

The Lolo Adventure Motorway

Around January of 1994, Kathy decided that our mountain biking skills needed to be challenged, that we needed a real adventure. So, she began looking around in the various biking adventure and touring catalogs that we had been getting. Here was the ad that caught Kathy's eye.

Lewis & Clark Mountain Bike

For history buffs who want a combination of mountain biking, hiking, pow wows and catered Western meals, the Lewis & Clark Mountain bike trek is for you. Starting and ending in Missoula, Montana we'll follow the footsteps of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark along the last remaining section of their historical route that has been preserved in its primitive natural state. Harlan and Barb Opdahl of Triple "O" Outfitters will guide us along the trail, set up camp each night, and provide us with hearty meals served from their chuckwagon. **8 DAYS \$995 8/14-8/21.**

Now, I've been camping a lot in my life. Heck, I used to just grab a blanket and Mindy, our Cocker Spaniel and head up into the hills behind the house and just sleep on the hillside. I've been camping a lot in my life, and I wasn't particularly excited to do it again.

When you're young, camping is a lot more fun. Your bones are still rubbery, so sleeping on rocks and pine cones isn't quite as painful as when you're older. Also, everything's an adventure when you're young.

I remember the time I went with a friend to camp up behind grandma Lavalette's farm, just uphill from the swamp back there. Sure, now that you're old enough, you all know better than to camp next to a swamp, but as you may have gathered from some of these stories, I wasn't always as smart as I am now.

There we were, cozy in our blankets as the sun began to set. *Bzzzzzzzzzt*—SMACK. The mosquito scouts had arrived. *Bzzzzzzzt*—SMACK, SMACK. The advanced forces had

arrived. In no time at all we were the "all you can eat for one low price" meal at the local deli. Quickly we pulled out our hatchets and cut down a dozen or so boughs from the pine and fir trees nearby. We found a depression in the ground, put a couple of branches over it to form a frame, threw the boughs on top, and crawled underneath in an effort to hide from the skeeters.

Surprisingly, it eventually worked pretty well. Or, maybe that we lost so much blood from the few skeeters that followed us into the shelter that we passed out and don't really remember. I do recall that after only a few hundred more bites we fell asleep.

Then there were the equally fun times of camping under the stars to be awoken by an unexpected downpour. Of course, you couldn't just dash under any shelter, as shelter all consisted of lightning rods in the form of trees.

Finally, when all you brought was a blanket and a dog, when you find you have, uhm, er, "callings of nature" during the night, and there is no toilet paper to be found, not even a Sears and Roebuck catalog, not even a corn cob, you discover that survival is for only the inventive.

Now, I've been camping a lot in my life. But, Kathy wanted to go camping. So, we sent in the down payment for the trip.

Shortly after, we got a packet of information from Adventure Cycling. One pamphlet was entitled, "Before You Go, A Handbook for Trip Participants." It had a few useful tips in it, but it was mostly geared for the bike-across-America tours that were so popular.

They did say that one should ride as much as possible before a trip, to build up your stamina and riding skills. They recommended 20 miles or more a day, 3 times a week to start, and working into longer day rides on week-

ends. As the trip approached, they recommended a 40 to 60 mile trip one day each weekend, working up to a 50 to 70 mile trip, and finally to a century (100 miles in one day).

Off-road riding, however, is considered to be about 3 times more strenuous than on-road riding. So, a 25 mile off-road ride takes about as much energy as a 75 mile on-road ride. This we could work up to.

The pamphlet also told how everyone must wear a helmet while riding, you couldn't wear headphones while riding, all traffic laws must be obeyed, and so forth. But, every serious bicyclist knows these things and does them anyway.

Adventure Cycling also sent a suggested packing list, which included:

