

Heart to Heart

Newsletter of the Colorado HeartCycle Bicycle Club
November/December 2007

Ride Across America -Part 1, March 8: 9-22, 2008

San Diego, California to El Paso, Texas

900 miles, 11 days riding 2 days off/ 49-115 miles per day

Cost: \$ 1,775.00 /\$350 Deposit. Rating: I-49, A-115.

Balance due by January 8, 2008

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. From the San Diego coast range into the Imperial Valley, riders will encounter quite a bit of climbing at lower altitudes the first couple of days. Once out of San Diego, we will bike on quiet roads alongside I-8. Out of El Centro in the Valley, we head toward Blythe where the route follows back roads along I-10 across deserts, hills and low mountains into the Valley of the Sun. From Phoenix, we're on to New Mexico on more back roads through some very pretty country into Hatch, Las Cruces and El Paso, Texas. This leg of the route crosses some hills with very limited traffic. It will be springtime in the great American Southwest. **You will have the ride of your life!**

The next two years in the spring of 2009 and 2010 will complete our adventure. Each year will be a two week segment. In 2010, we will finish in St. Augustine, Florida for our final destination-a beautiful setting to complete the Adventure Across America. We will take a total of 30 riders, 2 support vehicles.

Steve Parker, one of the leaders, has ridden and scouted the route. We will be using the Adventure Cycling maps, which are updated frequently.

For more information on the trip review the articles written on the trip at:

www.heartcycle.org The applications for membership and sign up for the trip are also on the web site. **Sign up will be by postmark beginning December 1, 2007.** Any applications received with postmarks prior to December 1 will be returned to the sender.

For more information contact leader Jerry (303) 738-9861, e-mail: jerrybakke@msn.com or leader Steve Parker (970) 382-9551, e-mail: emmbp@bresnan.net

You snooze - you loose - get your money in now!



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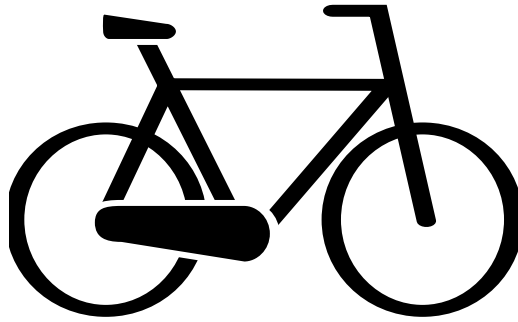
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Annual Meeting, Oct. 20, 2007

Nearly 100 members attended the 2007 Annual meeting and luncheon at the Mt. Vernon Country Club on Lookout Mountain.

Past Tour de France participant Ron Kiefel held everyone's interest with his anecdotes.

Members got a glimpse of the 2008 HeartCycle tours. Details of the tours will be sent out the first of the year in the tour brochure.

New Board Members were announced:

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***Newsletter Editor for
2008***

***Thank you to Harvey
Hoogstrate for volun-
teering to take over the
newsletter position!***

Tour the Passes, August 18-25 - A Canadian's Perspective

We came, we saw, and Mother, we were challenged in every way!

All of our senses were on high alert all week long: our legs felt the constancy and length of the climbs; our lungs heaved with the reduced oxygen; our eyes opened wide to the classic Colorado blue sky/mountain top views and nature's wholesome beauty; our nostrils flared to breathe in the smell of fresh air and every last bit of available oxygen; our ears strained to hear the complete sound of silence that can only be heard at altitude; and lastly and most deliciously, our taste-buds and stomachs sparkled with Sherry's home-cooking and Frisco's eclectic cuisine.

Our group of seven have all visited Colorado on a number of previous occasions. However, riding the roads of Summit County, the so-called "Heart of the American Rockies", was the best Colorado bicycle vacation for me! We rode Ute Pass (9,658'); we rode Loveland Pass (11,990'); we rode Hoosier Pass (11,541'); and we rode the infamous "Copper Triangle" ride which covered four passes in one day: Vail Pass (10,560'), Battle Mountain (9,000' plus), Tennessee Pass (10,424') and Fremont Pass (11,318').

