



# Heart-to-Heart

HEARTCYCLE BICYCLE TOURING CLUB

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

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Hi HeartCycle members,

Although many of our tours are full, we could use your help to get more registrants for the following five tours. We urge you to recruit other cycling friends if you personally are unable to register for these tours.

1. [Katy Trail](#) – May 26 (meetup), May 27-June 5 (riding), departure on June 6 (lodging on June 5th included).

Experience America's longest, nationally recognized, and beloved rail-trail through the heart of Missouri. Charming river towns steeped in railroad history and beautiful views of wetlands, forests, and limestone bluffs make for a premier adventure.

2. [Acadia: Rocky Coastal Maine](#) – June 1 (meetup), June 2-8 (riding), departure on June 9 (lodging on June 8th included).

Pine forests, rocky cliffs, quaint fishing villages, and tasty lobster await you on this reprised HeartCycle tour in Acadia National Park, Maine. The tour will include five days of road riding, a day cycling on the carriage paths in the park, and a day off to explore the many activities the area has to offer.

3. [NextGen San Juan Mountains](#) – June 15 (meetup), June 16-19 (riding), departure on June 20 (lodging on June 19th included).

Discover the most beautiful part of Colorado in the best time of year. Designed to attract a new generation of cyclists to the club—**but anyone is welcome to join!** Relax and travel in style on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway (included in the tour price!) on your way back to Durango.

4. [Underground Railroad \(year 3\)](#) – September 11 (meetup), Sept 12-26 (riding), departure on Sept 27 (lodging on Sept 26th included).

Join us as we embark on the third and final year of the Underground Railroad Adventure Series. This 2-week leg takes us from Cincinnati, OH, to Niagara Falls, Canada, through multiple historic Underground Railroad sites offering a journey rich in natural beauty and profound history.

5. [Southwest Wisconsin](#) – October 9 (meetup), Oct 10-18 (riding), departure on Oct 18.

Explore the Driftless Area, an area untouched by glaciers of the last Ice Age. Ride on quiet, lightly traveled roads through deep valleys surrounded by a rugged, hilly landscape of limestone bluffs and spring-fed streams on celebrated bike trails such as the Elroy-Sparta Trail, La Crosse River State Trail, and the 400 State Trail. Visit Taliesin, architect Frank Lloyd Wright's estate. For more about the Elroy-Sparta Trail, [check out this YouTube video](#).

Thank you for being a HeartCycle member!

Janet Slate  
HeartCycle Tour Director





# President's Spin

By HeartCycle President  
Mark Lestikow

January is a quieter month for cycling. The bikes may be on trainers or hanging patiently in the garage, and the roads we love feel a little farther away. But in many ways, this is when the HeartCycle year truly begins.

This time of year, people often talk about New Year's resolutions—ride more, ride harder, get faster. Those goals have their place. But as I've reflected on HeartCycle and the many conversations I've had with members over the years, I think what keeps most of us coming back has very little to do with numbers.

We come back for the feeling of rolling out on a quiet road in the early morning.

We come back for the conversations that start at a SAG stop and continue for years.

We come back for friendships formed mile by mile, meal by meal, tour by tour.

For many of us, HeartCycle has become woven into the rhythm of our lives. The tours mark time—where we were, who we rode with, what was happening in our world when we climbed that pass or shared that laugh. Those

memories don't fade when the ride ends; they stay with us.

As we look ahead to the 2026 season, I'd encourage you to think not only about where you want to ride, but also about how each of us helps sustain what makes this club special. HeartCycle works because members show up—for the rides, for each other, and sometimes for tours that may be outside their usual comfort zone or travel plans.

Some of the most meaningful HeartCycle experiences I've heard about over the years began with, "I almost didn't sign up for that tour." And yet those rides often became favorites—because of the people, the place, or the unexpected moments along the way.

If you're on the fence about a tour this year, or if you have cycling friends who might be a great fit for HeartCycle, this is a wonderful time to say yes—or to extend an invitation. Your participation truly matters, and it helps ensure that these shared experiences remain available to all of us.

Whatever draws you back to HeartCycle—community, adventure, reflection, or joy—I'm grateful you're part of this club. I look forward to another year of quiet roads, shared stories, and the kind of moments that make us say, year after year, "I'm glad I came back."