- Cycling helmet.
- 2 pair cycling shorts, synthetic chamois lining.
- Leg warmers or tights (rain pants could substitute).
- Light, long-sleeved shirt for sun protection and off-bike wear.
- Wool sweater or pile jacket.
- Rain/wind gear (jacket or poncho and pants). Gore-Tex or a similar water-proof, breathable fabric is recommended.
- Comfortable shorts for off-bike wear.
- Comfortable pants for off-bike wear.
- 2 or 3 pair of underwear.
- 2 or 3 pair of socks.
- Non-cleat touring shoes or sturdy tennis shoes, good for walking as well as riding.
- Cycling gloves.
- Bathing suit.
- Sandals and pajamas (both optional).
- Wool or polypropylene hat.
- Wool or polypropylene mittens or gloves.
- Waterproof shoe covers.
- Wool or polypropylene socks.
- Toiletries.
- Lightweight towel.
- Pocket knife (e.g. Swiss Army type).
- Lock and cable (not a U-lock).
- 2 or 3 water bottles.
- Basic First Aid kit.
- 3 or 4 bandannas.
- Sunglasses.
- Flashlight and/or candle or lantern.
- Sewing kit.
- Insect repellent.
- Nylon cord.
- Tape.
- Bungie cords.
- Tire levers and patch kit.
- Spare tube and maybe a spare tire.
- Pump.
- Spare spokes.

A second package came at the end of March. It told us that we would all get together at 7 P.M. on Saturday, August 13 at the Campus Inn in Missoula. Our lodging for that night was included in our tour fee. We would leave there on Sunday morning and would return there again about 2 P.M. on Sunday, August 21. Also, this year's tour would include a trip to the Looking Glass Pow Wow in Kamiah, Idaho.

We needed still more information about the ride, so we called Adventure Cycling. They said the trail travelled along the Lolo Adventure Motorway. Here are some excerpts about the Lolo Trail that we didn't find out about until after we had booked the trip¹.

"The Lolo Trail has exacted its measure [sic] of toil, pain, suffering and death.

"It can be traveled in safety and pleasure if the traveler takes the proper precautions.

"The time of year to go is between July 15 and Sep-

1. From "The Lolo Trail, A History of Events Connected With the Lolo Trail", by Ralph S. Space

tember 15. Sometimes the snow is melted and the road open by July 1, but I have known it, on rare occasions, to open as late as July 20. Anytime after October 1 the road can be closed by snow, although I have known it to be open as late as November 1. Passage in the winter by snowmobile is for the experts only. You could get caught in a blizzard that would make travel impossible for a week.

“Almost any type of car can make it over the road, but it is too steep and crooked for trailers. The larger and more expensive cars are not recommended,...

“Each car must be equipped with an axe, shovel and water bucket since these are required by the Forest Service.”

Adventure Cycling also suggested that I call Triple “O” Outfitters, which I did. I spoke to Barb Opdahl. She said the trip was a bit over 100 miles long. I told her that a good day’s trip for us at that point was about 20 or 30 miles with about 2000 feet of climb. She thought that we were probably in good enough shape, then. The weather, she said, would probably be in the 70s or 80s during the day, but might drop down to near freezing at night. It usually rained a few days every week.

By the end of July, we got a third packet from Adventure Cycling. It read,

“Dear Lewis and Clark Participants,

“By now I have spoken to most of you or you have received information from me. As it happens, I will be your leader for the upcoming Lewis and Clark Mountain Bike Trip. Our scheduled leader, Gil Russell, was suddenly unable to lead the trip. Those of us in the Adventure Cycling office who are qualified trip leaders fought over who would get to lead this trip. I won.

“In all seriousness, I am excited to be doing this trip. I am an avid cyclist/mountain biker also interested in scenery and history. Since this trip combines all three, I jumped at the chance. Also, Barb and Harlan Opdahl at Triple “O” Outfitters are nice folks. I am sure they will do whatever they can to take care of food, camping, shuttles, and so on. It will be great to travel the trail with such

knowledgeable guides.

“Back when Lewis and Clark followed this route, it was one of the toughest parts of the journey. The route was much rougher, they ran out of water and food, and ended up eating their horses. Things will be a lot easier for us, but it is best to be prepared. First of all, make sure you are physically prepared for the riding involved. The day’s ride is much more enjoyable if you are in shape and can concentrate on having fun. Second, be prepared for unpredictable weather. Here in the Rockies, weather can vary greatly and change quickly. Have rain gear and warm things, just in case. Lastly, check your bike or have a mechanic do it. Better to find problems now than out on the trail. It’s also easier (and safer) to ride a well-tuned bike. On the subject of safety, remember that everyone must wear a helmet at all times while riding.

“I am looking forward to meeting all of you on Saturday, August 13 at 7 p.m at the Campus Inn in Missoula. our accommodations that night at the Campus Inn are reserved and included in the tour cost, so we can be ready to leave the next morning. If any of you have questions, please don’t hesitate to call me. I can be reached at Adventure Cycling ...

