

shaker

Life

NORTHEAST OHIO'S COMMUNITY

Biking In Shaker:

- The Best Routes
- Easy Rides
- Killer Rides
- Safety Lessons

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The Pleasures of Biking

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PHOTOS BY

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Shaker Life looks at some of the people, places, and City initiatives that make this eco-friendly and healthful pastime so appealing to many Shaker residents.

Talk to Shaker residents about bicycling and you'll quickly discover that the City is chock-full of enthusiasts. They're using bicycles to commute to the office or to run errands around town. On weekends, they're pedaling the City's neighborhoods with children in tow or taking off for rides in the Chagrin River Valley and beyond.

What these residents will readily – and enthusiastically – tell you is that Shaker and the surrounding region are great places to ride a bicycle.

“Shaker residents have a big appreciation for cycling,” says Frank Hall, who has been outfitting Shaker's bicyclists from his store, Bicycle Boulevard, on Chagrin Boulevard for 16 years. “And they know how wonderful it is to cycle in this area. You can go out for a 10-mile ride and really have a nice time.”

Quiet side streets. Beautiful neighborhoods. Wide boulevards. Top-notch multi-use trails. A location close to down-

town Cleveland, the Metroparks, and the rolling hills and valleys of the eastern suburbs. These are just some of the reasons residents give for why it's such a treat to bicycle in and around Shaker Heights.

“We are just so connected to the places around us,” says Ann Klavora, a senior planner for the City. “That makes it a great community for all types of cyclists.”

“We have a network of neighborhood streets and sidewalks that other communities don't have. You can get from one part of the City to another by riding through the neighborhoods. This makes it a safe and pleasant experience,” she adds.

Moreover, the City has been proactive about keeping pace with a growing interest in cycling. Since 2008, Shaker has opened two multi-use paved trails, at Horseshoe Lake Park and on the Shaker Boulevard median, that these days are popular destinations for many cyclists.

Last fall, the Shaker Heights City School District installed bicycle racks at all

its buildings, and a recent \$460,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program will allow the City to install count-down pedestrian signals and other signage “with the overall goal of making it safer for kids to walk and bike to school,” says Klavora.

There's more to come. Shaker is working with surrounding communities on the Lake-to-Lakes Trail plan, with the goal of connecting Shaker Lakes to Lake Erie through Cleveland's University Circle and Rockefeller Park. The Warrensville/Van Aken Transit Oriented Development Plan calls for making that intersection navigable by cyclists. And Shaker continues to look at ways to add Share the Road and other signage to mark a network of bicycle routes connecting points of interest in the City, such as Thornton Park, the libraries and schools, and City Hall. This network plan was created in 2008 in collaboration with the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA).

Without a doubt the future of bicycling in and around Shaker Heights is bright, and residents will be enjoying the simple pleasure of riding their bicycles for a long time to come.

[commuting]

Steven Izen *20 years and counting*

For more than 20 years, Steven Izen has been bicycling year-round to his office on the campus of Case Western Reserve University.

“I ride about 3,000 miles a year,” says Izen, a professor of mathematics, who moved to Shaker in 1990. “I even ride through snowstorms.”

Izen is a familiar sight many mornings, riding the back roads of Shaker to North



Steven Izen

Park, which he then takes to University Circle via Martin Luther King Boulevard. It's a commute of about four miles from his Fernway-area home, but Izen admits to occasionally getting lost. "Sometimes I get lost on the way in because if it's a nice day and I don't have immediate obligations, I'll take the opportunity to explore."

Indeed, Izen has ridden on every street in Shaker and then some. "I ride all over," says Izen. "Through Cleveland, up north, sometimes I head out east first, sometimes south."

"The streets of Shaker and the east side of Cleveland are really bike friendly," he says.

Izen has been commuting – and exploring – on his bicycle since his undergraduate days at Polytechnic Institute of NYU and then in graduate school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"It's fun and I get exercise. It relieves stress. After a stressful day, I get home and I feel so much better."

Weekends bring more opportunities for Izen to enjoy his bicycle, as his wife, Susannah Muskovitz, and three sons often join him for rides around the region. "We ride as a family," says Izen. "In fact, in good weather we regularly take the boys on rides 30 miles long or more. That's not a big deal for them."

Even winter's worst doesn't deter him. Izen simply dons an extra layer of cold-weather gear, his insulated ski helmet and hits the road.