See you on the road,  
Mark







# From the Tour Director's Saddle

By HeartCycle Tour  
Director Janet Slate

Here we go into 2026, HeartCycle! Those of us who live along the Front Range of Colorado have been thoroughly spoiled by the glorious fall and early winter weather. For those of you getting pummeled by one atmospheric river storm after another, I'm sorry!

Winter usually involves fewer outside miles and more inside work—on a trainer at your home or on a stationary/spin bike at the gym. In either scenario, you will reap the benefits if you incorporate intervals into your training. In addition to fitness gains, you'll improve your heart health and increase your metabolism and fat loss, while better controlling your blood sugar and preserving muscle. Try near-maximal short efforts (e.g., 30-60 seconds) alternating with slightly longer periods of rest (e.g., 1-2 minutes). Your heart and lungs will work harder and recover faster leading to enhanced performance and endurance. Studies have shown that interval training also boosts brain health.



I want to close by thanking our 2025 tour leaders and coordinators: Cindy Alvarez, Ron Finch, Guy Kelley, Tom Kissinger, Greg, Mark, and Polly Lestikow, Scott MacCormack, Patty Menz, John Penick, Jimmy Schroeder, Helayn Storch, Tina Vessels, and Fred Yu. You are the lifeblood of the club! We greatly appreciate the efforts that these individuals have made for us to enjoy their tours!

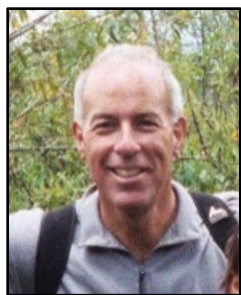


When you're on a tour and it looks like the tour leaders are having as much fun as you are, that's because your tour leaders were organized, attended to the details, and did the bulk of the work before the tour started. Of course, we love our SAGs too—Carol Fredrickson, Martha MacCormack, Mayoma Pendergast, Deb Raudins, and Kathleen Schindler—they're the best in the business!

Thanks for being a HeartCycle member!

Janet Slate  
[jslate@ultrasys.net](mailto:jslate@ultrasys.net)





# The Token American in Africa



By HeartCycle Member Peter Rudy

*"We need a token American for a biking reconnaissance trip in Africa. Are you up for it?" That was the call I got from my friend Andy, the North American Director of KE Adventure Travel, a British adventure tour operator, in 1998. The plan was to recon a cycling route from the base of Kilimanjaro, through the Rift Valley, to the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater. Our ground agent in Nairobi had done the route on a restored Enfield motorcycle. Now, KE needed eight souls to do it on bikes to see if it was possible and if it should be offered to clients.*

## The Adventure Begins

Via Amsterdam, we arrived at the modern airport in Arusha, Tanzania, at sunset. We drove to our lodge near Mt. Meru, the sister and neighboring volcano to Kili—standing a measly 15,000 feet. We arrived at Momella Lodge late in the evening. Momella Lodge was first the movie set built for the 1962 John Wayne movie *Hatari*. Hatari means "danger" in Swahili. It is the only lodge located in the protected national park, where animals roam freely. Upon entering the lodge, there is a massive stone fireplace. It seems that Hardy Krüger, the film's co-star, fell in love with the African bush and Tanganyika. After the movie was shot, he purchased the land and the buildings! Quite a feat in 1962.

It was at Momella Lodge that I first met Helen, an avid MTB cyclist from the Lake District, and a member of our team. When I wax romantically about this trip, it is for good reason. Helen and I have now been married for 23 years.

## Going for a Pee Can Be Exciting in the Bush

After flying since dawn without food, the G&Ts took their effect on our heads and bladders. As the lodge staff brought out the chicken and chips, we all went to find a bathroom. With all in use, I just went outside the lodge to find a place to pee.

A bit wobbly from the gin, I stumbled to an African palm tree visible from my torchlight. At the tree, I leaned forward, resting one hand on the trunk to hold myself upright. As I was relieving myself, I could swear the tree swayed. And it happened again. This time, I heard a loud crunching from above me. With my head torch, I raised my head. Casually munching the palm fronds directly above me was a gorgeous Maasai giraffe. He was unfazed by my bathroom activities and presence below him. We really were not in Kansas anymore.

