

**PRESIDENT’S LETTER — JOHN KNOWLTON**

**Value and Volunteers of a Bike Club**

On May 20 we welcomed 12 new members to the KBC. As participants in Bike Camp, these dozen people learned about riding safely on the road and with a group. They joined about 500 other official members of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club. Now, I’m not sure what we would do if all 500 of us showed up to a Monday Night Ride – that’s a lot of bikes in Texas Drive Park! But your membership is very important even if we don’t see each other at every group ride. As KBC interacts with public officials, infrastructure managers, and other organizations we are able to say that we represent 500 or so people. And that gives us credibility we wouldn’t have. So, thank you for your membership!

The evening of May 20 also saw the KBC Anniversary party. We had good food, fun, a gear swap table and granted some awards: The Old Crank award is given for enduring service. This year saw two recipients: Zolton Cohen and Renee Mitchell. Both Zolton and Renee have served as KBC President in the past as well as many other volunteer roles over the years. I was pleased to present the Volunteer of the Year award to Gordy Vader in recognition of his service as Ride Captain. Monday and Wednesday evenings Gordy faithfully welcomes people to ride and ensures we have ride leaders for every pace. KBC is led entirely by volunteers and we appreciate each one who helps in some way.



At the Anniversary party Paul Sotherland posted a map created by the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County. It shows every road the County maintains and highlights in yellow the non-motorized master plan. Now a simple map might not be a big deal. But this represents years of work and the continued gentle persistence of KBC members, among others. About a decade ago I had an exasperating conversation with a Road Commissioner. It ended with him telling me, “We don’t build roads for bikes, we build roads for cars!” Well, now that the county has a non-motorized master plan, they will be building roads for all users. That is a BIG change!



**HIGHLIGHTS**

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

editor@kalamazoobicycle club.org

June 25 is Kal Tour, a great opportunity to experience Kalamazoo County's beautiful scenery and rural roads. Please plan to join us for the ride, to volunteer, or both. This year's enhancements include a cool after party at a new venue Wind + James (indoor bathrooms with running water!). The party will include Root Beer Floats and a live band!

KBC is investing in these upgrades without increasing the price this year in order to serve the cycling community better. Please share the news with your friends!

## KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be **Tuesday, June 13** at 7:00 p.m. at [Oshtemo Community Center](#) (North Room), 6407 Parkview Ave, Kalamazoo MI .

**Kalamazoo Bicycle Club  
May 9, 2023  
Oshtemo Community Center**

### **ATTENDANCE**

John Knowlton	Paul Guimond	Mike Krischer
Charlie Grdina	Paul Wells	Pam Sotherland
Rick Whaley	Paul Sotherland	Renee Mitchell
Teri Olbrot	Paul Selden	

### **President:** John Knowlton

Many bicycle-related activities are coming up soon during Kalamazoo Bike Week, including KBC Bike Camp and the KBC Anniversary Party. More information can be found on the Bike Friendly Kalamazoo calendar and at [www.kalamazobikeweek.org](http://www.kalamazobikeweek.org).

KBC Membership has increased by 23 new members this year, not including renewals, indicating that the club is strong. We should consider asking new members what drew them to KBC when they register and perhaps put together a welcome package.

The City of Kalamazoo has introduced many infrastructure initiatives for improving connectivity for bicyclists and other non-motorized traffic while the City of Portage has improved recreational infrastructure. John noted that practical and safe commuting routes to retail destinations are sparse in Portage, which led to a conversation about how to best support the changes Portage has made while advocating for safe routes to high-traffic shopping destinations.

Ride season has begun, and the new Pre-Ride Statement is going well. KBC has two new rides this year, a ride on Monday mornings, and an LGBTQ+ ride on Saturday mornings.

### **Old Business:**

Rick Whaley reports that the W Ride had about fifteen riders present and three pace groups. Paul Wells asked about the inclusion of e-bikes on group rides and the consensus was that they participate without problems.

### **DIRECTORS REPORTS:**

#### **Kal Tour:** Mike Krischer

Mike put together posters for KalTour that include a QR Code that will lead people to the registration page. This, and social media advertising, is being emphasized instead of the use of pamphlets, as we've done in the past. He asked that people take what posters they can and post them in local establishments.

#### **Education Chair:** Paul Wells

We have eight people signed up for Bike Camp at this time. Our event will be small but will still meet our high standards. We have a small number of volunteers who have signed up to help with rides.

#### **Grants and Awards:** Paul Sotherland

The Anniversary Party is ready to go on May 20<sup>th</sup> at Wind + James. There will be a raffle, gear swap table, and the presentation of the Old Crank Award. Please send suggestions for the Old Crank Award to Paul. Kevin Kimbrough will donate on behalf of the Commission for the Blind to help defray costs for the party.