"The worst part of riding in winter is the frozen slush. When your wheels hit the slush, it pushes you off to the side and you can fall."

Over the years, Izen has learned how to deal with weather, traffic, and whatever else the road might throw his way. "You learn through doing it what you can and can't do," he notes.

"I've just been doing it forever. It's part of who I am."



[workout / recreation]

Anja and Eckhard Jankowsky

Getting competitive

Speed, sweat, and more speed are what Anja and Eckhard Jankowsky are after when they hop on their bicycles and head out to the Chagrin Valley from their Sussex home.

The Jankowskys, both natives of Germany, enjoy competing in some of the many athletic endurance events (think marathon or triathlon) that are held around Ohio each summer. This year, Eckhard plans to take part in his fourth triathlon, while Anja will compete in her first duathlon.

A triathlon combines swimming, running, and bicycling, while a duathlon is running and bicycling only.

The couple has found that Shaker is a great place to train for these events. "It's really fantastic that you can go out from your house and get to an area, like the Chagrin River Road, where you can ride for miles and miles," says Anja.

A typical workout for both Anja and Eckhard is about 20 miles, out Shaker Boulevard to the Chagrin Valley and back, a ride they do most weekend mornings through the spring, summer, and fall.

In an Olympic-distance triathlon or duathlon, which is the distance that the Jankowskys favor, competitors ride about 25 miles.

"I am very boring," jokes Eckhard, an associate professor at the Center for RNA Molecular Biology at Case Western Reserve University's School of Medicine. "I go the same way every time. I don't mind that, though, and it's good to know where all the potholes are. That is not unimportant information."

But as both Jankowskys point out, a bicycle ride that begins in Shaker can easily continue for 60 miles or more. "You can go from North Chagrin Reservation to South Chagrin Reservation. That's what a lot of people do," notes Anja, who works as a freelance website designer.

"You can even go further," adds Eckhard. "You can go from one Metropark to another and come back on the Towpath Trail."

Eckhard competed in his first triathlon, in downtown Cleveland, in 2005. He has since done the Portage Lakes Triathlon twice (winning his age group in 2007) and a Half-Ironman Triathlon in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Until recently, Anja was focused on running. She has competed in the Cleveland and Towpath Half Marathons several times (placing in the top 10 percent of her age group) and, in 2008, won her age group in the Towpath 10K. But she caught the cycling bug after she underwent foot surgery in 2007. "The only thing I could do was biking and so I started taking spinning classes at the gym. I had so much fun with that, I just thought at some point, I should get a bike too.

"Shaker is so well-situated for bicycling. We haven't even discovered all the possibilities yet," she adds.

[commuting]

Claudia and Mike McCord

Bicycling to work and loving it

After years of driving and taking the Rapid to work, it didn't take much to convince Claudia McCord and husband Mike to start bicycling instead.

For Claudia, it was a new bicycle. For Mike, it was the opening of Cleveland's Euclid Corridor. "Before Euclid was done, I never considered riding, even though I was a big cyclist," says Mike, who works downtown for the U.S. Department of Labor. "I always took the Rapid or drove. My cycling was mostly in the evening or on weekends."

But once he saw the construction underway on Euclid, he got to thinking. "There are bike paths on both sides, so I started exploring how to ride to the office."

These days, Mike typically leaves the

couple's home on Lomond Boulevard by 8 am and takes the side streets of Shaker over to Larchmere Boulevard, then heads down Fairhill Road to Euclid. His office is on East 9th and Lakeside. It's a commute of just under an hour each way, which Mike notes is faster than taking the Rapid and not much longer than driving.

He's become such a regular sight during the warmer months that one of Claudia's colleagues can gauge whether she's on time for work by when she sees Mike. "So if she sees Mike in certain places, she's like, 'Oh, I'm late,'" jokes Claudia, who is the library technician at Fernway School.

Claudia, meanwhile, started riding to work last fall, thanks mostly to a new bicycle.

"I bought it in June and by the time school started, it was really incentive to want to ride it," she says. "So I thought, I'll ride. It's really the perfect distance. It probably takes a minute longer to ride

than to drive, especially if the lights are going my way."

Claudia actually makes the commute twice a day, heading home at lunchtime to walk the family dog.

"So, I really get my exercise now by riding to school, riding home at noon, walking the dog, then getting on the bike and riding back," Claudia says.

