

Heart-to-Heart



Tour de Sawtooth

Ketchum, Idaho (home of Sun Valley) is the start and finish of this eight-day odyssey through splendid scenery in the rugged heart of central Idaho. Every mile is on a designated scenic byway. After climbing of Galena Summit on the morning of Day 1, we pick up the headwaters of the Salmon River ("River of No Return") and follow it for three days as it grows into a major waterway. We stay in small mountain towns en route to Salmon, where we have a rest day to enjoy rafting, hot springs and more. We retrace our route to



Challis and then head south over Willow Creek Summit and then descend past spectacular views of the Lost River Range to Arco. The final day offers a chance for the energetic to visit Craters of the Moon National Monument before returning to Ketchum. Approximately 400 miles; 6 days of riding. Longest day: 83 miles; shortest day: 58 miles. Rating: Advanced (for altitude, two long climbs and two long days.)



Dates: June 20-29, 2021

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Bike Tour Dreamin'

Since we did not tour together this year, you did not hear what potential tours the club is organizing for 2021. This month you will find 8 teasers to get you dreamin'. The HeartCycle editor would love to have a story or photo essay of a bike tour that you participated in that might not have been published in Heart-to-Heart before. Maybe it was not a HeartCycle tour, but some of the participants were HeartCycle members, like this months' stories are about "Pepe" (you'll see) by Alan Church and climbing "Grappa" by Kurt Arehart. There is nothing like a magical location to get you dreaming about future places to cycle. Remember there will always be scenic places to visit and see from your bike, so while it might not be in 2020; those places will still be there in 2021 or 2022... but only if you are healthy and ready to ride in the future. Keep dreaming and soon we will be on tours together again.

Paso Robles: April 11 - 17, 2021

You are invited to join your HeartCycle friends for a fixed base tour through California's fastest growing wine region – Paso Robles. This area is home to more than 250 wineries, many of which are small boutique producers that dot the countryside amongst 26,000 acres of vineyard. In addition to wineries the area is known for its breweries, distilleries and walnut, olive oil and cheese tasting rooms. The town is packed with excellent restaurants serving a bounty of farm fresh cuisine. Paso Robles is a veritable paradise for cycling– with incredible wine country scenery and rolling terrain. The majority of the riding is on quiet, winding, hilly back roads through vineyards, ranches and forests. The daily mileage is ~50 miles with 2,000 – 4,000 ft elevation gain. Since mileage is relatively short there will be ample opportunity to stop along the way to enjoy the area's natural beauty and to sample the local fare.



Social Distancing - It Takes Two

Submitted by Alan Church and Clare Bena

To keep us all motivated, HeartCycle asked for submissions for the monthly newsletter that describe rides or tours that may or may not have involved the club or its members. What follows does not come close to meeting this criteria! But perhaps it will entertain you for a few short minutes and leave you with a smile.

As cyclists, we get to enjoy the great outdoors and for the most part, maintaining proper social distancing is not much of an issue. I personally gave up on pace lines several years back and admittedly, riding the roads around Los Alamos, NM is pretty much always a solo event.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Los Alamos, it is a small town of only 15,000 situated in Northern New Mexico at roughly 7500 feet in the Jemez Mountains. The town is surrounded by national forests and numerous steep canyons that make it an ideal location for keeping secrets and producing nuclear weapons. No joke. "Aha!" you say, "Now I know where he's talking about!"



You mean you don't have signs like this in your backyard?!?

I say cycling is “pretty much” a solo event here only because there are some in this town who just don’t get the whole concept of 6 feet as socially distant. Let me explain.

Clare, my better half, works at a certain famous laboratory in town... or better stated, she works from home for a certain famous laboratory. Several times a week, she leaves the house well before the sun rises for a quick ride to a not so famous ski area, Pajarito Mountain, just outside of town. When we are strapped for time, we call this our “quality” vs. “quantity” ride. Out and back, it’s just over 20 miles and has only one hill. The “hill” is just over 4 miles long with an average grade of 8%. Throw in a few 10’s and 12’s, and one really nasty 14% section, and “presto”, you have a quality ride that gets you up out of the saddle and makes you wish you had an E-bike!