Although some of the passes took us into the neighbouring counties of Eagle, Lake and Grand, I think that we climbed every paved-road official pass available in Summit County. Sy, our Tour Leader, made sure that we had lots of optional rides to add on each day if our legs and lungs were up to it: the deceptively steep road to Montezuma; Boreas Pass (paved road elevation n/k); Turquoise Lake; Mineral Belt Trail; and Swan Mountain Pass (I'll call it a pass!).

Perhaps Sy has the stats on how much climbing we actually did, but the bottom line is we did lots of it! As they say, however, what goes up must come down and therein lies the "raison d'être" = the reason why we climb: the carrot, the golden egg, the rainbow after the storm, however you want to refer to descents. Pure sublime as you lean the bike into each corner and float down the mountain. I could ride downhill for the rest of my life and never take the smile off my face.

On several days of the Tour, we enjoyed riding with some of the members of the Summit Biking Club who encouraged us and highlighted various points and peaks of interest along the way. Except for a short downpour on the way back from Ute Pass, the weather was postcard perfect. The peaks were as clear as they could be. On the second last morning, we woke to fresh snow on the mountain tops, cooler temps and the scent of fall in the air. Just like

home for those of us from the Great White North.

You probably haven't figured this out yet, so I'll tell you flat out: I fell in love with Summit County! As much as I never ever tire of the abundant natural beauty of my home province, especially the scenery around Thunder Bay, Lake Superior and Northwestern Ontario, I am dedicating the Province of Ontario's 2007 summer theme song to Summit County. The words of the chorus go something like this:

"There's no place like this where I've been,
There's no dream like this that I've seen,
There's no other place like this for me."

For me, this song is very uplifting, consistent with the mega-sized mountains and 360° limitless beauty of Summit County.

HEART CYCLE: THANK YOU for giving me the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and wonder of Summit County from the best seat in the house: my bicycle saddle! I'll always remember riding my 100,000th mile on the first day of this Tour, going south on Highway 9, after coming down Ute Pass, on my way to the lunch spot outside North Silverthorne. I'll be back to ride again as soon as I can!

Laurie Leslie
Thunder Bay Cycling Club
Thunder Bay, Ontario, CANADA

P.S. To watch the commercial and hear the full rendition of "There's No Place Like This", you can visit www.summerontario.com and listen to four different versions by four different Ontario artists.

*It's time to mail in your
2008 membership renewal.
See form on back of newsletter*



Texas Hill Country, September 16-22

Biking in Texas in late summer may sound like a hot, humid adventure, but since we hadn't biked there it was a new place to go explore on our tandem bike!! The group of 21 bikers included folks from AZ, CO, WA, CA & TX (plus our 2 sags Tim & Sue) arrived on Saturday. This was my first fixed based tour and it was great just unpacking the suitcase in Fredericksburg, TX, and getting settled into our inn (despite the lack of hot water and changing rooms mid-week). Fredericksburg is a cute little town settled in the 1880's by German settlers and is now a tourist draw for its charm, climate and festivals. One of the first stores I walked by had this motto in the window:

“Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, wine in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming WOO HOO what a ride”.

This sounded like a motto I should seriously consider adopting!!

Before the meet & greet on arrival day we headed out for the 19 mile warm-up ride and immediately noticed the frequent cattle guards and dips in the terrain/roadway filled with water/creek crossing over the top of the road. Was this an unusual farm road or forewarning of the general area? There were deer and antelope on our short route, reminding us of the rural terrain of the Hill Country west of Austin and San Antonio. We noticed the heat and humidity as we rolled back into the hotel. Larry & Sherry Harris (leaders) barbecued up burgers and all the fixings for our first dinner poolside and clued the group into our next 6 days of biking around Fredericksburg. Number one rule: check out the “low water crossings” for green moss/slick bottoms before biking through them and consider walking these areas. Guess we were lucky on our warm-up ride to have kept the rubber side down.