With racks now available at all Shaker schools, Claudia hopes more students will start bicycling. "I'm hoping that by riding to Fernway everyday, the kids will notice that it's another way of getting to school."

Claudia and Mike grew up in Shaker and raised their children here. They view the city as a wonderful place to cycle. "When I was a kid in high school, I would often ride my bike," notes Mike. "Shaker has always been a great place to ride."

Adds Claudia: "I love looking at the houses when I cycle. I just love Shaker houses and all the beautiful gardens."

Claudia McCord with Fernway students Cory Henderson (left) and Zack Assel.



[commuting]

Rick Smith and Tania Menesse

Take the bike, leave the car

When Rick Smith and Tania Menesse were growing up in Shaker, they rode their bicycles all over town. So when the couple moved back to Shaker five years ago, it was only natural that they would pick up where they left off.

These days, if their destination is in Shaker, Smith and Menesse (and their children, Sage and Hazel) will more often than not leave the car in the garage and take their bicycles.

“Shaker is so ideal for biking,” notes Smith. “It’s a small footprint, about six square miles.” Adds Menesse: “Shaker is a beautiful place and when you bike you see and appreciate things.”

Indeed, Smith and Menesse have incorporated cycling into most aspects of their lives in the City. On many mornings, Menesse will take Hazel to school at the Early Childhood Enrichment Center by bicycle. In the evenings, Smith will bicycle to pick her up. Trips to Thornton Park and the Main Library, errands to Shaker Town Center, and excursions to Horseshoe Lake or Shaker Square are also typically made on two wheels.

“Our favorite bike ride is to the Main Library. That’s a really great ride and the kids get worn out, so it’s nice to go into the library and sit and look at books,” says Menesse.

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is another favorite destination. “It’s great to take a half-mile-to-mile bike trip and then spend some time in a natural setting and bike back,” notes Smith.



Claudia McCord suits up.

Western Reserve Wheelers

On the road for 30 years

If it’s a sunny Sunday morning during the summer, you can bet that members of the Western Reserve Wheelers are out riding the rolling hills and valleys of Northeast Ohio. Founded in 1972, the bicycle club sponsors weekly rides from the eastern suburbs to places like the Cuyahoga River Valley and Mentor Headlands.

The Wheelers began with a group of cyclists who met on weekends at John Carroll University to ride out to Hudson. “After a while people wanted to do some-

thing different, so we rode the ride in reverse. From there, we graduated to other rides,” recalls Bill Downie, who has lived in Shaker for 50 years and ridden with the Wheelers on and off since its early days.

Now, the club does more than 40 rides each season, one each Sunday from late March to late October. There are also informal rides on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings.

Recreational bicycle clubs are an American tradition that dates back to at least 1878, when the first bicycle club was founded in Boston. By the turn of the century, there were hundreds of clubs

across the country.

“I have found it a lot more fun to be with a group,” says Greg Coleman, who lives in the Sussex neighborhood and joined the Wheelers last year. “We can have conversations. And when people get flat tires, we all stop to fix it.”

Coleman also appreciates the push he gets from fellow members who, like him, are looking to improve their performance. “Sometimes we call each other up and challenge each other to make sure we’re at the rides,” he says.

The Wheelers divide riders into three groups. Group A sets the fastest pace, typ-



Tania Menesse and Rick Smith with daughters Sage (left) and Hazel.

ically around 18 to 22 miles per hour, and rides the farthest, 40 to 50 miles. Group B clocks in at roughly 15 to 18 miles per hour for 30 to 40 miles. And Group C rides at 10 to 12 miles per hour for 20 to 30 miles.

“We call it the Over the Hill group,” jokes Downie, who joined Group C at age 74, after years of riding with Group B and sometimes A. “We’re all older and we ride with a sense of humor. We talk about the good old days, but no one is climbing Old Mill hill anymore.” Some of the Group C riders are in their 80s.

The Wheelers’ Sunday morning rides

take them all over the region, beginning with easy rides to Shaker Lakes, Solon, and Chagrin Falls in the spring. In the summer, there are rides to Kent (the Silver Lake area), Hale Farm, and even Ashtabula. A Cider Ride in the fall takes members past the apple orchards in Geauga County.

Riding miles and miles through Northeast Ohio can be inspiring. “I like to take in the scenery, take in the sunshine. I view it as an escape from the routines of the week. I like to just let my mind focus on the moment,” says Shaker resident Dr. Louis Klein, who has ridden with the

Wheelers for almost a decade. “The club has enough rides that essentially we’ve kept the same schedule. No one gets bored.”