So last week, Clare returned home from her early morning ride where I presumed she was now ready to start her day and do her part to make a better bomb. But as she entered the house, something was not right. She looked a bit more disheveled than usual and I felt her ride did not go as planned. Then it hit me. A thiol-like scent emanating from her clothes and bike gear. For those of you who don’t live in a town full of PhD chemists, “thiol” is a chemical compound or group that contains sulphur and hydrogen. You’ve smelled thiols in things like natural gas, rotten eggs, and you guessed it, skunks. Just to clarify, Clare did not get gassed with rotten eggs.

So as Clare explains, in the wee hours of the morning, a skunk spotted Clare’s headlamp and decided to make a mad dash across the road... Why did the skunk cross the road? To get in front of Clare’s bike! Clare locked up her rear wheel, pitched her bike to the left, to the right while Pepe darted to the right, and then to the left. The two of them zigzagged down the middle of road with a common goal... **Do not hit Pepe!** But alas, Pepe met Moots up close and personal. Although Clare was able to stay upright and Pepe escaped uninjured, he left his calling card. So much for Pepe’s appreciation for social distancing!



Pepe Before



Pepe After

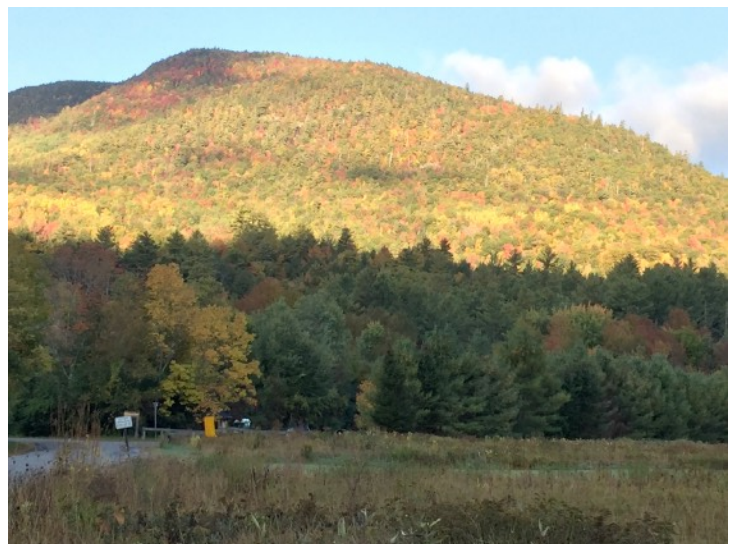
I suspect many of you have had the pleasure of a de-skunking experience. But for those of you who haven't, here are some tips:

1. Don't hit a skunk while on your bike. For that matter, don't hit a skunk ever.
2. Practice proper social distancing protocols whenever you are in the presence of a skunk.
3. If #1 and #2 don't work, wash your clothes with laundry detergent and a half cup of baking soda.
4. Shower as soon as possible. A baking soda solution works well here also.
5. Wash your helmet, bottles, wheels, and bike frame with a mixture of water, 10% white vinegar, and a touch of dish soap. Rinse and repeat with soap and water.
6. Leave your "contaminated" items in the sunshine to dry.
7. Forget cleaning your tires. Just throw them in your neighbor's trash.

All things considered, Clare was very fortunate. She didn't go down, her Moots got a bath, and she was able to work from home... which her co-workers very much appreciated! As for Pepe, he probably went back to his den, told his wife and kids about his story of survival, and warned them that cyclists need to pay more attention to social distancing!

Stay upright and stay safe!

Coast to Coast: September 11-26, 2021



This final segment of the Coast to Coast trip will commence in Rochester, NY where the 2019 tour finished. This last segment will have approximately 700 miles with 33,000 vertical feet of climbing as we pedal through some of the most scenic parts of New York and New England. The orientation meeting will be on Saturday September 11. We will travel from the Erie Canal east through the Adirondacks to Lake Placid, NY. where we will have the first rest day on September 16. Next, we descend to Lake Champlain, ferry across into Burlington and the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. We will have a second rest day on September 22 in Lincoln, NH. The final leg will take us to Portland, ME on the Atlantic Ocean. Our final rest day on September 25 will include a port side celebration dinner. Departure from Portland is scheduled for Sunday, September 26.