“Sincerely, Dave Robertson”

I went to the U.S. Geological Survey here in Menlo Park and bought topological maps of what we thought would cover the trip area and began trying to characterize the terrain. In spite of Barb’s assurances and Dave’s “Things will be a lot easier for us”, the maps suggested otherwise. It looked like we could be in for 2000 foot or more climbs every day and up 14% or steeper grades—steeper than we were used to.

As often as we could, we went out and rode longer and longer, and did higher and steeper climbs to get ourselves in shape. We improved quite a bit, but we felt we were probably just barely in shape for the trip.

A few days before the trip, we received a final packet from Adventure Cycling. It included a roster of all the participants for the trip: Kathy and myself and my nephew Bari Gonzalez,

Bob and Judy Marasco from Colorado, and Gus and Joan Montana, from North Carolina. With our leader, Dave, we expected 8 riders on the trip.

The itinerary in that final packet read:

- Day 1—August 14 9:00 am. Travel by vehicle to 13 Mile Camp, FS road 500. Ride to Cayuse Junction Camp. 10 riding miles with some steep terrain.
- Day 2—Ride to 12 Mile Saddle. Indian Post Office, Howard Camp, Devil's Chair visited; Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce historical sites. 18 miles... the most challenging riding of the trip.
- Day 3—Hike to the Sinque Hole and Smoking place. Bikes will be transported to the hike's endpoint, where we will ride on 15 miles, visiting Greensword and Dry L&C campsites, reaching the campsite at base of Sherman Peak.
- Day 4—Hike Sherman Peak to Spirit Revival Ridge (L&C Journals). Return to Road 500, riding 13 miles to Weitas Meadows Camp.
- Day 5—Ride to Boundary Junction, where we will make an early camp. Continue to ride to a trailhead, where we will hike to Jerusalem Artichoke Campsite, passing through Horsesteak Meadows. 12 miles of riding.
- Day 6—Bike to Salmon Trout Camp. Visit Lewis and Clark Grove, Small Prairie Camp, Pheasant Camp. Camp at Lolo Creek.
- Day 7—Bike to Kamiah, shower and get ready to attend Looking Glass Pow Wow. Indian feast at noon, parade and Pow Wow in the evening. Lodging in Kamiah at extra cost. Dinner Saturday and breakfast Sunday are participants responsibility.
- Please note the this is a historical trip with a combination of mountain biking and hiking, and is not a highly techni-

cal, high mileage bike trip. There will be opportunity to do some additional riding on some segments of the trip. Most of the terrain is old Forest Service road through heavily timbered country with varying altitudes below 6000 feet. A support vehicle will bring your gear and the grub. Please inquire before the trip if you are interested in fishing opportunities.

Day 1, Thursday, August 11

At 3 A.M., "Dwanny"¹ shows up, bringing Patti and Bari. We load Bari's stuff into the car. Last night we loaded our stuff and all 3 bikes. I tried to sleep a couple of hours during the beginning. Kathy woke us up along the way to see a crop duster and, later, Mount Shasta. Later, Kathy and I split the driving between us while the other tried to catch a few naps. Here are some expenditures:

- Stop at Anderson, Oregon for gas. 260.9 miles, \$14.26 for gas.
- Breakfast at Red Bluff for \$12.60. I have eggs and bacon. Kathy and Bari have pancakes. While they make our breakfast, I go to the men's room. As I pass by the salad cart, I see they are loading it up with ice cubes to keep the salad items cold. In the men's room, I notice that the urinals are all full of ice cubes. I'm really glad I didn't order anything that had to do with a salad for breakfast.
- Stop at Canyonville, Oregon for gas. 225.0 miles. \$14.50 for gas (10.7 gallons). Here we have lunch for \$20.00. I have peanut butter and jam sandwiches and french fries (well, it was a combination listed in the menu for kids). Kathy has a turkey sandwich and Bari has a hamburger.
- Stop at Cascade Locks, Oregon for gas and lodging. 242.7 miles, \$14.50 for gas (11.07 gallons). We arrive here at 7 P.M. Here we eat dinner but I don't recall what we had.

