

Heart to Heart



2015 Recipient of the Gerald E. Bakke Award



Harvey Hoogstrate

The Board of Directors

Chris Matthews (303) 618-4789 (2016)
President - president@heartcycle.org

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Asst. Treasurer - jdpnck@gmail.com

Bob Rowe (303) 910-7230 (2017)
Tour Director - tourdiretor@heartcycle.org

Jay Wuchner (720) 840-6467 (2016)
Sag Vehicles - sag@heartcycle.org

Fred Yu (303) 321-4530 (2016)
Insurance and Legal - fredericky@comcast.net

Working Members

Andy Anderson (404) 395-1491
Map Maker - maps3@heartcycle.org

Ron Barton (303) 798-2755
Co-Registrar - registrar@heartcycle.org

Harvey Hoogstrate (303) 755-9362
Web Master - webmaster@heartcycle.org

Richard Loeffler 303-981-2963
Med. Equip. - MedEquipMgr@heartcycle.org

Jeff Messerschmidt (303) 904-0573
Sag Supply Manager - sagmgr@heartcycle.org

Barry Siel (303) 470-8431
Newsletter Ed. - newseditor@heartcycle.org

Notes From The Board

The HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon was held on October 24, 2015 at the Mt. Vernon Country Club. Our thanks to Mickey Berry for making the arrangements. 25 members braved the early chilly temperatures to enjoy the pre-meeting bike ride. There were 130 members in attendance at the Annual Meeting. In addition to the fellowship and great food there was a slide show with photos from many of the 2015 HeartCycle tours and a roving Mariachi Band.

The five out-going Board Members were re-elected to the Board of Directors including, Mickey Berry, Rich Crocker, Steve Parker, Bob Rowe and Joanne Speirs.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the Gerald E. Bakke award to Harvey Hoogstrate (see Page 1). Harvey has been a long time member of HeartCycle, a dedicated board member, tour leader for many years, creator of the newsletter and he brought the Heartcycle newsletter and website into the 21st century. His years of service to HeartCycle is greatly appreciated, as was evidenced by the standing ovation he received at the announcement of him being the second winner of the Bakke award.

Ticklers on the 2016 HeartCycle tours were given by the tour leaders that were present and a list of the 2016 tours (see pages 12 and 13) was distributed. In the following pages in this newsletter are some photos from the Annual Meeting and an article on the Danube Tour. Enjoy!

Photos from the Annual Meeting











The Danube — Passau to Vienna

September 5 - 12, 2015

By Fred Yu

Tour leaders Deb and Jay Wuchner introduced a congenial group of 39 to the pleasures of the “Rad Urlaub” — German for “bicycle vacation” — in the beautiful Danube River valley in Austria. The Danube is the second-longest river in Europe and flows from Germany past Austria and several other countries into the Black Sea. The Danube River corridor in Germany and Austria is a popular cycling destination. Cities and towns in the area welcome bicycle tourists and numerous cafes, inns and hotels cater to them. Well-signed bike routes parallel both the north and south banks of the river, and crossing the river is easy with bicycle ferries, bridges and dams. The style of touring is different from the typical HeartCycle bike tour: distances between towns are usually no more than a few kilometers, and a sag van could not follow the bike paths and lanes easily anyway, as many of them are exclusively for cyclists and pedestrians. The itinerary does not call for long, hard days in the saddle, and doing so would defeat the point of visiting the region — to savor the Austrian scenery and ambience. A local company provided bikes (each equipped with a bike computer, bell, lights, kickstand, fenders, lock, waterproof pannier and handlebar bag), detailed route maps which described not only the major turns, but also the towns, sights and attractions to be seen or visited en route, luggage transfer and other support (but no sag). We enjoyed 4-star hotels each night.

The group assembled the first night in Passau, a town on Germany’s eastern border with Austria, and a popular stop on the Danube river cruise circuit. After an introduction and a “fitting” with the bikes (“Do you want your seat higher or lower?”), the group headed out to dinner at a local Biergarten. This was an appropriate and delicious kickoff to the trip, offering local specialties, such as roast pork, wurst, schnitzel, lots of potatoes and, of course, beer.



