

PRESIDENT’S LETTER — JOHN KNOWLTON

Welcome to Mo.

Mass times velocity. **$p = mv$**

That is the formula for momentum in Newtonian physics. By the way, the “**p**” comes from Latin *pellere* “push, drive.” I sense a push in Kalamazoo toward a better bike culture. One piece of evidence is the “Tour de Lanes” we hosted on November 4. Paul Sotherland and I had taken a ride on Michigan Avenue earlier in the fall to check out the new bike lanes. We cooked up the idea to gather some others to ride as a group to experience the new facilities and show motorists that we are using them. Paul grabbed donuts and I hired a graphic designer to promote the ride. The graphic was shared with other bike groups in town: Modeshift, Open Roads, Bike Friendly Kalamazoo, Portage Senior Center Bike Group, Pedal Bikes, etc.



When we arrived at the Pedal downtown parking lot, there were a few people on bikes including some I didn’t recognize. And then a few more came. And they kept coming. By the time we launched there were people under 5 years old with every decade of life represented up to age 78 (my dad)! And the total count was around 70 people. On November 4th, not the middle of July! Whether you like the bike lanes or not, this is a lot of people showing up to say “yes” to bikes. Bikes as recreation, transportation, physical fitness and commuting.

In the formula for momentum mass could represent the number of people on bikes. And velocity is not only speed, but direction. So the more people moving in the same direction, the more momentum we have. Road Commission of Kalamazoo County continues to develop their non-motorized infrastructure. City of Kalamazoo is putting a lot of effort into bike facilities. And multiple groups are coming together to ride and bear witness to the value of bikes and bicyclists. That is **momentum**.



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Please send stories and photos of your rides to:

editor@kalamazoobicycleclub.org

To keep pushing, we recently adapted our meeting format. From 6 to 7 p.m. is the business meeting. At 7 p.m. we welcome a guest speaker from the community to share about what they are doing to build bike culture. They have 30 minutes to share, plus time for questions. We're calling this segment "Cycling Shorts" - can you guess who came up with the name? Past guests include Isaac Green from Open Roads (September) and John Lindenmeyer from League of Michigan Bicyclists (October). November's guests were two KBC grant recipients, the Clark Logic Race team and Thunder Cats youth mountain bike race team.

In December we will have Dustin Black of Modeshift. Come check out Cycling Shorts!

KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be **Tuesday, December 12 at 6:00 p.m. at [Oshtemo Community Center](#) (North Room), 6407 Parkview Ave, Kalamazoo MI .**

Kalamazoo Bicycle Club November 14, 2023 Oshtemo Community Center

ATTENDANCE

Clark Bennett	Paul Wells	Doug Kirk
Peter Coles	Paul Sotherland	Rick Whaley
Bill Surna	Paul Selden	John Knowlton
Michael Krischer	Paul Guimond	Pam Sotherland
Mike Boersma	Paul Rehkopf	Teri Olbrot
Angela Bowers	Tim A. Stewart	Hugo Galver
Don Leiton		

President John Knowlton opened the business meeting at 6:00 PM and shared a copy of the agenda with everyone present.

MDOT Update: The lack of non-motorized infrastructure on the newly built intersections on US 131 in Schoolcraft was brought to the attention of those present at the KATS meeting by Paul Sotherland the day following our KBC meeting. It was confirmed that MDOT ignored the needs of bicyclists and other nonmotorized traffic when this project was planned. Paul added, "there is a decent chance that it could be taken care of in the future," and "we aren't the only ones pressing against this." Doug Kirk offered that additional pressure on MDOT to develop a plan of remediation would be appropriate. John Knowlton added that political pressure might be warranted if MDOT does not remediate the situation on their own. Paul points out that this oversight has just been recognized by MDOT and KATS, a budget would need to be created for any future project, and that construction has ended for the winter.

Community Bike Shop Proposal: Doug Kirk floated the idea of KBC helping to create and support a community bike shop to help unhoused and low income members of our community who rely on bicycles for their transportation. Members present agreed this could be a very worthwhile project, especially if we could partner with other non-profit entities such as Dignity in Motion and Ministry in Community. Doug will continue to explore what would be needed to develop this project and possibly write a KBC grant.