We're pretty exhausted by the time we stop at Cascade Locks. The hotel manager and his wife are really nice and let us keep our bikes

1. Geraldine Hawkins, my mother-in-law.

in their rooms so they won't be tempting to some thief as they would be if we had to leave the bikes sit on the van-top carrier.

Day 2, Friday, August 12

We try to cover as many miles as we can so we will have time to rest in Missoula before the trip begins. Fortunately, our friends Susan and Keith had given us a "trip gift" of a big back of varied candy. We just keep fueling our engines while we drive, sing, and tell bad jokes.

Singing. You ever get singing some song only to discover that you've been singing the wrong words for years? Have you ever heard someone sing, "The ants are my friends, they're blowing in the wind", instead of, "The answer my friend, they're blowing in the wind"? Well, I made a similar mistake which Kathy and Bari were all too happy to point out to me. There is this song, "Born to be Wild", by Steppenwolf, which has the lyrics, "Take the world in a lovin' embrace." For years, I've thought the lyrics were, "Kick the world in a loving place." Boy, some people are easily amused.

Every time we pass a road sign with a picture of a deer, indicating a deer crossing ahead, Bari says, "Look, a deer", and points at the sign. To which Kathy and I sing in response, "...a deer, a female deer."

Somewhere along the way we tune into what was apparently the all-Elvis radio station. That provides plenty of singing opportunities for a while.

We listen to the radio describe the big forest fires in the area where we're heading.

That evening, we arrive at Missoula. Some expenses are:

- Breakfast at Biggs, Oregon for \$13.00. Bari and I have pancakes and eggs. Kathy has yucky oatmeal.
- Stop at Spokane, Washington for gas. 314.1

miles, \$17.00 for gas (13.394 gallons).

- Lunch at East Spokane for \$18.00. I have chicken strips. Bari and Kathy have hamburgers.
- Dinner at Missoula for \$27.00. Kathy and I have a Chef's Salad. Bari has a Taco Salad. The food here is extremely good.

Day 3, Saturday, August 13

As we get up in the morning, I think that we're about to go on a bike ride on the worst part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's trail, with a significant forest fire Southwest of the Lolo Pass where we'll be riding. The fire has consumed 1400 acres as of today. There are 4 people watching the fire. Because it is too hard to reach the area of the wilderness where the fire is, only 4 people are only watching it. Also, our tour guide is a guy named Dave. Bari comments that he's never met an intelligent guy named Dave in his circle of friends. So, basically, we figure that we're all going to die.

We find a couple of our future riding partners, Gus and Joan, and have breakfast next door. On the way back, as we cross over the foot-bridge connecting the motel to the restaurant, we see a man down in the stream. He looks like he might be a little down on his luck, but it's hard to tell for sure. He's pulling something out of the stream and eating it—it looks like it might be snails. After he eats each one, he brushes his teeth.

We decide to take a brief spin in the Missoula area to stretch our muscles and to check out the bikes one last time. Bari and I have cromoly steel alloy mountain bikes with front suspensions. Kathy has an aluminum mountain bike with both front and rear suspension.

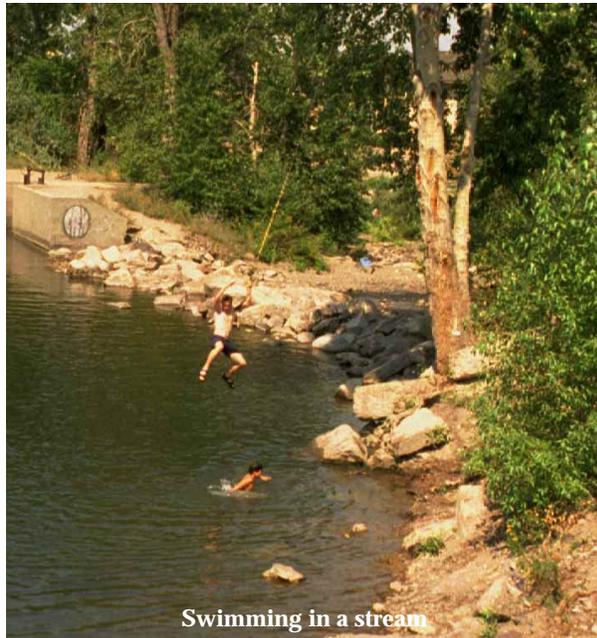
We begin by riding in the low hills behind the motel. Boy, it's a huge effort, and we begin to think we've made a huge mistake. If these little hills are killing us, there will be no hope for us when we get to real mountains.

