

**PRESIDENT’S LETTER — JOHN KNOWLTON**

**Group Riding Reminders: safe and fun for everyone**

Riding a bike is awesome! There is no other thrill like swooping through a turn on two wheels, under your own power. Robin Williams said that riding a bike is the closest thing we get to flying. And then riding in a group is all of that, plus camaraderie, greater speed, longer distance and the dynamics of being with other people on the same journey. Group rides are one of the principal benefits and functions of Kalamazoo Bicycle Club.

We had a couple of strange years with no official rides in 2020 after mid-March. And then in 2021 people weren’t sure about being in groups, even outside. Plus, the pandemic brought out many new or renewed riders. The effect of all this is that some of our group riding skills have grown a bit rusty. So, here are a few reminders for all of us to ensure that our group rides are safe and fun. And it is important to recognize that fun and safe are the responsibility of the group. Everyone on a group ride participates in making the ride safe. We have a social contract to follow the guidelines ourselves, and gently remind our friends who forget them.

**Finding your group:** KBC rides up to 18 mph are no-drop. That means we count how many people are on each ride and wait at stop signs to ensure everyone is with the group. We also need to help people with a mechanical issue or a flat. If they need to get a ride or turn around, we can use the buddy system and never leave a biker behind. Best practice is to assign a sweeper to stay in the rear of the group and call “All on” when regrouping. Sweepers can also watch the riders in front of them and have gentle conversations if people need safety reminders. Selecting a group to ride with also means understanding that on a 16 mph ride you might go 8 mph up a hill, 20 mph on a flat stretch and 24 mph downhill. The speeds we announce are the approximate average pace of the entire ride. If 16 is your top speed, consider a 14 mph (average pace) ride. It isn’t fair to ask a faster group to wait minutes for you at every stop sign. If the ride is advertised at 19 mph or faster, the group is not expected to wait and regroup.



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**Please send stories and photos of your rides to:**

editor@kalamazooBicycle  
 Club.org

**Making it safe for bicyclists and motorists:** At KBC rides we call out turns, slowing, standing, car up and car back. We ride in a straight line. No more than two abreast, an arm's length apart, as far right as safe, and we don't cross the center line. When a faster group passes a slower group, the front rider of the fast group calls out to the slower group. **Both** groups form a single file line so that there are no more than 2 abreast while passing. This allows cars to drive safely and ensures that both group of cyclists know that they are overtaking or being overtaken by another group. Safe and fun for all!

There isn't too much to remember here. Pick the right group, and ride safely! I'll see you at the group ride starts!

## KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be **Tuesday, 09 August at 7:00 p.m. at Shakespeare's Pub, 241 E Kalamazoo Ave. Up the steps, to the back and left.**

### Kalamazoo Bicycle Club

July 12, 2022

### Shakespeare's Pub

#### ATTENDANCE

|               |                 |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| John Knowlton | Paul Guimond    | Pam Sotherland  |
| Mike Krischer | Thom Brennan    | Marc Irwin      |
| Paul Rehkopf  | Doug Kirk       | Clark Bennett   |
| Gordy Vader   | Jillian Howland | Kathy Kirk      |
| John Idema    | Mike Boersma    | Paul Sotherland |
| Teri Olbrot   |                 |                 |

Paul Sotherland introduced special guest speaker Ryan Minkus of the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County, who is here to talk about the RCKC's plan for non-motorized traffic infrastructure. A few highlights of his informative presentation include:

The RCKC partners with local stakeholders and municipalities to identify community needs and regularly participates in regional planning discussions.

Recent accomplishments of the RCKC include widening lanes and paving shoulders; investment of over \$539,380 in non-motorized facilities, more than twice the amount required by law; creating non-motorized facilities agreements with Kalamazoo Township, Oshtemo and Texas Townships, and the KRVT.

The Road Commission website is a great source of information on non-motorized transportation, including a map of non-motorized routes.

Ryan took questions after his presentation and we learned that (1) there are no rumble strips planned for any of the upcoming improvements to bicycle routes; (2) regarding water meter covers in the road that become detached and leave a hole in the pavement: No, they cannot be moved but they are beginning to surround the caps with concrete to help keep them in place. (3) The RCKC takes care of township roads, not city or village roads, which are the responsibility of MDOT.