## The Cycling Begins

The next morning, we unloaded our bikes from the boxes, reassembled, and tuned them.

Charley, our on-bike "guide," was an Irishman who had spent many years in the African bush. He was

fluent in Swahili and Maasai, the language of the Maasai people, and various dialects. The route we were forging was new to him as well, but he knew the bush, the Serengeti, and the Maasai. Clive, his crew, and Charley would be our resources: Clive driving the bush vehicle with the cooking crew, equipment, tents, and food. Charley was on the bikes with the seven of us. While not a strong biker, we could not have made it through the bush without his knowledge of the people, culture, and language skills.

Upon leaving the park, we entered the outskirts of Arusha. On the East African equator, every day gets dark about 6 p.m., and it gets dark quickly, with not much lingering twilight as we have farther north. We turned off the park road toward the Serengeti, onto the main Arusha Road, two lanes of tarmac. We were treated to a marvelous

*Setting off with Kilimanjaro behind us.*





downhill, still descending from the foot of Mt. Meru. And as Lyle Lovett said, here is where we made our first mistake. Yet it turned out to be an unforgettable experience.

After we were all flying fast downhill on the Arusha Road for a while in the dark, Clive informed us by walkie-talkie that we had gloriously missed our first turn several miles back. Now pitch-black outside, we could not cycle back up the steep hill for a mile to the turnoff. The correct path to our first intended campsite was in the wrong direction, so we improvised.

We were on the outskirts of Arusha. Ahead on the road was what appeared to be a brightly colored motel, not hugely different from a roadside motel you would see in the U.S. From all appearances, it looked like the perfect place to spend the night. We soon got the sense we were not in a typical motel. The outlandish colors, trinkets, and decorations gave away its true purpose. We had stumbled upon a kind of brothel. This upscale motel served Arusha businessmen who brought their mistresses for a night of frivolity.

We changed clothes and headed to the open-air dining and dancing

hall, complete with a stage, a DJ, and a dozen tables. While we and our crew sat on one side, on the other were a half dozen Tanzanian businessmen in suits, accompanied by young women whom we were certain were not their wives.

### **Acacia Thorns**

These thorns were our nemesis. The Maasai use them to sew leather. They are drawn like magnets to bicycle tires. We all had Slime tubes mounted. I had the most intimate experience with acacia thorns. We were biking on dirt pathways the Maasai had used for centuries between villages. One day, we forged a route on a narrow path through a field of elephant grass. While it may not hide an elephant, it grows up to 15 feet tall. It adds a new dimension to the term "limited sight distance." That afternoon, I failed to navigate a steep rise in the path and then a hard right turn. I flipped over, lodging my bum in a sprawling acacia thorn bush. I was impaled on my back, still clipped in and holding my bike over me.

The ensuing debate from the others was whether to pull me out slowly or yank me out quickly. I have forgotten the decision, but I do

remember the entertainment that evening by our campfire. Helen, using a Leatherman, spent a fair bit of time pulling out a plethora of thorns from my bum.

After a few days and nights riding and camping, we came to the shores of Lake Manyara. Our ancient maps showed a path around the lake that we planned to take to continue west into the Rift Valley. Upon reaching the lake shore, we found—no path.

### **German East African Maps**

No path or trail, but we did find a half dozen fishermen with dugouts. When I say dugouts, do not think of American Indians or dugout canoes. These were just hollowed-out, substantial tree trunks.

First, Charley showed the fishermen our old German map and pointed to the path we hoped to find. The "path" had ceased to exist many decades ago, recalled the oldest fisherman. Charley began speaking and negotiating with the fishermen. It took an hour of polite conversation and haggling, but Charley convinced the fishermen to transport all of us, with bikes, from the east to the west shore of the lake—about nine miles.

First, we all had to pitch in and empty the hollowed-out trees of dead fish and blood. Helen and I were paired in the largest tree trunk, being the largest and smallest bikers. The photo attached was taken just as we set off. The adventure was still unfolding. As the last dugout pushed off from shore, a flock of thousands of pink flamingos took flight from the lake near us. I often exaggerate, but not here. (Two million flamingos live in Lake Manyara National Park.)

