

Heart-to-Heart



Still looking for a HeartCycle tour for 2019?

It's not too late!!!

After the kickoff November registration period, ten of our 2019 tours are full (a few have no wait list). Registration is open for all current, renewing, and new members. Grab some friends and register for one of the tours below before they fill too.

Le Monastere in Southern France Weeks 1 & 2 each have just 1 or 2 spots left. The following tours still have spaces available.

The Moab Area, May 11-16. Whether this is your first time to Moab or your 30th, the vistas never cease to amaze and inspire. Come join us on iconic rides of Arches NP, Dead Horse Point, La Sal Mountain Loop and Potash Road.

Bourbon and Bluegrass of Kentucky, May 22-30. This intermediate tour (with advanced options) rides through rolling countryside and horse farms. It includes stops at historic bourbon distilleries, Churchill Downs, listening to Bluegrass, and participation in the Horsey Hundred – a signature riding event.

Rediscover Colorado: Central Mountains and Passes, June 22-29. This advanced, scenic ride packs in classic climbs and passes you'll want to check off your bucket list, including: Cottonwood Pass, Trout Creek Pass, Hoosier Pass, Vail Pass, Tennessee Pass, Independence Pass, and McClure Pass.

Woman's Weekend, September 4-8. A "Woman's Only" Easy to Moderate tour in Colorado Springs (with harder riding options), and lots of non-riding activities such as hiking, painting and sightseeing.

Bicycling in Oz: the Ozarks, October 29-November 6. This is a one-of-a-kind fall foliage loop tour through the seldom biked Ozarks between Fayetteville, AK and Branson, MO, and back. You'll visit Mulberry Mountain, Branson, the Grand Canyon of Arkansas, plus enjoy 2 dinners cooked by our SAGs.

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Notes from the Board

Alexander (Sandy) Thompson, longtime HeartCycle member and veteran of many bicycle tours, died on January 13, 2019, at the age of 72, while riding his bike near Bogota, Colombia. Sandy was on a flat bike path when he went down, suffered a broken neck and immediately lost consciousness. He could not be revived.

Sandy was a resident of Boulder, Colorado and was a retired college professor. He was a strong cyclist and particularly enjoyed HeartCycle advanced tours, he rode on 15 HeartCycle tours. We will remember his keen wit and intelligence and warmth for others.

A remembrance of Sandy in on the following page.

An obituary from the Daily Camera can be found at: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailycamera/obituary.aspx?n=alexander-mackenzie-thompson-sandy&pid=191307188>



Alexander (Sandy) Thomson was a terrific person as well as an accomplished rider and academician. His love for cycling and traveling will always be remembered from the time we spent with him in Sardinia, Italy. Sandy had a wonderful time in Sardinia and also with our group. He liked Sardinia so much that he asked me in November when I was thinking about running that tour again, in his words he had a Stellar Time!

I will always remember the smile on his face cycling in Sardinia and on the fishing boat trip. We all know the dangers of cycling and hope nothing bad will ever happen to any of us. I don't think Sandy would change a thing when it comes to the enjoyment and places he explored on his bike. I know I wouldn't.

Below is Sandy's address if anyone would like to send a sympathy card and a message to his family.

He will be missed,

John Aslanian & Kathy Kime

Thomson Family
2934 Nogalas Circle
Boulder, Colorado 80301



Bike and Barge in Germany with Colorado Heart Cycle (CHC) September 2018

By Trina Mace Learned

Mid-September is the perfect time for retirees, their mates and pals to meet in Koblenz, Germany for a trip down the river. Or in this case, two rivers: the Mosel and the Saar. Koblenz, a 2000+ year old city, sits at the confluence of the Rhein and Mosel Rivers. Our group of twenty cyclists also converged there, traveling from various US locations – Colorado, Oregon, New York State, Connecticut, and Maryland – touching down in Frankfurt, then training north to the start of our ride.

We met on board the afternoon of Saturday, Sept 15, our first adventure. Although instructed on the docking location of our barge, the *Allure*, it was nowhere in sight as we lugged our rolling duffels along the cobblestone sidewalk. Only the rescue by our dedicated, fast-thinking tour organizer, Joanne Speirs, ended our frustration. She guided us to our barge which was tied to the river side of a large, luxury ship. Indirect access to the *Allure* required walking the gang plank, boarding the luxury vessel, bypassing the on-board swimming pool, descending the interior curved staircase, jumping the small gap between boats, then landing on the deck of our somewhat more utilitarian barge.

