

dAy FoUr... that's an appropriate way to indicate the kind of day the riders had today – a real up and down day.

We began the day with the Norwalk Rotary Club, after a nice sleepover with our host families. We were provided a nutritious breakfast at the Fisher Titus Regional Medical Center. President Wayne Babcanec presented the tour a donation check he said was raised weekly through donations at meetings – a great way to do it. Wayne was also quick to say how active the local hospital – Fisher Titus – has been in donating equipment and materials over many years on a consistent basis.



After the “requisite” group photo, taken of course by past president, Dick Stein, the group headed out for the shortest day of the week distance-wise. We first headed south toward Willard where we were to link up with PDG Jim Smith, who was to riding with us to our lunch stop in Greenwich. Jim and his friend Ellie ratcheted up our day's rider number to 25, another big day for MESA.

We always like to be positive in our journals, allowing our readers to believe our efforts are without incident. Mostly that's true but not entirely. Today we had a couple of unusual events – there was a hornet sting under the helmet (Ed Stewart), a wasp sting on the neck (Paul Smith) and a snapped front shifter cable (Herb and Eric de la Porte). The first two were taken care with medicines; the cable problem was dealt with at the end of the day after the father-son duo rode their tandem only in their lower range of gears all day. Luckily in the hills that was all they needed.

The hills began immediately after leaving Norwalk and kept challenging the riders all day, with an increase in elevation and slope as the troupe progressed. Our lunch stop was Greenwich where we met members of the Greenwich Rotary at Reservoir Park. Aaahhh, Cold cuts and fresh fruit – a perfect lunch for the weary. Our stop was short though, because we knew we had more hills to conquer.



From Greenwich our route took us south into more hills. Now mind you, hills are really only half bad – what goes up gets to come down. So we had some pretty nice coasting hills too; but the net energy expended is much greater than riding on the flats. Somehow the winds kept finding us as well. It seems like all week we have faced headwinds, which make it seem as though you are riding up a hill... constantly.

About halfway between Greenwich and Ashland is the little town of Olivesburg, best known for nothing at all except having one of the greatest little country-Amish stores around. And Ice Cream! (You have to understand that ice cream is one of bicyclist's weaknesses and most will go out of their way to find some... which we did.)



Shortly out of Olivesburg, we take a sharp easterly turn and head into Ashland, where the hills just got longer. The effect of the hills is remarkable: some of our group rides very strong and they arrived in Ashland around 2:30, greeted by no one since they were so far ahead of time. The rest straggled in group by group, with the final stragglers arriving exhausted around 4:00, which was the planned time of arrival.

The Ashland Rotary members met us at the Ashland Country Club, where our next round of host families greeted us warmly and whisked us away to their homes from cleaning up – not that we needed it.

Later we reconvened at the country club for a super supper outdoors. About 60 people celebrated the evening together and it was quite a celebration. In the audience were PDGs Dave Daugherty from Mansfield and Jim Hunt from Elyria; other members from Mansfield and Vermilion also attended, for special presentations. After a few short



speeches, check presentations were made; Ashland was first, and then came Mansfield, then two from Vermilion, by Sue Hunt representing her club and Bud Ennis, one of the non-Rotarians riding but representing the Vermilion Club. After the official business was done the group was treated to musical performances by a guitar-violin duo offering a variety of musical selections... joined in by dancing even.

The evening concluded with the riders going off to their host families' homes for an evening of personal fellowship and resting up for the next day's challenges. After four days of riding the tour has completed about 265 miles of Ohio grandeur, collecting over \$8,000 in donations on the road, and sharing the tour experience with hundred of Rotarians and their families. Two more to go...



Ed Stewart – Tour Coordinator