While most rides start at the Mandel Jewish Community Center in Beachwood, some begin farther east or west, depending on the morning’s route. For instance, the club’s annual ride to Milan, the birthplace of Thomas Edison, begins in Oberlin.

The Wheelers always welcome new members. For information, visit the club’s website at www.wrwb.com.

[around town]

Megan Hanger and Matt Albers

Slowing down for summer

And while Menesse does still drive to work at the Cleveland Foundation or to classes at Cleveland State University, where she is pursuing a master's degree at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, it is hard to catch Smith riding in a car at all.

You certainly won't find him behind the wheel in rush-hour traffic. Since 2006, Smith has commuted by bicycle year-round to his office at Progressive Insurance in Mayfield Village, a distance of 12 miles each way from the couple's Fernway home. "It's amazing," says Smith. "You get the hardest thing done for the day before you even get to work, so work becomes easier and more relaxed."

"At the end of the day it's even better. Everything that happened during the day melts away," he adds.

Menesse discovered the benefits of bicycling in Shaker with kids while on a break from her career a couple of years ago.

"It was so much more enjoyable to run errands if we biked places. Everything became much more of an adventure and we were getting exercise," says Menesse, adding that bicycling is sometimes faster than taking the car. "It actually takes less time to bike to Thornton than it takes to drive and that was kind of a fun realization."

Both Smith and Menesse hope that, like them, their girls will rely on their bicycles to get them around town, as they get older. "It's a great way to give your kids autonomy," says Menesse. Smith agrees: "Bicycling empowers kids and encourages decision making."

To be sure, their daughter Sage is already a fan. "I like to bike to the library and to Heinen's and with daddy around the town," she says, then smiles and adds: "I like to go fast."

A busy family of five can spend a lot of time in the car, driving from music lessons to sports practice to the library to school to the grocery store to...you get the picture.

Which is why last summer Megan Hanger and Matt Albers decided to start bicycling to some of those places instead.

"The kids reached an age where it was easy for us all to do it together," explains Hanger.

They discovered that getting out of the car made the summer months much more enjoyable, and not just for them, but for daughters Cora, Leah, and Sara as well.

"Otherwise, we're in the car all the time, driving people from place to place. But if we slow down and take the bikes, then it's more enjoyable for everybody," says Hanger.

"We bike to piano lessons, the library, the pool," she says, and Matt sometimes takes the girls up to Heinen's. "I have a

saddlebag on the back of my bike for the groceries," he notes.

The family also enjoys cycling from their Lomond-area home up to Horsehoe Lake or, when in a more adventurous mood, heading out to the Towpath Trail in the Cuyahoga National Forest.

"I love the Towpath," says Cora. "We get ice cream," adds Leah.

Megan and Matt park at the Rockside Road lot, then ride for a couple of miles and back again. They also recommend taking a longer trip on the Towpath, then catching the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad back to the car – a bargain at only \$2 per bicyclist, thanks to the Bike Aboard! program.

"It's a great day trip," says Matt. Adds Megan: "That's truly a nice adventure."

This summer, the family plans more adventures by bicycle. "My kids are older so their endurance is better. We can actually go places," notes Hanger.

Matt Albers and Megan Hanger with daughters Sara (left), Leah, and Cora.



STOP

Rules of the Road

A reminder for residents that there are some specific requirements for cycling in Shaker.

- All cyclists must license their bicycle with the Police Department at 3355 Lee Road. Licenses will be sold from 9 am to 3 pm June 5, 12, 19 & 26 and July 10, 17, 24 & 31. New licenses are \$5. Re-issued licenses are 50 cents. Please bring your bicycle with you when you are purchasing your license.

- Bicycle helmets are required for everyone five and over when operating a bicycle and for all passengers regardless of age. Helmets can be purchased from the Health Department (in City Hall, 3400 Lee Rd.) for \$10 from 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday.

- Children under the age of 14 may ride on the sidewalk, but must yield to pedestrians.

- Bicyclists must ride as near to the right side of the roadway as possible and may not ride more than two abreast in a single lane.

- Motorists should note that a bicycle is considered a vehicle on the road and shares the same rights as any other vehicle.



Jim Sheehan (right) with bike safety student Lee Reis in downtown Cleveland.

