



Heart-to-Heart

CLUB NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue:

Tour Director Message [p.1](#)

2026 tours still available [p.2](#)

Save the date for the 2026 Annual Luncheon [p.3](#)

Touring the World: Virtually [p.4](#)

HeartCycle Volunteer Member Bios [p.7](#)

2026 Tour Listing [p.8](#)

Board and Working Member Contact Info [p.10](#)



From the Tour Director's Saddle

By HeartCycle Tour Director Janet Slate

The HeartCycle 2026 tour season has begun! Fifteen intrepid members are pedaling from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) to Hanoi in Vietnam. As HeartCycle member, Diane Short would say, we wish them, “Blue skies and tailwinds!”

We hope you’ve got a tour or two (or more!) planned for 2026. If you’re still on the fence, what about [Acadia: Rocky Coastal Maine](#), [NextGen San Juans: Durango & Silverton, CO](#), and/or [SW Wisconsin - The Driftless Area](#)? Brief descriptions and photos appear on [p.2](#) of this newsletter. Contact the tour leaders for more information.

If you live along the Front Range of Colorado, we’ve been enjoying glorious—though spookily dry—warm weather. For sure, we hope for some March and April snowstorms. Even if we get some, I fear they couldn’t make up for all the moisture we’ve already missed. In the meantime, though, I’ve gotten out for lots more rides than I usually would have. All this to say, **remember to take care of your bike.** Winter is the time I take my bike into the shop for a tuneup. Maybe you’re handy and

do it yourself. In any case, make sure your bike is in good operating condition before you arrive for a tour. You know the drill: tires, drivetrain (chain, cassette, and chainrings), brakes, cables, bolts, and bearings. Say, when was the last time you replaced your bike helmet? Manufacturers recommend every 3–5 years.

I shared in the December newsletter that I’m involved with our statewide bicycle advocacy nonprofit, [Bicycle Colorado](#). On March 17th, the *First Annual Convening of the Colorado Safe Streets Advocacy Community* will take place in Boulder. Subject-matter experts will share their expertise, and attendees will have ample time to talk with fellow advocates to deepen their learning and plan action. If you are passionate about safe streets, ready to act, and want to go to this event, let me know and I’ll try to get you an invitation. Attendance is capped at 80. An alternative (2- to 4-hour event) that is free and open to all is [Safe Streets Lobby Day](#) at the [Capitol](#) (200 E Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80203), which starts at 7:45 am on March 18th. Register at this [link](#). An introductory session with information on [Current Legislative Priorities](#) for the 2026 legislative session and how the process works will set you up for success to meet with your legislators.

Thank you for being a HeartCycle member!

Janet Slate

jslate@ultrasys.net



The following three 2026 tours still have room for you and/or your friends! Please share these details with anyone you feel may be interested in joining us for a tour!

Our tour leaders have planned all the details to make these tours exceptional:

- Beautiful scenery best enjoyed on two wheels
- Great routes with minimal traffic
- HeartCycle camaraderie and SAG support

[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.

[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—anyone is welcome to join though! Relax and travel in style on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway (included in the tour price!) on your way back to Durango.

[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.

There's still room for you!

***The coast, the mountains, somewhere in between?
We have a ride for you!***



Mark your calendars for the 2026 HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Saturday, October 24, 2026

Mt. Vernon Canyon Club | Golden, Colorado

Luncheon start time and more details to be determined!

Both HeartCycle Members and Guests welcome!

Save the date for the 2026 HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon on **Saturday, October 24**, at the stunning **Mt. Vernon Canyon Club**. This event is always 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 are we planning for this year's luncheon?

- Another delicious ***gourmet buffet*** will be available...
- A continuous ***slideshow*** featuring 2026 tour photos...
- ***Camaraderie*** and visiting with fellow cyclists...
- And of course, the ***2027 tour announcements!***

What's new for the 2026 luncheon?

- This year, we're shaking things up with a new "***fair-style***" **format!** Instead of sitting through a long list of presentations, tour leaders will host individual tables where you can stop by, learn about their trips, ask questions, and connect one-on-one. It's a more interactive, relaxed way to explore the adventures ahead. And while you're not chatting with a tour leader, take the opportunity to catch up with old friends and enjoy the great food and beverages.



The 2025 luncheon was a huge success, and we hope to see you this year!