We work our way down to the college in town. It's a small, quaint, rather nice looking college. There is a stream that runs alongside the college and it's filled with kids swimming in it. They have a rope tied to a tree and they swing out into the stream and drop into it.

We ride alongside the stream bed for awhile. Part of the ride is also on a dried stream bed with lots of large rocks. When we can't go any further, we head back towards the college. A little way around the campus, Kathy's tire goes flat. It's a good thing we had the problem here where it's easy to change the tire and we're not under any pressure to hurry up.

We go back to the motel and ride around the town in the mini van to see what the town is like. We stop at a shopping mall for lunch and gifts.

Throughout the day while we're at the motel, we tried to guess which people we saw in the halls of the motel might be our other trip companions. I'm not sure that we guessed correctly for anyone at all. In the evening, we get together with the other riders for the first time, except of course for our dinner with Gus and Joan.



Swimming in a stream

There is one extra rider that shows up for the trip—Alan. He is a high school teacher from Ohio. He had been biking all around the world. He biked all the way to Missoula and wanted to come along on the trip with us.

Some expenses are:

- Breakfast in Missoula for \$20.00. I have pancakes. Kathy and Bari have fruit waffles.
- Lunch in Missoula for \$15.87. We eat at a buffet at a shopping center.

Day 4, Sunday, August 14

The day begins slowly. Early in the morning we load all our gear into a horse trailer which is towed by a Chevy Suburban. We have to stop at Adventure Cycling and we also have to pick up rental bikes for Bob and Judy. At 11:00 A.M., we finally stop at our first historical marker just outside of Missoula. About 45 minutes later, we stop at a ranger station in Powell, Idaho, near the beginning of our biking trail, to get an update on the forest fires in the area. We can see 2 fires in the distance.

We wander over to the river nearby and watch as smoke jumpers load into a helicopter and take off. One of the men's daughters is decked out in a replica of her father's uniform, including a mask, water bottle, and helmet. She watches her daddy leave.

Then we go to a restaurant up the hill a way and buy lunch. Our wallets are packed away, so Bob Marasco buys our lunch and we pay him back later.

Then it's back to the ranger station so that Harlan can get us some of the rather inadequate maps that always seem to be kept in ranger stations—you know the kind, where one inch equals, say, 5 miles. Finally, we load up again and head off to 13 Mile Camp and the beginning of the bike ride. Before we begin bike riding, however, Harlan takes us on a short hike. Along the way, we see "bear grass" for the first time and I recognize huckleber-



Trail start. (l-r) Joan's leg, Judy, Gus, Dave, Harlan.

ries—something we will be feasting on for a long time.

Harlan points out part of the Lewis and Clarke route and begins some of his story about their trip. I won't go into any of the Lewis and Clarke history in this story—there are lots of good books on the subject and I didn't record any of Harlan's unique extra knowledge about the famous trip.

Today's ride is 13 miles with 1620 feet of climb. It's deceptive in that it begins with a long, fun downhill ride. After that, however, it's mostly long, steep climbs followed by short steep descents. Well, I only recall 1 descent, the rest was all climb.

At the 4 mile point, we come upon Bob who rode ahead of us. He's lying down on a large rock, resting, waiting for his wife to catch up. There is a short rain during the ride, but it stops suddenly. It was enough to fool us, though, and it will be a couple of days yet before we stop carrying rain gear around with us.

At Cayuse Junction, we meet Barb, her nephew Jeremy, and Heather, a family friend. Jeremy and Heather are both about 18 years

old and ready for college in the fall.

Despite what the ad said, we have to set up our own tents. I think Barb got a bad first impression of me because I just mentioned that the ad said that they would set up the camp for us.

I told Kathy that we needed to find a campsite which was not under trees, in case it rained or there was lightning. You might think that a tree's leaves and branches would protect you from rain, but it just means that after the rain stops you get dripped on for hours more. We also needed a site with a slight down slope where we would position the door of the tent. That way, any rain running down the mountain side would run around the tent, not into it. Finally, we needed to remove as many stones, twigs, and other things that would poke up and hurt us all night.