Our barge was quite commodious. Each double occupancy cabin – twin beds only – had its own head (in this case toilet, sink, and shower). Internet access was free and bandwidth fine, but electricity depended on the ship's generator, which chugged to life every morning at 7:00 am, the sound more effective than an alarm clock. The tiny galley magically supported



Figure 1: Docked in Koblenz, a toast to our trip

gastronomic alchemy; breakfasts at 8:00 am (buffet style with lunch ingredients ready to be packed) and dinners at 6:30 pm were announced with the ring of a bell (head-starts not allowed). Coffee and tea were self-serve all day; alcohol consumption (more than just Mosel wines) ran a tab and bottles were collared with your cabin number. The upper, outside deck was comfortable for lounging or dining and, each evening, its railing sported the *de rigueur* cyclist's drying line for rinsed out riding gear.

By late afternoon, we had all arrived, unpacked in our assigned cabins and met back on deck for a toast (Figure 1) and a quick get-acquainted game to learn everyone's name. Then we were introduced to our crew: Bert, captain; Krystof, matroze (able seaman); Angelina, hostess; Alexandra, chef; and, of course, Francien, our guide. After the small celebration, we descended to the dining area for the first of many fabulous three-course dinners, prepared by our own resident chef.

Day 1: Koblenz to Cochem, Sunday, September 16 (34 kilometers)

We motored out of Koblenz and down the Mosel as dawn's light filled the western sky and enjoyed the views on a short cruise downriver, through our first lock, and to a spot where we disembarked for our inaugural ride.

At Aiken, we all tested our bikes. I felt a bit wobbly; I am accustomed to a sleek road bike. These versatile bikes were seven-speed touring models with wider tires, upright handlebars and much more heft, able to tote our panniers stuffed with rain gear or sunscreen, lunch, and water bottle. Except from some stubborn shifting as we climbed the bridge's onramp to cross the river, the next hour's cycling was a portend of much great riding to come. We rode along the river on dedicated, flat bike paths until turning into the town of Moselkern for our first off-bike excursion. We parked our bikes at the start of a path, grabbed our lunch sacks, and set off on foot into the woods. Nearly 45 minutes later, after hiking nearly two miles uphill, the forest parted to reveal an amazing castle. The Berg Eltz (Figure 2), one of Germany's most famous and iconic fortresses (it was featured on the 500 Deutsche Mark banknote), is a 12th century structure owned and occupied by the same family for 33 generations. Despite the crowds (who apparently knew a no-bike, no-hike rear approach) we got a private, guided tour of the castle with such unusual features as a medieval bedroom with an en-suite (a sort



of wooden out-house shed in the corner), a family council room where the truth was told and kept confidential (think Las Vegas-style "what happens here, stays here") a huge kitchen, and a nursery where the occupants' portraits were composites of baby faces juxtaposed on miniaturized adult bodies, the painter's style of the time. We hiked back down the mountain, hopped on our bikes and road the rest of the way to Cochem.

Back on the boat for dinner, the crew helped us celebrate my husband David's 75th birthday with an incredible chocolate-frosted, fruit decorated cake, presented with a spark-spewing Roman candle. (Note: he was not the oldest on this tour; we rode with at least two octogenarians, terrific riders both.)

Figure 2: Hike to Berg Eltz

Day 2: Cochem to Zell, Monday, September 17 (40 kilometers)

Our second day of riding continued our good fortune of beautiful weather – brisk fall mornings followed by warm, sunny days with highs in the upper 70’s, low 80’s. Having docked in Cochem after dark, we delayed the start of our ride until 10:00 am so we could take walks around town; some hiked up to the hilltop castle (Figure 4) while others strolled through the narrow village streets to see the timbered houses and quaint medieval churches.

Once on the bikes, the ride was easy, again along the Mosel. We stopped in Senheim, a quintessential Mosel region town with charming buildings and persistent vineyards clinging to the river-bank’s steep slopes. The beautiful Baroque St. Remigius Catholic Church (ca. 1075) was perched high above the town, perhaps explaining how it survived an 1839 fire that wiped out most of the area’s structures. Or perhaps the exhausting Fitbit tally of the 110 steps we climbed to reach the church proved too much of an obstacle for those 19th century flames.