#### **Membership:** Rick Whaley

Reminders have been sent out this week to the individuals whose memberships have lapsed, encouraging them to renew.

#### **New Business:**

Paul Sotherland shared that many new developments are in the works to promote non-motorized routes in the area. \$150,000 has been earmarked for road signs on bike routes and KATS is working to show these routes on Google Maps.

Paul Selden attended the Bike Summit and learned of programs that reach out to immigrants without driver's licenses who could use bicycles for transportation. At Paul's suggestion, the group posed for a picture with the Bike Week poster.



The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.

#### **Editors Notes:**

1. In the May Pedal Press, I incorrectly identified the youth mountain biking team KBC had made a monetary contribution to as the "Tiger Cats" and they are the "Thunder Cats". I am certain there are some tigers in that mix as well.
2. Requesting all submissions for the July Pedal Press be sent directly to KBC President, email: [president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:president@kalamazoobicycleclub.org), who has graciously agreed to publish the July Pedal Press.

## KALTOUR IS NOT FAR AWAY!

KalTour, KBC's annual summer tour is just around the corner - Sunday June 25. Those of you who have followed KalTour over the years know that the only constant is change with this year's KalTour is no exception. In order to ride you have to show up at the new start location: the Wind + James Event Center in Schoolcraft. Wind+James is on Eliza Street (W Avenue) just west of the tracks and east of 14th Street. For the first time, we will have access to an inside location with full kitchen and restroom facilities. Riders will be able to eat the post-ride lunch either inside or outside depending on the weather while listening to live music provided by a KBC member and his band "Joshua Tree". (I won't mention his name but he is the former owner of Breakaway Bicycles). The availability of a full kitchen will allow us to add root beer floats to the post-ride lunch menu. W+ J is only a half mile south of our previous start location which allows us to pick up the established routes with minimal changes. This year all of the routes, except the 15 mile route, will visit the sag stop at Scotts Mill County park at least once. There will be two additional sag stops for the 100 mile route as it travels around the county.

While you can register for KalTour on the day of ride, it is easier and quicker to sign up ahead of time at [KBC's KalTour 2023 Online Registration \(bikereg.com\)](https://www.bikereg.com). You can also scan the QR code at right to access the registration site. There is a \$5 KBC member discount for online registration only. Online registration through Bikereg is available through Thursday June 22.

As you know, putting on KalTour requires the cooperative efforts of many KBC members and other supporting businesses and organizations. In an effort to better organize and channel that support we have created an account on the *SignUpGenius* website. There you can see a list of all volunteer activities for which support is needed before, during, and after KalTour. This posting can be found at [Kalamazoo Bicycle Club: 2023 KalTour Volunteer Schedule \(signupgenius.com\)](https://www.signupgenius.com) (or by scanning the QR code below). The first large-scale volunteer activity will be road painting on Thursday June 15 starting at 6 pm from Wind & James. Maps and supplies will be provided and old clothes are recommended. (In case of severe weather, the date will be the following Tuesday, June 20).

If you have any questions about registration or volunteering, please email [kaltour@kalamazooobicycleclub.org](mailto:kaltour@kalamazooobicycleclub.org). You can also call or text. (269) 823-2819.

**Mike Krischer, KalTour Director**



To Register



To Volunteer

# DA2



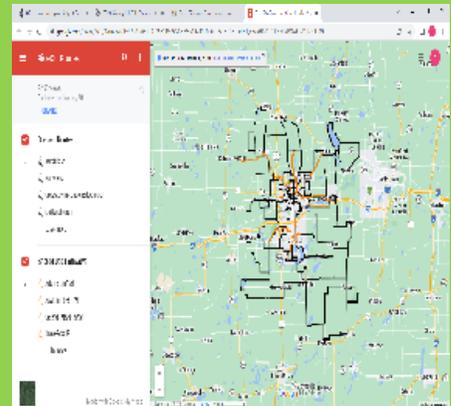
I am soliciting the membership for their observations for improvement, things that are working well and creative ideas that would improve the overall bicycling experience for riders in the community. One paragraph or two will fit the bill and it will be a work in progress. Send articles & associated photos to [editor@kalmazoobicycleclub.org](mailto:editor@kalmazoobicycleclub.org).

