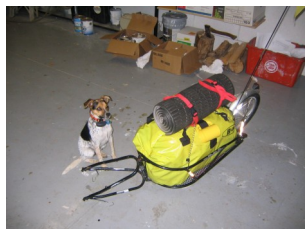


# News from the Road



## Ride Along Lake Erie by Matt Jenkins

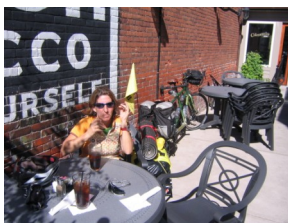
Amy and I have been talking about riding our Co-Motion Speedster from Ohio to NYC in the spring. We have been riding it quite a bit since we bought it two years ago, and we are starting to become comfortable on it. I have a B.O.B. trailer and most of the camping gear we need, so we decided to take a weekend trip to try it out.



*Above: Dot doesn't understand why she can't come.*

With marginal preparation we packed up and started our ride from our home in Munson Township. Our plan was to head east by northeast to a campground east of Erie Pennsylvania. We had an old (and we soon discovered – outdated) county map of Lake County, but our plan was to head north to Lake Erie, then turn right. We have traveled in this fashion before, using marginal highway

maps and a compass to pick our way to a destination. Surprisingly, it usually works. We picked our way north through Geauga County into Lake County. It didn't take long for the stoker / navigator to realize that the old map I had provided her was not accurate. The compass however was, so with a series of right and left turns we worked our way into Madison for lunch in a nice place called The Cornerstone, where we ate huge sandwiches. They let us drag our bike in and sit outside with it. We had to move some chairs around, but they were cool with it.



From there we followed secondary roads northeast to Geneva-on-the-Lake, a pretty little town right on Lake Erie. It has a sort of semi-permanent carnival midway thing going on downtown, but I always

seem to go there after things are shut down for the season so I wasn't tempted to get a tattoo or a Harley Davidson t-shirt. We did find a small convenience store with a very nice bottle of pinot noir from a vineyard in Harpersfield. That would come in handy later. As we made our way east on Route 531 east, we were following the shore of the lake. The 15-20 mph breeze we headed into steadily increased as we worked our way north. The wind along the shore was gusting at 38 mph. Our rig with the trailer and gear was around 120lbs. That was starting to feel heavy as we passed the fifty mile mark. The last forty miles would be upwind and we were starting to feel tired.

Our route took us past a little park just east of Ashtabula. We were going to take a break and eat something while we looked at the lake. It would probably have been a nice place to stop if there wasn't a sandstorm removing the paint from our bike and skin from our legs.

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November 2009

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## Letter from the Editor

Once again, Thanksgiving is approaching quickly. It's a good time to take stock of things and give thanks for the good things in life. It's been tough for many people in both the country and in our area, with unemployment rates so high and financial instability. But despite the negatives, there are things to be thankful for—even if they're small. I'm thankful for the days in the fall when we see the sun. I'm also thankful for all of the great people I've met through CTC—you're a wonderful group of people and I enjoy seeing and meeting you at club rides and other events. What are you thankful for this season?

I always admire the people who ride throughout the year—I dislike cold weather (although I like the change of

seasons—who says I have to be rational?). I also don't like the cold wind in my face or the runny nose that I get when I ride outside in cold temperatures. Kudos to those of you who ride year round. Whether you ride outside or stay in, it's a great time to try a new sport or fitness class. For some suggestions, see the short cross training article on page 7.

This month's articles include a narrative by Matt Jenkins (beginning on the first page), describing the ride he and Amy took along Lake Erie. Below, George Novotny and his son Chris experienced the Irish Hills Tour, Chris's first century! And Cleveland commuter Mark Yahraus tells us about his attempts at mountain bike riding (page 5).

I expect that there won't be too many submissions for the December newsletter. Please consider sending something—a photo of you and your friends on a ride, a narration of your favorite ride, why you like to ride, kudos to another rider, product endorsement, or any other thought that comes to mind. please send it to me at [hawkeyefan4411@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hawkeyefan4411@sbcglobal.net) or [vangilder\\_2@hotmail.com](mailto:vangilder_2@hotmail.com).

Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving!