Thereafter, several CHC riders gathered at a café along the water, hoping for quick service (coffee and cake or a beer) just as a cruise ship pulled up and disgorged 100+ soon-to-be café patrons. By noon, after getting back on the bike, we stopped in a riverside grove for lunch, taking advantage of the shade in the unusually warm afternoon sun. By 4:00 pm, we were in Zell, one of the larger producers of Riesling wine and famous for *Zeller Schwarze Katz* (“Black Cat” wine). According to legend, once upon a time, three merchants came to Zell to buy some wine. In one cellar, they tasted wines out of three barrels, but they couldn’t agree on which one was the best. They were about to take another sample, when a black cat suddenly jumped on one of the barrels, arched its back, its fur standing on end, and swiped its paw at anyone who tried to get closer. The wine merchants chose the barrel which was so obstinately defended by the cat, thinking that it probably contained the best wine.

After dinner, several of us climbed off the barge and walked through the town. Joined by Francein and Bert, our ship’s captain, we landed in a small pub, gathering more for the talk than the drink. Despite the weather implications of late September, the pubs continue to celebrate open-air seating, even well past dark, their patrons’ comfort aided by the complementary blankets folded over each chair.



Figure 3: The Allure docked in Cochem; bikes ready to ride



Figure 4: Cochem

Day 3: Zell to Bernkastel-Kues, Tuesday, September 18 (45 kilometers)

Yes, Colorado Heart Cycle (CHC) is an intense organization, one that takes its riding very seriously. But our club's ethic pales by comparison to the Dutch discipline for safe and responsible cycling. Before our departure, after the crew moved our bikes from the barge to the wharf, Francein noticed that one bike lock key was missing. For Francein, whose profession is leading bike tours, bicycle stewardship is fundamental. The cavalier act of neglecting to lock a bike was not appreciated; we would all stay put until the key was found, presumably by searching yesterday's pants pockets or the depths of our saddlebags. Reluctant to be "outed" as the careless key loser, no one produced the missing key or confessed to its loss. Eventually, the stalemate was broken – with a replacement lock – and the day's ride began. Two people stayed on board; the prerogative of the bike and barge format trip.

As was now our custom, the ride began leisurely. I tried not to be lulled into a spectator's immunity to its beauty, seduced by riding through kilometer after kilometer of spectacular scenery, impossibly perched hill-side-hugging endless vineyards and the guiding flow of the faithful river (Figure 5). Our first break is in a small town whose busy inhabitants are preparing for Oktoberfest events which would soon clog their narrow streets with more than just delivery trucks and endless rows of portable tables. We cluster around the outdoor tables of a small café, drink our coffee, chat, take turns in and out of the WC, and continue our digression from stateside realities. Then we're back on our bikes pedaling to Treban-Trarbach, a beautiful medieval town at the bottom of a teardrop bend in the river.



Figure 5: Vineyards along the Mosel's bank



Figure 6: Walking through Trarbach

On this warm fall day, the town's intimate commerce area was crowded with pedestrians and we, too, had to dismount and walk our bikes to the river promenade where we ate our picnic (Figure 6). During lunch, we all jumped up and waved as the *Allure* motored by. These daily shoreline sightings of our home-ship were a welcome routine, a constant reminder of our parallel progress down the Mosel. Later, we would again encounter the *Allure*, this time from overhead as the ship navigated the change in elevation within the sophisticated, if languid, lock system. To watch, we all pedaled into a gated area where we could leave our bikes. Out of Francein's earshot, this enclosure prompted the quip, "Here you don't have to lock your bikes. You know why? Because we're *IN* a lock!"

On this day, David and I were riding as sweepers. On group CHC rides, there are various advantages to your position in the pack. Riding in the front, near Francein, offers terrific commentary on our route and destination. Riding alongside other riders, perhaps different people each day, inspires get-acquainted conversations that often continue over dinner. And riding as sweeper has a leisure component - no one is waiting for you - that allows for frequent photo stops. On this day, sweeping also meant watching everyone navigate three or four kilometers of cinder path, the sort of bumpy, loose surface that required a white-knuckle grip just to keep your bike on course.

