

Heart to Heart

Newsletter of the Colorado HeartCycle Bicycle Club
May 2008



www.heartcycle.org

Ride Across America, Part 1

By Jerry Bakke

The first section of our three year ride across America will follow the old US 80 route from the coast of San Diego, California to El Paso, Texas. It will be springtime in the great American Southwest. This article will cover the second week of this two-week tour. See the April issue of Heart to Heart for the first week.

Days 8 & 9 – It was a screamer ride all the way from Globe to Safford; AZ: 79 miles and 1,850 vertical feet; wide shoulders; millions of California poppies and bright violet-blue loco weeds blooming along the roadside; expansive views of high desert volcanic mesas and distant mountains.

Safford, Arizona to Silver City, New Mexico saw snow showers; ponderosa pines; broad expanses of high desert grasslands tan with the winter cold; two mountain passes through craggy piles of weathered volcanic rock; inclement bands of clouds leaving us always on the edge of cold; and a final 23 mile uphill to the Continental Divide (6,230 ft) just above Silver City, NM.

It was a long day with the first full-distance riders arriving in Silver City 10 hours after our start in Safford; and it was a cold day, spitting light corn snow at lunch at 6,295 ft where Steve, Kathleen, & Carol built us a campfire. We huddled around it, nibbling at lunch and rubbing our hands towards the fire, then bundling up for a chilly descent down the pass to the high rolling grasslands that feed the Gila River.



It was our most challenging day: 117 miles, 5,900 vertical feet. Roughly half the riders sagged the last 30 miles.

Day 10 - A handful of riders got up on our rest day in Silver city and sag back to Buckhorn, NM to ride the last 30 miles into Silver City. Nevertheless, somewhere between a third and half the total riders have still ridden every single inch between San Diego and Silver City (so far), and everyone who has sagged has just sagged a little bit. The difficulty of a ride like this is the day after day riding somewhere between 55 and 117 miles for two weeks straight in the early spring when the tush isn't quite up to late summer tough as leather condition and the quads balk ever so slightly (or sometimes very loudly) at the beginning of each uphill climb.

Our rest day in Silver City was superb. Folks strolled through historic downtown, ate great food, lubed chains, queued up again for laundry, checked email, and generally rested and enjoyed town.

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For letters, articles or comments, send email to newseditor@heartcycle.org

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Day 11 - Silver City to Kingston, NM: After reporting on the nice scenery the past 10 days, I know my credibility might run low if I claim that today was the most scenic, but trust me: today truly was the most exquisitely beautiful ride of the tour. As a few of the New York Cycle Club riders said "This was a Colorado riders day": a small winding, no traffic road climbing slowly along a quiet stream in the Gila National Forest with pinion-juniper hills giving way to ponderosa pine. We climbed east of Silver City to the top of Emory Pass at 8,228 ft - the highest elevation we'll reach all the way across the country. From Emory Pass we could look across the dusty horizon to the see toward the mighty Rio Grande River.



After lunch, we buckled our seat belts and leaned into 8 miles of downhill turns to end our day at the historic silver camp of Kingston, NM. Though a bustling silver camp 100 years ago, today Kingston is a tiny one-street rural neighborhood known primarily for its "Spit and Whittling Club" which claims continuous activity since the late 1800s.

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Tour of Vietnam

By Barb Chamberlin

Chuc Mung Nam Moi! (congratulations for the New Year)

On February 12, 2008, eleven bicyclists met in Ho Chi Minh City for the start of an incredible adventure. Saigon streets were bustling with activity and pots of colorful flowers as it was the end of the Tet celebration. Fortunately, we got to see the bright red decorations, gorgeous lights at night, and Tet trees. Very much like our Christmas tree, the Tet tree is decorated with colorful streamers, paper flags, flowers, and talismanic objects that clink in the breeze repelling evil spirits and protecting the households.

After introductions at the Grand Hotel, our very lovely lodging in central Saigon, we drove to Phuong Nam Resort where we fitted and tested bikes, had a trip briefing, met our guides, and enjoyed our first ten course welcome dinner.