Each dugout had one fisherman in the rear with a long pole, as the lake is about 10 feet deep. Enjoying the ride with Helen holding on to me, I

*Crossing Lake Manyara.*





looked behind us. Our fisherman was literally sweating bullets as he poled us along. Strange, I thought. Then, while looking around, I saw little eyes atop black heads pop up out of the water around us—hippos. “How cute,” I thought, until Helen explained that more people are killed in East Africa by hippos than by any other animal. Now I understood the look of panic on the face of our boatman. For the entire journey, a dozen eyes silently accompanied us to the far shore. To say the fishermen were relieved on the far shore is an understatement.

Upon reaching the far shore, we came to a very old and very primitive Maasai trading village. We were now deep in the bush in the Rift Valley. Rows of huts, many of them on the main pathway, had shelves with foodstuffs and locally made goods for sale. Charley led us to a hut-cum-café where we dined on grilled lake fish, of course.

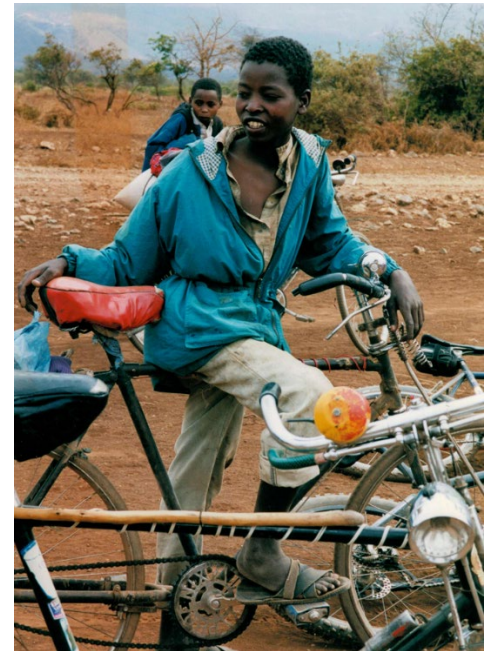
For several days and nights, we biked across the Rift Valley in areas that had rarely, if ever, seen an outsider, let alone a group of eight bikers. While mostly flat, the biking

was tough. At times, the ancient village paths consisted of dirt six inches deep with the consistency of fine talcum powder.

### ***Not The Only African Bikers***

But we were not the only cyclists in the Rift Valley. Often, we were passed on the path by a local Maasai young man on steel Chinese bicycles named “Flying Pigeon.” (There were half a billion Pigeons made.) The all-steel bikes were throwbacks to old English three-speeds: swept-back upright handlebars, rim brakes operated by pull rods, full chain guards, fenders, and rear racks. Always, these bikes were loaded with bags of grain or other foodstuffs. During one encounter, we offered the Pigeon rider a chance to switch bikes for a bit. Truth be told, we could barely hold up these Flying Pigeons loaded with grain, let alone pedal them. At that point, our group stopped complaining about cycling our fancy mountain bikes in the dirt.

As you can read, our understanding of the culture was absorbed every second we were awake. Even



*Boy on a Flying Pigeon.*

camping each night was a cultural learning experience unmatched in any book. The Maasai do not believe that anyone “owns” the land; they believe they are stewards of it. When we traveled through the Rift Valley, we wanted to camp near, but not disturb, the adjacent Maasai village, always looking for a massive Baobab tree for a bit of shade.

### ***“Hanging Out” With The Entire Village***

Each arrival near a Maasai village was a lesson in Maasai culture. We would set up about a quarter mile from the village. As soon as we started to set up camp, the village elder and everyone in the village would come over to see us—men, women, elderly, and children.

I learned from Charley that offering to pay the village elder a fee for camping would be an insult. So Charley approached interactions with the elder with the utmost respect and cultural tact. He exchanged pleasantries with the elder and requested if it was possible for one of his young warriors to guard our campsite for the night. The elder was always honored. Charley then made a nice