Oregon Wine & Surf Loop: August 22 - 29, 2021

When it comes to beautiful sites and world class cycling, the Oregon coast is hard to beat. This tour starts in Eugene visiting some award winning Willamette Valley wineries. You will be climbing the lush green backroads of the Oregon Coastal Range, then watching the waves crash and checking out the many viewpoints and attractions along this craggy coastline. There will be new and spectacular views at every turn in the road. Whale watching, sea lion sightings, and the many lighthouses will make you want to keep your camera close at hand. The off-day may include a lazy river kayak trip or a dune buggy ride at the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. This 7-day excursion will not disappoint. Approximately 360 miles with up to 15,500 vertical feet of climbing. Intermediate to advanced riders.



Cima Grappa

By Kurt Arehart - 1996

I awoke in Borso del Grappa in amazement, because I felt good. The prior evening I had enjoyed far more than my share of the local table red, and my body, that doesn't normally suffer such excesses gladly, was apparently letting me off the hook. Dodged another bullet, I guess. But there was something else nagging at me as I drifted up towards full wakefulness.

Oh yes. Cima Grappa.

Over mounds of great food and that very nice red wine at the Italian Cycling Center's training table last night, I had succumbed to mob mentality and agreed against my better judgment to climb Monte Grappa. Today. Six of us North Carolina flat-landers were pledged to ship out right after an early breakfast.

In they trooped, the plotters of the prior evening, all of them looking a little less certain about the day's enterprise. But we had made a pact, the weather was perfect, and there was no way out. I turned to the practical matter of stoking myself for this nasty climb. After eating all the granola and bananas that I could safely hold, I still had the uneasy feeling that there was a serious bonk in my future: I had no wonder-fuels of any kind. No sport drink, no energy bars, no packets of carbo-goo. Scanning the dining room of the Italian Cycling Center, I did the best I could: four pieces of something like melba toast, which I wrapped in a paper napkin, and two little single-serving packages of grape jelly. No time to wonder what Mark Allen might say, it was time to shove off for Grappa.



Borso del Grappa is a tiny village in the shadow of Monte Grappa, just six miles East of the larger and better known Bassano del Grappa. Typical of farming communities in this part of the Veneto, most of the buildings are of ancient masonry, built very close, and in excellent repair. We rolled downhill out of Borso to the West, easily covering the four miles to the start of our climb.

“That’s the road to the top of Grappa”, George had pronounced in his peculiar monotone during a ride several days earlier. The proprietor of the Italian Cycling Center, George’s delivery of this information was tinged with the boredom of repetition and also an implication that this data would be useless to unworthy flat-landers such as ourselves. Arriving now at the base of the climb with no real warm-up to speak of, the first short grade came into view, and looked no more welcoming today than it had when we whizzed by under George’s direction days earlier.

We began as a group, the six of us sorting out into a single line as each searched for a comfortable cadence to settle into. This first short bit ran straight at the mountain, flanked by the last of the neat little stone walled gardens of the village of Romano.

By the time I reached the hard left turn in the road that marked the beginning of the first switch-back, it became clear that this was not a group ride at all. We had already strung out quite a bit based on differences in fitness, gearing and strategy. Max was in the lead. No surprise there. He had recently jumped up to a new plateau in his riding, could now be regarded as a road racer, and had shaved his legs in the bargain. I expected him to be off the front immediately. Also up the road was Fred. *This* was interesting. Fred has been in good shape often in his life, but not at the moment. Plus, he had elected to bring half his life’s possessions along in a day pack. The fact that he was ahead of me was a source of both wonder and personal challenge, at once fascinating and intolerable. I had to catch this guy. The other three in our party fell well to the rear as we continued up the leafy green tunnel that was the first switch-back.