Bob was given an air mattress from his secretary as a gift for the trip. It's a red velour affair. It's pretty entertaining to see Bob try to pump up that Queen size mattress. It also makes a lot of noises as Bob and Judy toss and turn on it. It will be quite a source of amusement in the days ahead. "Bob and Judy's Bordello" they'll call it.



Bob resting along the trail

Shortly after our tent was up, Barb had supper ready for us—haystack—which is corn chips, chili, beans, lettuce, cheese, tomatoes, and onions. The ingredients are just laid out and you put them together in the combination you want. While we eat, ashes from the forest fire rain down on us.

This is just one of the things I was worried about, that they would be serving food that I didn't like. I could see it now, a week of Mexican food and fish, while I wasted away.

Near 8 P.M., several people went for a walk while the rest of us went to bed. I read Steven Donaldson's book, "A Dark and Hungry God Arises". I read for quite some time and then tried unsuccessfully to sleep. After a few hours of tossing and turning, I got up, walked up the trail a bit, and watered the flowers.

It was pretty chilly at that point, probably in

the high 40s or low 50s. I went back to bed and tossed and turned some more without ever getting to sleep. Kathy said that she had quite a time trying to sleep as well.

We saw lots of chipmunks, possibly an osprey, and a baby weasel today. Tonight I thought often, "It's only Sunday night! I hope the rest of the week gets better."

Day 5, Monday, August 15

By 5:30, Kathy is awake, so she and I take a walk to the latrine. Harland has dug a shallow hole and placed atop it this plywood frame, about 2 feet on a side, with a toilet seat attached over a hole on top. It wouldn't be so bad but the whole affair is sitting about 30 degrees off from vertical. It's like leaning up against a tree to try to use the beast.

Kathy and I then walk down the trail towards a stream that we saw coming into camp yesterday. Last night, when the group that took a walk returned, we could hear them say that there was a stream about a mile down the road. We walked only about a couple tenths of a mile until we could see it through the trees.

The stream is down the bottom of a fairly deep ravine, and we're not too anxious to walk all the way down and back up before doing a bike ride. So, we just look through our binoculars for wildlife around the water. We don't see any. We did see some of the ever present "bear grass", and one clump of it has a fairly rare bloom in it.

Shortly after we get back to camp, breakfast is ready. We have bacon, bagels, and sourdough pancakes. Eggs were available but nobody wanted any. While we ate, a mule deer walked through the camp. After breakfast, we made sandwiches for lunch which Harlan will bring to us further down the trail.

At almost exactly 8:00 A.M., Kathy and I take off for the day's ride. This is supposed to be



First campsite. (l-r) Gus, Dave, Barb, Bob, Judy, Kathy, Bari, Joan

the hardest day of the trip, so we wanted to start ahead of the rest of the group, knowing that they would all catch up and pass us before long.

Kathy, Bari, and I all have our amateur radio “handy talkies” with us. Bari’s got broken early, so he uses my spare. This allows us to keep in more or less constant contact even when we’re miles apart. We typically ride in more or less 3 groups anyway. There is the aggressive group that Bari is usually in, way out in front of us, the middle group which I’m usually in, and the rear group which Kathy is sometimes in. Often Kathy and I change relative positions.

The only bad part about the radios is that I’ve installed this nearly 5 foot tall antenna on the back of my bike so that it is more likely that Kathy and Bari can at least talk to me, even when they might not be able to reach each other. Unfortunately, nearly every time I get on or get off my bike, I scrape my leg across this antenna. Since I’m wearing biking shorts all the time, I’ve develop a huge, bleeding scrape across my leg.

Dave, our tour guide, mostly stays behind the slowest rider. He has a 157.785 MHz radio which he can use to call Harlan or Barb, if necessary. We hoped that by starting out first, we wouldn’t be holding everyone up. We knew that we’d probably have to do a lot of walking up the steeper climbs. In fact, by the end of the day, I joked how it was a nice 22 mile hike today.

In fact, today’s trip was 21.5 miles with a climb of 2800 feet. Kathy and I probably walked 4 miles of that in the morning, and another 4 miles in the afternoon, riding the rest of the way. By the time we come into camp, my legs are absolutely exhausted. Kathy said that she is sore all over, with several sore muscle groups. Being dead tired coming into camp, raising the tent is nearly beyond me.