*Setting up camp near a massive Baobab tree for shade.*





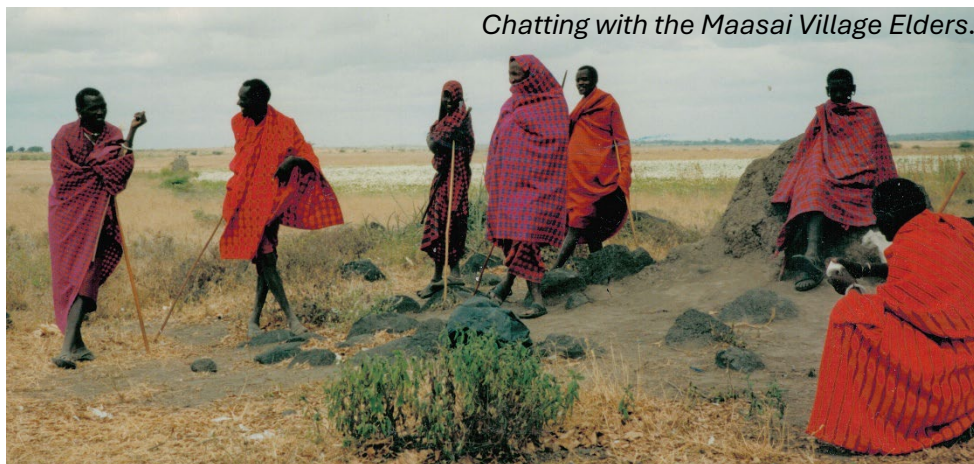
payment to the elder for the privilege of the young man's services. In that way, we were able to give something to help the village in a manner acceptable to their culture.

Why, you ask, would we need a warrior at our camp? As Charley put it: when you have a seven-foot Maasai warrior with a 10-foot spear at your camp, nobody—no animal, nothing—f\*cks with you. No worry about poachers nor an attack from a hyena.

Every campsite experience with the Maasai was both glorious and humbling. The children had no fear or intimidation. They wanted to be up front to see everything. Upon entering her tent, Helen would take out her wash kit. Five to ten children would be at the mouth of the tent, smiling and watching every move she made. The Maasai children would run around, talking and playing among us as we cleaned up and prepared for dinner.

After a respectable period of visiting time, the Maasai village elder would step back and make an announcement, which went something like: it is now time for all of us to leave; anyone found in the camp henceforth will be in violation of my order. In an instant, the Maasai were gone—for the evening. Until just before dark, a young Maasai warrior with his spear would be seen standing at the edge of the campsite. I can attest that the entire time our group camped in the bush, nothing f\*cked with us, even though we could hear hyenas and other animals around us.

Having read about the Rift Valley as a student, I thought I had a good sense of it. Not quite. It really is like God took His arm and pressed it down into Africa, making a 4,000-mile depression. This became vividly apparent as we biked toward the western wall of the valley.



*Chatting with the Maasai Village Elders.*

Nothing prepared us for what we found: almost a wall of large stones, more than 1,000 meters high, leading up and out of the valley.

At the base of the wall-like trail leading out of the valley was a massive waterfall. While beautiful, it also meant our first bath or shower in a week. At the foot of the waterfall-like stream, we gleefully decided to camp.

Upon leaving the river and waterfall, we found the local Maasai village people had arrived to greet us. Like before, Charley spoke with the village elder, arranging for our protection for the night. Here, the young warrior was almost seven feet tall and carried a much longer spear. In this area, hyenas were prevalent. Sleeping outside your tent could lead to the loss of a nose, we were told.

### ***Not Your Typical Chaperone For A First Date***

Being an American romantic, I think of what happened that evening as my first date with my future wife, Helen. Upon finishing dinner, everyone else was knackered and turned in. We had a 1,000-meter climb carrying our bikes the next day up a rocky path. But when we saw a full moon rise over the waterfall, Helen and I wanted to stay up, grab a cold Kilimanjaro beer (from the river), and enjoy.

With our beers, Helen and I sat next to each other on a massive log protruding from the river, facing the waterfall, with the light of the full moon sparkling down the falling water. But we were not alone. Seated a few feet from us on the log was our chaperone, our young Maasai protector, holding his massive spear and also gazing at the dancing moonlight. Just the three of us. Now that was a memorable first date.

At the rim of the valley, I was tasked with biking ahead of the group to what would be our first "town" in a week to find a place for lunch. I biked into a sleepy market town named Mto Wa Mbu, on the main road west from Arusha/Kilimanjaro through the Serengeti.