Ready to start by 8:00 a.m. or earlier, we'd meet with our guides, Phuong and Binh, receive a map, and review the details of the day's itinerary, mileage, terrain, road conditions, lunch stop, and the highlights of the day. The route kept us mostly on quiet roads to get us into the countryside, villages, and small hamlets. One or both guides rode with us, always available to answer questions and provide information along the way.

Our three friendly van drivers, Son, Dien, and Naghia did a great job. Every 10 km. or so you'd find the van open, waiting for you with iced cold bottles of water, sweet mini bananas, peeled oranges, cashew cookies, and chewy cashew nut candy (Yen Nhi). A driver was always ahead signaling with a flag to assist us with navigating roundabouts, ins and outs of larger cities, and changes in direction. Through Da Nang, we hugged Phuong's wheel while negotiating traffic through the city. Whether exhausted from the relentless head wind, tuckered from intense heat and humidity, muddied and wet from the drizzle, intimidated by the traffic, feeling ill, or needing a small respite, our drivers cheerfully loaded our bikes for reprieves. The support vans were available at all times and some days they did lots of loading and unloading!

Each day on the bike unfolded differently. Some days we biked from our hotel and on others the vans shuttled us out of traffic to a bike friendly road. The daily mileage varied from 40 km to 120 plus km. There was much to attract your attention while riding: vibrant green rice paddies, water lily ponds, terraced fields of coffee and vegetables, rubber, cashew nut, dragon fruit, and black pepper plantations, large sand dunes, salt farms, floating fishing villages, lobster and shrimp ponds, happy children bicycling or walking to and from school, peletons of Vietnamese on bicycles, mopeds and motorcycles, water buffaloes, colorful cemeteries, crops drying in the road, roadside temples, lively local markets, goats and cows in the street, beautiful coastal views and coastline with pounding surf, basket boats, sampans of every size, towns where everything spills out into the sidewalks and streets, long houses on stilts, new stucco homes with a splash of color on the front, pagodas, thick forests, sugar cane fields, gum trees, hamlets bustling with activity, rest stops with hammocks, open fronted shops lining the streets, women dressed in gorgeous ou dai, high mountains, and the ever present red flag of Communist Vietnam, it's five pointed star representing the workers, farmers, soldiers, intellectuals, and traders.

The day out of Da Lat commenced with many rolling hills and then an incredible downhill descent on a very narrow hair pin road. And then, there was a formidable, unannounced pass followed by another incredibly long and utterly fabulous descent. The views of the rice fields and terraced fields were spectacular. Then, literally out in nowhere, was our first picnic lunch by the side of the road. Under a tree and small café overhang, we sat on tiny seats at a small table and devoured yogurt, watermelon, peanut butter on rolls, mackerel in tomato sauce, and instant noodle soup. That afternoon, we arrived in Lien Son. The Mnong, one of Vietnams 54 main ethnic groups, live here in longhouses on stilts. All their animals, including the water buffalo, live underneath. After locating our own individual cottage on a gorgeous white capped lake at Bao Dai Lak Resort, we were off on an adventure, an elephant ride through a Mnong village and shallows of the lake. That evening, we were entertained by this handsome ethnic group of men and women singing, dancing, and playing gong and bamboo instruments. They welcomed us in a wine jar ceremony and had us join them in a lively circle dance. It was a very full day.



Our last day, we rode through Da Nang, by China Beach, and along miles of flat road parallel to the beach. Ahead in the distance, we could see the mountains and pass that we would soon tackle. Encircled by clouds, the area looked dreamy. Hai Van Pass was a formidable 10 km, 1500 meter climb in the drizzle and cool

thick mist at the top. The road carried very little traffic now that there is a tunnel not open to tourists cycling. I'm sure the view was fantastic, but we missed it due to the misty white out.