Cycling the World, One Virtual Mile at a Time

By HeartCycle Member Cody Ensanian

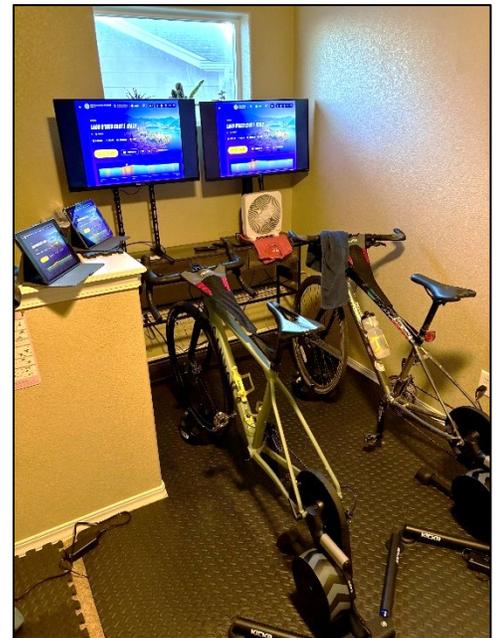


I wanted to share my recent indoor bike-trainer experience to hopefully inspire some of you to pull the trigger if you've been on the fence about getting one yourselves. About a month ago, I set up an indoor trainer, and I could not be happier! I absolutely love this thing! I want to share a little bit about my experience, and I'd love to hear from YOU about YOUR indoor trainer experience.

Let me start by saying these are my own opinions and that the club does not endorse any specific indoor bike trainers or training apps. I encourage you to do your own research, hear what other people's

experiences are (like in this article), and decide what works best for you. Ok, with the disclaimer out of the way, let's dive in!

I recently set up a Wahoo Kickr Smart Trainer (v6, to be exact), and I paired it with the Rouvy indoor bike-training app. Let's focus on the app first. There are about five or six "big name" training apps out there specifically designed to pair with indoor bike trainers. During my research, I was trying to decide between Rouvy and Zwift (probably the two most popular options). While Zwift has the largest user base, it's mostly themed around *virtual reality* rides—think video-



game-style rides where it's gamified and not based on real-world video or realism. Rouvy, on the other hand, is more focused on realism, providing rides based on actual, real-life video and "placing you" onto the route as if you were riding it in real life. They term this *augmented reality*, if you're big on buzzwords.

Virtual reality vs. augmented reality is the main difference between Rouvy and Zwift, and for me, I wanted to ride in actual, real-world situations and see real places around the world. I wanted to cycle through real cities and towns, along real lakes, see the real coast, and feel like I was there. To me, that felt more rewarding. Speaking of seeing the world, so far, I've completed 13 rides on Rouvy, and I



have cycled in six different countries! (Italy, of course, is a top favorite destination of mine!)

Now, if you like the idea of real, live video rides and *augmented reality* but also want some “gamification” to keep it fun, there’s actually a little of that built into Rouvy. You earn both “XP” (experience) and “Coins” (purchasing power) during your rides. XP helps track your progress and overall experience and ties into the many built-in milestones designed to encourage you to ride and ride hard (for example, one fun milestone I hit was burning the equivalent calories of a burger!). You can also customize your avatar—from the bike to your socks, gloves, bibs, and jersey, just about everything—and those Coins you earn help you “purchase” those upgrades. It’s a fun way to add a little gamification and mix things up.

But for me, the available routes are what make Rouvy shine. They have routes available in over 150 countries, and everything from short 30-minute jaunts to 4-hour Ironman segments. What I really like is that

you can easily search and filter routes based on length, estimated time to complete, total elevation, terrain type (flat, hilly, mountain), gradient, or even by “tags” such as “Ironman” or “Strava segments.” They even have a cool “map view” where you can browse routes geographically. You can also “favorite” routes, so you can flag them to ride later.

I’ve really enjoyed riding in augmented reality. I’ve seen beautiful cities, lakes, birds flying overhead, mountains, forests, the coastline—the options are endless, and it truly makes riding indoors fun (at least for me!). It inspires me to train more, and it’s inspiring me to travel more! I also really like having my “trainer bike” permanently set up and ready to go. It makes it so easy to just hop on and get a ride in. I recently bought a new bike, so my “old” bike became my permanent training bike. I can’t recommend this enough if you already have a spare bike—or even if you find a used bike to dedicate to trainer duty. If you only have a single bike, the extra effort of putting it on and taking it off

the trainer could become a deterrent. Yes, many folks do it, but it’s just one extra step and could be annoying.