### ***Keep The Swahili Name***

I found a local café for the group lunch. When I went inside, I was greeted by a dozen local men, all dressed in black suits. As luck would have it, this was the monthly luncheon meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, and I became the "featured speaker." Mostly, they asked questions about why we were in Tanzania and how we got there. They had a hard time understanding: "So, you packed up your bicycle in America, put it in a box, flew all the way to Tanzania, put your bike back together, rode across Tanzania, and then will put



your bike back in the box and fly back to America?" I am not sure they ever believed me.

These town businessmen were keenly interested in attracting business and tourists into the town, not seeing them pass through. They asked my advice. I had none. So I suggested that in their marketing they should always use the Swahili name for the town, Mto Wa Mbu. In English, their town translates to "River of Mosquitoes"!

That evening was one of our last in the savannah. We cycled to the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater, where we set up our final camp. If you have never heard of the Ngorongoro Crater, neither had I until the trip. The crater is a massive, unbroken volcanic caldera known for its stunning scenery and abundant wildlife. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the crater is 20-km wide and 600-meters deep. It was formed millions of years ago when a volcano the size of Kilimanjaro collapsed onto itself, creating the world's largest protected ecosystem and supporting a high density of animals, including the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, black rhino, and buffalo).



*Trying out my Ritchey.*

The following morning, we drove back to Arusha. All our now-trashed tires and tubes were removed. For fun, we wanted to count how many punctures were in our tubes, which was made easy by counting the green Slime dots. We found up to 48 per tube.

### ***From Guinea Pig to Guide***

We arrived back in Arusha to rooms at a modern two-story motel with a pool and poolside bar. Everyone except me was flying back from Arusha to Manchester that evening. I was staying another month for my

first trip to Africa and planned to see Zanzibar and then cycle in the Usambara, the Switzerland of Tanzania.

Tim, the company owner, and I relaxed by the pool while others cleaned up for the flight. A young Londoner named Richard, a friend of Tim's, came over to join us. Richard also ran an adventure travel company and was immensely curious about our reconnaissance trip. Then he asked if I had "any plans for tomorrow." When I said I had none, he asked, "Can I hire you to help guide 65 people up Kilimanjaro?"

*Maasai women visiting our camp.*



And so my part-time career guiding for British adventure companies began. A year later, I worked for Richard's company, taking 45 brave souls biking across Tanzania to the Ngorongoro Crater. Sadly, many of the cycling adventures from our reconnaissance trip could never be repeated.





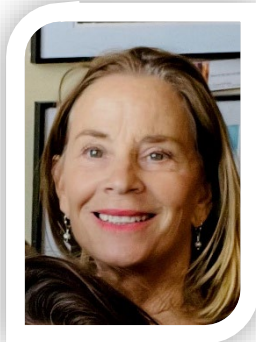
# HeartCycle Volunteer Member Bios

Each month, we'll shine a spotlight on two of our amazing volunteers—the folks working behind the scenes to keep HeartCycle rolling smoothly!

## Tina Vessels

Tour Leader

Greetings!



My name is Tina Vessels. I live in Denver, Colorado, after many happy years in the San Francisco Bay Area. I've been part of HeartCycle for about 13 years and have led tours in Tucson, Fredericksburg, and Japan. International trips are my favorite—Romania holds a special place in my heart!

Earlier in life I was a speech therapist before joining our family oil and gas business. I'm the proud mom of three boys and a brand-new grandson. Our family grew up skiing at Winter Park, where I made lifelong friends—just like the amazing friendships I've found through Heart Cycle.

I have lots of international adventures ahead and would love for you to come along for the ride! 🚴 ✨

PS... This year, my good friend Sue French Smith and I are going to lead the off-road and adventurous [Katy Trail Tour](#). Please come along for more adventure, laughs, and great riding!

## Sue French Smith

Tour Leader

Hello fellow travelers!



I grew up in New Hampshire and moved here to Colorado in 1985. I now call Tabernash my home when I am not traveling or spending summers in Maine. I joined HeartCycle in 2017 when I called Tina one day and told her I needed a reason to buy a new bike. She said her roommate for the trip to Sonoma had just canceled that day. So I bought a bike, signed up and survived all 454 miles and 35,000 feet of climbing. I try to do a trip or two every year.