Arriving in Bernkastel-Kues, we rode into, through and past the town to find our barge, which could only move into its docking berth at 5 pm, after the last tour boat departed. Mounting our bikes, several of us backtracked to our final destination and shared tall *Weizenbiers* (wheat beers) at a rathskeller, conveniently located in view of the dock (Figure 7). When the boat and our fellow travelers arrived, our tour leader, Joanne, threw a wine tasting party with local Mosel wines - all white - and some sausage from a famous Zell butcher.

Day 4: Bernkastel-Kues to Schweich, Wednesday, September 19 (50 kilometers)

Q: *Why did the bicycle fall over?*

A: *Because it was two tired.*

Wednesday was my birthday. Two riders in our group had ordered electric bikes, something that I knew little about before this trip, but apparently are all the rage in bike-habituated Europe. When one of those riders decided to spend her day cruising on the barge, Francein suggested she lend me her electric-assisted bike, in honor of my birthday. Perhaps a bit undertrained for this trip, I was grateful for the offer. "Oh, what fun it is to ride an electric bike!" Although I used the "econo" setting 95% of the time, the knowledge that a quick turbo boost was at my fingertips eliminated any mental barriers. I felt intrepid!



Figure 7: CHC riders enjoying a Weizenbier



Figure 8: Piesport

Our first stop on the ride was Piesport (Figure 8), the region's highest volume producer of Riesling, a fact belied by the placid atmosphere we experienced on the porch of a small café. Some chose beer to chase away the day's warmth. I indulged in strong coffee and apfelkuchen (apple cake); my birthday had just begun. On our ride out of town, we passed the remains of an ancient Roman wine-making villa, and further still, we saw a replica of a Roman wine-toting ship. While there the *Allure* went by on the river and, once again, we all vigorously waved until captain Bert sounded the horn.

Alongside innumerable vineyards, we continue on until we come upon a small park with picnic tables, public WC, and a wading trough! Twenty-four inches deep, it's a cement 12-foot by 6-foot rectangle with a railing down the center and a current created by constant flowing water (Figure 9). Two shirtless men were circumambulating it when we arrived and most of us were eager to join them, letting the spring-fed water cool our tired legs.



Figure 9: Cooling down in the wading trough!

Another amazing cake was served at afternoon tea time to celebrate my birthday. Dinner was a lovely barbecue outside, up on deck.

Day 5: Trier to Saarburg, Thursday, September 20 (30 kilometers)

Before we rode, one of the women in our group declared this "Butt Awareness Day!" I agreed! My rear end was very sore from our kilometers in the saddle.

The day began with a bike ride into Trier's Altstadt (old city). Francein wanted to show us the major tourist sites: The Ponte Nigro (Figure 10) from the Roman times (the city was founded in the 4th century), the market square, the cathedral and its sister church, the palace, and remnants of the Roman wall. We got into town around 9:45 and spent the morning sightseeing. Most of our group departed on their bicycles from the center of Trier; three of us opted to cruise on the *Allure*.

In the afternoon, we pedaled up a few gentle inclines, just enough to slow everyone down. Once again, while passing another lock in the river, we spotted the *Allure* in the lock, waiting to be raised to the river's level. Near day's end, we rode through the vineyards and a residential neighborhood to visit the ruin of a Roman villa.

We ended the day riding in a protective "critical mass" at Francein's suggestion, taking over the congested street and keeping the traffic away as we crossed the busy bridge to where our boat was docked. From there, we cruised on the ship for an hour and a half until we reached Trier.



Figure 10: Roman Ponte Nigro in Trier

On the boat, going through the day's second lock, we were greeted by our bicycle crew, watching to make sure we got in, got up, and got out of the lock safe and sound (Figure 11). When we pulled into Saarberg around 4 pm, the riders were on the opposite shore, stopped and watching. They rode over the ridge and glided down the off ramp to our boat, docked right under the hilltop castle. People cleaned up quickly; this was our night to go into town, explore the antique waterfall and hydro powered paddle wheels, and have dinner on our own. First, several of us had beer and wine at a kiosk right next to the boat, then wandered into town. In the town square (Figure 12), which is bisected by a stream leading to the 20-meter high waterfall, people were relaxing in chairs around tables. Although early (5:30) we found a lovely restaurant and ordered Weiner schnitzel, fish soup and beef. On our way back to the boat, we hiked by the castle.

