

# Heart to Heart



## Bike Helmet Law?

A proposed law that would make California the first state in the country to require that adult bike riders wear helmets has reignited a decades-long debate between regulators and the bicycling community over safety.

Senate Bill 192, introduced by state Sen. Carol Liu (D-La Cañada Flintridge), would impose a \$25 base fine on adults who bike without headgear. The proposal has spurred a backlash from California's bicycle advocacy groups, which say a mandatory-helmet law would do more harm than good. Helmet laws could make cycling appear more dangerous, they say, at a time when elected officials are working to draw drivers onto alternative forms of transportation.

Liu said she wants to encourage people to try biking and walking and keep them safe while doing so. Requiring helmets for adults isn't the only way to protect cyclists, she said, but "it certainly protects people more than not wearing anything on their heads."

Collisions involving cyclists in California rose 18% over a five-year period, from 11,814 in 2008 to 14,013 in 2012, according to the most recent California Highway Patrol data available.

But the best way to keep cyclists safe is to make the streets around them safe, said Dave Snyder, the executive director of the California Bicycle Coalition. That could include slowing down traffic or adding bike lanes separated from cars by curbs or bollards, he said.

"Protected bike lanes will protect far more riders than helmets ever will," Snyder said. He added that in countries where cycling is ubiquitous, such as the Netherlands, most people don't wear helmets.

After Liu introduced the bill, CalBike posted an online petition calling the proposal "ineffectual at best, dangerous at worst" that has since received nearly 3,500 signatures. The mandate would discourage people from riding their bikes, Snyder said, either because they feel it's dangerous or because they don't want to wear a helmet.

"We don't want the law to say to people, 'You should really ride a bike because it's great for your health, but you have to wear a helmet because biking is super dangerous,'" said Eric Bruins, the policy director for the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition. "If you hear that, are you really going to go out and ride?"

Studies on the effect of helmets and helmet laws are sometimes controversial, in part because researchers struggle to determine whether changing injury rates are the result of helmet laws or other factors.

A 2006 report on helmet-law studies by the medical journal BMJ concluded that such legislation may discourage cycling and that there isn't a clear correlation between such laws and a reduction in head injuries.

In contrast, a study in the Journal of Pediatrics that analyzed a decade of data concluded that injury and death rates were about 20% lower among children in states with helmet laws.

One possible explanation? Drivers see cyclists with helmets as "more serious" and "less likely to make unexpected moves," he wrote.

Several states, including Maryland, have rejected helmet legislation for adults. Like California, nearly half of states require them for children.

Liu's bill will be voted on later this spring.

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## Notes From the Board

### **Safe Riding Tips**

#### **Avoid busy streets**

One of the biggest mistakes that people make when they start biking is to take the exact same routes they used when they were driving. It's usually better to take different streets with fewer and slower cars.

#### **Light up**

Headlights are just as important as rear lights.

#### **Take the whole lane when appropriate**

It's often safer to take the whole lane, or at least ride a little bit to the left, rather than hug the right curb.

#### **Signal your turns**

You're less likely to get hit when your movement doesn't take motorists by surprise. Let them know you're about to turn or move left or right by signaling with your arm.

#### **Re-think music players and mobile phones**

It's more important to hear what's around you when you're biking than when you're driving.

#### **Ride as if you were invisible**

It's often helpful to ride in such a way that motorists won't hit you even if they don't see you.

## Bikes vs. Cars: The Deadly War Nobody's Winning

Excerpted from an article written for Outdoor Magazine by Andrew Tilin

Concussion or no concussion, Steve wants a new bike. Pronto.

Talking a beat too slowly, Steve describes a big ride he's supposed to do eight days from now. It's a Colorado event that took place last summer and covered more than 100 miles and over 13,000 feet of vertical gain—a major undertaking.

Steve's crash occurred in Boulder, 20 miles north of Golden. Pedaling his \$10,000 dream machine on a pleasant summer afternoon, Steve was traveling north on two-lane Cherryvale Road as he approached South Boulder Road. He had the green light as he entered the intersection, at about 25 miles per hour.