*Sarah*

Sarah VanGilder  
Editor

## Irish Hills Tour by George Novotny

It may something in the water in northeast Ohio, but many cyclists love the challenge of the hills. My son, Chris (age 25), began riding with me this year and quickly declared his love for them too. His riding ability increased though out the summer and by late August he was talking about doing a century. Although the Hancock Horizontal Hundred is a popular ride for those attempting a century, we decided to forgo that one and do the Irish Hills Tour on September 20, 2009 for his first century. This ride starts a little west of Toledo in Sylvania, Ohio.

We had met one of the ride directors for the tour early in the summer on the Roscoe Ramble. She told us about the ride, and since we had not ridden in that part of the state yet we kept it in the back of our mind. Knowing that part of the state is fairly flat, the word "hills" in the title didn't scare me too much.

A little background: The Irish Hills toured is hosted by the Toledo Area Council of Hostelling International

*"Where were the promised hills? I wasn't disappointed with the lack of hills but Chris decided to scout ahead to see if he could find them. "*

USA and pre-registration was \$20. This was the 37<sup>th</sup> year of the ride and it is always held the weekend after the HHH. They offer routes of 10, 31, 65 or 100 miles. A lunch is included for the 65 or 100 mile route. There are snack stops on all the routes. There were about 200 riders this year; which I understand was down from about 250 last year.

We stayed overnight on Saturday in Toledo and woke to a 47 degree morning. This is way colder than the temperatures I like to ride in. But, we had brought the Under Armour along, so we broke it out and took our

time suiting up. The sun was bright and we were hoping it would warm things up a little. It was a little after 8 a.m. when we got started. A nice touch to this ride was that they took your picture at the start of the ride and had them available at the end.



*Above: Chris and George at the start of the Irish Hills Tour*

We left the starting point on a bike path, which gave us a little time to warm up before the route put us on a road. Once on it, we quickly crossed into Michigan, where most of the ride took place.

[Continued on next page](#)

## Irish Hills Tour continued from page 2

We headed into a rural area pedaling northwest towards Blissfield, our first rest stop. The country side, unlike parts of the HHH, was not walls of corn stalks. Soybeans (I think), grasses and other shorter plants were more predominant.



Above: *On the Road*

Coming out of the country side we wound our way through town to the rest stop in Blissfield. Snacks included an assortment of fruit (apples, bananas and grapes), cookies and deviled eggs. Although the deviled eggs were a real treat, I got hooked on the shamrock sugar cookies.



To the Left: *Shamrock cookies.*

From Blissfield, we head north to Tecumseh on pretty flat roads. Where were the promised hills? I wasn't disappointed with the lack of hills but Chris decided to scout ahead to see if he could find them. I arrived at the lunch stop in Tecumseh a few minutes after he did around 10:30. One of the folks working the Blissfield rest stop told us that if we were doing the 100 mile route they would ship your lunch to the next stop if you didn't want to eat it early. We indulged in more fruit, cookies and deviled eggs, but had our box lunch shipped to the next stop. We also

learned that the hills came after Tecumseh.

*"...we headed back to the car for the ride back to Mentor. Tired but happy, with a newly-minted century rider!"*

Heading northwest again towards Sand Lake, we encountered the promised rolling hills. Although none offered the challenges we can find in the northeast, they did provide a nice break from the flat roads we had been on earlier. The temperature may have crossed into the 60's, but it still felt cool. A really beautiful day for riding. We pulled into the picturesque Sand Lake Park at the 55 mile mark, ready for our box lunch. Fruit and cookies were also available, but sadly no shamrocks. I settled for a chocolate chip and a fig Newton.



Above: *Still smiling at the rest stop at Sand Lake*

From Sand Lake we head southeast on a 30 mile leg back to Blissfield. A wind out of the northwest, while common, did not appear. Instead the wind was out of the south, bringing overcast skies. The wind picked up as

the afternoon wore on but the route had us zigzagging on the country roads, giving us periodic breaks from riding into the wind. We took a short break at the 75 mile mark before continuing the last 10 miles into Blissfield. We struggled a little with the last three or four miles, but hung in there until we hit the rest stop.

Back in Blissfield, we took some time at this stop, eating, drinking and chatting with the volunteers. Some of them had been there when we came through in the morning, so they were having a long day, too. They were a very friendly group.

Feeling better we did the final push back to Sylvania. The route was a little different from what we rode out on. However, the scenery looked familiar, but it just took a little longer to roll by. There was still a nice crowd in the parking lot when we pulled in. We checked in, as they requested and helped ourselves to a little more food and drink and our pictures. After saying good-bye to Patty, the ride director, and thanking her for a wonderful day, we headed back to the car for the ride back to Mentor. Tired but happy, with a newly-minted century rider!