Back on board, we all sat out on the deck until one by one, each rider arrived, joining us on the boat. By 9:00 pm, all were on board, allowing Captain Bert to turn the boat around, go back up river 1.5 kilometers, and dock there for the night. Deep into the evening, card games continued around the galley's tables.

After five perfect weather days, Friday – our last riding day – had a prediction for rain. At breakfast we'd all decide when and where to ride.



Figure 11: Through a lock on the Allure



Figure 12: Saarburg

Day 6: Saarburg to Merzig, Friday, September 21 (~35 kilometers)

Despite the weather forecast for rain – which each of us interpreted differently on our various iPhone apps – we all set out to ride at 9 am. The trip was unlike the days along the Mosel. Today’s trails were dirt and rocks, sometimes gravel and stone dust, but rarely concrete or asphalt. For one lengthy stretch, we rode through deep woods in single file, perhaps a bit too close to each other, until David’s bike caught on some sand and went out from under him. Eventually we reached a delightful eight-person chapel, overlooking the Saar River (Figure 13). It was made out of the local red stone and offered a vista of the water, highway, railroad, and the town we were approaching. Then down the hill to the bridge, across the river (Figure 14), and into Mettlach, where Villeroy and Boch has produced earthenware since 1748. We arrived just as rain started spitting but were not daunted. We watched the barge approach the dock in town, disembark our fellow travelers who had not ridden that day, then gathered at the museum. After walking through the extensive exhibits (china, place settings, floor tiles, and what they call “sanitary fixtures” which is their discreet word for toilets, tubs and sinks), we exited to a steady downpour, convincing many of us to make a run for the boat before it left the dock. Once on board, as the rain came down heavily and the wind picked up, we all thought about our five colleagues who decided to ride the remaining ten kilometers.



Figure 13: Hilltop chapel overlooking the Saar River



Figure 14: Crossing the bridge to Mettlach

Those of us on the boat ate our lunch in a dry, warm place and then Alexandra insisted on giving us more lunch – chicken tacos – which were fabulous! We took a nap after that, woke up to see sun, then walked into our last town, Merzig. When we got back to the boat, the riders were back, none the worse for wear. On our last night together, the barge's chef prepared a spectacular meal of roasted salmon. All of us, reluctant to let go of our fabulous time together, lingered over cards and watched our final sunset on the river (Figure 15).

