



TOUR DE NEW YORK

→ AT THE END OF January, I enjoyed a whirlwind tour through New York, meeting literally thousands of people interested in bike travel. We had three member gatherings (in Brooklyn, Saratoga Springs, and Ithaca), met with tourism and advocacy leaders in all parts of the state, and exhibited at the New York Times Travel Show, the largest travel show in North America. Through all our interactions, I gleaned a top 10 list of interests for bike travel in 2015 (in no particular order):

- Incredible excitement for Bicycle Route 66 — out this month!
- Big anticipation of Amtrak's pilot projects for roll-on service on the Vermonter and Capital Limited (Chicago to DC) lines, due this year.
- A desire to get more young people into bike travel (thanks to everyone who supported our Young Adult Bike Travel Scholarships).
- Serious small-town and statewide interest in attracting bike travelers.
- More requests for warm-winter riding destinations (our new Puerto Rico inn-to-inn trips are popular and we are researching a self-contained Hawaii trip).
- Major curiosity about our next new routes (Chicago-to-New York City and Texas Hill Country).
- More curiosity about digital versions of our maps (we are evaluating



We saw many friends at the New York Times Travel Show; featured from left, Steve Powell (Adventure Cycling Life Member and tour leader), Lukas Herbert (member and owner of Gotham Bike Tours, holding his son Henry), Lydia Hess (staff tours specialist), and Jim Sayer.

next steps after beta testing a digital version of our Northern Tier Route).

- Questions about our 40th anniversary (events and programs in the works — we will have dates and details very soon).
- Where are the next U.S. Bicycle Routes going to be? (We can't always be sure which applications will come in, but this year we have high hopes for routes in Arizona, Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.)
- What's my next big trip? (Honestly, I have no idea — I have to get cracking!)

That's my list — do you have any other interests, suggestions, or questions? Where are you going to ride? Share your thoughts with us as we head into the prime riding season of the year. I look forward to seeing you out there!

Jim Sayer
Executive Director
jsayer@adventurecycling.org

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MISSION

Adventure Cycling Association inspires and empowers people to travel by bicycle.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Provide the premier tools and inspiration for people to travel by bicycle.
- Expand and integrate bike travel networks for North America.
- Create the best possible conditions for bicycle travel.

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EMAIL

memberships@adventurecycling.org

SUBSCRIPTION ADDRESS

Adventure Cycling Association
P.O. Box 8308
Missoula, MT 59807

HEADQUARTERS

Adventure Cycling Association
150 E. Pine St.
Missoula, MT 59802

STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Sayer
jsayer@adventurecycling.org

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Sheila Snyder, CPA

MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

Julie Huck Annette Stahelin
Thomas Bassett Gage Poore Josh Tack
Meghan Holler Brian Bonham

MEDIA

Lisa McKinney Michael McCoy Alison Riley

PUBLICATIONS

Michael Deme Greg Siple Rachel Stevens
Cassie Nelson Alex Strickland

IT DEPARTMENT

John Sieber Richard Darne David Barth

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Michael Lessard Mandy Hale

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SHORT STUFF

As part of the bike-travel boom, short tours are spreading too

→ I'M WRITING from Adelaide, Australia, at the end of an eventful National Bike Month. I'll write later about my trip Down Under (I'm about to mountain bike into the Outback after presenting at a productive global Velo-City Conference), but wanted to mention a phenomenon I saw on an earlier trip to Tennessee: the growing popularity of short bike tours.

In mid-May, I was asked to do a speaking tour through the state, including a keynote at the Tennessee Bike Summit. While there, I met with members Austin Bauman and Robyn Elliott. Austin and Robyn operate small tour companies (Austin has Green Fleet Bicycle Tours in Nashville, Robyn has Bicycle Tours of Atlanta) and they are seeing more demand for day tours in their cities. While these are typically short rides, they share some of the same DNA with longer tours — discovery, learning, enjoying local people, cuisine and customs, and experiencing the world by bike. Often, these short tours re-introduce the bike to folks who haven't cycled for decades.

Austin and Robyn are part of a national trend, including the franchising of Bike and Roll rental and tour businesses in multiple cities, and the emergence of other day-tour operators. In fact there is now a Bicycle Tour Alliance that is developing best practices for day tours and includes companies from New Orleans and St. Louis to Denver and Key West. You can learn more at bicycletouralliance.org. (They'll also be hosting a conference in Nashville in January 2015.)

Another trend is that these tour operators are offering bike overnights. Robyn is developing Southern Getaways. In the Big Apple, another member, Gotham Bike Tours, is offering three-



Jim and Robyn Elliott during a break in their Atlanta bike tour.

day trips that utilize New York City's transit system to get out of town. As proprietor Lukas Herbert notes, the idea is to remove as many barriers as possible to get people out on a bike overnight for the first time. "Then, if they do our tours, maybe they can 'graduate' to a bigger, longer tour, maybe even strike out on their own. Regardless, the goal is to increase bike traveling, which is a good thing." (We're pleased to note that Gotham got the idea after learning about Bike Overnights at an Adventure Cycling member gathering in Manhattan.)

This is the grassroots level of the global boom in bike travel. It ties in beautifully with the renaissance in American urban cycling — and with the larger trend of companies offering the broadest possible spectrum of bike tour experiences. I'll report in the future on my travels in Australia, but in the meantime, don't forget that close to home you may have a budding bike tour company that will provide you new ways to explore your own backyard!

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