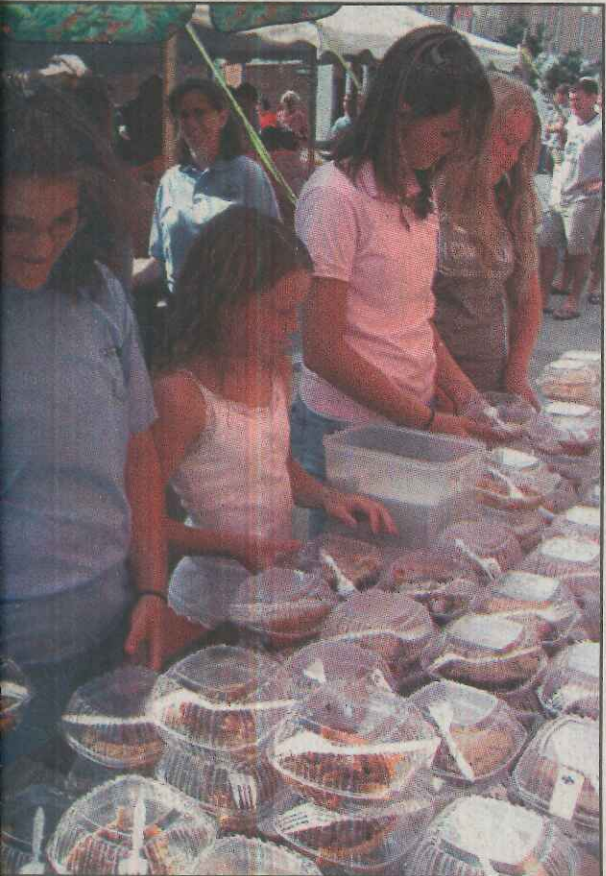




Staff photo/ Karen Campbell

Diana Zink, left, and Linda Lee of Trinity Lutheran in Moulton make barbecue chicken dinners Tuesday for GOBA riders. Below, Shelby Cook, Morgan Miller, Koch and Hayley Miller, members of the ALOT (Age Leaders of Tomorrow) 4-H club stack slices of pie to GOBA riders Tuesday night.



Enjoying good eats

KAREN CAMPBELL
 Staff Writer

lists in the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA), which stopped in Wapakoneta Monday and Tuesday, say an important part of staying prepared for their long rides is being fueled.

Helping them to do that are local communities where the trek are community groups and ser-

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ging from cheer- s, swimmers and teacher organiza- o churches, rotaries

"Business has been pretty good," Koch said. "We weren't sure what to expect, that made it hard to prepare."

She said each of the club's 24 members brought in two pies, which they sold by the piece. Whenever they ran out of the slices of the 12 different types they'd be done for the night.

The Rev. Joy Miller of Trinity Lutheran Church

in Moulton said it was also basically their first time holding a large-scale barbecue chicken dinner. While they had held them before for their congregation and the local community, they

made 600 in preparation for the bikers Tuesday night.

"We're selling until we sell out," Miller said. "We were hoping to make



Dean Cummins poses with his bicycle while on a two-day layover stop in Wapakoneta during this year's Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) bike tour. Cummins, a Wapakoneta native, began riding in GOBA after his 50th class reunion in 2000.

Staff photo/ Megan Veit

Local rider enters sixth GOBA

By MEGAN VEIT
 Staff Writer

Cummins returns for friends, family

Riding in his sixth Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA), Dean Cummins is enjoying spending time in rural Ohio with old and new friends.

Cummins had not even considered a GOBA ride until his 50th class reunion in 2000. He came back for the reunion to reconnect, and a friend suggested that they take the tour.

"I'd never heard of it," Cummins said.

Cummins' involvement in GOBA has taken the Wapakoneta native all over Ohio, to areas he feels most would not consider visiting otherwise. His tours have ranged from the hilly area of Marietta to the more urban Toledo.

The seasoned rider was up before sunrise on Mon-

day to make his 4-hour ride to Wapakoneta.

