

PRESIDENT'S LETTER: GROUNDHOG DAY — DOUG KIRK

Unlike Bill Murray's recurring nightmare about Puxatawney Phil, mine was literally over in a flash. It happened on beautiful Saturday in August, late in the morning, Kathy & I were finishing up a 50 mile ride out by Merson's Corner (give yourself some extra points if you know where that is!).

We returned to civilization on Ravine Road, turned right on Nichols, zoomed around those two odd traffic circles onto Howard Street, headed uphill past the WMU campus, then east toward Stadium. No students yet, so the roads were pretty empty.

Nice downhill there on Howard, and hoping to get the green light at Stadium, we were cruising along about 30 mph when a brown blur appeared at the edge of my vision headed straight across the road.

Bigger than a chipmunk, smaller than a dog. Brown. Doesn't look like a cat. Maybe a squirrel...but no big tail. Moving fast, straight across the road into my path. If he keeps coming, I'll T-bone him for sure. No time to work out what to do.

That's all my eyes told me, but it was enough to wake up that primitive do-what-you-can-to save your-ass response that's hard-wired into our brain from the Stone Age. I was still tightening every muscle in my body, bracing for who-knows-what, when—thump thump—I rode right over him.

My bars twitched hard, and I suspect my front wheel would have forced right—with dreadful, painful results—if I wasn't reflexively tightening my grip at the moment of impact. Instead, I just kept rolling along, shaken but barely slowed, thanking my lucky stars.

Kathy, five or ten yards behind, saw the whole thing up close, and besides dealing with the shock of the whole scene happening *right there*, she saw poor Phil in his death throes.

Poor little guy! Not a darn thing I could have done about it, but I felt guilty anyway. Phil isn't ever going to see his shadow, and I roll on down the road. Shaken, chastened, and feeling really lucky.

Be careful out there. Every day's a gift.

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 Business

Due to COVID-19 there was no KBC membership meeting in August.

HOWEVER, We WILL have a KBC Monthly Meeting on September 8, the second Tuesday in September, at 7:00 PM. The location will be **at the TEXAS DRIVE PARK PAVILION** to allow for social distancing.

Nominations for the Executive Committee will be taking place at the October meeting and the election of these committee members will be taking place at the November meeting. We will discuss how to go about handling these activities in view of the pandemic.

Other items may also be discussed.

KBC Membership Stats – Look for your name here

Total Memberships: 264

Total Individuals: 470

New or Renewed Members: Hank Apotheker; Deborah Bauer; Carolyn Douglass; Gus Garza; Steve Groetsema & Family; Jason Sparks; Matthew VanMiddlesworth

September Expiring Members: Chris Bol; Harold Gleaves; Sara Miller; Becca Shemberg; Sarah Stryd

KBC FINANCIALS as of 8/10/2020 from Pam Sotherland, KBC Treasurer:

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) ACCOUNTS: \$14,518.33

*Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$434.88

Monthly EXPENSES: **\$5.71**

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$14,947.50

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$6,868.00

Education Fund: \$6,308.00

Jeremy Smith Fund: \$560.00

TOTAL ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$1,000 for KRVT Pledge

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,184

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo Fall Bike Celebration Sept. 18-20

Cycling Tour -- Live Concert -- \$1750 Art Awards -- Fascinating Presentations -- & More

The second annual Fall Bike Celebration Weekend will raise awareness of bicycling and attractions in and around the charming village of Vicksburg, Michigan and southwest Michigan on the third weekend in September from September 18-20. On line registration ends September 17; see www.fallbikecelebration.org/registration/.

This year's weekend-long event again features ice cream at Apple Knockers Ice Cream Parlor on the shores of Sunset Lake and a scenic **bicycle tour** (on Sunday this year). Routes offer photo-ops of the beautiful Vicksburg Quilt Trail paintings as cyclists ride to destinations such as Scotts Mill Park, Climax, the longest covered bridge in Michigan and Shipshewana. A kid-friendly route on the Vicksburg Recreational Trail will go through the woods to its point of latest completion on the border of Portage. Capping off the weekend, \$1,750+ in cash prizes will be announced in a Public Bike **Art Competition Award** Ceremony on the grounds of the Vicksburg Historic Village.

There's also great news for **live music** lovers! An open-air lawn chair benefit concert performed by the popular Schlitz Creek Bluegrass Band will be hosted at Gilmore Car Museum as a way to highlight its collection of restored bicycles and raise funds for bike related causes. New for 2020, riders will start and finish on the grounds of the lovingly restored Vicksburg Historic Village, which is opening a number of its buildings to the public throughout the weekend.



The event was organized by civic leaders, local charities, bike-related organizations and members of KBC; it offers \$1 to KBC for each KBC member who registers as such, as well. Radio interviews leading up to the event will emphasize the need for motorist and bicyclist safety as the hours of darkness increase. Some activities are free, some require waivers and some may require children to be accompanied by an adult. The latest updates can be found at www.fallbikecelebration.org/schedule/.