Now Max was out of sight, and to my deep surprise, Fred had widened his lead on me. I checked my computer and found that I was climbing at nine miles an hour. I had already gone to my best climbing gear, and was beginning to consider coming out of the saddle for my first bit of leg relief. When was this first switch going to end? It had been at least a mile at a pretty tough grade with no break. At least I wasn’t being distracted by anything like beautiful scenery. The wall of trees lining the road, now mostly pines, was unbroken. Only one mile into this seventeen-mile climb of 5,170 feet, and already I was hurting.

Finally, the first turn, a hairpin to the right. The area was deeply forested, so still no view. Nature began to take its course and I slowly pulled up on Fred, the pack mule. I got on his wheel and briefly matched his pace: seven miles per hour.

“Who’s back there?”, he wheezed out.

“Kurt.”

“I’m so dead.” A hint of a whine.

“You’re doing great. I’m going to come by you. Stay on my wheel.” My predatory ambitions now vanished, I genuinely wanted to help Fred. Not that there was much drafting advantage at nine miles per hour. I just wanted to throw him a psychological bungee cord. But it was not to be. Next time I checked he was gone.

The second hairpin turn, this one to the left, came much sooner than the first. And this time, a break in the trees gave onto the valley floor below. Beautiful, but I couldn’t stop. Now vanity would not allow me to be caught and possibly passed by the struggling Fred. I negotiated the tight turn and mashed on.

I mostly like to have lots of information no matter what I'm doing. I'm big on maps and I tend to read-up on wherever I may be headed. Now, however, I desperately wanted to avoid knowing how little of the climb I had completed, and how very much more lay before me. So I was irritated by the regular presence of road signs announcing the precise altitude. They provided regular reminders that I was really just getting started. And yet my breakfast was about gone.

Arriving at the next hairpin turn left, and confronted with a still more magnificent view of the valley floor, and comfortable that Fred was now safely dropped, I decided to stop and feast on some of my melba toast. I savored two as my legs started to settle down. I would leave my precious grape jellies until a little later.

At last I gained the first shoulder of the mountain, and with it came some relief in the grade. I had long since dropped any thought of catching Max. Now it was just about getting to the top without being overtaken by the rest of my party. And that was going to be tough. Fuel and water were becoming an issue. I downed the last of my melba toast and pressed on. Road signs continued to provide altitude data and assurances that I was indeed enroute to "Cimi Grappa" (the top of Grappa). After passing several lodges, a gas station and a major hiking artery, I climbed up to the Italian alpine version of a 7-Eleven. I ordered up a fresh supply of mineral water and eyed the selection of food possibilities. Incredibly, I judged none of it to be decent ride food and passed on the opportunity. This was probably the worst call I've made in years. Not long afterwards I would be considering eating grass to get up the mountain.

Pressing on up the road at a steady nine miles per hour, the country opened up into vast, rock strewn, steeply sloping alpine pastures dotted by the occasional stone barn or farmhouse. Now it was possible to look down and see where you had been, which was quite satisfying, and look up to see where you must go, which was considerably less satisfying. But no matter. The sky was pure blue and the soft breeze brought reports of distant cow bells. I was in the middle of a classic Tyrolean scene. It was unspeakably beautiful. And I was bonking. I stopped near a roadside high-alpine cow who seemed completely unimpressed by the enormity of my accomplishment thus far, tore back the foil cover of the first of my priceless grape jellies, and carefully ingested every molecule of sugar it had to offer.

Having backed away from the onset of leg cramps, I labored on. Beyond the high meadows the view to the South was outstanding. Many of the villages I had cycled through in days prior could be surveyed in a single glance. Staring hard to the Southeast and applying just a little imagination, it was possible to make out Venice. My quadriceps called me back from such petty considerations and I stopped for the last woefully small sugar infusion. Looking ahead, the road began a very steep, very long traverse to a large and distant structure that I took to represent the summit. No way I was going to make it.

I stood considering the merits of turning back when I spied tiny flashes of color high on that impossible traverse. Cyclists descending. From this great distance they appeared to be moving slowly, but I judged that they were flying, and having a great time of it. Minutes later they sped past my position in tight formation, clearly highly trained local club riders, turned out in full Sunday regalia. I was still fighting my way up, and these guys had been there, done that, and were headed for home, passing yet another soft American stranded along the side of the road. If I was out of food, I was going to have to do this fueled by national pride. Hey, I was desperate.