Lastly, I’ll add that in addition to simply choosing a route to ride on your own, Rouvy also has Events and Group Rides you can join. Events are organized rides that anyone can join. You get to virtually ride the route with other riders from all over the world (yes, you see their avatars on the screen too—it’s pretty cool). Events are public, but if you want to organize a private group ride with just a few friends, you can easily do that as well by setting up (you guessed it) a Group Ride.

All of that to say, I think Rouvy has a lot of great features built in and available, and so far, I am loving it. When setting up my trainer, I actually set my partner up right next to me as well. With this setup, we have tons of options: we can ride individually whenever we want; we can ride together but on separate routes (in case I want something easier or harder, or longer or shorter, than they want); we can join events together; or, I can set up a private Group Ride for just the two of us. I really enjoy the flexibility and options we have.

To use Rouvy, you must download the app and install it on your device, such as a laptop or an iPad. It’s within this app that you explore, select, set up, and ultimately run your routes. Many people simply use their computer or iPad as their display, but I wanted a larger, more “realistic” (well, as real as it can be) experience. So, I set up HD TVs in front of our trainers and simply screen-share our iPads to them. This way, we have nice, large screens in front of us to enjoy our indoor rides. This setup has been working really well, and I’m glad I did it instead of staring at a small iPad screen. Of course, Rouvy has several options for getting the app



The scenery is 100% real-world video from the route itself. Your on-screen rider is seamlessly layered onto the footage, letting you experience the course as if you’re truly there.

displayed on a TV. Wireless screensharing is one option. Another, if your device and TV support it, is simply using an HDMI cable. But again, you don't NEED a TV—you can simply use the app on your iPad or laptop. The TV setup is fancy, but in my opinion, well worth it.

Ok, so what about my actual bike trainer, the Wahoo Kickr? Well, I've only had it for a month, but so far, I'm really enjoying it. The setup was easy and pairing it with the Wahoo app on my phone was straightforward (this gets it registered with Wahoo). Getting it added and paired to the Rouvy app was also very simple. When researching any indoor trainer, be sure to check what size cassette it comes with standard. The Kickr comes with an 11-speed cassette out of the box. If you need to swap it out to accommodate your bike, it's very easy to do. (I actually had to do this for my partner's bike, and it was a quick, simple change.)

An entire article could be written about the differences between not only Wahoo's line of indoor trainers, but all the popular options available today. I encourage you to research to find one that fits your budget and has the capabilities and features you want. For me, the Wahoo Kickr v6 (especially since I picked it up on sale) checked all the boxes.

Oh—and speaking of capabilities and features—since I'm someone who likes to nerd out over numbers and see exactly how hard I'm working, I opted to purchase a Wahoo heart rate monitor to use while riding and training. It integrated seamlessly with the Kickr and with the Rouvy app. I also have Rouvy set up to automatically push my indoor rides to Strava (which was very easy to configure). Rouvy integrates with more than 15 popular training apps, including Strava, Ride with GPS, Garmin Connect, Suunto, and [more](#).



After you finish your ride, ROUVY can automatically sync the activity to Strava with all your stats included. It even adds a few in-ride “photos” from the route to your Strava post, giving your virtual miles a real-world feel.

I'm super excited to have our trainers set up, and I know we'll be using them for more than just winter training to support our overall fitness goals. Quick 30-minute rides in the morning before work are now a reality—even when the weather is nice outside (because sometimes being time-crunched keeps you from getting in a full outdoor ride). If you've been going back and forth about whether to invest in an indoor training setup, and you're serious about staying healthy, getting more exercise, and complementing your outdoor rides with structured indoor training to improve performance and stamina, I can't recommend it enough. And at least from my personal experience, Rouvy has made it fun and enjoyable to get on the training bike—and it's never a drag to do so.

If you have any questions regarding my training set up, please don't hesitate to email me (heartcyclecody@gmail.com)!

