



“IT ALLOWS ME TO ABSORB A COUNTRY, ITS PEOPLE, AND ITS CULTURE. THERE IS NO OTHER MEANS OF TRAVEL THAT ALLOWS ONE TO DO IT QUITE THAT WAY. IT HAS DEFINED THE PERSON I AM TODAY. CYCLE TOURING IS THE THING I AM MOST PROUD OF WITH MY LIFE.”

Barry Kaiser

Nowhere he won't go, nothing he won't eat

→ The Guianas in South America — Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana — are not a well-known travel destination. And that is exactly why Barry Kaiser was planning a bicycle trip there this fall.

“I knew nothing about those three countries. I didn't know anyone who had been there. But as I started to research, they became more interesting. I'm always looking for something different,” said Kaiser, an investment manager living in Edmonton, Alberta. He describes himself as an “investment professional who cycles the world for its culture, insight, and food.” His penchant for any street food anywhere has gained him the moniker Barry “the Seagull” Kaiser.

Kaiser came to bike travel by way of competitive waterskiing. “All competitive water-skiers congregate in southern Florida in the winter,” Kaiser said. To stay in shape, he started cycling. A few years later, in 1989, he decided to ride around the world.

“Outside of a weekend tour, my first tour was a world tour,” he said. Starting in Europe, he learned to take obstacles in stride. But when a trio of American cyclists in Jerusalem said they planned to take the bus to Cairo rather than risk riding through the Sinai Desert, it made him think twice. As he cycled closer to the Israel-Egypt border, a group of Israeli men stopped him. When they

heard his plan, they told him, “They will kill you out there.”

At the Gaza Strip, soldiers told him it was too dangerous to enter and redirected him. When he finally reached the Israel-Egypt border, the Israeli immigration officer told him that it had been six months since a cyclist had crossed the Sinai Desert.

“Apprehensive, I made my way to the other side where an armed Egyptian soldier met me,” said Kaiser. “Not sure what to expect, I braced myself for his response. He broke a big Egyptian smile to say, ‘Welcome to Egypt!’ I nearly fell off my bike. The remainder of my trip to Cairo was just as warm and inviting as that encounter. I learned that day that no border was too difficult to cross and no obstacle was too big to overcome.”

On his first bicycle tour, Kaiser traveled over 22,000 kilometers through four continents and 22 countries. Instead of satiating his desire to travel, the trip only stoked it. After 30 years of exploring the world by bike, there is hardly anywhere he won't go. He admits that Southeast Asia can't be equaled for its food, culture, and hospitality — he's done five tours there. The verdict on the Guianas's street food is still out since COVID-19 has pushed the trip back until next year.

Kaiser will keep packing his bicycle because “it allows me to absorb a

country, its people, and its culture. There is no other means of travel that allows one to do it quite that way. It has defined the person I am today. Cycle touring is the thing I am most proud of with my life.”

After his world tour, Kaiser joined Adventure Cycling. He recently became part of the Legacy Society and included Adventure Cycling in his will.

“I see a real opportunity for people who have more than they need for retirement to give back to society and leave some kind of legacy,” Kaiser said. “We all have things we would like to see changed in this world. Cycle touring has given me so much over the past 30 years, and I want to pay that back partially through this planned giving program. I can’t find a better organization to do that with than Adventure Cycling.” **AC**

April Cypher is Adventure Cycling’s Assistant Development Director. In reading Barry’s blog (travelblog.org/Bloggers/Panchoy), she learned that escamoles is Spanish for ant larvae on your appetizer.

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“I SAW A GROUP OF GUYS SITTING AT A TABLE; THEY LOOKED ABOUT 50. IT TURNS OUT THERE WERE ALL IN THEIR 70S. THAT’S WHEN I KNEW THERE WAS SOME MAGIC TO CYCLING.”

Denise and Jim Badgley

From TOSRV to a lifetime of touring

→ DENISE BADGLEY’S FIRST CENTURY RIDE did not commence after a carefully executed training plan of incremental miles. In fact, she didn’t train at all. On a Friday, a friend asked Denise — a college student at the time — if she wanted to go on a bike ride the next day. The ride turned out to be the first day of Ohio’s annual Tour of the Scioto River Valley (TOSRV.)