Appreciate all,  
Charlie Grdina, KBC Editor

DA2.4

## Best Bike Routes in KZOO !

Looking to navigate your way around Kalamazoo by bicycle on some of the safer and more established bike routes ? Well look no further. Ride Our Routes (ROR) is a “movement” that gets you pedaling your bike along the nonmotorized network – through cities, villages, and townships – in and around Kalamazoo County. Joining this movement is as simple as riding your bike, individually or in small groups, and exploring 1<sup>st</sup> to 48<sup>th</sup> Streets, A to Z Avenues, and the many Shared-Use Pathways across our beautiful county. The link to [google maps is here](#) and does not require anything further.



If you are a KBC member and RIDE-WITH-GPS user, very detailed to routes that can be downloaded to your GPS device for turn by turn instructions on navigating the many the beautiful routes in around Kalamazoo county at this link : [Ride Our Routes page](#)

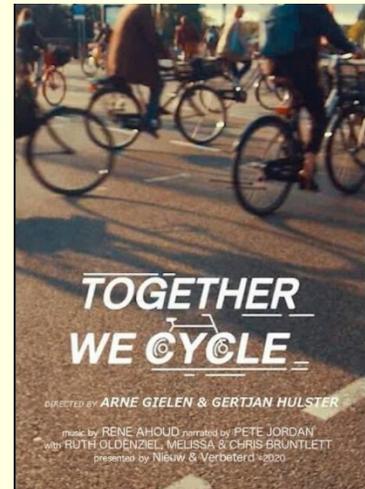
Thank you Paul Sotherland for bring this great navigation tool to our attention !

## Together We Cycle – Film Review

The documentary “[Together We Cycle](#)” was shown at K-College late this March. The film investigates the critical events that led to the revival of the Dutch cycling culture. ModeShift Kalamazoo sponsored the screening and both K-college students and KBC attended it.

Copenhagen was very much like any major US city in the 1960-70’s. There were significant plans to build a highway straight through the center of the city, but the citizens believed it would degrade the livability of the city and worked to shape more sustainable options. I think of what Detroit could be from the livability perspective had highways of the Lodge and 375 that now divide the city not been constructed (now in the planning phases for removal).

Automobile routes in the central Dutch cities were re-routed with the focus of preserving the city center for pedestrian and cycling mobility. Parking close to street corners was abolished, a major contributor to accidents, and was restricted to allow for better usage of roadways. Automobile speed restrictions were lowered to 20MPH in congested spaces. Starting in the late 1970, red cycling paths were established that ringed and linked the city together efficiently.



Cycling training courses and a rules-of-the-road competency exam are completed at early ages in Dutch society. A major revelation I heard is that it is safer to cycle through the city than it is to go by automobile. People appeared to ride in street or office clothing, with very few wearing helmets or protective equipment. The mindset and culture of the Dutch are cornerstone to the mass adoption of cycling. Cycling was NOT relegated to the poor and society was cohesive enough to pull together during the energy crisis of the 70’s to have no-car-Sunday to conserve fuel. One of the largest biggest revelations I walked away with from the film was that the positive relationship between the cyclist and the drivers was that the DRIVERS WERE ALSO CYCLISTS. This would be like seeing every passing car with a “Give em 5 Feet” and “Kalamazoo Bike Club” sticker for mental comfort.

The Dutch made decisions to change things incrementally and not all changes were successful. The majority proved out over time and by refinement. We can do the same here to the extent the population is willing to change from a car-first-culture to reap these same benefits.

Seeing the energy of the students attending and organizing at this event was refreshing. The students offered a safe bike riding course on campus for those just learning to ride in an urban environment. I walked out of the screening feeling hopeful of positive changes to come.

Charlie Grdina, KBC Editor

# BIKE CAMP 2023

KBC Bike Camp update: The 17th **KBC Bike Camp** was held on Saturday, May 20th. Although we had just 12 participants, it was a very successful event in all other aspects. The campers and the Bike Camp Committee liked the condensed one-day version, and we believe we covered all the important topics regarding riding safely on the road. Some of the campers came to the KBC Annual Party too. The Wind & James Event Center venue was excellent, and our group bike rides were on lightly-traveled, mostly flat roads. It was a cool 50 degrees and windy, but everyone enjoyed the ride.

Thanks to the Bike Camp Committee, Clark Bennett, Thom Brennan, Zolton Cohen, Jillian Howland, Jennifer Johnson, Renee Mitchell, Bill Surna, and Gordy Vader for their work and generous volunteerism. Thanks also to our president, John Knowlton, who made the trip to Wind & James by bike to welcome the campers to the KBC, to Tim Krone of Pedal Bicycles for his expert help in bike fitting, and Sharon Surna for camper registration. Thanks Paul Runnels, Marc Irwin, Rick Whaley, and Tom Keiser who helped as ride leaders.