Our six days of biking started each day just after sunrise at 7:30 AM to help beat the heat. It was amazing to ride so many small paved rural roads with so little traffic every day, were we still in the USA? Each day we headed out of town in a new direction and terrain. Some of the area was flat, some easy rolling hills and a few short steep (15%) climbs; but variety kept us on our

toes. We usually regrouped at the sag stops every 20-25 miles to have a cold beverage and food to refuel the next hill. We visited the Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area that has a seasonal colony of ~3 million bats, the rustic village of Luckenbach for sausage on a stick and limeade slushies; the Willow City Loop of superior scenery and more of those short steep pitches to get the heart rate up; the Enchanted Rock Natural Area with its grumpy ranger; nice country roads and through the Lyndon B. Johnson Historical Park. Many of us took advantage of the extra sight-seeing to climb the massive granite dome or tour the LBJ ranch on a bus. Several days we rode a few miles of fresh chip-seal roads to challenge our bike handling skills. But every day we had dozens of cattle guard crossings, open range land filled with goats, sheep, cows, deer and antelope and a few of those low water crossings. What was truly amazing was how courteous the Texas drivers are to cyclists and how few vehicles were on our routes. Have you ever biked an hour on a paved road and only seen one vehicle (our sag wagon) go by??? If that sounds good to you, then come to the Texas Hill Country!!

Our wonderful hosts, Sherry & Larry, took several car loads of folks into San Antonio one evening for dinner and sight-seeing on the famous River-Walk. There was also the recently renovated Nimitz Museum and Pacific WWII Museum on Main Street to tour and then shopping in all the different stores in Fredericksburg. Plenty to keep one busy after biking for 6 hours and still have time to enjoy the pool/hot tub at the hotel. By the last day of cycling we were confident in our low water crossings and enjoying the lovely spider web of roads around Fredericksburg, as we headed back to the inn for our last evening together when 4 bikes forgot our warning from the first night and slid out on moss on the last two “low water crossings”, including my captain/tandem and our fearless leaders Larry & Sherry!! No one was seriously hurt- just egos bruised and feeling sheepish. Just like my new motto: I finished skidding in sideways with chocolate in one hand and wine in the other with my body totally worn out and screaming WOO HOO what a ride after clocking 400 miles in the Texas Hill Country!!

article written and submitted by Judy Siel



September in Spain, September 2-15

What a wonderful time of year for a bike trip. Having developed an interest in cycling and being long-time international travelers, we found the HeartCycle Newsletter headline, “Come to Spain and ride where the pro’s train” too tempting to pass up. After a long hot summer of “training for vacation” we arrived in Barcelona, a bit jet lagged but with great anticipation for the ensuing weeks ahead. Several people enjoyed a few days in Barcelona before the tour began by walking around the city to visit the Picasso Museum, view the famous Antoni Gaudi houses and cathedrals, enjoy the lovely Spanish architecture and beaches, or stroll with the minions on La Ramblas, Barcelona’s pedestrian thoroughfare.

The group met up Saturday morning at Hotel del Prat near the Barcelona airport to load the bus and trailer with bikers and bikes, and transfer all to Girona to start the cycling part of the Tour. An hour bus ride north brought the entire HeartCycle group to the Peninsular Hotel, in the heart of old-town Girona. We quickly checked in, assembled our bikes, and joined our tour leaders, Warren Barta (el Jefe) and Steve Richards (el Jefe Dos), for our initial warm up ride.

Leaving Girona as a group to learn the “East Exit out of town”, we did a short ride of 25 miles that crested atop Montnegre, a 1000’ hill with an abandoned 15th century monastery complete with views of the valley below. We rode back to Girona and that evening enjoyed our first of several sojourns through the city to search out the Spanish culture and good Catalan restaurants.



