

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER — JOHN KNOWLTON

### Focused on our Mission

KBC has a multi-part mission. I could sum it up by saying our purpose is to promote safe bicycling. Here is the full paragraph:

*The Club's mission is to promote cycling as a preferred means of combining a healthy lifestyle with transportation. We encourage and facilitate group riding, touring, racing, commuting by cycling, and other cycling activities; defend and protect rights of cyclists; foster development and maintenance of safe cycling infrastructure; educate the general public about safe bicycling and motoring practices and skills; encourage creation of cycling facilities on public lands; cooperate with public authorities in observing and upholding all traffic regulations; provide opportunities for members to socialize with others who have an interest in cycling; help everyone recognize bicycles as vehicles used for pleasure, fitness, and transportation; and cooperate with other organizations having similar goals and purposes.*

You may have noticed that we are engaging more publicly and regularly with municipal leaders who manage infrastructure. In fact, a representative from the City of Portage will attend our February meeting to talk about that city's non-motorized transportation facilities. That meeting is on Valentine's Day, so please bring your sweetheart for a lovely post-dinner discussion of bike lanes and paths!

### Group Ride Survey

Again I want to thank each of the 50 or so people who responded to our Group Ride survey in December. As a result of the feedback we have decided to start two new group rides. The first is a Monday Morning ride. We had a short organizing call and there were several great suggestions for start locations, mostly on the north and east sides of the County. Our plan is to try a few different locations at the beginning of the season and settle into the one that seems best to the group. Please watch for more detail as Daylight Savings comes near.

The second new ride will be on Saturday mornings focused on LGBTQAI + Allies. We have one committed ride leader but want to find a few more to ensure there is always someone available to lead this ride. If you are interested, please send me a note at [president@kalamazobicycleclub.org](mailto:president@kalamazobicycleclub.org).



### HIGHLIGHTS

President's letter .....	1
Meeting Minutes.....	2
Call for Miles.....	3
Street Fight Review.....	4
Culture Matters .....	6
Membership.....	6
Dirty Donut.....	7

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

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

Ride leader applications will be accepted soon. You can apply to be a group ride leader at this [link](#).

We will present a ride leader summit via zoom on **Thursday, March 2** (approximately 30 minutes). To ensure group rides remain safe and fun for everyone, all ride leaders are required to attend the live zoom or view the recording.

We are experimenting with a **new KBC meeting location** for the first couple of months in 2023. Please join us Tuesday, February 14 at the **Osthemo Community Center** from 7 to 8 p.m. The OCC is a simple white building at 6407 Parkview Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49009. At our January meeting it was perfect for thoughtful conversation. See you soon for better biking!

## KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be **Tuesday 14 (Valentines Day— bring a date)** at 7:00 p.m. at [Oshtemo Community Center \(North Room\)](#), 6407 Parkview Ave, Kalamazoo MI .

Paul Sotherland	Pam Sotherland	Paul Guimond
Jillian Howland	Michael Krischer	Bill Surna
Mark Johnson	Jenna Marie Kovach	Ray Jennings
Paul Wells	Thom Brennan	Mike Boersma
Clark Bennett	Rick Whaley	John Idema
Terry O'Connor	Scott F. Powers	Paul Selden
Gordy Vader	Charlie Grdina	Timothy Stewart
John Knowlton	Teri Olbrot	

### **President** John Knowlton

John was recently contacted by Jessica Lanave of the League of Michigan Bicyclists, who shared congratulations for the many good things that are happening with road infrastructure in our community. John noted that Kalamazoo County spends roughly 8% of its budget on non-motorized transportation when they are mandated to spend only 1%. John underscored "Kalamazoo is doing something special with nonmotorized transportation."

In line with the redesign of many Kalamazoo streets, George Waring, Senior Civil Engineer for the City of Kalamazoo, is looking for input on changes to be made on Michigan Avenue. Using paint to reconfigure the lanes, the intention is to turn this six lane highway into a calmer, more community friendly, city street.

In response to the recent survey of KBC members, we are floating two new group rides for 2023. Jenna Marie Kovach is spearheading a Saturday morning ride for LGBTQ+ riders and their allies and is looking for supportive ride leaders for help. Also, an exploratory group is meeting on Monday to discuss a new daytime ride during the week. We hope to have two new rides by springtime.

### **Education Chair** Paul Wells

The Education Committee is proposing a one session bike camp this year to be held at Wind + James on May 20, 2023. This date and location coincide with our Anniversary Celebration scheduled for that evening. The cost has been reduced to \$25 for an individual or \$35 for a family and will include one year's membership in KBC as well as a discounted price for KalTour.

Book Discussion: **Street Fight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution** by Janette Sadik-Khan and Seth Solomonow, led by Paul Sotherland. Here are a few take-away comments:

A shift in thinking is taking place to make our roads safer and more accessible to all community members, and less car-centric in design.