We kid Harlan about his continual description of the trail as “undulating”—a term he picked up from one of his previous guides. This becomes a running gag for the rest of the trip. Whenever anyone wants to know how the trail is ahead, the answer is always, “Oh, it’s undulating.” We tell Harlan that he needs to

learn that when he has to put on the breaks, that's going down hill, and when he has to step on the gas, that's going up hill.

During the last 3 miles of the trip today, Harlan rode behind Kathy and I, in case we needed to put our bikes in the horse trailer and get a lift to camp. Near the end, Harlan said to us, "You're nearly topped out." Apparently this means something totally different to someone driving a Chevy Suburban versus a bicyclist taking their last breaths.

Somewhere along the way today, Alan saw a black bear run as fast as it could across trail about 100 yards ahead of him. Bari got a nose-bleed and made a joke that it was probably due to the altitude. It is, after all, nearly 6000 feet above sea level here. Bari and Joan ride so fast near the end of the day's ride that they nearly zip past the campsite and miss it altogether.

After setting up the tent, Kathy and I cut up one of our super absorbent camp towels to make wash cloths for any that want them. We then wash each other's hair. We aren't sure how people are going to do their washing. Are they going to find a private place, or just get naked any old where?

Barb boils a lot of hot water for anyone that wants to wash. Not everyone does. Barb says that people will learn on this trip that you can actually stay alive and not have to wash everyday like city folk do.

Nonetheless, Kathy and I tote some hot water around the far side of the camp truck and managed to give ourselves a reasonably good bath.

For supper we have fish sticks, some fish that Barb thinks is flounder, potatoes with cheese, cole slaw, buns, steamed broccoli, and ginger bread cakes with whipped cream. You can't fault the Opdahls for the quality or quantity of food they provide. Still, here I am again,

offered Mexican food or fish. I'm sure I'm going to just waste away on this trip.

Bari finds some elk legs at the edge of the camp site. Most of the riders stay up past dark and look at the incredible sky. Some don't recall ever having seen the Milky Way. The sky is just bright with stars.

Day 6, Tuesday, August 16

I didn't sleep again last night. I'm dreading both the ride and the hike we have to do today. The topological map I have indicates that the last mile or so of our ride should be up a 10% grade.

After the same sort of breakfast as yesterday, except that we also have huckleberry pancakes, we leave camp at about 8:30 A.M. We drive in the Suburban about a mile back down the trail we just rode and begin hiking part of the original Lewis and Clark trail.

We go past Sinque Hole and Smoking Place. The hike is pretty steep in parts. In fact, we stop to rest once. As usual, we take whatever opportunities we can to eat huckleberries. Besides the normal blue, tart berries, however, Harlan introduces us to a tiny, red huckleberry. It is much sweeter than the blue berries. So, from now on, we're always on the lookout for the red berries.

After climbing about 650 feet vertically, we come to the top of a cliff. The deep, expansive valley below is filled with fog, and there are mountain peaks poking through. It looks like a large lake with islands.

We climb down the other side of the mountain and the Suburban and horse wagon are there with our bicycles. The morning ride is hard, but not overly hard, it seems. But, as we come up to Bald Mountain, near Lewis and Clark's Greensword campsite, the climb is almost too much for me after yesterday's climb. In fact, the 3 women all ride in the Suburban the last

tenth of a mile or so. Others probably would have too, except that we were already at the top of the peak by the time the vehicle came around. Amazingly, several people comment on my aggressive climbing style—particularly compared to yesterday.

We stop and have our usual lunches that we made for ourselves after breakfast. Harlan brings the lunches which were stored in a cooler for us, and hands out little packets of drinks for us as well. We all find comfortable spots for resting in the bear grass off the side of the road. My lunch was peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, some kind of terrible fruit juice drink called Maui Fruit Punch, and an apple. I hate to sound like I'm dwelling on the food on this trip—it's just that I happen to have notes about what food we had, how far we rode, how much we climbed, and so forth.

Despite 2 nights without sleep, I'm starting to feel more energetic. I decide to start on the last leg of the day's journey ahead of everyone else as I'm sure I won't be able to climb the 10% grade at the end, so everyone will catch up to me there, anyway.