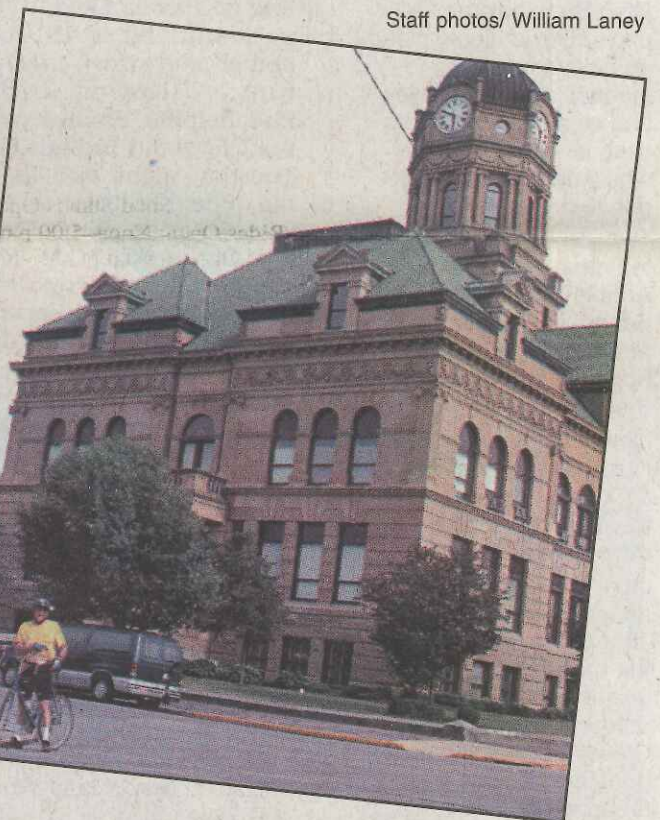
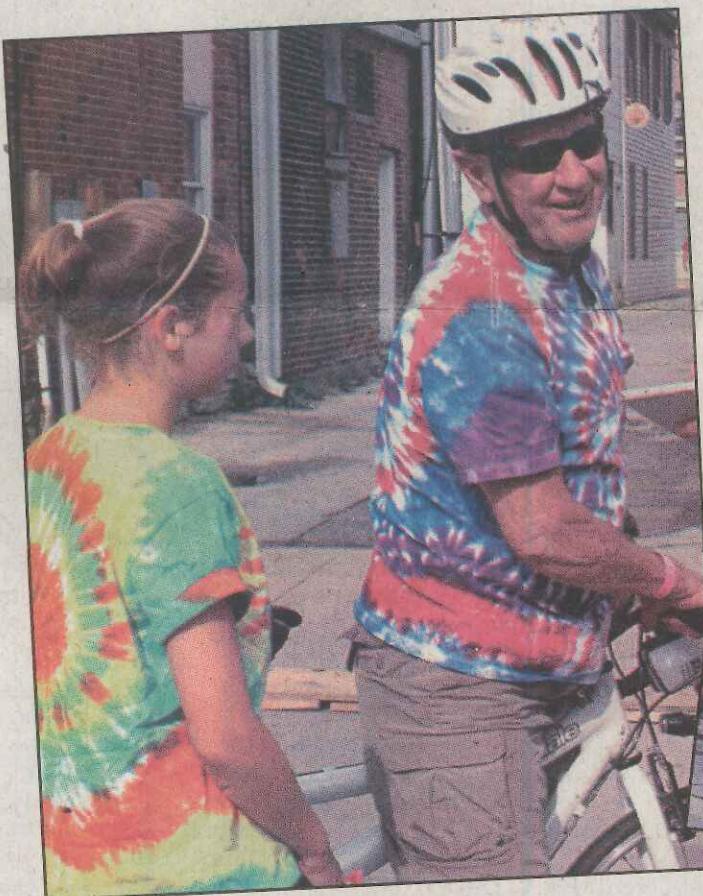
Cummins woke early and left the camp site before many other riders in order to beat the mid-day heat. He said this is a lesson he learned after a day of intense heat in 2003.

"It was the first time I really thought I was going to pass out from the heat," Cummins said.

While a quarter of the riders have car campers, a system of caravans that haul equipment to each night's site, Cummins is pulling his own weight this year. A small trailer attached to the back of his bike contains all the equipment he will need for the week's travel.