“I didn’t have a helmet. I didn’t have a spare tube,” Denise admitted. But she finished the 105 miles and returned the next year with her new boyfriend Jim.

“The people were so friendly,” said Jim. “I saw a group of guys sitting at a table; they looked about 50. It turns out there were all in their 70s. That’s when I knew there was some magic to cycling.”

Now, 36 years later, TOSRV is a yearly tradition for the Columbus, Ohio couple.

The Badgleys started shoehorning weeklong organized rides between Jim’s work as an electrical engineer and Denise’s as an accountant. “We have met so many lifelong friends while doing organized rides, which have led to more cycling trips and vacations,” they said.

In the fall of 1999, they traveled to Tennessee for their first self-contained ride. Twenty-three miles into the weeklong trip, Jim slowed to make a turn.

“I can still picture it,” he said. “She hit my left pannier, wobbled a few

times, and then went down.”

The crash left Denise with a broken collarbone and ended their trip. She spent the winter riding indoors, preparing for their next adventure: a cross-country ride along the Northern Tier. The following May, they arrived in Seattle to begin.

“I was a little worried about what I had gotten myself into,” Denise said. “We stopped at a barge crossing and talked to a guy in the information booth who told me, ‘In a few days that little voice in your head will go away.’ I still remember that after 18 years.”

The sights and smells of the Pacific Northwest captivated the couple. As they rode down Washington Pass, skiers slalomed down the slopes next to them. In Idaho, they weighed each piece of their gear with a fish scale and sent home items deemed too heavy to haul across the country.

“I had one shirt that weighed a few ounces more than another so I sent it home,” said Denise. “By New York, we were carrying big cans of ravioli.”

When they reached northern Ohio, a few friends asked if they’d had enough and were ready to come home. “No way,” they said. Another friend — whose longest ride was seven miles — joined them for the next 300. Seventy-six days after they left Seattle, they arrived in Bar Harbor, Maine.


“Our first tour across the country really cemented our relationship, and we realized we could always count on each other,” said Jim.

They discovered Adventure

legacy society

Cycling while planning for the trip. “We might not have tried it without the maps,” said Jim. They bought their Independent Fabrication touring bicycles, which they continue to ride today, after reading a review in *Adventure Cyclist*. And they eventually became Life Members. “We should have done it long ago,” said Jim. They joined the Legacy Society, saying, “It’s an organization that promotes something we love.”

In 2005, they returned to Seattle to ride the Pacific Coast Route. They camped next to the ocean every night and passed under towering Redwoods before ending in San Francisco. In 2017 they celebrated retirement by riding from their house in Columbus to Seattle.

“If you have even an inkling of trying a bicycle trip, do it,” said Jim. “You won’t regret it.” 

April Cypher is Adventure Cycling’s Development Coordinator. She rode her first century last summer after a lot of training.

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Fran Stagg

BY APRIL CYPHER



“BEFORE THAT CROSS-COUNTRY TOUR, I WAS POSITIVE I COULDN'T CLIMB MOUNTAINS, BUT I DID.”

Lifelong cyclist finds happiness on the road

→ Inspired by an article in *BikeReport* (the precursor to *Adventure Cyclist*), Fran Stagg embarked on her first long-distance bike ride — Wisconsin's Elroy-Sparta Trail — but a few miles in she found herself in the dark at the mouth of a tunnel, the sound of running water all around her. “I hadn't remembered reading anything about bringing lights,” Fran said. Determined to continue, she inched her way along. “That first tunnel was nearly a mile long. I kept thinking ‘I'm going to take another step and drown.’” When she rounded the tunnel's final corner, she was greeted not by the sun but by the bright flashlight beams of a Boy Scout troop.

Fran learned early on how to deal with less-than-ideal cycling conditions while growing up in rural Price, Utah. Without a bike of her own, she resorted to borrowing her older brother's. “I'm really short,” she said. “I used a sawhorse to get on the bike.” Once on the bike, she could reach the pedals, but getting off proved more

problematic. “I'd get both feet on one side, jump off, and let the bike go crashing.” The following Christmas, a shiny new girl's Schwinn was under the tree. “My brother had some influence in my getting a bike. I was trashing his.”