Slowly cranking up the mega-traverse, teetering on the edge of massive cramps, I looked down, curious about my four friends below. Not a trace, and I could see a long way. I was now back to thinking I would make the summit, but didn't give them much of a chance. The killer traverse ended with a hard turn to the left, crossing a major ridge line and bringing me around to the North.

The Dolomites were like granite fangs against a stark blue sky. Beyond them could be seen the Alps. An incredible view made doubly so by the way I had earned it. And just as importantly, the top was less than a half-mile away, a finite distance and climb that I knew I could cover.

Max waved me in and we celebrated. He had been there for quite some time and had grown concerned. The wretched, bald-legged youth had completed the climb without stopping once, underlining the vast difference in fitness between us. One by one, the rest of the crew limped in, much the same as I had, each with a story of solitary triumph. The climb was clearly the toughest thing any of us had ever done.

The night prior I had promised much Grappa, the local moonshine, to all in our group who summited. None of us had any intention of consuming such a thing now, particularly with seventeen miles of steep descents in our immediate future. So I sat back and sucked in the clear alpine air, and enjoyed the view, warmed by the hard sun and my escape from buying all that Grappa.

Ohio Appalachian Country: October, 2021

Would you believe southeast Ohio was the first wilderness of our infant country after the Revolutionary War? The Ohio River was beckoning to the adventuresome of the eastern seaboard and our first pioneers came in droves. Ohio became the 16th state in 1803! The book, "The Pioneers" is a very good read of these events, and we will be riding and staying overnights in the many settlements described in the book. Southeast Ohio has been tamed but with mostly small towns and paved roads, but a bicyclist will definitely get that "pioneer feel" next fall.



Texas Hill Country: Mar 26 - Apr 4

Willkommen to Fredericksburg, a small slice of German-Texan heaven taking us back in time! Our spring training rides offer more than 500 miles of paved country roads and acres of abundant wildflowers in the Texas Hill Country. We plan to mix hilly terrain, bucolic country lanes, and picturesque ranch roads, many through open range with longhorns, sheep, chickens, pigs and goats coming up close and personal. Two options will be featured most days; a shorter route and a longer route. This will be a fixed base tour within an easy walk to art galleries, boutiques, museums, music venues and the many restaurants for which Fredericksburg, Texas is famous. Spring warm-up means Spring-like weather with average daily temperatures between 40 and 70 degrees and mostly dry. Those choosing to fly should look at arrivals at Austin-Bergstrom (AUS) or San Antonio (SAT). Bike transport to and from Denver is available. We are a tandem friendly tour.



Roaring Fork Valley: July 15 - 18

Please join us for a four-day tour of riding up and over the hills and ridges surrounding the Roaring Fork Valley. The fixed base for this tour will be in Basalt, Colorado, located 180 miles west of Denver and 20 miles down valley from Aspen, Colorado.



Basalt (pop 4,200) is a historic mining turned resort town located at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Frying Pan Rivers at an elevation of 6,611 feet. Gold medal fishing and many excellent restaurants and/or pubs are available within 5 minutes walking distance of the hotel. The bike rides are loops from Basalt over lightly travelled roads and bike paths with grand vistas of the Elk Range and surrounding valleys. The “groad” connectors access different roads for a new and different riding experience from previous tours in the region. The gravel sections are uphill, short (2.5 - 7.5 miles) and can better be described as hard packed dirt (i.e. pretty smooth under normal conditions). The rides range from 50 – 55 miles in length with 2,150 – 3,783 ft of climbing.

Land's End to John o'Groats: May 27 - June 14, 2021

The LEJOG cycle ride is the grand daddy of all cycling challenges in the UK, starting at Land's End in Cornwall (the extreme southwestward point in mainland Britain) and ending at John o'Groats in northern Scotland - very close to the most northerly point of mainland Britain. You will have rolling hills, stone villages, thatched houses, moors, dales, lochs, mountains, rivers and seas. Like all iconic routes it has boring bits, we plan to take a van around those and spend time on the more scenic parts. Average daily distances are around 65 miles no day with more than 4,000 ft of climbing. It's just shy of 1,000 miles with about 50,000 ft of climbing accomplished in 15 days of riding with an additional 2-rest days.

