



October 2023

PRESIDENT’S LETTER — JOHN KNOWLTON

October Cornucopia: Guests at KBC Meeting, Bike Facilities Ride, Officers Election

In September we started a new format for KBC meetings. **Business** takes place at **6 p.m.** Last month, much of that time was allocated to developing an editorial calendar for a future marketing plan. In addition, Deb Droppers joined us to talk about community resources available to help organizations execute great events. At **7 p.m. we welcome a guest speaker.** Here is the reason for the experiment with a new format: Around 500 people belong to KBC. They don’t all come out to group rides, so they must belong for another reason. KBC’s purpose includes group riding and events, but also supporting commuting, advocating for bicycle infrastructure, educating motorists and cyclists about safety, etc. I want to lean into connecting with other people and organizations with similar purposes. We can surely learn from each other and find strength in numbers. This month our guest will be one of the leaders of the League of Michigan Bicyclists. John Lindenmayer or Matt Penniman will give an update on the legislation of interest to cyclists, the state of cycling in Michigan, and how other clubs are doing.

Speaking of bicycle infrastructure, Paul Sotherland and I recently took a two-wheeled tour of the new bike lanes in downtown Kalamazoo. City Engineer George Waring tells us that the new traffic lights for bikes on Michigan Ave. (yep, you read that right!) will be installed near the end of this month. Once that work is complete, KBC will organize a slow roll to tour the new lanes. We intend to invite other clubs, Open Roads, etc. and hope to get at least 50 bikes on the road, experiencing the City’s efforts to install bike facilities. More information coming soon!

October also marks the nomination period for KBC officers. We elect President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Any member may nominate another member or himself or herself. I expect all four current officers to run again.

Keep riding, stay moving, and enjoy the fall!



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Please send stories and photos of your rides to:

editor@kalamazoobicycle club.org

KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be **Tuesday, October 10** at 7:00 p.m. at Oshtemo Community Center (North Room), 6407 Parkview Ave, Kalamazoo MI .

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club September 12, 2023 Oshtemo Community Center

ATTENDANCE:

Paul Sotherland	Pam Sotherland	Paul Wells
Paul Selden	Paul Guimond	John Knowlton
Doug Kirk	Clark Bennett	Rick Whaley
Mike Krischer	Mike Boersma	Teri Olbrot
Deb Droppers, Guest	Isaac Green, Guest	

John Knowlton, President, opened the business meeting at 6:00 PM.

Pam Sotherland, Treasurer provided an update of the Discord app, which is being used on a trial basis with the Friday morning women's ride. With Jenna Kovach's leadership, the 'beta' test is going well and will likely be recommended for use with all club rides in 2024. Here are a few points of information:

Discord does not have a "read only" function, that is, everyone on the server can post information. However, members can be paused, or put in "time out," if leadership deems their posts inappropriate or excessive.

All sanctioned ride leaders who are interested in the role can be administrators.

The Rules of Engagement will be the same as our community rules on Facebook.

Old posts can be removed to reduce "clutter."

Gordy Vader, Ride Captain, announced that he is scheduled for surgery on October 6th and will be recuperating for the rest of the season. Gordy asks that John Knowlton and other ride leaders help lead in his absence. In addition, as the season progresses, Gordy is seeing a shortage of Ride Leaders and asks that more people step up to help, in that some group rides are getting too large for safety.

Expanding the role of Communications Director was discussed, mainly to refine the marketing and communication of Kal Tour, our primary event and fundraiser.

John Knowlton led a discussion that generated a draft of an Annual Editorial Calendar, gathering topics that would inform and educate the community at large about KBC's mission and activities.

Deb Droppers gave a presentation about the Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center, (KELC,) a non-profit that gives learning opportunities to students studying Sports and Event Management at WMU, mainly by promoting WMU sporting events. While sharing her expertise and advice, Deb notes that most of her students are away doing internships in the summer and that KELC might not add significant value to the management of KalTour.

John Knowlton opened the 7:00 PM with a few announcements:

Paul Selden: BFK's Fall Bicycle Celebration is coming on September 17th and needs more ride leaders. Gordy volunteered to help. BFK is sponsoring a beautiful new mural on Portage Road.

Paul Sotherland: Plans are in the works for an "infrastructure slow roll" through downtown, using the new bike lane on Michigan Avenue. A date and time will be announced next month. The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) has finished putting up bike route signs that coordinate with the routes on their website. Also, the Grants and Awards Committee is looking for nominations for the Friend of Bicycling Award. Please contact Paul if you know of a business or organization that is making an impact in the bicycling community.

John introduced our guest speaker, Isaac Green, Director of Open Roads.

As executive director of Open Roads, he runs a nonprofit youth development program that uses bikes and bicycling as a tool to engage with and mentor kids. Kids can earn their own bikes and learn how to take care of them. Open Roads is a full-service bike shop that provided 92 bikes to refugees last year and is on track to provide 102 bicycles this year.



Other notable information from Isaac:

We run on grants and donations.

We provide bicycles for transportation to people who are refugees, experiencing homelessness, and with disabilities.

We accept donations of bicycles and gear.

Most of our students are from Kalamazoo and Portage, primarily the Northside, Vine, and Edison neighborhoods.

Kids are more interested in mountain biking than road riding. Safety on the road is a big concern.

Safe Routes to Schools is a federal grant project but unfortunately, local schools are reluctant to participate.

Isaac is eager to collaborate with KBC on our Infrastructure Slow Roll by inviting his students to join us. For more information about Open Roads, you can contact Isaac at director@openroads.org.

