

PRESIDENT'S LETTER – DOUG KIRK

A Tale of two Rides

Last Wednesday I rode out to the Wednesday Night Ride (a/k/a the WNR) with my buddy Ed. He and I have been riding out to the WNR for roughly 30 years. It was really, really hot and sticky, so the group was smaller than usual. Only six other people showed up, about a quarter of the usual number.

But it was 8 hard-core riders; people who have been doing the WNR for a long time, who love to ride, and know each other really well. Eight people who have ridden hundreds of miles—and in many cases thousand of miles together. So, lots of miles sharing the four “H”s of bicycling—heat, hills, headwind and humidity.

Eight people who understand how a double paceline works, and who pay attention to everything that’s going on around them. Eight people looking out for one another, totally focused on their riding. Eight people who come to the WNR looking to ride swiftly and safely, all challenging themselves to ride harder than any of us would alone. I suspect most of us rode that ride as hard as we could. We averaged 21 mph, about all this aging body can hope for anymore on that 33-mile route.

I’m sure we all went home seriously dehydrated, salt-depleted, hungry and most of all happy. And I’m certain we all slept really, really soundly. A good-sized hunk of my focus in life is taking care of myself in order to be able to keep riding this way.

This morning I rode a recovery ride—15 miles in an hour and a half—really slow, all alone, barely pushing on the pedals. I sat up straight, looked around, thought about things that have been on my mind lately, greeted everybody I saw, stopped and moved some sticks off the shoulder, stopped to talk to a guy walking his dog, and found a perfectly good screwdriver lying in the road.

It was easily 85 degrees but I went so slow I hardly perspired. (I say “perspire” because grandmother claimed that women merely glow, men just perspire and only horses sweat.)

I was alone with my own thoughts on that ride. I noticed a few trees starting to change. That chicory (little blue wildflowers) seems to grow better at the side of the road than anywhere else. That I’ve never seen the corn so tall or the grape vines so lush. And that summer goes by faster every year.

Next time you go out for a ride, count your blessings. Take a moment to reflect on how lucky you are to be able to ride your bike—fast, slow, alone, in groups, on trails, on gravel roads, wherever. To reflect on how much you love to ride your bike.

Email: president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org



HIGHLIGHTS

President’s letter	1
Cornucopia.....	3
Education Report	4
Fall Bike Celebration.....	5
Insurance on E-bikes.....	6
I Still Hate Horses.....	7-8

Please send photos of your rides to:

editor@kalamazooBicycleClub.org

There was no KBC meeting in August

The next KBC meeting will be Tuesday, September 14 at 7:00 p.m. at Shakespeare's Pub, 241 E Kalamazoo Ave. Up the steps, to the back and left.

Finance report as of 08/09/21, Pam Sotherland

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) ACCOUNTS: \$17,115

Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$470

Monthly EXPENSES: **\$1,275**

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$16,310

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$5,353

Discretionary Expenses: **\$500**

Education Fund: **\$3,808**

ROR21: **\$1,045**

AVAILABLE Balance for Remaining Budgeted Expenses: \$10,956

Current Cash minus Designated Funds minus Encumbered Expenses

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,189

KBC History and Mission (found on our excellent website, kalamazooBicycleClub.org)

Established in 1971, the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club (KBC) is an organization devoted to addressing the needs of bicycle-riding enthusiasts in the Kalamazoo area by offering a variety of rides throughout the bike season, engaging in community bicycling advocacy, and educating both its members and the general public about bike safety.

From KBC's Constitution: 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.

From the editor: You may have noticed that the club was founded in 1971 — that's 50 years ago. How might we acknowledge or celebrate a half-century of service to the cycling community in Kalamazoo? A half-century ride? Surely you have some good ideas! Please send them to editor@KalamazooBicycleClub.org.

The Road is a Cornucopia, by Zolton Cohen

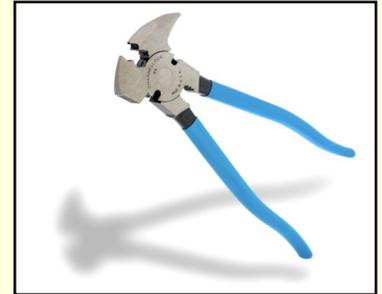
The road, you'll hear from many who use it for cycling and driving, can teach you many things. It is an epiphany, a metaphor, a eulogy, a destination all in itself.

It is also a cornucopia; a giver of tangible things. Tangible, useful things.