Everyone made it to the top! Awaiting us on the other side of the pass by Lang Co Beach was my favorite restaurant of the trip. Thinking all the food was on the table, I took a picture of the eight course meal covering the table to show all my fiends back home. To my surprise, the plates of food kept coming and coming until plates were balanced on our tea cups. It was an eleven course meal. At the end of the day, we arrived in the imperial city of Hue at the Hotel Saigon Morin, an absolutely gorgeous grand old French Colonial style hotel by the Perfume River. After settling in and warming up, we walked to An Dinh Vien Royal Restaurant. Prior to dining, we dressed in lovely Imperial togs; traditional gowns and hats. In the dining area we were entertained with traditional music and song. The royal meal was course after course of special dishes originating from Imperial kitchens, each presented as a work of art. The evening was the perfect place to culminate our trip and sing Auld Lang Syne.

Interspersed with riding days were three wonderful and diverse rest days. The first rest day was in Da Lat, a bustling cosmopolitan city nestled in the central highlands where the temperature was cool and fresh. In the morning, our first stop was the Art Deco summer palace built for former Emperor Bao Dai in 1933. Then, the silk embroidery village, where we saw first hand how embroidered pictures are made. It was truly amazing to watch women painstakingly produce images thread by thread. From a distance the art looks as though it has been painted. Crazy House was a wonderfully silly structure built by a Vietnamese architect in the shape of a tree with all it's branches.

Our second rest day was in the seaside resort of Nha Trang. Several of us took a very early morning walk along the beach. After visiting the Tri Nguyen Aquarium, we walked the very narrow streets of Tri Nguyen, a colorful and

picturesque fishing village. I found it fascinating being this close to the Vietnamese people in their daily lives. Of course, our paddle in a basket boat was unique. Back on the boat, some of us enjoyed a massage or experienced "threading". After passing numerous floating fishing villages, we arrived at a lovely bamboo restaurant on an offshore island. Here our palettes experienced something new, eggplant cooked in a smoky tasting fish sauce. The afternoon was free to meander along the beach, walk to Cho Dam, the enormous main marketplace with interesting sights and smells, eat ice cream or enjoy a massage and/or manicure.

Our third rest day was in the delightful town of Hoi An, dating back to 200 B.C. Inscribed by UNESCO's World Heritage in 1999, Hoi An is a rich cultural and architectural fusion of Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and European influences. In the morning, we crossed the Japanese Covered Bridge, a beloved symbol of Hoi An people, visited a beautifully preserved 200 year old home of a prosperous Chinese merchant, and enjoyed a concert of classical music and dance in a traditional theatre. That afternoon, we were on our own to walk through the non-motorized streets of Ancient Town.



I decided to have my clothes washed at Miss Ha's Laundry. After paying \$1.00 to have my clothes washed by hand and dried by fan, Yen invited me into her kitchen for sweet sticky rice cakes and some yummy condiments she was cooking in a pan on top of hot coals. This was truly a special experience.

The cuisine in Vietnam was one of the highlights of this trip, flavorful and healthy. I was overwhelmed by the generosity from the kitchen pantry, in fact, there was an ample and varied supply of seafood, fish, meat, vegetables, and fruit. Meals were a delicious blend of flavors, textures, and color. We all had favorites, but there were several we all agreed on; a tasty lemon dessert served at Trong Dong Restaurant in Da Lat, French baguettes, and huge slices of juicy fresh mango. Some of us loved a basic bowl of pho for breakfast; a simple broth of flat rice noodles, topped with spring onions and slivers of chicken, pork, or fish. Needless to say, we all brushed up on chopstick handling skills. The breakfast buffets that appealed to all cultures, the eight and ten course dinners, and the simple picnic lunches were wonderful.

All our lodging was comfortable and some luxurious. Each was a welcome oasis from the cacophony of honking horns, the chaos that passes for a traffic system, the wind that met us head on, the intense humidity and heat, or the cool rain and drizzle. My favorite was Loc An, a modest, family owned hotel with lovely gardens and courtyards.