The current designs, which are intended to move cars as quickly as possible, are dangerous to pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

Better streets are good for the economy – “cars don’t buy things, people do.”

See Paul Sotherland’s notes on pages 4 & 5 for more details on this lively and informative discussion.

Mike Boersma reminds us that we can sign up for road commission updates and make service requests for road hazards at the KCRK website, <https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/signon.php?sRedirect=%2Ftownshipresources.php%3F>

Join us next month on February 14<sup>th</sup> KBC monthly meeting with our guest speaker from the City of Portage, Kathleen Hoyle, Director of Parks & Recreation.

Meeting adjourned around 8:15 PM

Teri Olbrot, KBC Secretary

## Call for Your 2022 Bike Mileage

How many miles did you ride in 2022?



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](mailto: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. Indoor and/or outdoor miles -- we play no favorites in this annual KBC column. 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 "**2022 KBC Member's Annual Mileage Almanac.**"

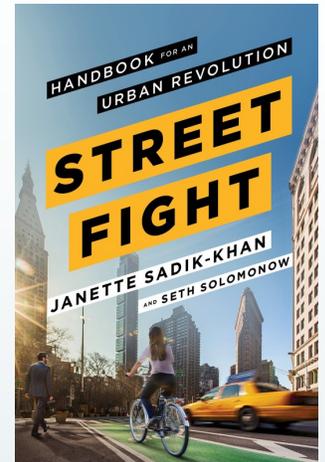
Paul Selden

# Book Review — “Street Fight” by Janette Sadik-Khan

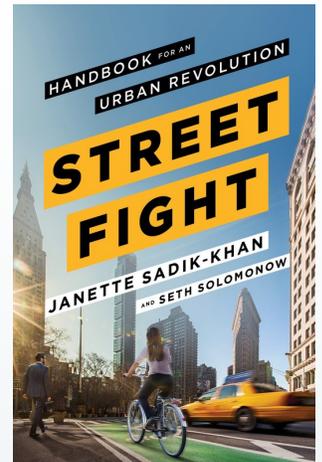
At the January KBC meeting Paul Sotherland led an outstanding discussion of this book and what the major take aways and actionable steps KBC members could be taking to help support the many road infrastructure changes occurring in Kalamazoo. The notes below highlight those observations and take-aways. Helmets off to you Paul !

## What are major take-home messages from the book?

- Just try stuff, see what happens, collect data, and report back to constituents.
- Change is difficult. When you push the status quo, the status quo pushes back - hard.
- Expect resistance...from many different constituents. BUT...do not be deterred.
- Paint is cheap. Use it to “try stuff.”
- There is a palpable shift occurring from the “Moses” outlook of car-first to a streets and roads for everyone outlook.
- Motorist-first outlook ruined cities.
- Improve safety for all by reducing traffic speed and calming motorist behavior.
- Traffic engineers must place safety at the center of street design; with that in mind, change the geometry of urban streets to slow drivers to the “speed of life.”
- Simplifying the street makes it safer to walk, drive, bike and take buses.
- When cities design infrastructure for people who walk, ride bikes, or take public transit they are creating demand for the growth they want to see and need to survive.
- Use parking as a barrier between motorists and cyclists to help protect cyclists and to avoid cyclists getting “doored” by drivers exiting/entering vehicles.
- Bloomberg’s (i.e. the elected leadership’s) patient, attentive, and supportive outlook helped make changes possible and enduring.
- Heads-up wayfinding signs, as well as other signage, helped make new infrastructure more user-friendly.
- Signage also helped raise everyone’s awareness of the new infrastructure.
- Better streets (i.e. streets for all) are good for the local economy. People, not cars, purchase stuff. • Non-users of cars subsidize car-users through taxes paid.
- Allocate street space according to users present. The “real estate” of a parking spot can be more valuable than fees paid to park.
- Improve transit as density of housing increases.
- Keep the “last mile” – including installation of bike racks at destinations – in mind.
- Network effects – connectivity and continuity of routes – is paramount. Even though completely connected and continuous routes cannot always be created at the outset, “gapfilling” between routes should be the next steps between projects.
- Deep and frequent public engagement, including feedback from stuff tried (see above), is essential. BUT, consider opinions of the “8.4 million traffic engineers” wisely



## How can those take-home messages be applied locally – especially including role(s) for KBC, individual members and collectively?