Initial bike fitting was a traumatic adjustment for a few: the bikes were sturdy, steel beasts, weighing at least 30 pounds, before loading the pannier and saddle bag. No carbon fiber; no titanium; saddles were well cushioned with small springs under a wide tail. Upright riding posture and platform pedals. A triple on the front and seven speeds in back. Sleek and agile they weren't. E-bikes were also available. More than a few folks pined — some openly — for their own bikes, but after passing quickly through the five stages of grief (i.e., denial, anger, depression,

bargaining and acceptance), everyone came to terms with their bike for the week. Most of the other bike tourists we saw on the route were riding similar gear. By week's end, it was hard not to appreciate that the bikes' panniers and handlebar bags, durable frames and wide tires were key in a trip with no sag at hand.

While the bike paths along the Danube shore were generally flat, any departure from the valley could be steep. The first day concluded at the lovely Hotel Kocher in St. Agatha, about 5 miles from the river, but with a grade of up to 10% for a short stretch. Fortunately, the bikes had sufficiently low gearing that the climb was doable for the persistent or dogged rider. For the less committed, the hotel offered a van shuttle from the river.

Breakfast each day was typically a sumptuous spread offering eggs, a variety of prepared meats, hard and soft cheeses, house-made preserves, fresh German breads, sweet cakes and rolls, muesli and other cereals, yogurts, fresh fruits, juices and one's choice of espresso, cappuccino, cafe latte, and other coffee drinks, teas or hot chocolate.

Except for the final day, a longish push of 55 miles, a typical day of riding would be between 20-40 miles, mostly flat; a relatively unhurried start around 9:00 a.m., leisurely lunch at a cafe along the way, coffee and pastries at any appealing konditorei, and the rest of the day to sightsee and pedal at one's own pace.



The second day finished in Linz, a lively city with a wide variety of restaurants available. The hotel was modern with lots of glass, located next to the Neue Dom, one of the largest churches in Austria.

The third day offered an optional trip to Mauthausen, a former Nazi concentration camp, now a memorial park and museum, and a moving history lesson about the Anschluss and Austria's part in the Third Reich. Most of the group rode the punchy 14% grade to reach the camp and take the tour. At Mauthausen, thousands were

worked to death, hauling large granite stones from a nearby quarry up steep steps. Those who did not collapse from overwork died from malnutrition, abusive and horrendous conditions, or outright execution.

The third day ended in Grein, a lovely small river town with an Eis (ice cream) vendor strategically situated to snag after-dinner strollers.

Day 4 began with sunshine. Along the way, in the town of Ybbs several of the group visited a small Rad Museum covering the history of cycling and containing two galleries of early bicycles. The weather turned rainy in the afternoon and the ride into Melk was not only wet but made worse by a head wind. Melk has a famous large Benedictine abbey which was built in the early 18th century and dominates the hill above the town. With its grand baroque architecture and a large cathedral with magnificent frescoes and a large library, the abbey is famous throughout Europe. Haus Am Stein featured a centuries-old grape vine that wrapped around a house; the grapevine, a protected national historical monument, still bears grapes.



Day 5 offered a variety of diversions: a visit to a museum in Willendorf showing the “Willendorf Venus” — a 10 cm limestone figurine thought to represent female fertility, dating to Paleolithic human activity in the valley. A climb to the Hinterhaus Ruin, an old castle on a ridge above the river, finishing with a steep climb up a watchtower to a high battlement with commanding views over the Danube.

The cycle route ran through the Wachau Valley, a section of steep vineyards along the Danube where some of Austria’s best wines are grown. The day ended in Krems, where

the hotel was reached via a short, but punchy 12% grade.

The final day of riding was longer and into a persistent headwind, but brought the group into Vienna and a spacious comfortable hotel on the banks of the Danube. A small group relinquished their bikes in Krems, took the train into Vienna and enjoyed a visit to the Belvedere Museum and Garden.

For the last day of the tour, Deb and Jay organized a bus and walking tour of Vienna, with Hildegarde, a very knowledgeable guide. The bus gave us a windshield tour of many of Vienna’s monumental landmark sights, and a foundation for further exploration. The group walked through the Schonbrunn Palace and across the old inner city of Vienna, with Hildegarde pointing out St. Stephan’s Cathedral, the old Greek and Jewish quarters, the training school and stables for the famous Lipizaner horses, and countless other places and items of interest, large and small, and restaurants famous for their wiener schnitzel and other local specialties. Our final group dinner was at a restaurant famous for its Tafelspitz, the national dish of Austria.