Bike Safety *Traffic Skills For Cyclists*

For more information on the Ohio City Bicycle Co-op, visit www.ohiocitycycles.org

The motto of the Ohio City Bicycle Co-op is short and sweet: “We help people use bicycles.” The co-op’s director, Jim Sheehan, is a longtime Shaker resident. Among the many programs at the co-op is the popular Intro To Traffic Skills class, which is offered two Saturdays a month at the co-op’s shop in the Flats.

“We do a parking lot ride and practice some basic handling skills and emergency maneuvers, and then we go for a ride,” says Sheehan, who has also served as a director for the advocacy group, the League of American Bicyclists.

The two-hour Traffic Skills class covers everything from checking equipment and communicating with motorists to handling a bicycle in traffic and learning how to tumble. Following Sheehan shares some basic safety guidelines for Shaker cyclists:

- * Make sure your equipment is working correctly. This includes your bicycle, helmet, gloves, glasses, and lights (especially when riding at night).

- * Understand the law and how it pertains to cyclists. Bicyclists are subject to the same laws as motor vehicles, with two major differences. They are allowed to ride two abreast in one lane,

and they should ride as far to the right side of the road as practicable. In 2006, Ohio ruled that “practicable does not mean a cyclist has to ride all the way over in the gutter,” says Sheehan. “That is not always practical, and not always safe.”

“We spend most of the time in our class talking about lane position – and whether or not to share the lane with a car,” he says. “The cyclist makes that decision because all traffic law is based on the idea of first come, first served – within reason.”

- * Make sure you are communicating with motorists. “Every choice you make on the road communicates something to motorists. Where you ride, how you turn your head, whether you get off the seat when you stop at a traffic light,” explains Sheehan.

- * Develop solid bike handling skills and learn to identify hazards, including other road users who are potentially dangerous and dodgy road surfaces. Take some time to learn maneuvers that can help you avoid an accident. These include emergency stops, emergency turns, and learning how to fall.”

To read more on bicycle safety, Sheehan recommends *Bicycling Street Smarts*, which is online at www.bikexpert.com/streetsmarts/.

Bike Tours *Bicycle Rides In and Around Shaker*

With more than 200 miles of sidewalks and quiet neighborhood streets, not to mention several recently completed multi-use trails, there are plenty of options for cycling in Shaker and the region. Here are some of our favorites.

Shaker Median Trail

This multi-use trail runs for 1.5 miles along the south side of the Shaker Boulevard median from Warrensville Center Road to Sulgrave, then connects to another 1.5 miles of paved trails in Beachwood and Pepper Pike. This is a gently rolling trail that winds in and out of the woods and through fields of wildflowers.

In late summer, stop and sample the blackberries growing by the side of the path. Or bring a picnic to eat on one of the many benches along the route.

Saturday Morning at Shaker Square

Looking for a relaxing way to spend a Saturday morning? How about cycling over to Shaker Square for some shopping at the North Union Farmers Market or for brunch followed by a matinee at Shaker Square Cinemas?

1. For a quieter ride along Shaker's side streets, take Clayton Road (which begins just left of City Hall's front steps) to Warrington Road.
2. Warrington turns into Coventry Road a block or so after you cross S. Woodland Road. Take a left onto Shaker Boulevard to enter the Square.

Southerly Park to the Nature Center

Enjoy a ride around and through Shaker's Southerly Park, followed by a stop at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. Bring a picnic to enjoy at the Nature Center's pavilion or on a bench at Southerly Park.

1. Start the ride on Shaker Boulevard and West Park Boulevard, which is the northwest corner of Southerly Park. Head south on West Park using the multi-use trail. At the corner of West Park and S. Woodland, notice the grove of magnolia trees, planted by Shaker elementary students over the years.
2. Take a left on Woodland to continue around the park, then another left on South Park. Alternatively, you can ride through the park, using one of the multi-use trails.
3. Take South Park to the Nature Center on your left at 2600 South Park Boulevard (just before you hit North Park).

Horseshoe Lake to Lower Shaker Lake

Horseshoe Lake and Lower Shaker Lake are the original mill ponds created when the North Union Shakers dammed Doan Brook in the 19th century. Today, cyclists can enjoy a lovely ride around these lakes and the surrounding parklands.

