

## MESA Ride - Day 4 - Defiance-Van Wert-Delphos-St. Marys by Kurt Anderson



Rotarian Herb de la Porte and son Eric ride together on a tandem bike for the whole 400 plus miles of MESA Tour.

If given the choice, most of the riders might prefer to do 100 miles in 85 degree weather, rather than 61 miles in 95 degrees. Throw in a stiff crosswinds and the choice is likely to be unanimous.

After minor maintenance and breakfast at Peter Lundberg's "Charlie's Down Under," we bid good-bye to president Jerry Overmier and the Defiance Rotary, following a scenic route along the Auglaize River toward Van Wert.

Outside Van Wert we met president Phil Farris and his wife Robin, who hosted an early lunch at the farm estate of Robin's parents, Darwin and Sharon McClure. Sharon won our respect by helping host us only 2 days after gall bladder surgery. And the Van Wert Rotary earned our respect as President Phil announced that the club was contributing to the MESA tour. Thank-you, Van Wert!

The cool shade in the McClure yard outside Van Wert was the last we would see for a long time. As the clock moved past 11 AM, the thermometer climbed over 90, and steady crosswinds made staying upright a challenge, the miles seemed to correspondingly lengthen. Our pace slowed substantially and progress became a true effort.

Thankfully, the Delphos club had provided an oasis at the Lake Oscar picnic facility, with a welcome second lunch to restore our depleted energy and a fabulously bone-chilling well-water hose "shower," which offered as much entertainment as refreshment. We enjoyed great laughter and fellowship with Delphos president Dick Clark, immediate past president and welcome coordinator Tom Grothouse, and other Delphos Rotarians. The stop was genuinely needed and appreciated, as was the Delphos club's MESA contribution. Thank-you, Delphos Rotarians!



The final 25 miles into St. Marys were simply brutal. The heat was sweltering, the wind relentless, and...oh, yeah...a bridge was out. (This we had been forewarned of by the Delphos club, who gave alternate directions).

But our spirits revived as we arrived in the downtown park and were met by the St. Marys Rotary club. President Keith Fledderjohann, welcome coordinator Linda Vogel and numerous members of the St. Mary's club presented us with a MESA donation of \$2,500! With 75 members, the St. Mary's donation is the largest per capita club donation the Tour has received to date! Thank-you, St. Marys Rotary!!



After showers at our respective host homes, we gathered at “Legends,” a local sports restaurant whose name more likely comes from the food portions than a sports theme. Paul Smith’s pork tenderloin sandwich was so big it had wings, and Herb de la Porte was actually sharing food! Welcome coordinator Linda Vogel was a fabulous host in place of President Keith Fledderjohann, who was understandably excused to celebrate a major milestone...his 25th wedding anniversary. Congratulations, Keith and Pam.

Words cannot express the riders’ joy and satisfaction in seeing the enthusiastic support of local clubs for the MESA mission and the Tour. The meals, lodging and fellowship have the character of family celebrations, while the donations have the character of family compassion and generosity. In so many ways, these clubs are truly demonstrating Service Above Self.



This article was written by Kurt Anderson

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This is the 4th year Kurt has been a rider and has been the contributing author all four years.