Early in the morning, my friend and I got a ride on the hotel punk across a shallow river to the ocean beach and watched fisherman casting nets in the shallows while the sun came up. It was a very memorable way to start the day.

Everything on this trip far exceeded my expectations. I have done numerous self supported bike tours, but never one arranged by a tour group. I really enjoyed sharing this incredible cultural experience with new HeartCycle friends. Riding a bike was the perfect way to sample slices of rural Vietnamese life. Sharing it with others was enriching. Thank you to Roger Staub for conceiving of this memorable HeartCycle Cycle trip to Vietnam. Thanks to Richard Oday of Pedaltours who is planning another bike trip through northern Vietnam in 2009. Also, "cam on" to Phuong, Binh, Nhan, Son, Dien, and Nghia of Ecotours.

**Colorado HeartCycle 2008 Tours**

The 2008 Tour Brochure has been mailed out to all club members and has been posted on our website. The tour brochure includes other useful information about each of the tours listed above. Details and difficulty ratings for these tours can be viewed on the HeartCycle website, www.heartcycle.org

Grand Valley Ramble

May 23-26, Colorado status: open
125 miles, 3 days \$275
Leader: Steven Richards
Info: (303) 321-5922, treasurer@heartcycle.org

Utah-Wyoming-Idaho

June 8-16, UT-WY-ID status: full
425 miles, 7 days \$875
Leaders: Jerry Bakke & Larry Harris
Info: Jerry (303) 738-9861, jerrybakke@msn.com
or Larry (817) 457-6502, thepedalers@aol.com

Tour of the Sierra Nevada Mountains

June 19-29, California – Nevada status: open
400 miles, 10 days \$1450
Leaders: Henry Lam & Connie Brown
Info: Henry (925) 708-4066, hclam@comcast.net
or Connie (925) 681-0649, ccjbrown@comcast.net

Islands of the Northwest

July 5-13, NW Washington State status: open
410 miles, 8 days (7 riding) \$1400
Leaders: Ken Condray & Becky Bottino
Info: (425) 745-1150, condray3@comcast.net
or bbottino@Comcast.net

Tour the Passes of Summit County Colorado

July 19-26, Colorado status: open
430 miles, 7 days \$700
Leaders: Sy Katz & Larry Augenstein
Info: Sy (303) 789-5268, skskatz@comcast.net
or Larry (719) 598-4124, bikenuts@juno.com

Idaho Panhandle; Lakes, Rivers & Silver Mining

August 16-23, WA-ID-MT status: full
425 miles, 7 days (6 riding) \$975
Leaders: Harvey Hoogstrate
Info: (303) 755-9362, harvhoog@gmail.com

Colorado Northern Front Range

September 7-13, Colorado status: open
250 miles, 6 days (5 riding) \$750
Leader: Jeff Messerschmidt
Info: (303) 904-0573, jefmesserschmidt@hotmail.com

Fireworks of Fall – The Notches of New Hampshire

September 20-28, New Hampshire status: open
425 miles, 7 days (6 riding) \$1175
Leaders: Jim Bethell & Janet Reilly
Info: (518) 446-1766, jim@bikes5.com

Big Bend – The Forgotten Park

Sept. 27 – Oct. 5, Texas status: open
453 miles, 8 days (7 riding) \$1150
Leaders: Larry & Sherry Harris
Info: (817) 457-6502, thepedalers@aol.com

Classic California Coast

October 11-19, California status: open
380 miles, 8 days (6 riding) \$1100
Leaders: Dan Pappone & Duncan Rollo
Info: Dan (408) 316-1667, daniel.pappone@ge.com
or Duncan (970) 224-2783, dtewell123@msn.com

Katy Trail: Leaf Peeper Edition

October 11-16, Missouri status: open*
200 miles, 5 days \$650
Leader: Steven Richards
Info: (303) 321-5922, treasurer@heartcycle.org
*only one opening left for 1 solo male rider

Exactly what the "Spit and Whittling Club" does, well, hard to tell but one way or the other, I think it must be a guy thing.