The City of Portage just produced these photos of our KBC Give Them Five to Keep Them Alive yard signs showing the five-foot minimum space required for vehicles to pass cyclists. That cyclist in the photos happens to be KBC's Bill Surna, who is on the City of Portage Bicycle Advisory Committee. Portage plans to send these out on various media to remind folks of the 5' passing ordinance. It is great to see our area governments, and the RCKC stepping up their support and infrastructure for cyclists. The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety has placed 5' passing yard signs at the stations all over Kalamazoo for Kalamazoo Bike Week. I hope they leave them there for a while, like last year.

I'm sure some of you attended the Kalamazoo Bicycle Show, organized by the city. It is notable that the City of Kalamazoo organized this event. It's more evidence of the big change in attitude and seriousness regarding cyclists. Paul and Pam Sotherland and I had a KBC table there, gave out KBC, Bike Camp, and KalTour fliers, and 5' yard signs. There were a lot of other organizations there, and some interesting antiques and other bikes on display.

Paul Wells, Education Chair & Bike Camp Director



## The 23<sup>rd</sup> W Ride Report

Fifteen riders, a mixture of W Ride rookies and seasoned W Ride veterans, sacrificed their opportunity to watch the coronation of Charles III in order to participate in W Ride XXIII. They arrived at the east parking lot at Vicksburg High School on May 6, buoyed by the good weather by W Ride standards. After learning that the east parking lot was needed for dance recital parking, the riders relocated at the west parking lot. Here, the riders posed for a pre-ride picture. While high visibility yellow/green is a color that is less than pleasing to the eye, it is still a cycling color that never goes out of style.



Left to Right: Marc Irwin, Tom Cross, John Idema, Don Juzwiak, Andrzej Dudek, Randy Button, Steve Stapleton, Tom Keizer, Terry O'Connor, Kathy Zimont, Julie Knowlton, John Knowlton, Bill Surna, and Ben Zimont

John K. agreed to lead a 17-18 mph fast group, with the RL leading a 15 mph group, and Marc agreeing to lead a slower group. Driven by a need for speed or peer pressure, 11 of the 15 riders decided to ride with John K. Bill joined the RL, while Don decided to ride with Marc.

The fast group quickly opened up a gap on the remaining riders and were joined by Dan Kallewaard riding from his home. Soon after the start, Bill informed the RL that due to some mild but nagging leg issues, he didn't want to push it and planned to ride 24 miles. This allowed the RL to contemplate what it would be like to be a leader without any followers during the last 24 miles of the ride. Between 46th Street and the Calhoun County line, the fast group passed the RL's group in the opposite direction minus the Zimonts who had formed a group of their own. Heading back to Vicksburg and slightly west of Fulton, Bill opened up about a 100 yard gap on the RL and, in a heroic display of grit and determination, the RL didn't even make an effort to close it up.

Back at the high school, Bill finished his ride and bid his slacking riding companion farewell, but not without a Gatorade and some pretzels. At this point, the RL was averaging 14.5 mph. While munching on a white chocolate macadamia nut Clif Bar, the caviar of Clif Bar consumables, the RL was joined by Randy, Steve, and Tom K., riding back from the Shell station. While Tom K. decided to call it a day, Randy and Steve told the RL that they had decided to slow down and join the RL. It pleased the RL to know that he would have some company the last 24 miles, and would not risk dehydration from lonely teardrops. The RL later learned that Julie, Marc, and Don had also decided to finish their ride after 24 miles.

Randy, Steve, and the RL began their ride to the Van Buren County line into a cross/tailwind, similar to the last 12 miles of the ride. Somewhere between 5th and 4th Street, the Speedy Six (John K., Dan, Tom C., Andrzej, and the e-bike duo of Terry and John I.) passed the Not-As-Speedy Three in the opposite direction, having opened up a gap of only about 7 miles. Shortly before the county line, they were also passed by Ben and Kathy in the opposite direction. During these 12 miles, the RL spent most of his time tucked behind Randy and Steve, although it should be noted that he did pull for about a half mile.

As the RL's group turned and headed east back to Vicksburg, the RL thought to himself "Hmmm, the cross/headwind isn't as bad as I thought." However, once the RL reached open farmland around 8th Street, he changed his mind. Surprisingly, however, the RL didn't feel as bad as he thought that he would and actually pulled for about one and a half miles during the last 8 miles. About 3 miles from the finish, the RL's group passed Ben and Kath taking a break by the side of the road, and the trio finished triumphantly at the high school, another W Ride completed.