**cTC**  
Cleveland Touring Club

## Ride Along Lake Erie *continued from page 1*

*“We crossed into Pennsylvania and immediately the road became a designated bike route, with a wide, well-marked lane for us. What a difference from Ohio.”*

We rode back up the hill and sat under a tree in a sheltered spot out of the wind. It was after 4 p.m. and we had at least thirty miles to go, so we didn't stay long. Ashtabula has a nice little section of old shops by the river but it is easy to see that the town is hurting. We rode past large mothballed factories with weeds growing through the parking lots. I remember when these plants employed thousands of people, but not now. The next town we rode through was Conneaut, another pretty town that appears to be on the downslide. Lots of lovely old homes left over from the days when people had summer homes there. We left the lakeshore there and headed south to Route 20 east. I would miss the spectacular views, but the steady cross wind was a bit much. We had been crawling along at speeds around 10 mph so we needed to make some speed if we wanted to reach the campground before dark. We brought lights, but the idea of negotiating strange roads by them was a little daunting.

We crossed into Pennsylvania and immediately the road became a designated bike route, with a wide, well-marked lane for us. What a difference from Ohio. The wind dropped and we were up to 16 m.p.h. again. We turned onto Route 5 east, also a well-marked bike route with wide

lanes, we were sensing a pattern here. I hope Ohio follows this pattern soon. The tandem with a trailer is a big thing and it was really nice to be able to relax a little with a smooth straight lane for us. Our route turned north through a beautiful little county road to the campgrounds.

Virginia's Beach (<http://virginiabeach.com>) is an RV campgrounds with some primitive sights. We selected a spot on a hill that had a view out over the bluff and Lake Erie. We had just enough time to set up our tent and go for a walk along the beach before sunset. We cooked dinner with my brand new Jet Boil stove. It was sold as the fastest stove available to boil water which proved to be true, but it also was a little to hot for me to cook anything but water without burning it. Lucky for us, we were so hungry it didn't matter. The wine was great, however, and the sound of the waves breaking on the beach below lulled us to sleep.

Breakfast Saturday morning was instant oatmeal and coffee, not much to power that huge machine with. We broke camp and set out in search of a real breakfast. As we rode past a chicken coup I said, “I bet there are eggs in there,” but we kept riding. The sun was out as we rode to Conneaut, where we found a little lunch counter downtown that was open. It was a typical local diner with car memorabilia and old rock music.



*Above: A beach outside Conneaut*

Breakfast is probably the best meal to order in places like this and we were glad to have a good meal. We got to people watch as the locals filed in. We headed west out of town on Route 20, which in Ohio isn't a bike route, has no bike lane, and is crowded with cars and trucks.

We shifted our route back to 531, which was nicer. Then the rain started – light at first, then by the time we got to Ashtabula – a down-pour. We pulled over at a little coffee shop called Harbor Perk in an old section of town that they are attempting to gentrify along the river. The hot coffee and pastry was nice and we hung out for an hour hoping the rain would let up a little. It didn't. It got worse, so we put our wet gear back on and rode into the rain. The rain would continue for twenty hours, but luckily we didn't know that yet.

We were planning to find a motel room if it got too wet and take it easy. Our plan was to stay in Geneva if possible. That was before we found out it was the “Grape Festival” weekend. I guess it is a pretty big deal, because every hotel and motel was booked. We wandered around in the rain until we settled on the State Park campgrounds in Geneva. The bad weather made it easy to find a campsite. We picked out our site and headed into town to get food for dinner. The Grape festival was pretty soggy. It probably would be fun if it wasn't raining so hard. The streets were full of teenagers in wet hooded sweatshirts, I suppose they were the only people determined enough to go out in this weather. Negotiating the tandem through them was a real challenge. We crouched under a canopy and had a slice of pizza to help get us back.