Our first full day of the tour, we were slated for what Warren described as Lance Armstrong’s favorite training ride west out of Girona. A long gradual uphill climb, through forested hillsides dotted with wild lavender, and fields of corn and sunflowers, brought us to St. Hilari Sacalm, where we had lunch and what turned out to be the best Gazpacho in all of Catalunya (and by the end of the trip we had tried it everywhere). After lunch a technical and twisty but nicely gradual downhill retraced our route to Angles and back into Girona (70 miles).

Daily rides were typically on back-country roads, several only one lane wide, but fortunately devoid of traffic, with vistas of stone farm houses and the occasional “Bon dia” coming from the Catalunians working in the fields. When we did encounter traffic, we found the Spanish drivers to be quite courteous. The roads themselves were good asphalt with nary a pothole in the place, apparently saved from disrepair by the lack of freeze-thaw cycles in the warm Mediterranean climate. Who knew that Girona had palm trees?

We did several loop rides from Girona east over the Les

Gararres hills through Mare de Deu dels Angels (affectionately termed by Warren as the Hell’s Angels, due to it’s steep 3 mile return climb?), circling the coastal plain of the river El Ter. The first loop passed through several charming medieval villages, Madremanya, Monells, Parllava, Rupia, and La Pera. Many continue to be functioning villages, some with cafes, some with art galleries, but all with lots of charm, stone buildings, and cobblestones. The next day was a cruise to the Mediterranean coast through Llagostera, Sant Feliu de Guixols and Tossa del Mar with its Moorish castle and beach-side setting (62 miles). The high road was reminiscent of California Route 1 with sea cliffs and a stunning view of the Mediterranean and sea-side resorts down below.

We had three more rides out of Girona: 1) the Peratallada-Pals-Begur ride that again crossed the Les Gararres hills that separate Girona from the Costa Brava (77 miles), 2) the Canet de Adria (34 miles), and 3) Romanya de La Selva (58 miles) that looped from Llagostera and Calonge near the Mediterranean coast and back through the towns of la Bisbal d’Emporda and Cruilles.

If you are becoming bewildered by all the Catalan town names, rest assured that the digital maps provided by Warren virtually guaranteed that no one became permanently lost for any great length of time. Maybe there was a wrong turn here or there on the cobblestones in one of the town centers, but those usually resulted in the discovery of some quaint old-town square with a historic cathedral and a cafe with authentic espresso. These were also

the places to find little shops for art and pottery, so the extra time was well spent. It was also the place to interact with the locals, who were tolerant of our poor Spanish and feeble Catalan, but often found our attempts entertaining.

On day 10 we packed our bags, prepared the loads for transfer by van about 30 miles north and closer to France, and we rode over to meet the van, unload, and settle in for our second week in La Perla Hotel on the outskirts of old-town Olot. Farther north the humidity was less, but the hills and climbs into the Pyrenean foothills were a bit more. The gradients were still always bearable, and the 10 to 15 mile descents were to die for (that’s figuratively of course).

We did a fantastic loop ride through Beget, formerly a medieval village, and now a focus for artisans. Several group members, including el Jefe Warren opted to ride to the French border to say Bon Jour (our third language of the trip, not counting English), and then back down into Beget

(continued on page 6)



(September in Spain, continued from page 5)

Several folks took the optional return route through Oix following Warren on a small country road (68 miles), where we were treated to a moderate climb and a glorious descent. This was considered optional because when Warren scouted the route in a car on his pre-trip, this was partially dirt. Imagine the treat we were in for, a fabulous descent on a freshly paved road. We arrived back in Girona exhausted but absolutely elated.

The day after the longish ride through Beget and Oix, we took a relatively easy ride east out of Olot through the countryside to Mieres (37 miles). While the mileage was short, the purchase of several large pottery items by folks forced an innovative inside-the-shirt carry system and several comments about the “pot”belied riders we had picked up.