Friend of Cycling Award: Paul Sotherland reported that there are three candidates for this award. Their names will be shared later.

Communications Director: John Knowlton announced that he has met with Jenna Kovach and she has agreed to take on the role of Communications Director, now that Jillian Howland has relocated.

Tour de Lane Recap and Next Steps: A strong turn-out of about 75 people showed up on a cold November day to experience the cycle track and enjoy donuts and cider. The City of Kalamazoo expressed appreciation and encouragement to plan similar events in the future.

Kalamazoo Bikes Idea: Several community stakeholders have approached John Knowlton about collaborating on some projects to promote bicycling culture. Details will be shared at a later date.

Mall Multimodal Mayhem: Bill Surna announced that a Midwest tandem group, Midwest United Tandem Society, is considering a change in venue for their annual event and are considering Kalamazoo as a destination. The consensus of the members present was that with our own event struggling, we would not be in a position to provide any significant help to MUTS.

Kal Tour: The future of Kal Tour is in question, due to decreased attendance and revenue. As our main fundraiser, and as events of this nature evolve and change nation wide, what does KBC want our event to look like? Who can help develop and implement a fresh vision of Kal Tour? Discussion to be continued.

BFK Donation: Paul (Doc) Rehkopf presented John Knowlton with a donation on behalf of Bike Friendly Kalamazoo. Many thanks, BFK, for your continued collaboration and support!



Elections: President John Knowlton, Vice President Paul Guimond, and Treasurer Pam Sotherland were unanimously affirmed for another year of service on the Executive Committee. Secretary Teri Olbrot regrets that she cannot continue in this role. The position of KBC Club Secretary remains open. Please contact Teri or another member of the EC if you can serve in this capacity.

With the business meeting concluded, John Knowlton welcomed our guest speakers Hugo Galver, Don Leiton and Angela Bowers, who reported on KBC grant recipient Thunder Cats, and Tim A. Stewart, who reported on Team Clark Logic, also supported by a KBC grant.

Teri Olbrot, KBC Secretary Extraordinaire

2023 KBC Friend of Bicycling Award Nominees

KBC members present at the upcoming Business Meeting of the club at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, 12 December, will have an opportunity to select the recipient(s) of the 2023 Friend of Bicycling Award. Please attend the meeting and cast your vote. The following three organizations were nominated to receive the Friend of Bicycling Award this year:

Southwest Michigan ThunderCats – Established in 2022, ThunderCats is the first K-8 youth mountain biking program in the greater Kalamazoo area. For the 2023 season, they had 52 parent volunteer coaches and 70 kids signed up. Their goal is to help young cyclists build confidence, develop skills, strengthen friendships, and be active for life. More than riding a bike, the ThunderCats program is about gaining healthy habits, learning skills for life, and sharing the joy of riding. They also strive to build a community that respects cyclists and that appreciates and advocates for preserving and developing natural spaces for enjoying off-road cycling. ThunderCats was a KBC grant recipient in 2023.

City of Kalamazoo Public Services Department AND City of Kalamazoo Community Planning and Economic Development Department – During 2023 these two City of Kalamazoo departments planned and created the bike lane (cycle track) on Michigan Ave through downtown Kalamazoo that will be a game-changer for downtown. It immediately creates a much more conducive (*i.e.* safer) cycling environment and thereby invites people of all ages to ride their bikes where they would never have considered riding them in the past. In addition to this major improvement in cycling infrastructure this year, these City of Kalamazoo departments planned and installed Bike Route signs on many City streets, helping to guide cyclists along City streets while raising awareness of everyone to the presence of cyclists. Members of both departments have clearly been proactive supporters of creating a non-motorized infrastructure in Kalamazoo and have sought input from the cycling community on many ongoing street design projects that will have a positive effect on urban cycling for years to come.

The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) – Using professional engineering judgement and factors such as traffic volumes, safety and crash history, connectivity, speed limits, topography, and through consultation with various stakeholders (including members of the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club) the RCKC developed 180 miles of non-motorized routes on primary and local roads throughout Kalamazoo County and installed over 500 Bike Route signs along those routes during 2023. In addition, The RCKC continues to create and maintain a county road system that is safe and convenient for travel by all users, provide information supporting recreational bicycling and bicycle commuting, and regularly advocates for the rights of cyclists to travel safely on Kalamazoo County roads.

