



Heart-to-Heart

HEARTCYCLE BICYCLE TOURING CLUB

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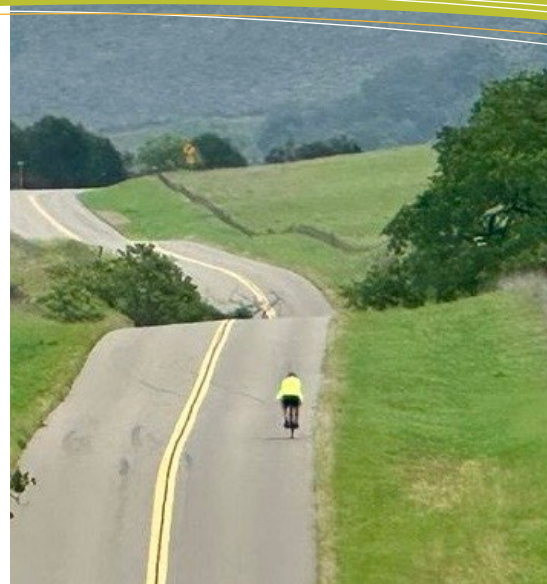
President's Spin

By HeartCycle President
Mark Lestikow

As I was looking through photos from the Solvang tour Polly and I led this spring, two images stood out that perfectly capture what makes HeartCycle tours so special.

The first photo shows a lone cyclist on a quiet, undulating road, framed by rolling hills and green grass. It's a peaceful moment—one that reminds me why so many of us fell in love with cycling in the first place. Out there on the road, it's just you, your bike, and the rhythm of your breath and pedal strokes. The solitude gives space to take in the beauty around you or to let your mind wander freely. It's therapy on two wheels.

Then I came across a second image—one of a line of bikes leaning against a white fence, resting together while their riders took a break. This photo tells the other half of the story. At SAG stops, over lunch, or at the end of the day,



HeartCycle tours transform into something deeply communal. We share stories from the road, offer encouragement, compare gear, and just enjoy each other's company. The laughter and camaraderie that flow so naturally in those moments are as meaningful as the miles we ride.

Cycling is often seen as a solo endeavor, but these tours show how beautifully cycling blends solitude with connection. On a HeartCycle tour, you can find serenity and companionship in the same day—sometimes in the same hour. It's that balance that keeps so many of us coming back year after year.

As we look forward to upcoming tours and the fall riding season, I hope each of you finds that perfect mix: the quiet moments that refill your spirit and the shared ones that remind you you're part of something bigger.

See you on the road!





From the Tour Director's Saddle

By HeartCycle Tour Director Janet Slate



Only three tours remain for 2025. Space is available (single supplement or shared) on the [Paso Robles tour](#). If you haven't been on this club favorite or you want to repeat it, this is your chance! Fall is wonderful in central California! This fixed-base tour has been so popular that we've run it nearly every year since 2019. We're taking it off the calendar for a few years, though, so now might be your time!

Speaking of tours, many of you have already signed up for one or more of the 2026 foreign tours. If you haven't, I've got some good news, because a few slots remain:

- We've got an opening for a man to share on the [Vietnam tour](#);
- We have 3 slots available on the [Patagonia \(Argentina\) tour](#);
- We have 11 openings on the [Moselle River, Germany, Luxembourg, and France \(bike and barge\) tour](#); and
- We have an opening for a woman to share on the [Puglia \(Italy\) tour](#).

Getting on the waitlist is worth it, because sometimes people cancel. (Your deposit will be fully refunded if you don't clear the waitlist.) Please see my message in the [August newsletter](#) about insurance. 😊

If none of those entice you, what about the rest of our 2026 tour schedule? Here's a preview of what we'll be opening for registration after the [annual meeting and luncheon](#):

<i>Death Valley, CA</i>	<i>March</i>
<i>Napa-Sonoma-Marin, CA</i>	<i>May</i>
<i>Tug Hill & Thousand Islands, NY</i>	<i>May</i>
<i>Katy Trail, MO</i>	<i>May-June</i>
<i>Acadia National Park, ME</i>	<i>June</i>
<i>Los Alamos-Santa Fe, NM</i>	<i>June</i>
<i>Jackson Hole, WY (2 tours)</i>	<i>July</i>
<i>Montreal to Quebec, Canada</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Underground Railroad (yr-3), KY-NY</i>	<i>September</i>
<i>Southwestern Wisconsin</i>	<i>October</i>

If you're not going on the Paso Robles tour, please sign up to join us at the [HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon](#), on Saturday, October 18th, at the Mt. Vernon Canyon Club. Besides catching up with friends, maybe making some new ones, and enjoying a delicious lunch, we'll be presenting the 2026 tour schedule. The tour leaders will be on hand to answer your questions.