I'm talking tools.

Over the years I've spent in the saddle I have run across some truly remarkable pieces of manmade road debris. Nuts, bolts, washers, springs, shocks, mufflers. But the most memorable are the tools that have fallen out of people's pockets, cars, vans and trucks and onto the asphalt. I have picked them up, taken them home and used them. Thanks, road!

Among my collection is a pair of identical, blue-handled official Channellock straight jaw pliers. I found them about a week apart along the same stretch of road. I like to think a tradesperson lost one pair, went to a store and bought another, and then lost that pair as well. Maybe he or she was driving a pickup like the ones I used to own, with a corroded steel bed turned into a lace doily of rust that let tools, sawdust and beer cans tinkle and trickle out onto the road racing below.



I also gleaned a pair of heavy-duty hog-wire fence cutting pliers, something I never would have purchased for myself, but I'm glad I have them and have put them to use several times. Need any hog-wire fence cut? Let me know. I've got the pliers for that.

My collection of found socket wrenches is not quite as extensive as one a good friend likes to brag about. He claims he has a complete set, amassed over the years, from 1/4 inch all the way up a full inch. We're talking regular American stuff. Don't get him started on the metric ones.

And speaking of metrics, probably the crown jewel in my road-found tool collection is a pristine, professional 10mm Snap-On box end wrench, shiny as the day it was lovingly crafted and polished. It looks to have been brought to that state by methodologies not dissimilar to those used to bring to life a gorgeous handmade Italian bicycle.

Long ago I gave up stopping to pick up bungee cords. The metal ends are usually squashed by tires, the bungee part is frayed, or the hooks bear hanging flaps of flesh from some poor schmuck's forehead when it snapped back on him while he was lashing a load of rough sawn poplar lumber to the top of his Toyota Corolla. They're just not worth it, either as a securing device for anything motorized, or to stop on the bike to retrieve.

With this history, enthusiasm, acuity, and awareness of the road's riches, one might be surprised to learn that I had never found a hammer lying on a gravel shoulder - that is, until earlier this summer, when I ran across one on G Avenue, along the Wednesday night KBC bike riding route.

It wasn't an entire hammer, just the head. And it is a miserable piece of crudely made foreign junk, likely from a primitive, open-air smelter in some impoverished country. To put it alongside my Snap-on wrench? Lamborghini, meet Yugo.

My first thought, one that I sent in a group text to several grizzled bike veterans, along with a photo, was that it had come off the Wednesday night Hammerheads group. I speculated that this handle-less tool was from a newcomer who couldn't handle - couldn't handle - the pace.

The response from my buddies was swift. Dave stated the obvious, "Road prize!" Paul weighed in with a puzzling, Zen-like post, "Good. Otherwise, you'd have to claw your way out of it." I'm still working that one out.

Doug inched the bar higher with, "Zolton, I think you nailed the only explanation. I had to put the hammer down! I didn't see a handle. Maybe the guy who lost it got shafted."

But Vinnie provided the icing: "The Big Dog dropped the hammer. It happens."

What have you found out there on the road?

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

[Please check for your name here!](#)

Total Memberships: 301 — Total Individuals: 519

New or Renewed Members: Dane Austin & Family; Tom Cross; Molly Lacy; Autumn Monaweck; Sandra Rapp; Kathy Rubino & Dave Dunlap; Jason Sparks; Mike & Sharon VanderMeulen; Matthew VanMiddlesworth
September Expiring Members: Mark Allen & Family; Cathy Cheron; Mike Hughes; Kerri Langdon-Fischer; Sara Miller; Adam Rafels & Family; Gerald Stewart; Molly Yoshikawa

Education Committee News

KBC member and Education Committee member Bill Surna organized our KBC 'Round the Town community ride on Thursday August 12th, starting at Schrier Park in Portage. We had a small group of six, with two women, joining us who were new to KBC rides. KBC members Bill Surna, Renee Mitchell, Clark Bennett, and myself rode. Bill put together a nice route through Eliason Nature Preserve, which has a beautiful winding, paved trail through deep, cool shady woods. We completed the loop through Portage neighborhoods, for a total of eight miles, at a relaxed, "recreational" pace.



Mark your calendars for Thursday, September 9, at 6:00 for KBC's 'Round the Town ride starting at Lewis Park in Lawton, MI, organized and led by Renee Mitchell. It would be great to see lots of KBCers out there supporting more relaxed, shorter, casual rides for folks new to road riding and KBC.