Tafelspitz is a boiled beef served with a horseradish sauce, and potatoes and creamed spinach on the side. Although the term “boiled beef” doesn't rouse the appetite, in fact, the dinner was delicious, and finished with a sweet cream strudel (topfenstrudel) or Sachertorte for dessert. A fitting end to the trip.

This short description doesn't do justice to the marvelous sights, tastes and experiences on offer. The trip had art, culture, history, plus great food, beer and wine (did I mention the food before?), unique hotels, plus the delicious challenge of navigating a foreign country and a foreign language. Austria has an extensive cycling infrastructure that we in the US can only dream about: dedicated bike paths, lanes and routes in good repair (read: smooth), clear signage, traffic signals for bikes, bike racks, and attentive, patient and courteous drivers. This tour was, perhaps, less about the intrinsic pleasure of riding a bicycle and more about sightseeing at a comfortable pace from a bike seat. Thanks to Deb and Jay for a bike journey rich in new experiences and memories.



Colorado HeartCycle 2016 Tours

In Search of Texas Bluebonnets

March 30 - April 6 Status: Open
7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,180.00
Jim Bethell, jim@bikes5.com (518) 446-1766
Jay Wuchner, jaywuchner@comcast.net
(720) 840-6467

Paso Robles Wine Country

April 23 - 30 Status: Open
7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,365.00
Becky Bottino, bbottino7@gmail.net
(206) 683-9220
Ken Condray, condray3@gmail.com
(425) 334-1444

The Island of Mallorca, Spain

April 30 - May 14 Status: Wait List
14 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,400.00
Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com
(719) 237-3350
Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
(303) 910-7230

Heart of Holland Bike & Barge

May 21 - 31 Status: Open
10 days, Easy / Int. \$1,940.00
Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs@aol.com
(303) 312-7252

Friesland Bike & Barge

June 1 - 11 Status: Open
10 days, Easy / Int. \$1,940.00
John Penick, jdpenick@gmail.com
(203) 232-8946

Durango Fixed Base Sampler

June 4 - 8 Status: Open
4 days, Int. \$750.00
Steve Parker, bsparker116@gmail.com
(970) 382-9551
Chris Matthews, chriswmatthews@msn.com
(303) 618-4789

Re-Living the Pro Challenge

June 25 - 29 Status: Open
4 days, Int. / Adv. \$565.00
Diane Short, dianbike@eazy.net
303-763-9874

Le Monastere - SESSION 1

July 2 - 9 Status: Wait List
7 days, Int. / Exp. \$2,350.00
Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
(303) 910-7230

Le Monastere SESSION 2

July 9 - 16 Status: Wait List
9 days, Int. / Exp. \$2,350.00
Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
(303) 910-7230

Cowboy Country

July 16 - 23 Status: Open
7 days, Adv \$1,225.00
John Penick, jdpenick@gmail.com
(203) 232-8946
Fred Yu, frederickyu@comcast.net
(303) 321-4530

Colorado HeartCycle 2016 Tours

Mothers Daughters Weekend

July 28 - 20 Status: Open Late Nov.
2 days, Easy \$TBD
Julie Lyons, julie@lovesweatandgears.net
Ann Lantz, ann@lovesweatandgears.net

Coast to Coast, The Northern Tier: Year 1

September 19 - 23 Status: Open Late Nov.
13 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,490.00
Steve Parker, bsparker116@gmail.com
(970) 382-9551
Chris Matthews, chriswmatthews@msn.com
(303) 618-4789

Grand Valley Ramble

September 22 - 25 Status: Open Late Nov.
9 days, Int. / Adv. \$TBD
Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs@aol.com
(303) 312-7252
Doug Moll, doug@aaplus.com
(720) 312-1203

Fireworks of Fall, Upper Hudson River

Sept. 26 - Oct. 2 Status: Open Late Nov.
8 days, Int. \$1,260.00
Jim Bethell, jim@bikes5.com (518) 446-1766
Janet Reilly, janet@bikes5.com