[Continued on the next page](#)

## A Ride Along Lake Erie continued from previous page

We set up camp in the rain, and began to cook our meal in the rain. I was cooking a dinner of pasta and tomato sauce and some vegetables in a plastic pouch, not exactly “haute cuisine”. The rain continued as a huge motor coach backed in next to us. We were camping at a site that had electrical and water hookups. As I noticed I was once again burning the bottom of my pot, I guess I felt a momentary twinge of envy as I watched them carefully lower the hydraulic leveling pods, push out the bay window attachment, lower the canopy, and adjust the satellite dish all from his dry warm seat. “No sense of adventure,” I said to Amy, peering out from under the fly of the tiny two-man tent where we would spend the next 12 hours. We were lucky that there was a laundry at the campgrounds where we could dry out clothes. We lingered there in the warm, dry, well-lit room until it was time to return to our tent. It wasn’t as bad as I feared – we were warm and dry. And I won at gin rummy. The question of “what will we do if it rains all day?” was answered.

Morning brought more rain. As we lingered over hot coffee, the rain let up. We packed up our sodden tent and stuffed it in the dry bag with the rest of our gear. Our bike was

soaked, and so were the Brooks B-17 saddles, we decided that a tarp would be a good addition. Our neighbors eyed us like we were an alien species. It amazes me how these “campers” bring all the features of home with them. They set out little astroturf mats on the asphalt, and some even put potted plants out. I guess we were an alien species.

Once again we headed out in search of shelter, and breakfast. Cycle tourists spend a lot of time thinking about food and shelter. Sometimes it is hard to pass up a nice clean restaurant, especially when you don’t know when the next one is coming. Our compass directions were the reverse of the way out – south by southwest. Our semi-fictional map was now so waterlogged it was like paper mache. We found ourselves following a pretty road thru cornfields and forests. It was headed in the perfect southwest direction. The only problem was it was dirt, with some washboard. I reasoned that this is also something we should learn to handle. We have 28 mm. Schwalbe Marathons on Velocity Dyad rims – they are pretty good on rough terrain. Our bike was already filthy from all the rain, so we pushed on. The climbs were a challenge in the wet dirt, but we did it. We even

stopped to greet a barking German Shepherd mid-climb. She was friendly and her owner was very apologetic. We mounted up on a hill and got it going without a crash. It is surprising how stable the tandem is. It is hard to get started, and hard to stop, but when it gets going it is pretty smooth. Small bumps that would pull a single don’t affect us much. As we crested the hill, the sun came out for the first time since Friday afternoon.

We crossed into Geauga county, from here we knew the way home, but fatigue was starting to set in. As we got closer to home, I noticed a few signs that our strength was waning. Amy started to laugh at my cynical jokes, a sure sign of the early stages of exhaustion. As we turned onto Sherman road for the final leg, the rolling hills looked a little daunting. “We can do this,” I said aloud, more for me than Amy, as I shifted down into the granny gear.

We dried out our gear and packed it away with a good feeling about our experiment. Headwinds, rain, getting lost, even camping in the rain, we can handle it. Our spring trip will involve long stretches on old railroad beds, even a mile long section through an abandoned railroad tunnel, but I think we can do it.

## CTC Club Notes

### CTC LIST-SERVE

Many members are missing out on announcements from other club members. To receive updates via e-mail from club members regarding schedule changes, weather conditions, road closures, parties, membership, road maps, scheduled rides, etc. Simply send an e-mail to [clevelandtouringclub@hotmail.com](mailto:clevelandtouringclub@hotmail.com) with a request to be added to the list-serve. You will receive an invitation

from the list-serve manager within a few days.

### CLUB DUES & MEMBERSHIP

Club membership is annual and starts May 1 each year; so no matter when you sign up with the club, your membership runs from May 1 to April 30. To join CTC, visit the website at [www.clevelandtouringclub.org](http://www.clevelandtouringclub.org) and download the membership form.

### RIDER STATUS

All riders who join CTC on scheduled weekday and weekend rides *must* be Cleveland Touring Club members. The standard club liability waiver must be signed by all participants. Guests are welcome, but regular and occasional riders must join the club to receive maps, to be covered by club insurance and ride leadership. CTC ride leaders are frequently updated with membership status.

## The Cleveland Bike Commuter by Mark Yahraus

### Why I'll Never Mountain Bike Again

#### Part I

Lots of things seem like a good idea that subsequently prove to be huge mistakes - that spring break tattoo, the color choice for the master bedroom walls, voting for Obama... Everyone makes decisions that they later regret. Right now, mine is mountain biking.