I have ordered 250 more of our famous "Give Them Five to Keep Them Alive" five foot passing yard signs. We have more distribution locations, and we will be restocking them, and adding more locations when we receive them. I thought that this program would have a one year life, but we are going on six years and the message still just as vital now. We must continue to remind folks that we are legitimate, legal, responsible road users. Thanks to our local bike shops, Pedal North and South, Zoo City, and Kazoo Swift, where we have collected hundreds of dollars in donations to keep us in the sign business. We also want to thank The Chain Gang for the Chain Gang Memorial Fund donation of \$5000 along with the local donations, that we are using to keep the sign program going.

KBC now has four LCIs! An LCI (League Certified Instructor) is a cyclist trained as a road cycling educator by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB.) Renee Mitchell has been the only local LCI for several years, and has contributed her knowledge and skills for many years at KBC's Bike Camp, and LAB's Smart Cycling class. Now we have three new LCIs, Jennifer Johnson, Bill Surna, and me (Paul Wells). Also trained as new LCIs were Lauren Lott of the City of Portage Parks, and Hayden Guild from Bicycle Friendly Kalamazoo. We spent the weekend of August 13, 14, and 15, a total of 15 hours, learning the details of how to teach road cycling law, skills, and safest practices on the road. We had the benefit of four seasoned LCI trainers for the five LCI candidates, so nearly a one to one ratio. KBC now also has more credibility within the greater Kalamazoo area with more credentialed cycling experts. Thanks to The Chain Gang Memorial Fund for funding the scholarships that allowed us to participate in the training.

Paul Wells, KBC Education Chair

Fall Bike Celebration Weekend Coming Sept. 17-19

Multi-Charity Bikeathon -- Cycling Tour -- Live Concert -- \$1750 Art Awards -- & More
By Paul Selden

This year the third annual Fall Bike Celebration Weekend offers bicycling, an outdoor live concert, results of its Public Bike Art Competition, plus fascinating live and online presentations, all on the third weekend in September from September 17-19, with the help of many KBC members. The weekend also highlights the many attractions in and around the charming village of Vicksburg, MI and southwest Michigan. For full details, see www.fallbikecelebration.org.

On Friday Sept. 17, the public is encouraged to ride their bicycles to two expertly led disc golf clinics, the Vicksburg Historic Village and the Farmers Market. That afternoon a webinar will present lessons learned about “Increasing Safe Passing of Bicyclists” gained through “how-to” research conducted in Michigan and Tennessee. Given the support KBC has given the safe passing movement, many members may want to attend this webinar, so I’m supplying a link to the description and sign up form [HERE](#).

On the morning of Saturday Sept 18, the [Ride For A Reason: Multi-Charity Bikeathon](#) will give supporters of 16 charities a chance to ride and walk to raise funds for a variety of worthy programs important to southwest Michigan. This very special event aims at providing an outdoor social fundraising platform to help make up for donations lost during the pandemic, starting and ending at the wonderful timber-framed Vicksburg Pavilion. On Saturday afternoon live and virtual presentations will uncover the mysteries of the Vicksburg Quilt Trail paintings and highlight progress on the huge Mill at Vicksburg entertainment and hotel complex. Saturday evening promises great news for live music lovers. An open-air [Live Benefit Concert](#) performed by the popular rock, blues, country, folk and bluegrass AMP band will take place under the big roof of the Vicksburg Pavilion, with gates opening at 6:15pm. Results of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo’s [Public Bike Art Competition](#) with \$1,750 in cash awards will be announced at the concert.

On Sunday Sept. 18, the event’s namesake [Fall Bike Celebration Bike Tour](#) will offer routes with views of Vicksburg Quilt Trail paintings. Cyclists will ride to scenic destinations such as Scotts Mill Park, Climax, over the longest covered bridge in Michigan and as far as Shipshewana and back. The Bike Tour starts and ends at the lovingly restored Vicksburg Historic Village.

Bill Adams, former Vicksburg Village President and honorary event Co-Chair observes, “Vicksburg welcomes bicyclists and everyone to enjoy the Fall Bike Celebration. We are grateful for the support of the Vicksburg Foundation, generous sponsors, and wonderful in-kind supporters who make this fantastic fall bicycle festival possible.”