Here is a link to the non-motorized transportation section of their website for more information: [https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/non\\_motorized.php](https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/non_motorized.php)

**President:** John Knowlton

John led an abbreviated business meeting due to limited time. John Knowlton and Teri Olbrot contacted a total of approximately twenty candidates for the upcoming primary election about their positions on infrastructure for bicyclists, and three have responded. Our August meeting will include a panel of members who will share tips and inspiration on using our bicycles for commuting. The EC has been asked to create a statement that articulates our values regarding road etiquette, policies for no-drop rides and other crucial safety tips.

**Fundraising:** Mike Boersma

Today is Amazon Prime Day – For those who use Amazon Prime, it's easy to sign up for Amazon Smile and indicate KBC as your preferred non-profit. Amazon will then make a small donation on your behalf.

Please email your county commissioner and ask them to prioritize nonmotorized transportation as they will be voting at the end of month on their budget. John Knowlton adds that the county has many demands on its budget and a short message to your commissioner stating, "Please consider funding nonmotorized transportation" is a quick and easy way to advocate for bicyclists.

**Kal Tour:** Mike Krischer

This year's ride had a total of 175 registered riders, better than last year but still room for improvement. The most popular rides are middle distances, with the 50-mile route being the crowd pleaser. Volunteers were great, with special thanks to the race team and AMBUCS.

**Treasurer:** Pam Sotherland

We received \$772 through the City of Portage and expenses were \$310 for Bike Camp. It paid for itself and a little more.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 8:00 PM

## AUG 2022 Membership

Total Memberships: 301

Total Individuals: 483

**New or Renewed Members:** Kathy Braginton; Jay Campbell; Peter Coles & Family; Angela & David Erdman; Steph Guyor; Dawn Hinz; Henrik Holm & Family; Charlene & Steve Howland; Donald Juzwiak; Kerri Langdon; Joy & Roy Livingston; Holly VanLuke & Tim DeLaRonde; Matthew VanMiddlesworth; David Warwick & Family

**August Expired Members:** Terry Butcher & Family; Elisha Hall; John & Teri Olbrot; Jeffrey Phillips; Sandra Rapp; Bill Smyser

Rick Whaley, Membership Director



### The 2022 Ride to South Haven

The Ride to South Haven will be held on Saturday, August 20, 2022 and will start at 8:00 A.M. from the southwest corner of the KVCC parking lot on O Avenue. We will be stopping in Lawrence on our way to and from South Haven for tasty and semi-nutritious snacks. And we'll be eating subs in South Haven. In between, we might even get some cycling done. We'll also ride by Lake Michigan in order to strut our cycling stuff in front of the beachgoers, who will, no doubt, gaze upon us with awe.

The ride will be about 102 miles and will be similar to the 2021 route that is in the KBC Ride with GPS Route Library and is labeled "South Haven Century Fall 2021." After the Ride Leader determines the final 2022 route, it will also be placed in the Route Library. The RL's pace will be in the 15-ish mph range, but other groups of faster or slower riders are also welcome to ride, as well.

Although the RL did an 85 mile ride earlier this year, this will be his first century ride of 2022. So, you might just want to see what happens after 85 miles, when the RL cycles into The Unknown.

Once again, the lake and the subs are calling. The mysterious Mile 86 is calling, too.

**Rick Whaley**, Ride to South Haven Ride Leader





## VOTE 2022

Kalamazoo Bike Club has requested from candidates running for local county and state level offices a reply to the following question:

“As a candidate for elected office serving our area, can you please share your position on the importance of non-motorized transportation infrastructure as well as any other information which may be of interest to our members?”

We have received from response from :

Dr. Sherry O'Donnell, Congressional Candidate , 5th District

Dr. Tamara Mitchell, Senate Candidate, 19th District

Sean McCann, State Senator – 20<sup>th</sup> District

Their response are below presented in the order received.

Hello John:

Thank you so much for reaching out to me regarding your cycling club. I also am an avid cyclist so this is a topic that is near and dear to my heart. I participate annually in a couple of century rides to benefit Multiple Sclerosis plus I have ridden cross-country in the Apple Cider Century based in Three Oaks, Michigan.