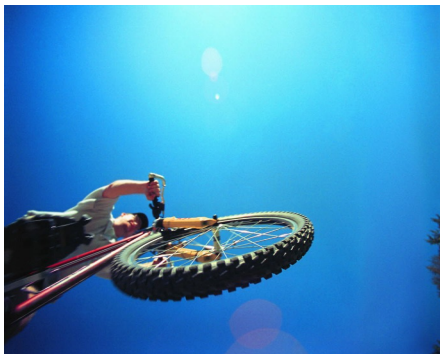
I work with a guy (hereafter known as Junior) who is a huge sports fan, but only this year discovered the Tour De France (the Lance effect?). Every day I'd be accosted with questions about the previous day's stage, team tactics, et al. The positive outcome was expanding his cycling beyond pulling his daughter in a trailer and the occasional ride on groomed paths. As he is also highly competitive, he suggested a ride with me to see how well he could hang. Now this guy is 15 years younger and 20 pounds lighter than me, with a prototypical cyclist's body (5' 10" and 150 lbs). My edge was equipment and training. The "event" was to be completed with me on my fully loaded commuter bike (that I've been riding all summer) and him astride a heavy comfort bike sporting mountain tires that his crotch had only recently been introduced to. I delivered a spectacular thrashing, having to sit at each major intersection to allow him to catch up and culminating with a wait in excess of six minutes at the top of the Euclid Creek Parkway for his arrival. I basked in the glory on the slow pedal home.

Rather than dissuading him from further two wheeled embarrassment, quite the opposite - Junior sought out more appropriate cycling activities for his equipment. After some mountain biking in the Euclid Creek Reservation, the internet directed

*"I was trapped—thud— and ate dirt for the first time in recent memory. If only I knew that this was merely a foretaste of things to come."*

him to the CAMBA built trails at West Branch Reservoir, and it was love at first ride. Unfortunately for me, this provided the perfect venue (in his mind) for a re-match. Junior hounded me day after day until I agreed to ride there with him. Having never mountain biked before, I watched a few videos on the internet to get an idea of what to expect. From the perspective of an uninitiated observer, it didn't look a whole lot different than urban commuting - dodging pot holes, broken glass, storm drains and pedestrians; popping wheelies and jumping cars in an effort to avoid a crash or traffic light backup; a few quick turns here - only with trees. A few quick turns here and there would be just like avoiding the "door prize" from parked cars. "This looks easy enough. I'll clean his clock and in the process perhaps discover another aspect of cycling on which I could expend untold dollars and time," I thought. Yeah...

The day before our scheduled ride I



ran into my next door neighbor and told him what was up to for the weekend, lamenting the fact I was going to be using my intended victim's "B" bike. Low and behold, good neighbor Bob suggested I use his "real" mountain bike - a front suspension Gary Fisher. Even better, it turned out Bob and I have the same shoe size, so I could also borrow his Shimano shoes and wouldn't have to trade out his clipless pedals for platforms.

After a thorough cleaning, lubrication, air in tires, and seat adjustment, I was ready for a test ride. Since my street was temporarily closed for construction, I headed in that direction. Things were going well, outside of the front derailleur not shifting to the big ring, until I hit the ruts from an excavator. It was at that moment that I realized Bob had never adjusted the tension in his clipless pedals and if he had it was in the wrong direction. I was trapped - thud - and ate dirt for the first time in recent memory. If only I knew that that this was merely a foretaste of things to come. After some tweaking of pedal clip tension the next morning, I was on my way.

A 45 minute drive put us into the parking area of the West Branch State Park mountain bike trail. Even a neophyte like me could tell there was some serious riders and bikes at play here! The short ride along snowmobile trails to the start of the lake side trail was fast and a little scary since it was comprised of loose gravel - certainly something I try to avoid on the road. Once I followed Junior into the woods on the single-track things got interesting really fast...

*Read more about Mark's mountain bike adventures in Part II, which will be in next month's newsletter.*

## Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming Events

### New Year's Bash at a Wilderness Lodge

CTC member **Peter Miguét** extends the following invitation to all CTC members:

I hang out with a group of individuals called the Why Not Adventurers, a very fun and energetic group. This year we are spending New Year's at a Wilderness Lodge. Ring in the New Year in a special way – take off with our group by cross country skiing from the lodge, your backpack laden with your favorite champagne or other sparkly beverage, and toast 2010 from somewhere on the trail!