1. Start at Horseshoe Lake Park (the entrance is on Park Drive between North Park and South Park boulevards) and ride around the lake's perimeter on the multi-use trail. For portions along Park Drive use the road. Check out the marker just before the dam on the South Park Boulevard side of the lake to get more information on the history of Horseshoe Lake. Or better yet, stop at the Shaker Historical Society at 16740 South Park Boulevard, open Tuesday to Friday and Sunday, 2 pm to 5 pm.
2. Next, take the connecting trail west on North Park to Lower Shaker Lake. Circle Lower Shaker Lake by taking a left on Brook Road across the dam, then riding east along South Park Boulevard.
3. Return to the multi-use trail by taking a left from South Park Boulevard onto Larchmere Boulevard, then another left onto N. Woodland Road. Pick up the trail at the corner of N. Woodland and North Park Boulevard. Head east to return to Horseshoe Lake.

The Chagrin River Valley

Some of Northeast Ohio's most beautiful terrain can be found just east of Shaker Heights in the Chagrin River Valley. This 20-mile ride is recommended for experienced cyclists only (and most definitely not for young children).

1. Head east on Shaker Boulevard.
2. After you pass under Interstate 271, at the rotary, take Gates Mills Boulevard heading northeast.
3. At the end of Gates Mills, continue east on Old Mill Road.
4. Take a right on Chagrin River Road going south. This is the heart of the Chagrin River Valley and you will see the Chagrin River on your left. Continue south on Chagrin River Road to S. Woodland Avenue.
5. Head west on S. Woodland to return to Shaker.



Hanger/Albers family

Organized Rides: *For Fun, Challenge, or a Good Cause*

For some Shaker bicyclists, there's no better way to enjoy the sport than to take part in an organized ride. Each year, there are dozens of bicycling events held around Ohio, and hundreds more throughout the U.S. Many are just for fun, while others raise money for charitable causes.

Close to home, there's the Ohio City Bicycle Co-op's Saturday Social Rides. "It's free. We'll loan you a bike. We go at the pace of the slowest person and we stop a lot. It's really social," says Shaker resident and co-op director Jim Sheehan. The five-to-ten mile ride starts at the co-op's shop in the Flats and explores a different part of Cleveland each weekend. Find details at www.ohiocitycycles.org.

Further afield in Burton, there's the popular Sunday in June event, put on by the Cleveland Touring Club. Now in its 34th year, the event takes more than 800 bicyclists on a tour through the heart of Northeast Ohio's Amish country.

"It's a fully supported ride," says Greg Coleman. "There are refreshment stops and repair stations," he says, noting that riders can opt for a 25, 50, 62, or 100 mile route.

Feeling ambitious? The Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) is a one-week tour of Ohio that attracts more than 3,000 cyclists each June, including many cyclists from Shaker. Participants ride about 50 miles each day, camping along the way. This year's GOBA route is through Southeast Ohio and includes Athens, Marietta, and the scenic Hocking Hills region.

Meanwhile, many avid Shaker cyclists hit the roads each summer to raise money for various causes.

Shaker-resident Dr. Louis Klein rides the four-day, 328-mile Pan Ohio Hope Ride. The event, which benefits the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodges, takes riders from Cleveland to Cincinnati. "It's a very enjoyable ride that has grown beautifully over the years," notes Klein. Participants bunk in college dormitories and are bused back to Cleveland at the end of the tour.

For a few Shaker residents, a cycling event offers the opportunity for an extraordinary personal challenge. This June, Winslow Road residents Jim Karlovec and Susie Rabiah will be part of a

four-member team in the grueling Race Across America (RAAM). The 3,000 mile race takes riders across the entire length of the continental U.S. in just eight days, starting in Oceanside, California, and ending in Annapolis, Maryland.

"It's the premier ultra-marathon cycling event in the world," says Karlovec. During the event, Karlovec and Rabiah will alternate riding at top speed for 15 to 30 minutes for a period of up to six hours. Some member of their team will be on the road at all times.

"It's a race. If we don't make certain checkpoints by a certain time, we'll get disqualified," Karlovec says. The couple has ridden in other endurance cycling events over the years, including the historic 750-plus mile Paris-Brest-Paris in France – but nothing compared to RAAM, for which Karlovec and Rabiah trained for more than a year. Follow their progress at giveaway.net.

To learn more about cycling events in Ohio, check out the Ohio Bicycle Events Calendar at <http://www.ohiocycling.info>.