As I ride, one thing has become clear to me. Michigan is a beautiful state and, as a result, many cyclists are drawn-in each year; however, bike lanes to provide safety for those cyclists are glaringly lacking in the great state of Michigan. I oftentimes find myself riding along Blue Star Highway because it is the closest to my home that provides a wide enough shoulder to feel safe on my rides. Financial support for bike safety should be a priority and, I believe, that the increased cycling tourists attracted would pay for the improvements of bike lanes and additional signage that would minimize some of the cycling safety concerns. I have personally observed cycling-safety signs while riding the aforementioned Apple Cider Century in the Three Oaks area. Cyclists must be able to come to Michigan and enjoy riding in the midst of the surrounding beauty without worrying about the currently all-too-frequent injuries or fatalities related to bicycle-motor vehicle crashes.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sherry O'Donnell, Congressional Candidate , 5th District

Hello President Knowlton:

Thank you for contacting me about non-motorized transportation infrastructure.

I support non-motorized transportation and its many benefits for the community and individuals. Ideally, a well-designed infrastructure for non-motorized transportation, specifically bicycling would not only have designated lanes, but connect local communities and enhance access to shopping and businesses. In addition, such transportation contributes to a cleaner environment and provides residents an opportunity to engage in a healthy lifestyle activity.

I have read about potential changes that may be coming to the Portage community and look forward to being invited to participate in any stakeholder meetings on the issue. Further, I would like to continue conversations with you and the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club about your vision for non-motorized transportation infrastructure and the potential for improving infrastructure countywide.

Kindest regards,

Dr. Tamara Mitchell, Senate Candidate, 19th District

Bicycling is a healthy and environmentally responsible means of transportation for people of all backgrounds. We have a vibrant cycling community in Kalamazoo County, and I hear from constituents often who are interested in supporting Complete Streets initiatives to make non-motorized modes of transportation more accessible, safe, and convenient for all.

Kalamazoo also knows well that tragedy can strike when cyclists are threatened by unsafe driving and infrastructure. Most famously, five experienced cyclists were killed by an automobile driver in 2016. While many in the local cycling community carry on the memory of those individuals lost, we also strive to create change to make cycling conditions safer.

I was proud to participate in Kalamazoo Bike Week 2021, where I discussed some recent legislation at the state level relevant to cycling. In 2018, Michigan passed a statewide law to require 3 feet of clearance when motorists are passing cyclists. I would eventually like to see this expanded to 5 feet to match some of our local ordinances. Currently pending in the legislature are House Bills 4277-4279 to enact stricter Distracted Driving prohibitions on cell phone usage, which I hope to have the chance to support into law.

In 2021, I worked together with Sen. Ed McBroom, Kalamazoo Rep. Julie Rogers, and Rep. Bronna Kahle to introduce a bipartisan package of bills to protect Vulnerable Road Users, including cyclists. Senate Bills 580-581 and House Bills 5181-5182 would create enhanced penalties for drivers who injure or kill a vulnerable roadway user, such as cyclists, pedestrians, or wheelchair users.

Historically, Michigan law has specifically placed little to no burden on drivers who injure non-motorized users, with the victim often having to prove the event took place due to severe negligence. It should be expected that road users would face consequences when their reckless actions result in the injury or death of another person, however that is currently not the case. We need to do a better job of protecting Michigan cyclists who are exploring all our state has to offer, and this legislation aims to do just that.

Thank you for being a part of our great Kalamazoo cycling community. Please do not hesitate to contact me at my legislative office for any reason ([sensmccann@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sensmccann@senate.michigan.gov), 517-373-5100) and have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Sean McCann, State Senator – 20<sup>th</sup> District

# 2022 Cycling Events.

Not an all inclusive list of all rides in the area but certainly the major ones in driving proximity to Kalamazoo. KBC Events, in **RED**, are the only club sponsored events.



the tour de france 1920

| <u>Event</u>                | <u>Date</u>                                     | <u>Link</u>   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Time Trial</b>           | 3&17 May, 7 &21 June,<br>5&19 July, 2&16 August | <a href="#">Kalamazoo Bicycle Club - Life is better on a bike!</a>  |
| Vineyard Classic (Paw Paw)  | 11 September 2022                               |   |
| BFK's Fall Bike Celebration | 18 September 2022                               | <a href="https://fallbikecelebration.org/registration/">https://fallbikecelebration.org/registration/</a> |
| Gilmore Gravel              | 08 October 2022                                 | <a href="#">Gilmore Gravel Grand Prix</a>   |