My volunteerism with HeartCycle started with writing newsletter articles for the trips I went on when they needed someone. But this year I decided to go big or go home and accepted Tina's invitation to co-lead a tour with her. It was decided that it was time to go on the Katy Trail since HeartCycle hadn't done this tour for several years. I agreed to handle the maps. I got to spend some time in Missouri scouting and really fell in love with the area of the Katy Trail, small historic towns, lots of riding, and found great barbeque in Kansas City and St. Louis at each end of our ride. I'm retired now, but my career in IT focused on GIS (geospatial information systems) hence my agreeing to do the maps. I hope you'll join us on the Katy!

**Consider joining Tina and Sue on their [Katy Trail Tour](#)!**

*Join Sue and Tina for an incredible biking tour through the heart of Missouri. Katy Trail is a rail-trail that was originally part of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (the MKT or "Katy"). **10 days (9 riding days + 1 rest day) for less than \$2300 (!)**—incredible value for an amazing tour!*



## About HeartCycle Bicycle Tours

2026 tours that are currently scheduled 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, waitlist, etc.) can be found at the bottom of the [HeartCycle Tours](#) web page.

Send a message to [tourdirector@heartcycle.org](mailto: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.

### February

#### Vietnam

##### Ho Chi Minh City/Hanoi, Vietnam

Dates: Feb 24 – Mar 13, 2026

Days: 16

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$4,000

Link: [Vietnam Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tom Kissinger

[tom\\_k@pipeline.com](mailto:tom_k@pipeline.com)

### April

#### Patagonia Argentina: Lakes & Volcanoes

##### Patagonia, Argentina

Dates: April 10 – 22, 2026

Days: 11 Rating: Interm / Adv

Cost: \$3,750

Link: [Patagonia Trip Details](#)

Contact: Lisa Evans

[iceski@comcast.net](mailto:iceski@comcast.net)

### May

#### Tug Hill & Thousand Islands Region

##### East Syracuse, NY, USA

Dates: May 15 – 23, 2026

Days: 7

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$2,100

Link: [Tug Hill Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Bethell

[bethell.jim@verizon.net](mailto:bethell.jim@verizon.net)

### June

#### Acadia: Rocky Coastal Maine

##### Bar Harbor, ME, USA

Dates: June 1 – 9, 2026

Days: 7

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$2,600

Link: [Acadia Trip Details](#)

Contact: Patty Menz

[pmenz@verizon.net](mailto:pmenz@verizon.net)

### March

#### Death Valley, California

##### Death Valley, CA, USA

Dates: March 21 – 28, 2026

Days: 6

Rating: Intermediate / Advanced

Cost: \$2,700

Link: [Death Valley Trip Details](#)

Contact: Kevin Schmidt

[hillslope@gmail.com](mailto:hillslope@gmail.com)

### May

#### Napa Vine & Surf Loop

##### Santa Rosa, CA, USA

Dates: May 9 – 17, 2026

Days: 7

Rating: Intermediate / Advanced

Cost: \$2,300

Link: [Napa Trip Details](#)

Contact: Cindy Alvarez

[sindelou2@gmail.com](mailto:sindelou2@gmail.com)

### May

#### Katy Trail, Missouri

##### Kansas City, MO, USA

Dates: May 26 – June 6, 2026

Days: 10

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$2,250

Link: [Katy Trail Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tina Vessels

[tina.vessels@gmail.com](mailto:tina.vessels@gmail.com)

### June

#### NextGen San Juans: Durango & Silverton, Colorado

##### Durango, CO, USA

Dates: June 15 – 20, 2026

Days: 4

Rating: Interm / Adv

Cost: \$2,000

Link: [NextGen Durango Trip Details](#)

Contact: Greg Lestikow

[glestikow@gmail.com](mailto:glestikow@gmail.com)







## HeartCycle Bicycle Tour Rating System

### /// EASY -----

Approx Daily Miles:  
< 40

Avg Daily Gain (ft):  
<= 1,500'

### /// INTERMEDIATE --

Approx Daily Miles:  
40 to 60

Avg Daily Gain (ft):  
1,500' to 3,500'

### /// ADVANCED -----

Approx Daily Miles:  
50 to 70

Avg Daily Gain (ft):  
2,500' to 4,500'