In Kingston, we filled our bellies and hearts with a superlative dinner and evening at the Black Range Lodge which is a funky old timber frame lodge with comfy little bedrooms within bedrooms and bathrooms whose windows open into a greenhouse full of banana and other tropical plants. The lodge owners cooked turkey and homemade minestrone soup followed by homemade ice cream. It was one of those meals that fills your heart and soul and, in this case, prepares you for Carol's gambling game played 'round the pool table after supper.

This game that Sag Queen Carol Nies calls "Left-Right-Center" is really a way for all the dollars you had in your pocket to migrate to the center of the table, where winner then takes all - which in this case meant that Carol took all (and then carried her loot around in a plastic grocery sack the next couple of days).



Including everyone losing a few bucks to the Texas Tornado, it was a great day.

Day 12 & 13 - After our rest day in Silver City, we climbed to the most spectacular view and highest point on our route: Emory Pass at 8,228 ft where we ate a relaxed lunch and gazed off toward the Rio Grande Valley. After lunch, we buckled our seat belts and flew 8 miles down the mountain to the historic silver camp of

Kingston which is now a tiny rural neighborhood best known as the home of the "Spit and Whittling Club". Rather than spitting or whittling, though, we had a lovely meal and then let our Sag Queen, the Texas Tornado, Carol Nies take our extra dollars in a lively game of Left-Right-Center. I never knew cyclists were such avid gamblers!

The next day we continued our flight down the foothills to the floor of the Rio Grande River. From there, it was rider choo-choo train time for 60 more miles into Las Cruces for the night, and another 55 miles in El Paso the next day. As one rider said "it's too bad this is over, today was the first day I wasn't sore in the morning."



Jerry and Steve: you're great! Andy Anderson was our main photographer with contributions from Alan Church and Carol Nies (who is still walking around with her winnings in a grocery sack). Thanks. Several people commented on how well this group got on. I agree. We developed a camaraderie that was uplifting and easy.

And a special thanks to our great sag girls: Carol and Kathleen. You were superb. Many thanks.

Colorado Heartcycle - 2008 Training Rides

Rides will go if the temperature is at least 40 degrees and the roads are dry. Call the ride leader if the weather is questionable.

Date	Time	Route	Dist.	Start Location	Leader/Phone
May 3	9:00	Masonville / Rist Canyon	54	Big Thompson School, US 34 & CR 27 west of Loveland	Homer Fritz (303) 477-6446
May 4	9:00	Littleton / Conifer	44	Mineral Park-n-Ride, SW corner of Santa Fe & Mineral in Littleton	John McQueen (303) 794-2623
May 10	9:00	Boulder / Left Hand Canyon / Brainard Lake	83	Bus Stop, SW corner of US 36 & Broadway in Boulder	Gordon Tewell (720) 304-9572
May 11	8:30	Bergen Park / Echo Lake / Idaho Springs	43	Bergen Park Park-n-Ride, SE corner of Evergreen Pkwy & CR 65 in Bergen Park	John Steele (303) 300-3573
May 17	8:30	Superior / Carter Lake	81	Colony Square Theater, SE corner of US 36 & McCaslin in Louisville	Homer Fritz (303) 477-6446
May 18	8:00	Louviers / Larkspur	49	Superior Metal Products in Louviers, 6.5 miles south of C470 on Santa Fe, west on Kelly Ave., south on Cora Road	Jeannie Clayton (303) 964-3364
May 24	8:00	Golden / Golden Gate / Wondervu	63	Parfet Park, 10 th & Jackson Streets in Golden	Sheridan Garcia (303) 638-0330
May 25	8:00				
May 31	8:00	Idaho Springs / Loveland Pass / Dillon	89	Safeway west of Exit 241 off I-70 in Idaho Springs	Lee Cryer (303) 778-2305

This list of training rides is tentative. Please check the website at www.heartcycle.org for up to date information, including start location.