The weekend long event was organized by civic leaders, local charities and bike-related organizations including KBC members and promises to pack the weekend with dozens of reasons to ride, showcase local amenities, provide ways to support bicycling, emphasize the need for motorist and bicyclist safety as the hours of darkness increase and to have fun. Some activities are free, some require waivers and some may require children to be accompanied by an adult. KBC is donating 5 Foot Safe Passing yard signs to event participants and volunteers. The latest updates to the weekend’s schedule can be found at www.fallbikecelebration.org/schedule/.

“This year we will employ safety and public health measures that worked last year -- and now, vaccines are working in our favor,” stated KBC Member/Bike Friendly Kalamazoo’s President Paul Selden. “We are welcoming everyone to enjoy the Fall Bike Celebration at any level -- bicycling or virtual.”



E-BIKES AND KBC INSURANCE

KBC's insurance provider has clarified our coverage for e-bike riders which reads in part:

“For the purposes of this communication, the definition of electric bicycle is consistent with the CPSC [definition](#) and the League's [position](#) on electric bicycles:

Class 1 electric bicycle shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

Class 2 electric bicycle shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour.

Class 3 electric bicycle shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.

Based on the language from the insurance policy, losses arising from the use of a Class 2 electric bicycle would not be covered under the League's club insurance program. Again, this is consistent with prior year's coverage and our understanding of industry standards. Given that it could be difficult for a Club to determine which class of an electric bicycle is being used during club activities, clubs may consider notifying club members and club activity participants that Class 2 electric bicycles are not permitted.”

Pedal Press editor has seen several e-bikes at KBC rides, all of which were Class 1 or Class 3 bikes. It appears that riders on these bikes would be covered by the insurance, provided all other requirements were met.

KBC Group Ride Start Times Change in September & October

In the month of September, Monday and Wednesday night rides roll out at 5:45.

Once the calendar flips over to October, start time is 5:30.

If you ride in November, you're a tough guy or gal! No club rides are regularly organized in the winter months.

Editorials and Editor's Letters

There are two types of content written by editors on an editorial page. The first is the formal editorial. An editorial is drafted by a committee and represents the organization's or publication's opinion on a topic. These may be best known in the form of political endorsements. Editorials are often written about topics or current events as well. For example, editorials have been drafted about climate change, immigration policy, recreational marijuana and virtually every other issue you can imagine. Editorials are unsigned because they represent the publication's position, not the opinion of an individual person. In the years I have been reading and editing Pedal Press, the KBC has not published an editorial.

A Letter from the Editor or simply an Editor's Letter is different. Editor's letters do not represent the position of the publication or its sponsoring organization. They are signed as they reflect the opinions of one person, the editor who writes the content. The project I have assigned myself in this space is to express how cycling integrates with the rest of my life. Integrate is a word I chose on purpose. It means to combine one thing with another so that they become a whole. It is related to integrity, in the sense of "engineers tested the bridge to confirm its integrity." A bridge without integrity may fall apart. Likewise a person whose life isn't integrated is in danger of disintegrating. My editor's letters are deeply personal and make extensive use of personal pronouns. They aren't KBC's positions, they are my reflections on a life in which family, faith, weather, love and health are all combined, with cycling, into a whole. Read them if they amuse or illuminate or encourage you. If not, feel free to skip them — you aren't missing any important KBC news. Editor, John Knowlton

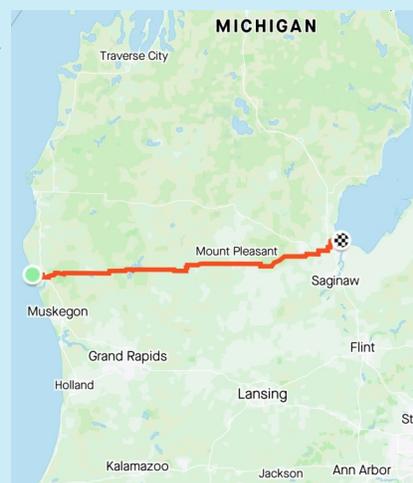
I Still Hate Horses - Editor's Letter, John Knowlton

Not the creatures themselves, they are lovely to look at. And with their slender legs and large bodies perched five feet off the ground they seem more likely to tip over than to run gracefully across uneven ground. No, I just don't like to ride them. And they probably aren't really excited about being sat upon, having a bit placed between their teeth and prodded to haul me around the countryside either. I like to consider this a mutual feeling.