Thank you for being a HeartCycle member!

-Janet Slate jslate@ultrasys.net



HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Mt. Vernon Canyon Club, 24933 Club House Circle, Golden, Colorado

Cash Bar Opens @ 11:30 AM | Buffet Begins @ 12:00 Noon

\$35 per person (Members & Guests Welcome!)

Join us for a memorable day at the HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon on **Saturday, October 18th**, at the stunning **Mt. Vernon Canyon Club**. This event is packed with great food, inspiring conversations, treasured memories from the past year's tours, and the opportunity to learn more about next year's tours.

What's on the agenda?

- **Gourmet Buffet:** Enjoy a delicious spread while catching up with old friends and meeting new ones.
- **2025 Tour Highlights:** Relive the best moments of this year's rides with a continuous slideshow featuring photos submitted by YOU! If you have 5-10 photos that capture the spirit of your favorite tour, send them to **Cody Ensanian** at heartcyclecody@gmail.com to be part of the slideshow.
- **2026 Tour Preview:** HeartCycle Tour Director, **Janet Slate**, along with 2026 tour leaders will share details and answer any questions you may have about next year's tours.

This is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate another successful year, connect with fellow cycling enthusiasts, and get psyched for what's coming in 2026!

Register now!

Sign up today on the **HeartCycle website** at www.heartcycle.org. Click on the "2025 Annual Luncheon" link in the green toolbar on the homepage, then hit the "Register" button. **Spots are limited to 125 attendees**, and registration closes by **Saturday, October 11th**—or sooner if we sell out! Please note, **all payments must be made online**—no payments will be accepted at the door.

For questions, feel free to contact **Mark Lestikow** at: mark.lestikow@closetfactory.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Notes from the Summer 2025 Central Colorado Rockies Tour

By HeartCycle Member Melinda Posner



Turns out, it was our co-leaders Scott MacCormack and Guy Kelley's intention for this tour to showcase the Central Colorado Rockies' incredible bike paths. Had I realized this in advance, it wouldn't have changed some of my expectations—that we would find nice paved paths looping around and through developed urban areas. And yes, we did find that. What I didn't expect was the incredible network of trails that cover GREAT distances, leading you far beyond the loops and connections within and around a city.

Instead, these paths can take you many miles, like the 60 miles from Frisco to Eagle, with nary a road mile.

Sure, the trail through Vail was a nightmare on a Saturday with the Triple Bypass crowd filling the streets, but never having been to Vail, it gave me a first-hand glimpse of the attractions that beckon so many visitors—including the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, The Amp—Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater, and the gondolas taking bikes up to the many ski routes to bike down. But I digress.



As I said, these bike trails cover great distances, through popular ski destinations like Vail and Copper Mountain, ferrying riders through the flora and fauna of sequential climate and topographical zones. High mountain passes reveal snow-capped peaks and spectacular views while the landscape changes dramatically as you descend from 11,000' plus to lower elevations—from pines, aspens and paintbrush wildflowers to plant species that thrive in desert-like conditions.

Why would you choose to drive from Frisco to Eagle, when you can ride a smooth separated trail that is akin to hiking in an alpine landscape? Each segment of our tour followed a wild river—the Eagle, the Blue, the Snake, the Colorado. Not just occasional glimpses of a distant waterway; no, these paths get you right close to the rivers' snaking winding rushing and placid waters and offer pullouts with facilities and access for getting right in.



Galaxy S21 5G



Galaxy S21 5G

Passes? We got 'em—Ute, Vail, and Fremont, for sure. Were there more, sure, but that is another Central Colorado Rockies tour for another day!

We pedaled through smaller towns like Dillon, Silverthorne, and Keystone and experienced the bike trails around Frisco from all directions. Especially enjoyable was the bike trail along the Colorado River in Glenwood Canyon to Glenwood Springs—touted as one of the top trails in the country.