- Be informed; get educated and help educate others about how to use the infrastructure.
- Better understanding of infrastructure concepts, limitations, and benefits leads to better questions and more helpful feedback from cyclists.
- Engineering – Education (including sufficient signage) – Enforcement
- Motorists in Kalamazoo already seem to be driving more slowly.
- Expect those planning and implementing non-motorized infrastructure (i.e. planners, engineers, and road crews) to have a “streets for all” outlook and sufficient expertise to put that outlook into effect. Proof is in the pavement. Trust and verify.
  - How do new cyclists, or even cyclists not accustomed to riding on city streets, learn how to ride in city infrastructure correctly? For example: What’s the correct way to turn left from a right-hand bike lane? (Again...provide education...get educated.)
  - More cyclists create demand for more non-motorized infrastructure (pg 203). But, this can be a chicken’n’egg situation because better infrastructure encourages more cyclists to ride. At first, new infrastructure will likely seem underutilized.
  - USE the infrastructure that’s created. Set an example by riding bikes – correctly and as frequently as possible – on the infrastructure. Be seen using it.
  - How about organizing “slow rolls” in bike lanes and along bike routes? These can help enhance comfort levels for cyclists and motorists. Make them fun and comfortable. (Collaborating with Mode Shift was mentioned here.)
  - Be involved. Cyclists need to participate in the process of planning and providing feedback through surveys, outreach gatherings, and having a seat at the table.
  - Provide wheels-on-the-ground feedback – constructively and cordially.
  - Be a partner in the process. Develop and nurture the partnership(s). Write thank-you notes for jobs well done; ask questions and make suggestions when appropriate.
  - Submit maintenance requests to RCKC and to cities so that existing infrastructure is maintained at a safe and user-friendly level.
  - Identify “critical areas” and “desire lines” to help sculpt infrastructure that’s being created.
  - Pay attention. Think of ways for KBC to lend a hand. Make suggestions. Play a role.
  - As in the recent past, facilitate adoption of Five Foot ordinance by municipalities that don’t have the ordinance on the books.
  - When cities design infrastructure for people who walk, ride bikes, or take public transit they are creating demand for the growth they want to see and need to survive.
  - Simplifying the street makes it safer to walk, drive, bike and take buses.
  - Traffic engineers must place safety at the center of street designs and change the geometry of urban streets to slow drivers to the speed of life.

## Culture Matters

The book “Street Fight” brought some great discussion of the lessons learned in New York city’s implementation of new cycling and pedestrian mobility infrastructure. I came upon an article written by Liz Alderman for the New York Times in the fall of 2021 titled “[As bikers throng the streets it’s like Paris is in anarchy](#)” that highlights some other lessons.



The origin of this observation starts with implementation of over 100 miles of new bike paths and the elimination of cars in certain areas of Paris since 2019. The cycling population has exploded given the factors of the pandemic (avoiding crowded public transportation), rising fuel costs, adoption of e-bikes and climate change consciousness.

A well-intentioned effort to model the successful bike infrastructure of their neighbors to the north in Copenhagen, Paris now ranks as one for the top 10 cycling cities. The problem is France is not the Netherlands where most of its’ citizens were taught to follow the rules of the road from an early age. Paris has yet to acquire an ingrained cycling culture where all citizens understand the rules of the road and abide by them. An observation from pedestrians is that the bikers think the rules apply to everyone except them. Another factor is the rapid growth in shared infrastructure has yet to work out all the connective kinks one would anticipate of changes of this magnitude. These two factors have created the chaos where bike accidents have jumped 35% in the course of one year. I believe these factors can be overcome but it will take some time and effort.



Our role as KBC members and cycling ambassadors of goodwill is to lead-by-example, follow the the rules of the road and educate the public. It is also to provide ongoing involvement with the transportation planners to offer them positive and constructive feedback where safety and connectivity is concerned.

To that end – Tot Ziens and Au Revoir

Charlie Grdina, KBC Editor

## December 2022 Membership

Total Memberships: 300

Total Individuals: 481

**New or Renewed Members:** Jake Biernacki & Family; Mike Birmann; Pat Cronin & Karen Halsted; Kevin Hains; Mark Jackson; Kelly Root; Erik & Samuel Schnepf; Steve Stapleton; Mark Zettel

**February Expired Members:** Steve Cox; Dave Dilno; Chris Gottwald & Family; Dan Kallewaard; David Keyte; Larry Kissinger; Tim Mitchell; Gabe Rice; Jessica Sackett

Rick Whaley, Membership Director

## Dirty Donut Race Discount !!



The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Dirty Donut Race is June 3, 2023 at the Martin High School, in Martin, Michigan. For those of you who have not yet entered, we want to offer our fellow KBC members a discount for the race. When you register, use the following **15% OFF** promo code at registration – **kbc23**

The Dirty Donut is fast becoming one of the premier gravel races in not only Michigan, but the Midwest. We offer races from 10 miles to 61 miles. In just our 3<sup>rd</sup> year, we had 535 people race in 2022. Racers from Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Texas, Minnesota, and Canada are already registered for the 2023 race and we expect to grow even more this year. Last year we saw many KBC members race for the first time and we would love to see more of you this year.

If you would like to race for FREE, all you have to do is bring a friend with you to volunteer for a corner worker position and we will give you a free race entry. If interested please send us an email [dirtydonutrace@gmail.com](mailto:dirtydonutrace@gmail.com) and we will send you a list of what jobs are available to select from.

Happy New Year,

Dan Frazier – Race Director



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