Teri Olbrot, KBC Secretary Extraordinaire

Finance Report (21JUN-30SEP 2023)

Pam Sotherland, Treasurer

KBC FINANCES as of 9/20/2023

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) ACCOUNTS: \$17,434

RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$3,985

EXPENSES: **\$3,373**

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$18,046

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$3,965

Discretionary Expenses: **\$266**

Education Fund: **\$2,812**

ROR21: **\$887**

ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$0

AVAILABLE BALANCE for REMAINING Budgeted Expenses: \$14,081

Current Cash minus Designated Funds minus Encumbered Expenses

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,192

October 2023 Membership

Total Memberships: 321

Total Individuals: 494

New or Renewed Members: Jason Badders; Jason Sparks

October Expired Members: Jennifer Evans; Nick & Kelley Hampton; John King; Tomme Maile & Dale Abbott; Dan Murrin; Jacinda Roedel; Beth Smigiel

Rick Whaley, Membership Director

Forest and Foliage in the Fall Ride

Mark the calendar and watch the weather. October 21st will be the 2023 edition of the Forest and foliage in the Fall Ride. There will be three marked routes, the same 30,50 and 62 mile paved routes in our library, including the only categorized climb (CAT 5) in our library. Meet at Gun Lake Park at 10:30.

Take 131 north to exit 59 east until the road ends, the lot will be on the left. The weather promises to be perfect...well, a perfect example of something. In the past we've had everything from great weather in the 70's to a great example of sleet and freezing rain.



Marc Irwin, KBC Member & Ride Coordinator

Education Committee Update

The KBC Education Committee members Bill Surna, Clark Bennett and I participated in two events in August and September, a bike education and Slow Roll at the Edison Neighborhood Association on August 26th, and a bike education and bike check at Family Fitness Night at Milwood Elementary School on September 21st.

The Edison Neighborhood event (organized by the City of Kalamazoo) was a bust as no one showed up! Bill Surna prepared a condensed bike safety PowerPoint from Bike Camp, and we brought League of Michigan Bicyclist "What Every Michigan Bicyclist Must Know" booklets to hand out. But it was all for naught because nobody came. Bill and I made some connections with the two KDPS police bike officers that came to lead and follow the ride, and heard their stories of policing on bicycle.

Clark Bennett, Sharon Surna, Bill Surna and I attended the Milwood Elementary Family Fitness Night to hand out booklets, 5'yard signs, and do safety checks on bikes. This event was very well attended and included fun outdoor activity games, Strider bike learn to ride for Kindergartners, and our bike checks. Unfortunately, this opened a can of worms as many parents and kids brought their trashed department store bikes which we attempted to make rideable in five minutes, with limited success. We did hand out safety booklets and talked to a few kids and parents about safe riding. The PE teacher, Jim Horn, was surprised at the turnout and the number of bikes that showed up. In the future we need to make sure we can stay on task educating instead of fixing bikes..

Thanks a bunch to Sharon, Bill and Clark for volunteering your time and knowledge to these events.

Paul Wells, Education Chair

DA2



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. Send articles & associated photos to editor@kalmazoobicycleclub.org. Lots of good things going on out there on Da2 wheels.

Friend to Cyclist

Helping create and sustain well connected, courteous, and vibrant communities. Friend to Cyclists is a locally focused collective in and near Kalamazoo County, Michigan, that encourages bicycling for transportation, fitness, and pleasure. Together we seek to build community, increase physical activity, make our streets and roads safer and less congested, and support local businesses and organizations. Click on above link to learn more.



Paul Sotherland , KBC Grants and Awards Director

KBC Photo Contest

I have received many excellent photos and we will be voting on the winners at the October KBC meeting. Still working on getting a dealership to donate a C-class Mercedes-Benz for the prize pool and have not yet given up hope. Appreciate everyone who has submitted photos to this contest.

Charlie Grdina, KBC Editor

Michigan Ave Maintenance (W Main - Harrison)

If you have been downtown Kalamazoo recently you have noticed the positive and calming changes to the city's main street. Many changes are still coming and clicking on the above link will provide an overview of them. This is GREAT NEWS and you will be immediately happy when you read it! Thanks to Paul Sotherland for sending it my way.

Sign, Sign Everywhere a Sign

• Undoubtedly all of you have seen the new Bike Route signs around the county. Here are some statistics for Bike Routes on RCKC roads:

- 179.535 total miles of bike route to be signed*
- 516 number of bike route signs to be installed*
- 102 number of sign relocations to facilitate the bike route signing
- Primary Road signs:435
- Local Road signs:81
- Three (3) townships with the most Bike Route signs: Kalamazoo (78), Comstock (66), Oshtemo (56)
- Three (3) townships with the least Bike Route signs: Charleston and Wakeshma (11 tied), Brady and Prairie Ronde (14 tied)

The signed routes are the highlighted routes on the attached map (the preferred bike route map generated a few years ago from RCKC consultation with KBC members and others).

Mike Boersma, KBC Member & Road Commission Liaison

THUNDERCATS MTB CLUB

Earlier this year KBC provided the THUNDERCATS Mountain Bike Club a financial grant. Click on the above link for short video of the club at a local race. Looking at the smiles on those faces and positive experiences those youth are having it looks to be money well spent.



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. Get out and ride your bike !

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



<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Link</u>
Fall Foliage Ride	21 October 2023	Above Article in Pedal Press
Lowell Gravel Race	28 October 2023	LOWELL CLASSIC GRAVEL ROAD RACE - Home (thelowell50.com)