For Day 13, Warren and Steve had scheduled a Triple Option Day that could include a hike around the Valle de Nuria, a hike in La Garrotxa (the Olot volcanic park), or a ride to the Col du Jou (48 miles). Since we had omitted the ride to the col into France the day before, we and Bill rode an alternate route out through Campredon west of Olot and up to the Col d’Ares and the French border at a massive 1513 meters (come on, we sleep 1000 ft higher than that in Boulder!). Kidding aside, the view into France was special, it was literally the high point of the trip, and we had a very special Perrier at the French cafe on the border.

The final biking day saw the only moisture on the trip, a bit of fog and a light drizzle in the early morning on the way out to Rupit, although it hardly drew a complaint since it was the first wetness encountered on the Tour. Packing up was tempered by fond memories of lots of coffee con leche, Spanish tortillas, seafood, Serrano ham (one of dozens of types available), fresh baguettes rubbed with garlic, tomato, and olive oil, andoh yes, the gelato.

Steve and Warren put together a great trip with spectacular rides, and the options on the rides and the freedom to travel and explore at our own pace was an appreciated treat. We had a great time, even after we found out they don’t speak Spanish in Catalunya, they speak Catalan, a sort of mix of Spanish and French. And for Russ’ first trip to Europe it was really fun. He observed that Europe is quite civilized: you can drink the water from the faucet and you don’t have to keep your mouth shut while taking a shower like in many countries in Asia. It was a really relaxing vacation too. No tents, no sleeping on the ground, and no eating in the dark around a campfire. All we had to do for 15 days was get up for breakfast, go for a bike ride, take a shower, and eat out at a restaurant. We’re hooked on these bike vacations. Where are we going next?

submitted by Diane “Gaspacho” La May and Russell “PiPi”



Lake Champlain with a French Connection, October 7-13

What a beautiful tour!

Ken Cogger and Harvey Hoogstrate did a great job leading this tour, and the sag drivers, Sara and Dennis, were fantastic, always anticipating the needs (and wants!) of the riders.

This tour was run two years ago, and the weather was quite wet every day, I'm told. Not so this year. It was cool and cloudy most of the week, but we only had one day, a half day actually, of rain.

Sunday's ride from Burlington to Ticonderoga, about 70 miles, started out cool and cloudy, but the afternoon was sunny and warm. A short stretch of dirt road made the afternoon interesting!

Monday the weather channel was predicting rain, so some riders left early to escape the nasty weather. Guess who got dumped on---! A few riders visited Fort Ticonderoga before starting their ride to Essex. The group of riders that left a little later experienced a very brief shower, and enjoyed a hot chili lunch so thoughtfully prepared by Dennis and Sara. We met some very kind and hospitable residents in Essex. The riders who got rained on found food and warmth in a bazaar going on in a local Essex church. Also, one of the church members let the whole group store their bikes in her garage! The historical Essex Inn bed and breakfast was very beautiful, and the food was great.

Tuesday's ride to Rouse's Point, about 60 miles, gave us some hill challenges.

Wednesday we crossed into Canada. After lunch (two kinds of hot soup!) we all stayed together and followed Ken into Montreal on a series of wonderful bike paths.

Thursday was a layover day in Montreal, everyone pursued their own interests.

Friday was a long flat day, 80 miles, and we left Montreal in a steady rain. Our resourceful sag drivers found a Catholic church that opened their doors for us so we could lunch indoors where it was warm and dry - amazing grace! After lunch the rain stopped but then - you guessed it - the wind came up. Lodging that night was at the very beautiful and peaceful Shore Acres Inn.

Saturday's short flat ride (45 miles) returned us to Burlington.

The foliage was still pretty green, with touches here and there of red and yellow.

A lovely tour - very scenic - I encourage you to sign up for it the next time it is offered.

submitted by Ann Nordstrom



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Signature _____ Date _____

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