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Thank you all for the rich experiences. This includes a very positive experience and exposure to riding more actively as we age with e-bikes. Many riders on the tour were over 70 and two were over 80! These older cyclists were a joy, always happy and cheerful at each stop throughout the day. They're great models for aging and being able to turn over the pedals for many years ahead—enjoying sights and sounds and the feel of the wind in our faces as we climb and descend mountains—you're my inspiration!

- Melinda

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Additional note from Co-Leader Guy Kelley:

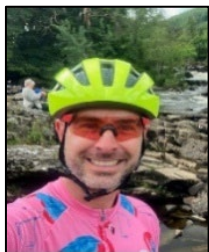
A major theme that Scott and I agreed to for this trip was to showcase the bike trails of Summit and Eagle Counties and how extensive they had become. By maximizing use of those trails, we minimized the use of busy highways. Also, we wanted to minimize transporting luggage, so we opted for a double hub ride.

Our riders were pleasantly surprised that the Frisco and Eagle communities offered enjoyable resources for evening and day-off activities. While about 6 riders took the shuttle into Glenwood Springs to experience the Hot Springs (a short trip from Eagle), other riders stayed in Eagle to mountain bike, play golf, take a hike, enjoy the historic downtown (Yeti's

Grind), and kayak Sylvan Lake just north of Eagle. My memory is when one of our riders, Nate flatted, a local fireman stopped and told us the nearest bike shop, which turned out to be right off our bike route (60 feet) and next to it was a local coffee shop (another Yeti's Grind)! Another memory, one rider (Sharon Fritss) came early and wanted to ride to acclimate to the high altitude. So, I told her that I planned to paint the drainage gates on Highway 9 out to the Ute Pass turn off. She accompanied me and gave valuable advice on how to make those visible to riders.

Hopefully, HeartCycle will do this tour (or something similar) again in the future!





Back in the Saddle: Welcoming a Returning HeartCycle Member

By HeartCycle Newsletter Editor Cody Ensanian

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Peter Rudy considers himself an adventure cyclist. His first big journey was riding from Connecticut to California right after graduating high school. In the mid-1980s, he moved to Denver, where he worked for a law firm and joined HeartCycle and other groups for bike trips. By 1990, Peter had relocated to Vail to represent Vail Associates, adding gravel and dirt rides to his repertoire of road cycling adventures.

Beyond practicing law, Peter guided trekking and biking trips around the world with a British company, leading groups through Nepal, Bhutan, Tanzania, Morocco, and more. He now lives in Denver with his wife, Helen—whom he met on a scouting ride across the Serengeti. Retired from law, Peter and Helen now look forward to cycling adventures that end with hot showers instead of tents.

We are especially thankful that Peter has offered to contribute articles to our newsletter. We look forward to his insights and stories, and you'll find his first contribution on the next page.

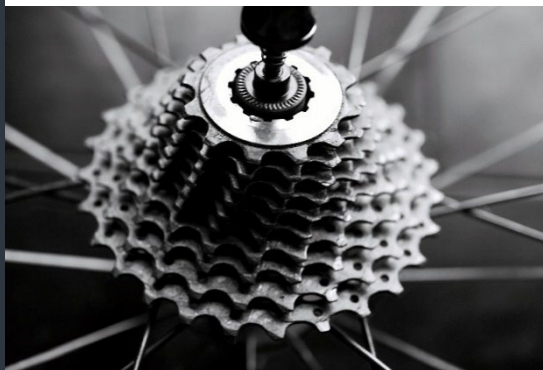
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Helen & Peter, Ugandan "hiking buddies," Congo border



Helen & Peter, Thorung La Pass, Annapurna, Nepal



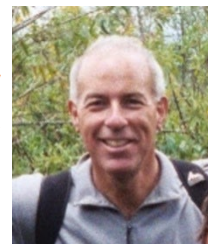
Always looking for contributions:

Have a great cycling story, tour experience, or helpful tip to share with fellow riders? We'd love to feature your adventures in an upcoming newsletter! Send your article ideas, ride reports, or photos to newsletter@heartcycle.org.