### /// EXPERT -----

Approx Daily Miles:  
> 65

Avg Daily Gain (ft):  
> 4,000'

## June

### Northern New Mexico: Los Alamos & Santa Fe

Los Alamos, NM, USA

Dates: June 26 – July 2, 2026

Days: 5 Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$1,600

Link: [New Mexico Trip Details](#)

Contact: Alan Church

[alan.church@comcast.net](mailto:alan.church@comcast.net)

## July

### Jackson Hole Wyoming #1

Jackson, WY, USA

Dates: July 15 – 20, 2026

Days: 4

Rating: Easy

Cost: \$2,000

Link: [Jackson Hole #1 Trip Details](#)

Contact: Clare Bena

[cbvamoots@gmail.com](mailto:cbvamoots@gmail.com)

## July

### Jackson Hole Wyoming #2

Jackson, WY, USA

Dates: July 20 – 25, 2026

Days: 4

Rating: Easy

Cost: \$2,000

Link: [Jackson Hole #2 Trip Details](#)

Contact: Clare Bena

[cbvamoots@gmail.com](mailto:cbvamoots@gmail.com)

## August

### Moselle River: Germany / Luxembourg / France

DEU, LUX, FRA

Dates: August 4 – 11, 2026

Days: 6 Rating: Easy

Cost: \$3,200

Link: [Moselle River Trip Details](#)

Contact: Rita Kurelja

[ritakurelja@hotmail.com](mailto:ritakurelja@hotmail.com)

## August

### Montreal to Quebec, Canada

Montreal/Quebec City, CAN

Dates: August 15 – 23, 2026

Days: 7

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,100

Link: [Montreal to Quebec Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Schroeder

[jimmyschweb@gmail.com](mailto:jimmyschweb@gmail.com)

## September

### Underground Railroad Year 3

KY/OH/PA/NY, USA & CAN

Dates: Sept 11 – 27, 2026

Days: 15

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,500

Link: [Underground Railroad Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Schroeder

[jimmyschweb@gmail.com](mailto:jimmyschweb@gmail.com)

## September

### Puglia, Italy

Bari, Italy

Dates: Sept 15 – 28, 2026

Days: 12

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$5,700

Link: [Puglia Trip Details](#)

Contact: Janet Slate

[jslate@ultrasys.net](mailto:jslate@ultrasys.net)

## October

### SW Wisconsin – The Driftless Area

Madison, WI, USA

Dates: Oct 9 – 18, 2026

Days: 8

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$2,400

Link: [SW Wisconsin Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Bethell

[bethell.jim@verizon.net](mailto:bethell.jim@verizon.net)





## 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 (2024-26) | 303-919-0426**  
President - [president@heartcycle.org](mailto:president@heartcycle.org)
- **Tom Kissinger (2024-26) | 303-475-8669**  
Vice President
- **Janet Slate (2025-27) | 303-683-6128**  
Tour Director - [tourdiretor@heartcycle.org](mailto:tourdiretor@heartcycle.org)
- **Alan Church (2024-26) | 303-489-1789**  
Treasurer - [treasurer@heartcycle.org](mailto:treasurer@heartcycle.org)
- **Laura Davis (2024-26) | 970-581-1361**  
Secretary
- **Ron Finch (2025-27) | 303-656-5573**  
Safety Coordinator & Insurance
- **Rita Kurelja (2025-27) | 970-231-7163**  
Registrar - [registrar@heartcycle.org](mailto:registrar@heartcycle.org)
- **Richard Crocker (2025-27) | 520-539-8019**  
Asst. Registrar - [registrar@heartcycle.org](mailto:registrar@heartcycle.org)
- **Cody Ensanian (2025-27) | 570-419-9453**  
Newsletter Editor, Co-Webmaster, IT Guy - [newsletter@heartcycle.org](mailto:newsletter@heartcycle.org)

### Working Members

- **Jim Bethell | 518-466-8490**  
Co-Webmaster - [webmaster@heartcycle.org](mailto:webmaster@heartcycle.org)
- **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 - [tourdiretor@heartcycle.org](mailto:tourdiretor@heartcycle.org)
- **Scott MacCormack | 720-939-6099**  
Special Projects

#### /// 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.

