bike Mileage — Paul Selden

How many miles did you ride in 2020?

I know a lot of you keep track of the miles you ride. This is an early 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.

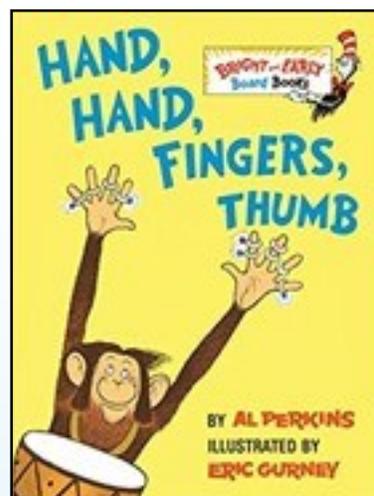
To make March's Pedal Press, reports submitted on or by February 20 will be printed. After that, I'll close the request for our "2020 KBC Member's Mileage Almanac."

We had 37 members report their mileage in 2019. As of January 21, almost half of you reported in. THANK YOU to everyone who has shared your mileage so far!

(Results will be reported alphabetically—Ed.)

Editor's Letter: Mittens or Metaphor?

Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb. Dum Ditty Dum Ditty Dum Dum Dum. One of my favorite books of all time! Besides being a great rhyme, this classic tome illumines a key issue for winter cyclists: keeping phalanges from phreezing. Last month in this space I made a case for riding harder to convince your core to release some warm blood to the extremities. Recently I came across a neat product that helps, too. These are the Hestra Split Mitts. They are windproof, water resistant shells. Intended to go over your other gloves, they add 10 degrees or so to your comfort range. And they pack up quite small to fit easily in a jacket or jersey pocket.



One advantage of mittens (four-finger or two-finger lobster claws) is that your digits can use the buddy system. Qoheleth made the general point quite poetically: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. . .Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?” Yes, mittens seem warmer than gloves. You give up some dexterity, but gain the warmth of community.



And here comes the metaphor: As a community of cyclists, we do better when we are in common space together. As more fingers make the hand warmer, more cyclists interacting make for a better world. Its no secret that 2020 brought on a bike boom. Pandemic life caused people to want to get out of their homes and do something safe outdoors. Many of them resuscitated old bikes or bought new. Shops were sold out of tubes, tires, clothing, and even bikes. Repair departments had loooooong turn around times getting old rigs back on the road or trail. There are thousands or millions of new and renewed cyclists.

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club has an opportunity and perhaps even an obligation regarding these riders. Our mission reads in part, “The purpose of the Club shall be to promote bicycling. . .and all forms of recreational bicycling activities. . .to provide an opportunity for members to socialize with others who have an interest in bicycling. . .” The Club has several traditional ways to engage and help new and renewed cyclists: Bike camp is a key tool to reach adults who want to learn or sharpen their bike riding skills. In addition, several of our group rides have a route and

Mittens or Metaphor, cont.

speed option for newer riders. This is especially true on Monday night rides leaving from Texas Drive Park, the Pedal Women's ride on Tuesday evenings, and the Friday morning women's ride. COVID stopped all that in 2020, but we are hopeful that vaccinations and other suppression approaches will be successful across the country. Additionally, updated distancing practices and procedures around the beginning and end of rides may soon allow safe cycling.

If we assess that it is safe to gather for group rides, the Education Committee is planning to bring bike rides to neighborhoods on 5 Thursday evenings this summer. The official name is Ride 'Round the Town with Kalamazoo Bicycle Club. We will meet at churches, parks, or community centers and offer some basic education and a bike safety check. Then, Club members will lead short rides, based on the skill and stamina of the neighbors who join us. We can make connections with other cyclists, promote bike camp, and invite people out to group rides. Watch the Pedal Press for more info! Community bike rides are like the mittens: we are seeking to make life better by expanding the number and quality of cycling interactions.

John Knowlton, editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

About KBC

Recognizing that Southwestern Michigan offers a rare combination of goody 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 continue 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.