The two-night stay in

See CUMMINS, Page 8B



Staff photos/ William Laney

Turning back spokes of time

Cyclist rides on at age 84

By ANNIE LINDER
 Staff Writer



Wapakoneta, Tiffany Puff of Wapakoneta and Madison Wireman sit in front of the face painting booth near the entertainment tent on Tuesday; Doug Gonias of Toledo shaves in front of the trailer of portable showers at the campgrounds behind the Wapakoneta High School on Tuesday. Staff photos/ Kristin Reichardt and William Laney



Jackson From Page 1B

chair broke en route to Wapakoneta — in front of his tent at the GOBA campsite Monday evening, Jackson said he began cycling because of a fuel shortage and rising gasoline prices in 1979.

He couldn't recall what the prices were in those days but said they probably didn't come close to the price of fuel today.

After complaining about the shortage to a friend, Johnson decided to take her advice and purchase a bike.

That friend, Linda Bell, 66, already a cyclist in the nearby Falls Church, Va. started to ride with him and has since accompanied him on his trips.

"I knew nothing about biking," the Iowa native said, recalling his first tour on the (Des Moines)

Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, known as RAGBRAI. "I hurt my knee the first day, didn't ride the second, tried again the third day, didn't ride the fourth and rode 107 miles on the fifth day.

"We were averaging about 70 miles a day for seven days," he said, "but we had the wind at our backs, so it was easier."

After the first tour, Jackson said he had trouble believing fellow cyclists who told him he would be back on the road again soon. He was — not long after that first trip.

Jackson, a retired government employee who accepted a position with the War Department after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, made three cross-country trips and rode through numerous national parks and tours on his red 1987 Trek bicycle.

"I've got at least 60,000 to 70,000 miles on this bike," Jackson said.

A row of colored bracelets from previous tours cling to the bicycle's frame, and he keeps a pouch of toilet paper, First Aid supplies and tools attached to the handlebars, decorated with a

large smiling face he painted on the pouch's front.

Between tours, Jackson often attends elder hostels, or educational seminars at colleges and universities, where he said students study everything from the lives of famous American authors to the cultural differences between religions.

Along with the mileage, few unexpected accidents and injuries occurred.

One time he tore several layers of skin off his forearm, revealing a patch of bone — and years later, a scar.

There was the day he was nearly hit by a semi-trailer, which sent him flying off the seat during a downhill course and required two sets of stitches over his left eye.

Jackson said he will never forget the day his bike skidded off an Oregon road and landed in a pile of volcanic shards, which pierced the tire and cut into his skin.

Through it all, he said, the incredible scenery makes those trips worth the pain.

"Out west, the mountains, they may be pinkish in

the morning, purple in the afternoon and grayish in the evening — it's really a sight," Jackson said. "And in Kansas, you can watch all the sunflowers turn their heads from east to west toward the sun."

Another rewarding aspect of his trips is communicating with fellow cyclists from across the country, many of whom are teachers he corresponds with through e-mail, he said.

"It's been very good — I've been fortunate," Jackson said.

Between tours, Jackson said he stays in shape by playing softball and tennis on recreational leagues and participating in water aerobics three times a week.

"People ask me all the time if I'm too old for this," Jackson said, "but I'll keep on riding."

“ I've got at least 60,000 to 70,000 miles on this bike. ”

— John Jackson

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Staff photo/ Karen Campbell

Scott Frey, right, and Marc Dyrness, members of the Wapakoneta Breakfast Optimists make a roast beef sandwich Tuesday night as they prepare to feed GOBA riders.

substantial chicken dinner. It all varies what they eat depending on what their bodies need. This year the heat also played a factor.

"Meeting the local people, putting on dinners for civic functions is part of it," Detroit's Knudsen said. "I see civic groups that we are from them and our appreciation support." A MacDonald Cambridge, Canada, said

they always buy from local groups when they can to show their support.

"You always know they put a lot of effort into it," MacDonald said.

Jim Lillig, of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, said by buying from the community groups, they are able to give something back.

Knudsen said he and his group of friends only get together once a year for these rides. While they don't

know what the draw is in particular, it's an unbelievable vacation, with nights spent getting away from the stresses of every day city life and escaping to small towns off the beaten path.

"All week long, all year long, it's rush, rush, rush," Knudsen said. "Out here the lifestyle is slower and the local communities are making that happen, giving us a place to enjoy a good meal and sit in the grass listening to a band after a long ride."