Even so. We took an epic family RV trip this summer and each person was asked what they would really like to do. Devon wanted to stop at as many NFL stadiums as possible. We saw the Seahawks' Lumen field in Seattle, Levi Stadium where the 49ers play, the Raider's new home in Las Vegas and the Chiefs' turf in Kansas City. Julie's goal was to sport climb at Smith Rock in Oregon, where the sport was invented (maybe — there seem to be competing contemporaneous claims). I wanted to visit Washington State wine country. Lexi had two picks: visit a water park and ride horses. The water park was in South Dakota on a blazing hot day and everyone was happy. We rode horses in Bryce Canyon, Utah.

As a member of the family, I dutifully got on my horse and allowed myself to be led around for 90 minutes. The canyon is stunning, and I recommend visiting, on foot. In fact, we had spent the previous afternoon hiking down into and back up to the rim of the canyon. Seemingly other-worldly shapes and colors were all around. It is very cool. But horses aren't so cool, to me. As a teenager I had a friend whose family kept horses. They weren't nearly as accommodating as the rental horses at the National Park. My friend's horses seemed particularly resentful of being ridden and sought every low branch they thought might allow them to scrape me off like a barnacle.

Recently Julie and I were reviewing a photo album she made of pictures from the trip. We love these album books that can be made by photo websites. There is a qualitative difference between looking at images on a screen and holding a physical book in your hands. My



mom makes two or three of these books each year and at every family gathering they get pulled out. People remember times we spent together years ago, we laugh at old hairstyles and “how young we looked back then.” They really help everyone remember and retell the family’s story. During this reminiscence of our recent epic RV trip I resumed complaining about horses. Julie might be tired of hearing it (for which I can’t really blame her). She said, “What’s the difference between riding a horse and riding a bike? You’re out in nature, moving through the world. Why do you love riding bikes and hate riding horses?”

Besides the barnacle scaping, which I have recounted several hundred times, she really does have a point. And her question worked, because I couldn’t think about her question and keep talking about how much I hate horses at the same time. So, she gained a short reprieve from my equestrian whining.



Even the fanciest of bikes don’t have their own will. They go where you point them and don’t run for the barn. And while that is a compelling contrast to horses, it doesn’t explain why I love riding a bike.

Stones go where you throw them, but I don’t spend hours each week throwing stones. It turns out that one of the things I really like about bicycles is right there in the name: “cycle.” There is something magic about doing the same motion over and over, and yet it is different every time.

I rode ODRAM a few weeks ago. This is 147 miles from Lake Michigan to Lake Huron. The official route starts at Double J ranch in order to accommodate 300+ participants, but Julie and I camped at the original starting line. Meinert Park is a county owned facility in far northern Muskegon County, right on the lake. My ride lasted nearly 8 ½ hours. At an average 85 cadence (pedal strokes per minute) I turned the cranks about 43,000 times that day. This calculation makes me wonder how many rotations a bottom bracket can make before replacement. At 300 hours per year my BB will experience about 1.5 million rotations between New Year and year end. That’s a lot of turning! And yet every single one of those pedal strokes is in a (slightly) different location. And the weather is different. And the grade is different. And my mood is different and the lighting is different. And everything is different, and every pedal stroke is essentially the same.

I use 172.5 mm cranks on most of my bikes. That is the radius of the circle that my feet carve. Its circumference is just over a meter. So the incredible mechanical advantage of gears, chain and wheels means that my feet made circles whose total circumference was about 29 miles, while the bike and my body moved 147 miles. That’s about a 5:1 mechanical advantage. My feet made the same motion over and over again, while my body moved through ever changing, differing space and forward in time.

The cycle is everywhere in nature. Sow, grow, harvest, rest. Winter, spring, summer, fall. Childhood, adulthood, reproduction, death. Evaporation, transpiration, condensation, precipitation. Anabolism, catabolism, metabolism. It is even in movie plots: introduction, rise, climax, fall. And in songs: verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, chorus.

Why do I love bikes and not horses? I think it is the tension of doing the same thing over and over in different places spaces and times. The pedaling gives me safety, security, and comfort in a world of change, novelty and adventure. The stability of the cycle in the messiness of life.

This piece was originally published on my blog “Thinking for Success” at johnknowlton.substack.com. Every Wednesday I sent out mental models for being more productive, efficient, and better relationships. Weekends are for cycling, travel, song lyrics and other things that fall out of my brain.

E-mail: editor@kalamazobicycleclub.org.