“You do not know much about the history of Indochina”

By HeartCycle
Member
Peter Rudy



A Short Story about Cycling in Vietnam

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In the center of old Hanoi, sits its most iconic centerpiece, picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake (Lake of the Restored Sword) with legendary Turtle Tower in the center. It looks much the way it did during the French Colonial days. I was sitting on a park bench when an elderly Vietnamese gentleman approached and asked if he could sit down and talk to me. I assumed he wanted ‘something,’ but he just wanted to chat and practice his English. He asked a question repeated frequently and eagerly by Vietnamese with whom I spoke: what did I think of Vietnam?



Hanoi Old Town

Having just arrived, I had no answer. He was amazed that I was with a British expedition company that came to lead a cycling group along the Vietnamese/Chinese border in the Hmong cultural area. He did not grasp why people do adventure cycling. In most developing countries, the only people on bikes are those that cannot afford a car or moped. The thought of having money but choosing to ride a bicycle was foreign to him.

He and I were both in our teens and 20s during the Vietnam War. After he asked me his

questions, I mustered the courage to ask my one burning question: what did he think of Americans and about us coming to Vietnam after the Vietnam War? He laughed and said in a kind and teacherly way, “You must not know much about the history of Indochina.” He continued, “If we continued to hate every country that has ever invaded us, we would have no friends in the world.”

So began my adventure cycling trip in Vietnam and my appreciation of its people. My wife and I arrived in Hanoi a few days before our cycling guests. We had the luxury to wander in Hanoi. When our group of bikers arrived, we would take a train, then bus, then off-road vehicles to the far north, just below the Chinese border. Deep into the Hmong cultural area.

So, some of you are thinking, what does this have to do with the upcoming HeartCycle tour to Vietnam next February being coordinated by board member Tom Kissinger? While my prior routes were different than our upcoming trip, the point is the same: Vietnam and its people. I cherish my experiences in Vietnam as much as any I have guided, be it in the Serengeti or across Bhutan.



Young Hmong women at the market



Hanoi is somewhat of a microcosm of the new/old Vietnam. On the approach road from the airport, you will see the titans of world industry, from Panasonic to Nike. Once in the city, especially the old city, much remains of the long French occupation. Hanoi was the only major city we did not bomb in the war due to its historical status. The Metropole Hotel was fully restored to its French Colonial glory. Helen and I wiled away evenings in the serene courtyard lawn chairs, much as Graham Greene did when he wrote *The Quiet American* in the 1950s. Rest assured, we will be there next February with the HeartCycle group!



Typical Hanoi traffic



Some of My Thoughts Why You Should Come Biking in Vietnam...

- Vietnam is a GREAT introduction for your first adventure travel cycling trip. Once in the countryside, you will always know you are on an adventure, in a strange and new world. Yet, the infrastructure and support services are first rate.
- There is no better way to see, feel and experience Vietnam and its kind generous people, than on a bike. Bikes, mopeds and motorbikes are the predominant means of transportation. In the rural areas, all the children cycle. They are thrilled you are on a bike. While cycling, you can go anywhere, and the locals will hardly notice. I would cycle

through markets and into craft shops and schoolyards. Top Tip: cycling on narrow walls between rice paddies is harder than it looks.

- Vietnamese of all ages are thrilled you wanted to come to their country. They so want to be accepted. They are a healthy, educated and vibrant people. Unlike other developing countries, judging by the appearances of all I met, apparently they have good health care and support services.
- I found the social order fascinating. On one hand, it is a society based on respect for elders that emphasizes valuing the wisdom, experience, and contributions of older family members. On the other hand, gender equality is very apparent, at least outside the home and in business. A mix of solid Confucian and patriarchal tradition with Communist ideology. Vietnam has one of the first gender equality provisions, enshrined in the 1946 Constitution.
- Phở, French food, and Vietnamese coffee. I bet you did not know that the Vietnamese often eat Phở three meals a day. Yes, strange at first for breakfast. But bowls of hot bone broth with noodles and sliced chicken or beef powered many a bike ride. Vietnamese coffee is a powerful biking tonic: strong syrupy drip coffee with lots of sweetened condensed milk. And upscale food almost always had French origins and was delicious.



Rural Market

When I first went to Vietnam, a decade ago, I had already led many more adventurous (and arduous) cycling and trekking trips. But the cultural experiences of this country and its gentle people are some of my most memorable. (Perhaps nearly being drafted into the war impacts my judgment!) Now more than ever, Vietnam is becoming a major economic player flexing its unique identity. Helen and I are excited to go back.