Paul Sotherland, KBC Grants and Awards Director

December 2023 Membership

Total Memberships: 318

Total Individuals: 484

New or Renewed Members: Tom Holm & Family; Cheryl Sherwood & Cricket Howard; Scott Steurer

December Expired Members: David Anderson; Michael Barnett; Tori Cane; Jacqueline Killmer; Robyn Richardson & Family

Rich Whaley, Membership Director

The Future of KalTour—A Call to Wheels !

At the December KBC business meeting there will be a discussion regarding the future of KalTour. Many KBC members have both helped with KalTour and have enjoyed riding over the years. However, there are some barriers to continuing KalTour in 2024.

Ridership has not recovered in the post-pandemic years of 2021 to 2023. We are running less than half of the number of riders that we had in 2019 and previous years.

There are not enough KBC members who are willing to volunteer for KalTour duties which prevent riding KalTour. This includes taking the late shift at registration, working the sag stops not covered by AMBUCS, and driving sag vehicles. It is not desirable to count on a small group of past volunteers to perform the same tasks each year.

Although KalTour committee meetings have been well attended, the KalTour committee does not have specific people responsible for major areas such as food and routes.

The increasing importance of social media and the decline in the number of area bike shops have greatly changed the methods of publicizing KalTour. New methods are needed to reach beyond the KBC membership in attracting riders.

There remain many positive aspects of KalTour: It provides a positive cycling experience for many local and out-of-town riders and has remained profitable. The Kazoo Valley AMBUCS members have continued to support KalTour, and KBC has continued to split the profits with them. The use of an indoor facility, Wind + James, for the post-ride lunch was well received.

I encourage all KBC members who are interested in seeing KalTour continue, to attend the December 12 business meeting which begins at 6 pm.

Michael Krischer
KalTour Director

KBC Education Committee Update

The Bike Camp Committee has decided to let Bike Camp take a rest after 16 years of success teaching new cyclists the ropes of road riding. Bike Camp didn't seem to recover to the numbers we had in previous years, and without a clear plan to promote it more extensively, we can't be sure of increasing the attendance. Covid sure seems to have been the main culprit. We cancelled our 2019 and 2020 editions, and had very low numbers for 2021 and 2022. Bike Camp is a lot of work to prepare and present for just a few folks. If there are people out there in KBC land that have ideas for Bike Camp or a similar program, let us know. We are always welcoming to new folks with fresh ideas. We thank all the many KBC members who have worked on Bike Camp all these years, and the many riders who joined us year after year to help lead Bike Camp rides.

We are working on and collaborating on some new educational outreach programs, and hope to have some plans for 2024 soon. Our four KBC League Certified Instructors, Renee Mitchell, Bill Surna, Jennifer Johnson, and me will be active in the area leading bike education projects.

Paul Wells,
KBC Education Chair

DA2



Soliciting 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 happening on Da2 wheels.

2023 YEAR END CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION

Please consider donating to the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club. Your donations help support all of the activities of the KBC, but especially the activities that are NOT weeknight rides, including local advocacy, BikeCamp, community outreach, League Certified Instructor training and bicycling programs, bicycling infrastructure like bike stations at local parks and trailheads, support of youth cycling, and other activities which enhance bicycling for the entire community. The Kalamazoo Bicycle Club is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations to the KBC are tax deductible. There is a link on the KBC website to donate <https://www.kalmazoobicycleclub.org/donate-to-kbc/>

It is also possible to do a Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA if you meet certain criteria. More information here: <https://www.kalmazoobicycleclub.org/qcd-to-kbc/>

Mike Boersma, KBC Kalamazoo Road Commission Liaison

KBC Membership Dues Increasing

The Executive Committee recently reviewed the club's annual expenses and determined that, given the increase in our insurance costs, an increase in dues is in order. According to the KBC constitution "the dues amount will be set yearly at the first meeting of the new year by the Executive Committee." It has been a number of years since the last increase. Therefore, as of mid October, individual and family dues have increased by \$10/year; an individual membership is now \$35/year and a family membership is now \$45/year.

Pam Sotherland, KBC Finance Director

Editors Note: At less than 2 lattes increase it remains a bargain. Speak with anyone who has used the insurance coverage to remove any doubt.