Since that Schwinn, Fran always had a bike during her college and Navy years. In the early 1980s, a friend lent her a few issues of *BikeReport* where she discovered a whole community of cycling enthusiasts. “I've been a member ever since,” she said. Fran served 24 years in the Navy, a career she described by saying, “my first 10 years I was told what to do; for the next 14 I did the telling.” Afterward, she started a civilian career as an accountant and began bike touring around the same time. For her first tour, Fran cycled for a week around Washington's San Juan Islands. She joined Salt Lake City's Bonneville Cycling Club and served as treasurer until the time commitment began cutting into her riding. At 63, she was

JULIE SHIPMAN

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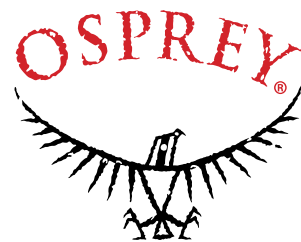
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the oldest woman in a group of 30 who rode from Los Angeles to Boston. "Cycling has made me more confident. Before that cross-country tour, I was positive I couldn't climb mountains, but I did. You do things you didn't think you could do."

When two riders voiced apprehension about the next day's mileage during a recent Adventure Cycling Great Lakes tour, Fran coached them through it. For her the best part of bike touring is "meeting new people and proving what you can do if you put your mind to it." In 2013, Fran decided to become a Life Member and thus solved the hassle of renewing her membership every year. She recently decided to further support to the organization's mission by putting Adventure Cycling in her will. "I wanted to leave my money to those who make me the happiest. That's Adventure Cycling." 

April Cypher is Adventure Cycling's development coordinator.



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George Mendes

Transforming lives today ... and tomorrow

→ “Transformative” is a word that comes up often when talking to George Mendes about bicycle travel. He believes it changed his life and has the power to do the same for others.

In 2006, after years of working internationally in management consulting, Mendes took a sabbatical to re-explore the U.S. Bicycling cross-country ticked the boxes of seeing the U.S. and having an active adventure. But he had questions about how safe it would be.

“Adventure Cycling was an amazing resource,” Mendes said. “The maps helped me plan, but really it was the articles that made me comfortable in saying, ‘Yes, I can do this!’ They told me what to pack. They convinced me that the myth that traveling isn’t safe was not true.”

Earlier that year, Mendes’s father, Isidro, was diagnosed with cancer, so Mendes used the ride to fundraise for cancer research. In St. Petersburg, Florida, he attached a yellow sign to his BOB trailer that read, “Cycling Across America to Raise Funds for Curing Cancer” before riding west on the Southern Tier.

“On the first day, people pulled over and flagged me down. I was afraid they were angry. Was I going too slow? Did I pull in front of them? But they just wanted to talk. They wanted to know what I was doing. Some people said they wanted to do the same thing. People would say, ‘I live just up the road, can I make you dinner? I have a spare bedroom.’ At

first, I wasn’t sure if I should say yes. It’s very disarming.”

But Mendes quickly learned to love the way bicycle travel enabled him to connect with people. “That was the most surprising and transformational aspect.”

Mendes celebrated the end of his ride in San Francisco with his father, but it wasn’t long before he started planning for another bicycle adventure. He’s logged thousands of miles everywhere from Alaska to Florida, often with his father pedaling beside him.

In 2011, Mendes joined Adventure Cycling’s board and has used his business acumen to help steer the organization.

“I’ve been lucky to have experienced firsthand Adventure Cycling’s mission and values,” he said. “I want to make sure other people have the opportunity to do that too.”

Last November, Mendes became the newest Legacy Society member by making a charitable bequest to Adventure Cycling in his will.

“I made a will because I knew it would help my family. My mother, Zita, passed away 23 years ago. She had the foresight to create a will and record her wishes. During the grieving process, I didn’t have to worry about what she wanted. I knew because it was written in her will. It made a difficult time a little less painful. That stuck with me.”

Mendes’s bequest gift will become part of a permanent endowment to help others experience transformative trips and connect with people across

“ADVENTURE CYCLING WAS AN AMAZING RESOURCE. THE MAPS HELPED ME PLAN, BUT REALLY IT WAS THE ARTICLES THAT MADE ME COMFORTABLE IN SAYING, ‘YES, I CAN DO THIS!’”

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the U.S. The gifts from Mendes and other Legacy Society members celebrate their lives while securing a bright future for personal discovery, adventure, and bike travel.