This fall's bicycle celebration is taking place in close consultation with local public health officials authorities. Safe practices will include limiting attendance, staggering start times, social distancing and face coverings, among others. Yet, in many ways, this year some events will reach even more people due to their web and/or hybrid formats. BFK's Bike Art Competition has been digital from the start, gathering virtual attention nation-wide. The bluegrass concert will be open air, hosted at the Gilmore Car Museum, North America's largest of its kind. A number of fascinating **virtual presentations** will be offered. People will be welcome to enjoy the Fall Bike Celebration at any level they feel comfortable with.

-Paul Selden

KBC Member Photos

Credits: Pam Sotherland (left);
Molly Cartwright (right)



Men, we are sorely under-represented here! I know you are riding, so send us a picture!

You too can be memorialized in the hallowed pages of the Pedal Press! Send your cycling pics to:
editor@
kalamazoobicycleclub.org



Toilet Paper and Bikes — John Knowlton

Remember when you couldn't buy toilet paper at the grocery store due to COVID? It's kind of like that with bikes right now. That is definitely a bad news/good news story. Bad news that I can't buy another bike to add to my stable. Good news for bike shops having sold a ton of bikes to thousands of new cyclists! And good news for the thousands of people who are exercising outdoors. It seems that with stay home orders, anxiety about being cooped up inside and a need for something to do, many people have decided to start riding bikes again. We congenial cyclists cry, "Come on in, the water's great!" All in all, I think the scales tip steeply toward good news here.



Early this COVID, selfishness had a temporary grip on me in the form of a single-speed commuter bike. I was working on a list of reasons why I needed another bike in addition to my carbon road bike, carbon gravel bike



Bombtrack Outlaw

with a second set of carbon wheels, custom steel tandem, fancy mid-fattie mountain bike, etc. etc. The bike is beautiful, driven by a Gates carbon belt so there is no grease to worry about, and has a front rack which can carry a pizza. As anyone can tell, I NEED this bike.

And yet somehow, against my natural inclinations, I felt a higher nature rising up in me. Actually, it was

my friend Phillip who brought it to the surface. We are both members of Stones church and he knows that Julie and I ride. Because we talk about it all the time. And we may have made ourselves (ok, just me) odious in the way that cross fitters and vegans have a tendency to do. Phillip had received a used bike as a gift and wanted to get it tuned up and start riding with me. He is a great guy and I looked forward to spending time with him so I had him bring the bike to my garage and we worked on tuning it up. We got it back to good working order, but the bike was a medium sized mountain bike and he is over 6 feet tall. I realized that we had a Trek hybrid in size large that Julie used to ride which would fit him much better. We replaced the tires which had dry rot and cleaned it up, then gave it to him. He was very thankful and passed the mountain bike on to another member of our church for whom it was the right size. The four of us have since gone on a gravel ride together!

Phillip and I ride regularly and he has become friends with some KBC members and is now going on rides with them – without me! He has become a cyclist. It turns out that it felt great to give that bike away. Since then we have given a bike to the Deacon's Conference which distributes bikes to people who need them for transportation to get to work. We have found another woman at church who wants to get into cycling and picked out one of the smaller mountain bikes that our kids have outgrown. She isn't very tall, so the bike fits her well. I replaced the knobbies with some 26" slick tires and Julie is showing her the ropes about shifting, pedaling, and clothing selection.

Toilet Paper and Bikes (cont.)

This has all come about since I had a moment of recognition which occurred at the nexus of two overlapping events: Phillip asking for help with a bike and seeing empty racks at local bike shops. My season of divestiture has even included selling excess parts. I had a set of Velocity Aileron 700C wheels. These are good quality aluminum rims for road or gravel riding. However, they were my third best set of wheels and rarely used. I sold them on a social media marketplace within about 5 hours. Later there was a set of carbon-soled cycling shoes that didn't quite fit right which I sold too. My new mindset is that people need bikes and gear to enjoy the sport I love. And I have more than enough, so let's spread it around.

We have also realized that new cyclists need the three G's: Gear, Guidance, and Group. Gear is pretty self-explanatory. But when shops have sold every bike priced under \$2,000, gear might become hard for a new cyclist to get. Guidance is about providing enough instruction to be helpful without becoming overbearing. That's why Julie is helping our friend learn how to shift her new mountain bike instead of me! And group means having at least one other person to ride with who can give a new rider confidence, help in the event of a mechanical or physical breakdown, and ideas on where to ride safely.

How about you? Can you become a bike evangelist? Is there gear including bikes, helmets or clothing that you could give away? For a new cyclist it is as necessary as toilet paper, but provides a much longer effect!