In closing, I found Vietnam will expand your comfort zone. One afternoon, I was trying to walk across a traffic-filled, main Hanoi boulevard. Four or more lanes, hundreds and hundreds of screaming mopeds, motor bikes, and cycles (see traffic photo above). No traffic lights or crosswalk and no one stopped. After waiting forever for a break in traffic, a tiny woman came up to me, took my hand and said, "You walk with me, do not look at them, just walk, and they will go around." Petrified, with my hand in hers, we walked right into the middle of traffic. And like Moses parting the Red Sea, the hundreds and hundreds of screaming mopeds flowed around us as we crossed. Standing on the sidewalk on the other side, she was clearly pleased she could help me. She turns to me and gives me a small bow, with a big grin on her face. And I gave her a hug.

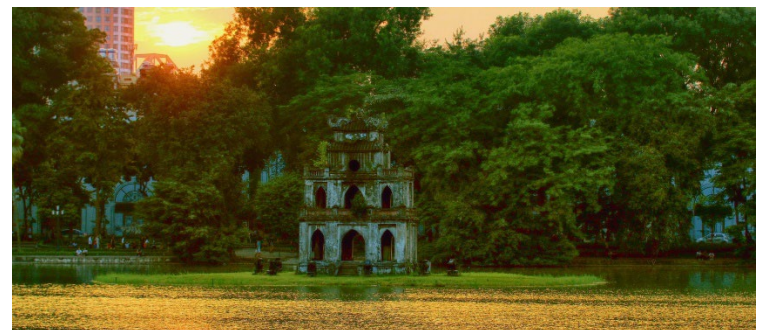
Next February, HeartCycle is sponsoring a tour to beautiful Vietnam. Check out the trip summary on the HeartCycle website. One spot is currently available for a man willing to share a room. Don't fret, however. The waitlist is also available, and lots can happen between now and February. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to tour coordinator, Tom Kissinger (tom_k@pipeline.com).



Working in the rice paddies



Market place near the Chinese border



Turtle Tower, Sword Lake, Hanoi



About HeartCycle Bicycle Tours

HeartCycle offers a number of exciting tours each year.

2025 tours that are currently scheduled or planned are highlighted on the next few pages. Tour details are also available on the [HeartCycle website](#).

To read and observe the procedures for announcing new and planned tours please review the [Tour Announcement and Registration Policy](#).

Links to tour policies (illness, conduct, wait list, etc.) can be found at the bottom of the [HeartCycle Tours](#) web page.

March

South Island, New Zealand Christchurch, New Zealand

Dates: March 6-22, 2025

Days: 16

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$5,100

Link: [New Zealand Trip Details](#)

Contact: Janet Slate

jslate@totalspeed.com

April

Shikoku Pilgrimage, Japan Koyasan, Japan

Dates: April 6-18, 2025

Days: 12

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$4,500

Link: [Japan Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tina Vessels

tina.vessels@gmail.com

Springtime in Solvang Solvang, CA, USA

Dates: April 12-19, 2025

Days: 6

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$1,660

Link: [Solvang Trip Details](#)

Contact: Mark Lestikow

mark.lestikow@closetfactory-colorado.com

May

Underground Railroad Year 2 Memphis, TN, USA

Dates: May 10-25, 2025

Days: 14

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,500

Link: [Railroad Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Schroeder

jimmyschweb@gmail.com

June

Randonnée en Dordogne, France Bordeaux, France

Dates: June 1-13, 2025

Days: 12

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$3,500

Link: [Randonee Trip Details](#)

Contact: Fred Yu

frederickyu@comcast.net

Le Monastere in Southern France Limoux, France

Dates: June 21-28, 2025

Days: 7

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,350

Link: [Le Monastere Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tom Kissinger

tom_k@pipeline.com



June cont...