Just then, a car turned left in front of him. Steve was far enough away to avoid a crash, but a second car abruptly turned left, too, and he couldn't dodge it. The vehicle's right front corner hit his left foot, shearing the pedal cleat off his cycling shoe. The car bulled into the seat tube of Steve's frame, which snapped. He went flying, helmet first.

"I had very little road rash," he says. "But I hit my head."

Steve again brings up the long ride he wants to do. "Do you think we'd be able to settle in a timely manner?" he asks his lawyer.

Unless Steve has his facts wrong, the motorist who hit him was legally at fault, but if you put Steve on a bike anytime soon, he would be a risk to himself and others.

"Really, I'm kind of glad you don't have a new bike already," the lawyer says after a long pause. "Because if you did, Steve, you'd be trying to ride it."

"I'm OK," he says.

"I'm a little worried about that head of yours," the lawyer says. Steve doesn't seem to be. Before long he waves and leaves. For all I know, he got on a different bike the next day.

Riders who are sure they've been wronged and simultaneously believe that cyclists are always right. Often as not, they *have* been wronged, but roughly 47 percent of all bike-car mishaps happen because riders are at fault. That figure is debatable—there's no national database. Still, there's no doubt that riders often behave recklessly on roads and highways. Ask any driver who's seen them blow through red lights or come screaming the wrong direction down one-way streets.

A particularly sour moment for cycling's image occurred last September in New York City's Central Park, when Jill Tarlov, a 58-year-old mother of two, stepped off a curb and into the path of 31-year-old Harlem cyclist Jason Marshall, who was swerving around other pedestrians and reportedly in an aerodynamic tuck when he hit her. Three days later, Tarlov, the wife of a CBS senior vice president, died from severe head trauma. Marshall, who told reporters that the collision was "unavoidable," hasn't been charged with a crime.

In San Francisco in March of 2012, cyclist Chris Bucchere killed an elderly pedestrian in the city's Castro district, hitting him after running multiple stop signs. According to a report on the mishap in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, three other pedestrians had been mowed down in

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the Bay Area in the past year. Bucchere ultimately pleaded guilty to felony vehicular manslaughter.

We all know that motorists can be reckless and myopic as well, and statistically they may be at fault in car-bike accidents nearly half the time. When drivers screw up or drive too aggressively—or with outright malice—the consequences are usually dire for bicyclists because of the harsh realities of physics. Cars are massive metal beasts; bikes are not. When collisions happen, bikes and their riders get the worst of it, regardless of who's at fault.

Compared with countries like Denmark, the U.S. doesn't do nearly enough to give vulnerable riders the buffers they need on the road. In Copenhagen, more than 50 percent of residents cycle to work or school. The most advanced bike-commuting American city, Portland, Oregon, has only one-tenth that percentage of daily riders. Transportation experts believe that protected cycling lanes, as opposed to bike lanes spliced into roads, are cycling's safest routes. Such infrastructure is growing, but it isn't close to being fully woven into any major American city.

So riders take to the roads and take their chances. There, they can encounter distracted, impatient, or drunk drivers, lane-hogging SUVs, deteriorating pavement, and traffic-clogged grids. Multiple dangers exist from coast to coast. Maiming or fatally injuring a cyclist is a felony offense in only three states. And when drivers are found to be at fault, the penalties can seem far too light. The reality of our system is that a driver whose behavior is deemed to be negligent or careless—but not intentional—may not face harsh charges for a brutal accident. An intentional charge is quite rare. It's almost as if a passenger in the car needs to hear a statement of intent from the driver that they mean to do harm.

Consider the case of 50-year-old Annapolis, Maryland, cyclist Trish Cunningham, who was knocked down and killed in August 2013 while she was riding on a two-lane road. The accident happened when a minivan driver swerved into Cunningham while trying to avoid oncoming traffic during an attempt to pass her on a narrow uphill stretch. A grand jury found no probable cause for a charge of criminally negligent manslaughter, and the only consequence for the driver was the issuance of three minor traffic citations and a \$1,500 fine.

From a statistical standpoint, the growing public outcry among cyclists may be running inversely to the problem itself. In 2012, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported 726 cycling-related deaths and 49,000 cycling-related injuries, and many more injuries likely go unreported. But in the past 40 years, the number of annual traffic-related cycling deaths has generally been declining, while the U.S.'s population, the amount of bike commuting, and the number of bike trips taken have ballooned. One could argue that cycling, as it has experienced a rise in popularity but not in deaths, has actually become *safer*—more commonplace but no more lethal.