The RL again broke out the orange, grade, and fruit punch Gatorade and the pretzels, so Randy, Steve, and the RL could enjoy the carbohydrates of their 48 mile labor. The RL averaged 15.3 mph over the entire ride and Steve noted that they averaged 16.3 mph over the last 24 miles. Ben and Kathy finished a couple of minutes later and they replenished themselves, as well. Leftover W Ride maps, licorice Twizzlers, were also eaten, having served their purpose. The Speedy Six (who averaged 18.1 mph) also made a speedy getaway from the high school and didn't stick around for the refreshments. The RL hopes that they aren't consumed with regret regarding their decision (although a twinge of regret would be just fine).

# PEDAL THE ZOO

## Event Information

Date: Sunday, July 30, 2023  
Time: 1pm - 5pm  
Address: Heritage Hall  
625 Oakland Dr, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

In-person registration at 12pm the day of the event. Online early registration is available. Visit our website for more details! [www.PedaltheZoo.com](http://www.PedaltheZoo.com)

## Purpose

Pedal the Zoo is an engaging tour and celebration of downtown Kalamazoo. This excursion is designed to encourage our participants to visit downtown, celebrate the unique places that help to define our community, and support the local cycling culture. The outing itself is designed to celebrate small businesses, local bicycle shops, food entrepreneurs, merchandise vendors, and local breweries alike.

## Our Sponsors:

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[publicrelations@eventkalamazoo.com](mailto:publicrelations@eventkalamazoo.com)  
[www.experientiallearningcenter.org](http://www.experientiallearningcenter.org)  
1417 S. Burdick St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001



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**INFO  
PACKET**

**JULY 30, 2023**

The RL was the last rider to leave the parking lot and as he started to put his bike in his car, he felt a few drops of rain. Perhaps, a preview of next year's W Ride.

W Ride Maps - Good for providing directions and for post-ride snacking too! →

Rick Whaley, Ride Leader, W Ride



## June 2023 Membership

Total Memberships: 326

Total Individuals: 511

**New or Renewed Members:** Jeff Bartz; Deborah Bauer; Mike Boersma; Theresa Bunch; Michael Bussey & Family; Kevin Cleary; Lauren Cummings; Gene Decker; Philip Fisher; Michael Foley & Monica Elfring; Lee Anne Fontaine; Katie Grabiec; Amy Heath; Hershel Jude & Family; William Keene; Nadean Knight & Family; Linda & Jeff Kozacki; Molly Lacy; Ann Lapoint & Family; Samantha Lindsey & Family; Dave Mange; Michael Miller; Autumn Monaweck; Vanessa Paragas & Lacey Vogt; Ted & Stephanie Robinson; Jeremy Sikkema; Kathy Vandewalle; Angie Veneklase; Jenni Willoughby

**June Expired Members:** Karen Applebey; Doug Chapel; Thomas Dewhirst; Teri Goodman; Vince Groppi; Paul Guimond; Jayme Haney; Kelly Jones; Joshua Kling; Jonathan Langworthy & Family; Val Litznerski; Jean Mohny; Robert Mrva; Danielle Palmer; Vijaya Pattamatta & Family; Marisa Royster; Kyle See; Kelly Smith; Lindsey South & Jim McKim; Tom Sprinke; Gordy Vader; Kitty Vader; Ric Wiessner & Family

Rick Whaley, Membership Director

# 2023 Cycling Events.

Not all inclusive but looking to capture the main cycling events in the immediate (50 mile or so) area. Provided for informational content only – **KalTour, W-Ride Bike Camp and KBC Recovery Party** are KBC sponsored events.

[RACE SCHEDULE – MGRS \(michigan gravelraceseries.com\)](https://michigan gravelraceseries.com) - Link to all gravel races



<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Link</u>
Dirty Donut	3 June 2023	<a href="#">Dirty Donut</a>
Bike-a-Palooza	3 June 2023	<a href="#">Tweed Ride &amp; Bike-a-Palooza</a>
<b>KalTour</b>	25 June 2023	<a href="#">Kalamazoo Bicycle Club - Life is better on a bike!</a>
100 Grand	01 July 2023	<a href="#">Rapid Wheelmen Bicycle Club</a>
Holland 100	15 July 2023	<a href="#">Holland 100</a>
Pedal The Zoo	30 July 2023	<a href="#">Pedal The Zoo</a>
Gilmore Gravel	TBD	<a href="#">Gilmore Gravel Grand Prix</a>
Lowell Gravel Race	28 October 2023	<a href="#">LOWELL CLASSIC GRAVEL ROAD RACE - Home (thelowell50.com)</a>