MN-WI: Mississippi River Weave

Minneapolis, MN, USA

Dates: June 21-30, 2025

Days: 9

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,000

Link: [Mississippi Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Schroeder

jimmyschweb@gmail.com

July

Central Colorado Rockies

Frisco, CO, USA

Dates: July 9-17, 2025

Days: 8

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,160

Link: [Rockies Trip Details](#)

Contact: Guy Kelley

guy.kelley@comcast.net

Jackson Hole Wyoming

Jackson, WY, USA

Dates: ~~July 24-29, 2025~~

Days: 5

Rating: Easy

Cost: \$1,800

Link: [Jackson Hole Trip Details](#)

Contact: Clare Bena

cbvamoots@gmail.com

CANCELLED

**Look for this trip in 2026!*

August

Alaska – The Last Frontier

Anchorage, AK, USA

Dates: August 2-9, 2025

Days: 7

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$4,280

Link: [Alaska Trip Details](#)

Contact: Scott MacCormack

SAMacCormack@gmail.com

Steamboat Springs NextGen Tour

Steamboat Springs, CO, USA

Dates: August 17-22, 2025

Days: 5

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$1,350

Link: [Steamboat Trip Details](#)

Contact: Mark Lestikow

mark.lestikow@closetfactory-colorado.com

September

Acadia: Rocky Coastal Maine

Bar Harbor, ME, USA

Dates: Sept 8-16, 2025

Days: 8

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$2,700

Link: [Acadia Trip Details](#)

Contact: Patty Menz

pattymenz@verizon.net

**HeartCycle
Bicycle Tours**

Send a message to tourdirector@heartcycle.org to let us know (1) where you'd like to go on a future tour and (2) if you have an interest in leading or co-leading a tour.

*October***Le Monastere in Southern France****Limoux, France**

Dates: October 4-11, 2025

Days: 7

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,350

Link: [Le Monastere Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tom Kissinger

tom_k@pipeline.com**June trip also available***Paso Robles Wine Country****Paso Robles, CA, USA**

Dates: October 18-26, 2025

Days: 8

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,450

Link: [Paso Robles Trip Details](#)

Contact: Cindy Alvarez

sindelou2@gmail.com**HeartCycle
Bicycle Tours**

Send a message to tourdirector@heartcycle.org to let us know (1) where you'd like to go on a future tour and (2) if you have an interest in leading or co-leading a tour.

/// Tour Ratings ///

Rating	Approx Daily Mileage	Approx Daily Elevation Gain (feet)
Easy	< 40	< 1,500
Intermediate	40–60	1,500–3,500
Advanced	50–70	2,500–4,500
Expert	> 65	> 4,000



HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Contacts

Please feel free to contact any of the members listed to the right with questions, comments, or concerns. We are more than happy to field your questions and get you in touch with the appropriate club contact.

Board of Directors

- **Mark Lestikow (2026) | 303-919-0426**
President - president@heartcycle.org
- **Tom Kissinger (2026) | 303-475-8669**
Vice President
- **Janet Slate (2025) | 303-683-6128**
Tour Director - tourdirector@heartcycle.org
- **Alan Church (2026) | 303-489-1789**
Treasurer
- **Laura Davis (2026) | 970-581-1361**
Secretary
- **Ron Finch (2025) | 303-656-5573**
Safety Coordinator & Insurance
- **Rita Kurelja (2025) | 970-231-7163**
Registrar - registrar@heartcycle.org
- **Richard Crocker (2025) | 520-539-8019**
Asst. Registrar - registrar@heartcycle.org
- **Scott MacCormack (2025) | 720-939-6099**
Web Master - webmaster@heartcycle.org

Working Members

- **Jim Bethell | 518-466-8490**
Asst. Webmaster
- **Graham Hollis | 720-323-6479**
Asst. Treasurer
- **Jeff Messerschmidt | 303-904-0573**
SAG Supply Manager
- **Dan Palmquist | 303-638-2535**
SAG Vehicles
- **Jimmy Schroeder | 260-450-2007**
Ride-with-GPS Coordinator
- **Judy Siel | 720-519-9401**
Asst. Tour Director
- **Cody Ensanian | 570-419-9453**
Newsletter Editor - newsletter@heartcycle.org

/// About HeartCycle ///

The HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club is a not-for-profit Colorado corporation that began providing bicycle tours in 1978. The club is organized and run by volunteers who enjoy the challenge and the fun of cycle touring and want to share their enthusiasm.

HeartCycle has the unique distinction of having originally been formed as a cardiac research project (hence the name), but has long since become simply a not-for-profit bicycling club that promotes multi-day, SAG-supported tours. A volunteer Board of Directors meets monthly and welcomes member attendance and participation in planning and running events. HeartCycle also has many other volunteers working to assist the Board.