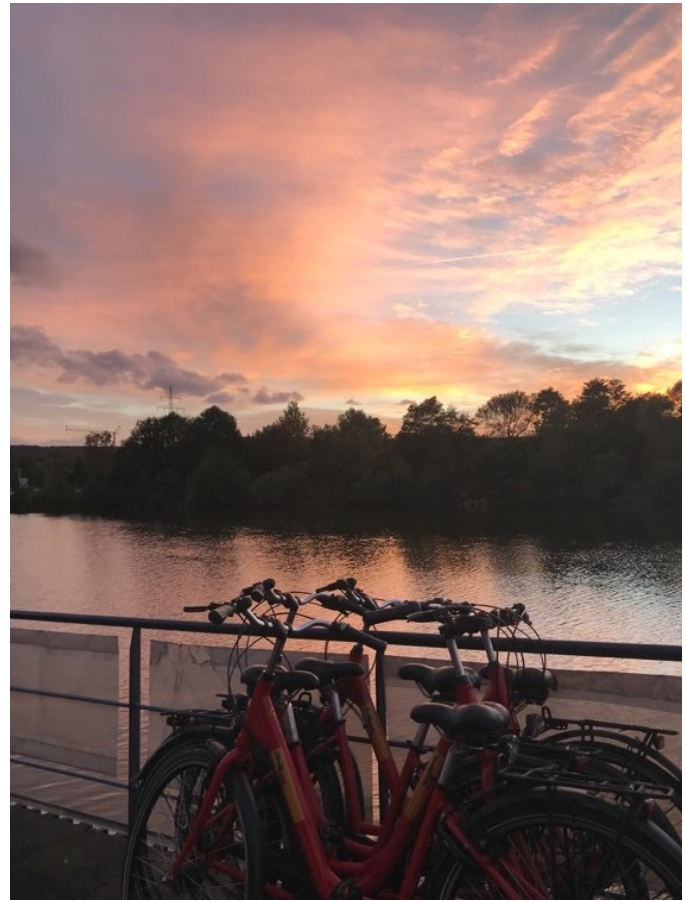


Figure 15: Sunset over the Saar from the Allure

**Figure 16:
Bike and
Barge CHC
riders**



Colorado HeartCycle 2019 Tours

Bicycling in Paradise: Maui

Maui, Hawaii

Jan. 26 - Feb. 1, 2019 Status: Wait List
 6 days, Int./Exp. \$2,280.00
 John Aslanian, 22flatrock@gmail.com
 Bob Rowe, browe49@comcast.net

Tucson Town & Country

Tucson, Arizona

March 2 - 10 Status: Closed
 8 days, Intermediate \$1,470.00
 Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com
 Tina Vessels,

Paso Robles Wine Country

Paso Robles, California

April 6 - 13 Status: Closed
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$1,390.00
 Becky Bottino, bbottino@gmail.com
 Ken Condray, condray3@gmail.com

Big Bend - The Forgotten Park

Marfa, Texas

May 4 - 12 Status: Wait List
 8 days, Int./Adv. \$1,950.00
 Nate Dick, npdick@gmail.com
 Larry Harris, thepedalers@aol.com

The Island of Mallorca

Palma, Mallorca, Spain

May 4 - 18 Status: Wait List
 14 days, Intermediate \$2,750.00
 Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com
 Polly Page, mspollypage@gmail.com

The Moab Area Tour

Moab, Utah

May 11 - 16 Status: Open
 5 days, Int./Adv. \$1,130.00
 Doug Moll, doug@aaplus.com
 Richard Loeffler, richardtloeffler@gmail.com

Bourbon & Bluegrass

Louisville, Kentucky

May 22 - 30 Status: Open
 8 days, Int./Adv. \$1,520.00
 Jimmy Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
 Helayn Storch, helaynstorch@hotmail.com

Central Oregon High Desert

Sisters, Oregon

June 10 - 17 Status: Wait List
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$1,695.00
 Ann Werner, acwerner@comcast.net
 Bill Buckley, william.buckley87@gmail.com

England - Magical History Tour

Oxford, England

June 16 - 26 Status: Wait List
 10 days, Intermediate \$3,340.00
 Graham Hollis, gramhollis@comcast.net
 Fred Yu, fredericky@comcast.net

Rediscover Colorado - Central Rocky

Mountains and Passes

Gunnison, Colorado

June 22 - 29 Status: Open
 7 days, Advanced \$1,420.00
 John Penick, jdpenic@gmail.com
 Rosemarie Lueke, ree22@msn.com

Colorado HeartCycle 2019 Tours

Italy's Dolomites

Alta Badia, Italy

Part 1 Base Tour

June 23 - 30

7 days, Adv./Exp.

Status: Closed

\$1,650.00

Bormio, Italy

Part 2 Option

June 30 - July 4

4 Days, Expert

Clare Bena, cbvamoots@gmail.com

Status: Closed

\$650.00

Le Monastere: Session 1

Lemoux, France

June 29 - July 6

7 days, Int./Exp.

Bob Rowe, browe49@comcast.net

Status: Open

\$2,350.00

Le Monastere: Session 2

Lemoux, France

July 6 - 13

7 days, Int./Exp.

Bob Rowe, browe49@comcast.net

Status: Open

\$2,350.00

Women's Weekend with Love, Sweat and Gears

Colorado Springs, Colorado

September 4 - 8

4 days, Easy +

Maryann Loeffler,

Julie Lyons,

Status: Open

\$700.00

Coast-to-Coast Northern Tier Year 4

Grand Rapids, Michigan

September 7 - 21

14 days, Int./Adv.

Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com

Richard Williamson, richard6a@gmail.com

Status: Wait List

\$2,450.00

Bicycling in OZ: The Ozarks

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Oct. 29 - Nov. 6

8 days, Int./Adv.

Jimmy Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com

Tom Biggi, biggi@awdboost.com

Status: Open

\$1,540.00