The terrain is not flat, and riders will encounter some challenging grades, although short by Colorado standards. Roads in the UK are generally high standard, but narrow compared to the U.S. UK motorists are typically fast, but patient and courteous toward cyclists.



Colorado HeartCycle 2020 Tours

Las Vegas & Death Valley Spring Training

Las Vegas, Nevada

March 11 - 20 Status: Completed
 9 days, Advanced \$1,750.00
 Jimmy Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
 Richard Williamson, richard6a@gmail.com

Paso Robles Wine Country

Paso Robles, California

April 18 - 25 CANCELLED
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$1,390.00
 Becky Bottino, bbottino@gmail.com
 Ken Condray, condray3@gmail.com

Shenandoah Valley

Staunton, VA

April 25 - May 2 CANCELLED
 7 days, Advanced \$1,650.00
 Kurt Arehart, klarehart@gmail.com
 Jim Bethell, bethell.jim@verizon.net

Relaxed in Provence

Avignon, France

May 14 - 23 CANCELLED
 9 days, Intermediate \$2,675.00
 Polly Page, mspollypage@gmail.com
 Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com

Durango Weekend

Durango, Colorado

May 16 - 19 CANCELLED
 3 days, Int./Adv. \$670.00
 Denise Weaver, dweaver1200@hotmail.com
 Rob Weaver, Robert_r_weaver_iii@hotmail.com

Bruges-Paris, Bike and Barge

Bruges, Belgium

May 16 - 29 CANCELLED
 14 days, Easy/Int. \$3200.00
 Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs1@gmail.com

Traverse Bay

Traverse City, Michigan

May 30 - June 7 CANCELLED
 8 days, Int./Adv. \$1,570.00
 Lynn Driver ldriver@med.umich.edu
 Bob Rowe browe49@comcast.net

Beyond Dordogne

Bordeaux, France

June 19 - 28 CANCELLED
 9 days, Advanced \$2,750.00
 Fred Yu, frederickyu@comcast.net
 Graham Hollis, gramhollis@icloud.com

Roaring Fork Road & Groad Weekend

Basalt, Colorado

July 15 - 19 CANCELLED
 4 days, Int./Adv. \$760.00
 Ron Finch, blouie-rfinch@comcast.net
 Robin Heil, rjsheil@bresnan.net

Oregon Wine & Surf Loop

Eugene, Oregon

July 25 - August 2 CANCELLED
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$1,680.00
 Cindy Alvarez, sindelou@cox.net

Colorado HeartCycle 2020 Tours

Glacier & Waterton National Parks

Whitefish, Montana

August 8 - 16 **CANCELLED**
7 days, Int./Adv. \$2,100.00
Jim Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
Scott MacCormack, samaccormack@gmail.com

Southern Albania - Session 1

Tirana, Albania

Sept. 23 - Oct. 4 **CANCELLED**
11 days, Int./Adv. \$1,660.00
Tina Vessels, tina.vessels@gmail.com

Fernie to Olney Groat Tour

Fernie, BC, Canada

August 16 - 21 **CANCELLED**
4 days, Int./Exp. \$1,100.00
Jim Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com

Southern Albania - Session 2

Tirana, Albania

Sept. 28 - Oct. 9 **CANCELLED**
11 days, Int./Adv. \$1,660.00
Denise Weaver, dweaver1200@hotmail.com

Black Hills of South Dakota

Custer, South Dakota

September 9 - 11 **CANCELLED**
4 days, Int./Adv. \$760.00
Judy Siel, bjsiel@msn.com
Barry Siel, bsiel03@gmail.com

Ohio Appalachian Country

Columbus, Ohio

Oct. 11 - 19 **CANCELLED**
8 days, Int./Adv. \$1,600.00
Jim Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
Scott MacCormack, samaccormack@gmail.com

Coast-to-Coast Northern Tier, Year 5

Rochester, New York

September 12 - 27 **CANCELLED**
14 days, Int./Adv. \$3,150.00
Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com
Patty Menz, pattymenz1@verizon.net