Do you have an indoor trainer set up

Cody Ensanian
February 17, 2026 at 5:32 PM · Rouvy

ROUVY - Lago d'Iseo East | Italy

Ride the world on ROUVY | REAL ROUTES | ridden in | <https://go.rouvy.com/adventure/gEXj4>

Distance	Elev Gain	Time
9.87 mi	364 ft	32m 14s

Virtual Rouvy RIDE LAGO D'ISEO EAST | ITALY

and paired with a cycling app? Is it Rouvy or Zwift? Or perhaps another company? I'd love to hear from you (the good and the bad!). Also, if any HeartCycle members out there are riding on Rouvy and interested in a virtual Group Ride sometime, reach out and I will set something up for us!

Happy spinning, Cody

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!

Mark Lestikow

President, Tour Leader



My wife, Polly, and I live in Centennial, Colorado, and we've been HeartCycle members since 1996. Early HeartCycle members — and Polly's employers — Dr. Jim and Mickey Berry encouraged her to try a tour, so she signed us up for The Heart of Colorado Tour. We had a great time, even though we didn't actually meet our tour leaders until day two! And yes — back then every SAG stop featured peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, bananas, and Fig Newtons. How times have changed!

After riding the Tres Parques tour in Utah led by Jerry Bakke, Polly became inspired to start leading tours. Jerry was a wonderful mentor to her and truly helped elevate the quality of HeartCycle tours, especially when it came to food and SAG support. We began leading in 1998 and have since led tours throughout Canada, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. Along the way, we've made many lifelong friends. Between leading and participating, we've been part of more than 30 tours over the years, including riding across America on both the Southern and Northern tiers — adventures we never would have attempted on our own.

HeartCycle has been a major part of our active lives for decades, and it continues to be a source of joy and community for our whole family.

Outside of cycling, I founded Closet Factory Colorado in 1992 and ran the company with Polly and our youngest son, Doug, until retiring in 2023. Polly and I have three adult children and six very active grandchildren. As HeartCycle President, one of my goals is to help introduce younger generations to the joys of bicycle touring. Our oldest son, Greg, has caught the HeartCycle bug after joining me on three tours. He and I co-led a tour in Steamboat Springs last year, and he's now co-leading a Durango tour with another rider from his generation.

Cody Ensanian

Newsletter Editor, Future Tour Leader?



Hello! I'm Cody! I live in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and have called it home for about 10 years. Before that I spent a few years in Savannah, Georgia, and I grew up in Pennsylvania, splitting time between the Pittsburgh and Williamsport areas. Ever since high school, I hoped to live in Colorado, and I feel fortunate that it worked out. I'm happiest outdoors—cycling, hiking and backpacking, flyfishing, kayaking, skiing, snowshoeing, or trail running—and when it comes to bikes, I enjoy it all: road, gravel, and mountain.

I began volunteering with HeartCycle in spring 2025 and currently serve as a Board Member, Newsletter Editor, Assistant Webmaster, and unofficial "IT guy" (fitting, since technology is my profession). I wanted to give back to the club that introduced me to my first organized bicycle tour—an experience that changed how I think about travel and cycling—and I hope to help lead or coordinate future tours.

So far, I've been on two professionally led international tours: Italy with HeartCycle and Scotland with another vendor. I loved both experiences—there's something special about cycling (and eating!) your way from city to city in another country. This year I'm excited for my first domestic tours: NextGen Durango in June and Jackson Hole in July. If you're joining either, I look forward to riding with you!

I earned my degree in Computer Science from Lycoming College and now serve as the Senior Network Analyst for a K-12 school district in Colorado Springs. I enjoy supporting students and keeping the technology running behind the scenes.

I'm grateful to be part of the HeartCycle community and look forward to many more miles—and meals—
together!





**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 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CANCELLED





**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

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

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

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

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

September

**Underground Railroad Year 3
KY/OH/PAINY, 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

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

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





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
- **Tom Kissinger (2024-26) | 303-475-8669**
Vice President
- **Janet Slate (2025-27) | 303-683-6128**
Tour Director - tourdiretor@heartcycle.org
- **Alan Church (2024-26) | 303-489-1789**
Treasurer
- **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
- **Richard Crocker (2025-27) | 520-539-8019**
Asst. Registrar - registrar@heartcycle.org
- **Cody Ensanian (2025-27) | 570-419-9453**
Newsletter Editor, Co-Webmaster, IT Guy - newsletter@heartcycle.org

Working Members

- **Jim Bethell | 518-466-8490**
Co-Webmaster - 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
- **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.