"My will reflects who I am, my life, and my values," Mendes said. "As I reflect back on my life experiences, it's evident that my best memories weren't made on a cell phone, or sitting in rush-hour traffic, or tackling that endless to-do list. My best memories were made in the moments when I slowed down, doing the things I love, with the people I love, and cycling." **AC**

April Cypher is Adventure Cycling's Assistant Development Director.

“This is a ride that cyclists must **try once** in their life!”



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Randy Cronk

BY APRIL CYPHER



The travels continue for this global citizen

“I WANT TO HELP THEM FALL IN LOVE WITH BIKE TOURING: TO SMELL IT, HEAR IT, SEE IT. TO EXPERIENCE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING.”

→ THERE ARE STILL PLACES on the globe Dr. Randy Cronk has not cycled. For instance, he has never turned a pedal in Antarctica or North Korea. “I’m not really a bucket list kind of guy,” said the Ohio psychology professor, “so I’ll just have to see where the rest of my cycling life takes me.” So far, Cronk has managed to shoehorn over 60 tours in 86 countries into holidays, summer breaks, and sabbaticals from his day job at Mount Vernon Nazarene University.

When the university recently stopped offering a January term, it threw a wrench in Cronk’s 30-year “BiPsychling” tradition. Every other year since 1986, he led students on a month-long, 1,100-mile tour from San Francisco to Phoenix. “It was a cross-cultural experience for students,” said Cronk. “Some students had never been out of Ohio.” Along the way, the students learned about social psychology, positive psychology, and, maybe most importantly, self-efficacy. The trip gained popularity over the years, ballooning to 42 students in 2014 with every person riding the entire 1,100 miles. “I wanted to help them fall in love with bike touring: to smell it, hear it, see it. To experience a different way of living.”

It was during a group tour where Cronk, as a first-year graduate student at Indiana University, caught the bike travel bug. “I joined a friend who was leading a small group of

high school students on a four-day, 220-mile supported tour,” he said. “I was hooked on bicycle touring from then on.” Over the next few years, he toured around the Midwest and led the first of his California-Arizona rides with students. In the summer of 1987, Cronk rode his loaded bike out of Seattle, Washington, and headed east. “My first trans-America tour was probably one of the most significant tours of my life. To bicycle across America, my country, made this land ‘home’ in a way that only a select few of its citizens can imagine or have had the privilege to know. Indeed, although I may have an Ohio postal address, through cycling, the world has become my home.

“I believe that bicycling has enriched my life tremendously, and after I’m no longer able to give of my time and talents to support bicycle touring, I wish to support organizations like Adventure Cycling that will enable others to discover and enjoy the rewards of bicycle touring,” said Cronk. But as long as he can still ride, he’s intent on sharing cycling with anyone game to keep up. Five years after his first cross-country ride, Cronk and his wife, Becky, zigzagged their way up the Continental Divide from Mexico to Alaska on a tandem. His 16-year-old daughter, Natalie, joined him the next year where they averaged 116 miles a day cycling from New Orleans to Canada. The next year, the family rode cross country in

COURTESY RANDY CRONK

a blistering eight weeks. Cronk and his nephew, Jacob, have twice ridden border-to-border.

For all his world travel, Cronk doesn't neglect his own backyard. He has played integral roles in both Knox County's Kokosing Gap Trail and the Knox County Bicycle Club. Many local riders can thank Cronk for sparking their interest through a beginner ride, safety clinic, or one of over 30 presentations he has given about the power of bike travel.

One would be hard pressed to find a better bike travel ambassador. To listen to Cronk talk about cycling is to be captivated by stories: the time he got to experience socialized medicine firsthand in 1991 after crashing on an oil-slicked road in Russia, interrupting possible guerilla fighters on a Guatemalan backroad in 1993, or battling brutal headwinds while being chased by a dog for a solid 10 miles in Montana. There is a consistent thread through all of Cronk's adventures — the kindness of strangers. "For every



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mean-spirited act, I have experienced a thousand acts of kindness," Cronk said. "In dozens of countries on every continent, I have been given shelter and food. More importantly, though, is the dignity that has been bestowed upon me as a traveler. I hope that I have always returned the favor and

affirmed the dignity of the many I have had chance encounters with because I had the courage to hang panniers on a bike and make the world my home." **AC**

April Cypher is Adventure Cycling's Development Coordinator.

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