Colorado HeartCycle offers a dozen tours for 2008 that span the country from the San Diego to the Notches of New Hampshire and from Victoria Island to Big Bend National Park. There is something here for everyone. The hardest part is deciding which tour(s) to sign up for this year. Several of the tours are already full or keeping a waiting list. Below are descriptions of two tours that still have openings.

Grand Valley Ramble

May 24-26 2008

New Signup Deadline: May 5, 2008

The Grand Valley: Land of Wine, Peaches and Dinosaurs! Wine sampling can include everything from Road Kill Red to award winning Riesling, Chardonnay, Merlot and Syrah. A gently rolling 50-mile ride around the farmlands and ranches of Fruita awaits on day two. When finished, one can visit fossil beds, dinosaur museums or simply back for a nap. On Monday morning it is off to experience cycling the beautiful "Tour de Moon" loop that winds through the Colorado National Monument.



Back in the day the Red Zinger Cycling Classic went through here. But, please, do not race. Stop to enjoy the wonderful views. This is a 34 mile ride that begins with a four mile climb that is a bit of a grind but offers stunning vistas then flattens out on top. Finish at your own pace and return to Denver. Or visit more wineries on the way back. The price of this tour includes breakfast each day.

Tour of the Sierra Nevada Mountains

June 19-29, 2008

Come tour the spectacular mountain passes of the California Sierra Nevada mountain range on this 10-day tour which starts and ends conveniently in Reno, Nevada.

The first day will give you a chance to warm up as we head out of Reno to Topaz Lake over gently rolling high desert terrain with views of the stark, rocky Eastern Sierra. The next day the climbing begins as we ride over Monitor Pass and into the heart of the Sierra Nevada. The views change dramatically into the tall pines and aspens of the Sierras as we ride through some of the most beautiful high mountain scenery anywhere on earth.

This tour takes us over Ebbets Pass and Carson Pass both designated scenic byways because of their pristine beauty. We will enjoy a well deserved day of rest in a resort destination beside beautiful Lake Tahoe, the second largest freshwater lake in the US. You will not believe how blue the water is in Lake Tahoe. Stops along the way include the ski resort towns of Kirkwood and Bear Valley as well as the last night of the tour at a lovely spa hotel in the historic town of Truckee.

We have purposely kept the mileage within reasonable limits so that anyone with merely human climbing skills and a desire to see the beauty of the Sierra Nevada up close and personal should be able to comfortably complete this tour.



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2008 Colorado HeartCycle Membership Form

Please print legibly!

Membership (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) application only. Must be filled out even if you are not signing up for a tour.

New _____ Renewing _____ Email address _____
(please print your email address very carefully)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell _____

Individual Membership \$20.00

Family Membership \$25.00

Names of family members _____ Email Address _____

I prefer to have the monthly newsletter delivered: electronically (email) _____ or paper (USPS) _____

As a member, I am willing to contribute to Colorado HeartCycle in the following ways:

Starting training ride _____ Leading Tour _____ SAG driving _____ Website team _____ Making maps _____ Event helper _____

Signature _____ Date _____

In signing this release for myself or a member of my family who is under the age of 18, I acknowledge that I understand the intent hereof, and agree to and will absolve and hold harmless Colorado HeartCycle Association, Inc., and its officers and members and any other party connected with club-sponsored rides in any way whatsoever, individually and collectively from and against any blame or liability for any injury, misadventure, harm, loss, inconvenience or damage suffered or sustained as a result of participation in said club-sponsored rides or activities associated herewith. I also consent to and permit emergency medical treatment in the event of injury or illness. I shall abide by traffic laws and regulations and practice courtesy and safe cycling. I also understand that HeartCycle Association, Inc., requires the use of helmets when participating in all club rides.

Send this form with check payable to HeartCycle. Mail to: HeartCycle, PO Box 100743, Denver, CO 80250-0743

Or pay membership fee electronically by going to: www.heartcycleregistration.org