Of course, prior to this, you would have been treated to a splendid traditional New Year's Dinner specially prepared by your hosts, Ryan and Holly Ryan. The traditional New Year's dinner of pork and sauerkraut, vegetables, potatoes, salad, dessert and champagne compliment this delicious spread. Following dinner, swing dancing will help settle the food and prepare the mood for the remaining hours of 2009.

Here are the specifics:

The Wilderness Lodge ([www.thewildernesslodge.net](http://www.thewildernesslodge.net)) is located approximately two hours away by car. Stay from Thursday, December 31 until Sunday, January 3. Cost for the New Year's dinner will be \$25 (includes champagne and fireworks). Lodging costs vary, depending on where you stay. You can get a room at either the lodge (there are only seven rooms, so this is first come, first serve) or the Holiday Inn Express, five miles away. Ski and snow shoe rental is also available.

Check out our web site, <http://www.whynotadventure.org/>. I have posted wilderness lodge pictures there under photos. Also, I have some pictures from last year on my facebook page as well. Check out the Wilderness Lodge website, <http://www.thewildernesslodge.net/>, there are a lot of pictures and information there. I am looking forward to having a great experience as I did last year and spend time with old friends and spend time with new ones I will make along

the way. For any questions please contact me via email at [petermmiguét@aol.com](mailto:petermmiguét@aol.com).

### Ride Across Indiana in 2010

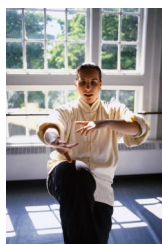
CTC member **John Knight** is putting together a group to ride RAIN (Ride Across Indiana) next season. RAIN is an annual ride across the state of Indiana, and is sponsored by the Bloomington Bicycle Club. It is a one day ride that will be held on July 17, 2010. You'll begin in Terre Haute, IN and ride 160 miles. You must complete the ride in 14 hours, as it is a requirement that you finish by 9 p.m. – when it gets dark. The course runs mostly on historic national Route 40, an older divided four-lane road with light traffic.

If you are interested in this ride or want more details, please contact John at [jk42dd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jk42dd@sbcglobal.net). Registration for 2010 begins on January 1, 2010.

## Cross Training During the Off-Season

As cold weather and snow approach, many of us put our bikes away until the spring thaw. During the winter, a lot of outdoor cyclists move indoors and take Spinning and other cycling classes, but this is a great time to try some new fitness options and try cross training. Cross training improves your fitness and reduces the chance of injury. In addition, by varying your workout, you can improve your performance (and reduce the chance of burn-out).

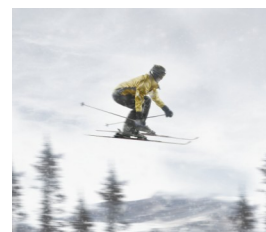
This winter, consider taking a fitness class or two. Gyms and many community recreation centers offer a variety of classes. You like to run, but have you tried yoga? Tai Chi?



The latest class craze is Zumba, a fusion of Latin music combined with dance and aerobic steps. Another indoor alternative is to hit the pool. Swimming laps is an incredible all-over body workout, or you can sign up for a water aerobics class. Water aerobics classes can be challenging and aren't just for retirees!

Maybe the gym isn't really your thing. You don't have to stay inside. If you like snowy weather try cross country skiing or snow shoeing. Lake Metroparks has trails and rents equipment at a reasonable cost. While the Greater Cleveland area isn't exactly known for its downhill ski slopes, there are

some options fairly close by that you can try. And snowboarding is another great alternative.



Whatever you like to do to stay fit

and healthy during the off-season, consider trying something new and incorporating it into your weekly routine. There are a lot of options during the off-season. Who knows, you may discover a new passion for winter!

## *Cleveland Touring Club*

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Cleveland Touring Club  
3770 Northwood Rd.  
University Heights, OH 44118



*Cleveland Touring Club is a group of recreational cyclists who ride mostly in Lake, Geauga, and Cuyahoga counties in the Cleveland, Ohio area.*

*Our emphasis is on group fun and physical fitness, and our riders include a wide range of ages and riding abilities from the faster riders (all ages), to people in their 20's through 80's.*

*If you have information to include in upcoming newsletters, please email Sarah VanGilder at [hawkeyefan4411@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hawkeyefan4411@sbcglobal.net) or [vangilder\\_2@hotmail.com](mailto:vangilder_2@hotmail.com).*

## Have a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving!