## Where was that HeartCycle Tour? (Answers on Page 8)



A. In 2008 Team W.I.M.P. was formed on this tour.



B. This 2009 tour included a visit to the “Earthship Center.”





C. This 2010 tour included a 20% white knuckle descent.



D. In 2011 HeartCycle had a **bike tour?** to this Asian country.





E. In 2012 HeartCycle went to this island in the Mediterranean.



F. 2013 saw the addition of many HeartCycle members from this State.





G. In 2014 HeartCycle went north of the border for this tour.

- A. Ride Across America, Part I
- B. New Mexico - Land of Enchantment
- C. Springtime in San Diego County
- D. Vietnam
- E. Mallorca, Spain
- F. Eastern Washington
- G. Washington and British Columbia



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## The Upper Hudson River Ramble Update



We currently have a number of open slots on the Upper Hudson River Ramble Tour. This is a semi-fixed based tour starting in Albany, NY, spending 6 days in Glens Falls, NY near Lake George and then traveling back to Albany the last day. This is a very scenic tour in and out of the Hudson River Valley. There is a different route each day that explore the region on beautiful lightly traveled roads in Upstate NY.

The entire tour description can be found here: <http://www.heartcycle.org/TourDetails/1548.pdf>

Please consider joining us this July on this memorable tour in NY State.

Jim Bethell & Janet Reilly

Note from Editor: We did a tour in this area with Jim and Janet and had a great time. Jim always takes quiet scenic roads and Glens Falls is a cute little town. If you haven't done a tour with Jim and Janet you are missing some of HeartCycles' best tour leaders.

# Colorado HeartCycle 2015 Tours

## Southern Arizona Spring Training

March 15 - 22 Status: Complete  
 7 days, Int. \$1,060.00  
 Rich Crocker, [richcrocker@hotmail.com](mailto:richcrocker@hotmail.com)  
 (719) 237-3350  
 David Durst, [dursteam@gmail.com](mailto:dursteam@gmail.com)

## Discover San Diego

March 21 - 28 Status: One Female  
 7 days, Int. \$980.00  
 Becky Bottino, [bbottino7@gmail.net](mailto:bbottino7@gmail.net)  
 (206) 683-9220  
 Ken Condray, [condray3@gmail.com](mailto:condray3@gmail.com)  
 (425) 334-1444

## Colonial Virginia

April 3 - 12 Status: Open  
 9 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,695.00  
 Ralph & Carol Nussbaum,  
[RENussbaum@outlook.com](mailto:RENussbaum@outlook.com) (206) 713-9417

## Great Rivers II: Springtime on the Rivers

April 25 - May 9 Status: Open  
 14 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,060.00  
 Steve Parker, [bsparker116@gmail.com](mailto:bsparker116@gmail.com)  
 (970) 382-9551  
 Chris Matthews, [chriswmatthews@msn.com](mailto:chriswmatthews@msn.com)  
 (303) 618-4789

## Omak 4 Day Fixed Base

May 7 - 11 Status: Wait List  
 4 days, Int. / Adv. \$460.00  
 Ralph & Carol Nussbaum,  
[RENussbaum@outlook.com](mailto:RENussbaum@outlook.com) (206) 713-9417

## Fabulous FootHILLS of Colorado

May 9 - 16 Status: Cancelled  
 7 days, Int. + \$950.00  
 Diane Short, [dianbike@eazy.net](mailto:dianbike@eazy.net) 303-763-9874

## Springtime in California Sonoma and Napa

May 15 - 23 Status: Wait List  
 8 days, Adv. / Exp. \$1,675.00  
 Alan Scott, [ascott999@comcast.net](mailto:ascott999@comcast.net)  
 (720) 840-6630  
 Bob Rowe, [browe@comcasst.net](mailto:browe@comcasst.net) (303) 910-7230

## Eastern Washington 4 day tour

May 28 - June Status: Wait List  
 4 days, Int. / Adv. \$460.00  
 Ralph Nussbaum, [RENussbaum@outlook.com](mailto:RENussbaum@outlook.com)  
 (206) 713-9417  
 Pam Austin, [freeandflying@live.com](mailto:freeandflying@live.com)  
 206-525-1020

## San Juan Mountains

June 19 - 28 Status: Wait List  
 9 days, Adv. / Exp. \$1,345.00  
 Tom Groves, [u4eahnrg@aol.com](mailto:u4eahnrg@aol.com)  
 Peter Podore, [ppodore@gmail.com](mailto:ppodore@gmail.com)

## Central Oregon High Desert

June 21 - June 28 Status: Wait List  
 7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,495.00  
 Ann Werner, [acwerner@comcast.com](mailto:acwerner@comcast.com)  
 Rich Crocker, [richcrocker@hotmail.com](mailto:richcrocker@hotmail.com)  
 (719) 237-3350



# Colorado HeartCycle 2015 Tours

## British Columbia Coast

July 4 - July 12 Status: Open  
 8 days, Adv. / Exp. \$1,600.00  
 Dean Karlen, [dean@karlen.email](mailto:dean@karlen.email) (250) 595-1371  
 Bob Rowe [browe49@comcast.net](mailto:browe49@comcast.net) (303) 910-7230

## Washington British Columbia Loop

July 17 - 26 Status: Open  
 9 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,325.00  
 Ralph Nussbaum, [RENussbaum@outlook.com](mailto:RENussbaum@outlook.com)  
 (206) 783-6450  
 Mike Parent at [mrparent@arifleet.ca](mailto:mrparent@arifleet.ca)

## Upper Hudson River Ramble

July 18 - July 26 Status: Open  
 8 days, Int. \$1,420.00  
 Jim Bethell, [jim@bikes5.com](mailto:jim@bikes5.com) (518) 446-1766  
 Janet Reilly [janet@bikes5.com](mailto:janet@bikes5.com)

## San Juan Islands

August 1 - 9 Status: Wait List  
 8 days, Int. \$1,425.00  
 Ken Condray, [condray3@gmail.com](mailto:condray3@gmail.com)  
 (425) 334-1444  
 Becky Bottino, [bbottino7@gmail.net](mailto:bbottino7@gmail.net)  
 (206) 683-9220

## Mothers, Daughters, Sisters with LSG

August 6 - 8 Status: Open  
 2 days, Easy \$390.00  
 Julie Lyons, [julie@lovesweatandgears.net](mailto:julie@lovesweatandgears.net)  
 Ann Lantz, [ann@lovesweatandgears.net](mailto:ann@lovesweatandgears.net)

## The Idaho Panhandle

August 15 - 22 Status: Wait List  
 7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,420.00  
 Chris Matthews, [chriswmattthews@msn.com](mailto:chriswmattthews@msn.com)  
 (303) 618-4789  
 Richard Loeffler, [RichardTLoeffler@gmail.com](mailto:RichardTLoeffler@gmail.com)  
 (303) 981-2963

## Danube River Passau to Vienna

September 5 - 13 Status: Wait List  
 8 days, Easy \$1,465.00  
 Jay Wuchner, [jaywuchner@comcast.net](mailto:jaywuchner@comcast.net)  
 (720) 840-6467  
 Deb Wuchner, [debwuchner@comcast.net](mailto:debwuchner@comcast.net)  
 (303) 792-2111

## Black Hills of South Dakota

September 7 - 11 Status: Wait List  
 4 days, Int. / Adv. \$665.00  
 Barry & Judy Siel, [bjsiel@msn.com](mailto:bjsiel@msn.com) 303-470-8431

## South Oregon and Crater Lake

Sept. 11 - 19 Status: One Male  
 8 days, Adv. \$1,470.00  
 Ralph & Carol Nussbaum,  
[RENussbaum@outlook.com](mailto:RENussbaum@outlook.com) (206) 713-9417

## South Utah National Parks

September 23 - October 4 Status: Wait List  
 11 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,590.00  
 Ralph Nussbaum, [RENussbaum@outlook.com](mailto:RENussbaum@outlook.com)  
 (206) 783-6450  
 John Penick, [jdpenick@gmail.com](mailto:jdpenick@gmail.com)