So, mounting up again and taking off I surprise myself. I'm off like a bolt of lightning. Part of it is because some of the afternoon's ride is down steep, extremely rough trail, and I'm a very aggressive downhill biker. In fact, Bari commented later on that he could see my tire tracks go along until I hit a large rock in the trail, and then my trail would disappear for 5 or 10 feet before my bike came back down to Earth again.

Three times I met Harlan in the Suburban. Once as I was near the top of a hill, Harlan passed me. When I came over the top, I was off like a shot again and passed Harlan. And Harlan passed me again as I neared the top of the next hill.

Harlan likes to drive slowly on the trail so that he doesn't kick up dust for us. Well, Bari

would have to disagree as he is constantly being showered with dust whenever he follows too closely to Harlan. To make matters worse, somewhere along the way Bari falls with his bike on one of the more dusty segments of the trail.

It hasn't rained up here in over 2 months. The Opdahls say that it has always rained a day or two when they take people on this trip.

After a long, strenuous climb, I am surprised to find that I am only about a half mile from the end of the day's ride, and it is mostly down hill to the end. During the whole afternoon, I only stopped riding once to pour water over myself to cool down. It is very hot riding in the stretches where there is no shade.

Kathy got a nosebleed today. My big disaster was during the lunch stop. I opened my bike bag—a large bag that I can clip on and remove from my handlebars—and noticed that my tube of sun block had turned upside down and the cap had come off. The sun block oozed out and covered everything. My snacks, my tools, and my radio and battery were all covered.

Worse, my camera was all covered with sun block and it oozed into every crevice it could find. The lens cap had come off as well and made a huge mess of my zoom lens. I don't know if I'll ever get the camera to operate well again.

At camp, Bob lends his bike to Jeremy and he and Bari take off for a short bike ride. Bari gets another nose bleed. When Jeremy returns, the bike has a broken spoke. No one thinks that Jeremy broke the spoke, though, as it wasn't even noticeable that the spoke was bad until someone noticed it by looking at the wheel.

The broken spoke is on the freewheel side of the rear wheel. In order to get at it for repair, you have to remove the free wheel with a special tool.

I packed quite an array of tools in my duffel for repairing just about anything I could think of. Sadly, the tools I packed were only good for repairing the bikes that Kathy, Bari, and I were riding. In fact, most mountain bikes were built with the same sort of equipment. But Bob's rented mountain bike wasn't.

Bob's bike has a Sun Tour cassette, and my cassette cracker is for Shimano equipment. Alan and Dave figure out an ingenious way of filing part of the rivet end of a spoke in such a way that they manage to force the spoke through the hub and around the free wheel. The spoke accepts the stress of being tightened, so the filing didn't weaken it excessively.

We came into camp a little after 3 P.M. As usual, while everyone else wants to rest a few minutes after the ride, I rush to find the best campsite and the best tent. Tonight's site is right in the middle of a large clan of chipmunks. They are going to complain about my intrusion all the time we are here.

After setting up the tent, I decide to clean Kathy's and my bike while the others tackle the broken spoke problem. I clean all the critical parts first, such as the chain, the rings and the cassette, and the derailleurs. Then I try again to salvage equipment from the sun block damage.

After dinner, we all watch an incredible sunset—made more so by the dust and ashes from the nearby forest fires. Also, as usual, several people play cards—rummy.

Today we rode about 11.2 miles and climbed 1430 feet on the bikes. We also hiked about 3 miles and climbed about 650 feet up the mountain.

To tell the truth, I've been secretly fantasizing that Kathy will have one of her frequent allergic reactions to plants out here. Then that I can take her back to some doctor and not have to

lie sleepless on rocks all night and climb mountains all day.

Day 7, Wednesday, August 17

Today is going to be "chicken and rice day". Last night, we were talking about how exhausting it was to do all these climbs. Gus, or "mountain goat Gus" as we call him, was telling us about how you need to learn how to breath. He promised to show us how today. I also mention that I get into this sort of meditative state, where I just sort of chant something in my head to keep me focused, then I just keep my head down and pedal once more, and once more, until we're done. So, when Barb said that we would have chicken and rice today, I suggest that we chant "chicken" as our left pedal goes down, "rice" as the right pedal goes down, "chicken" as the left goes down again, and so on.

The day begins with another hike. This time it's to Sherman Peak and Spirit Revival Ridge. Then, sigh, more riding. Fortunately, I finally got some sleep last night.

Even though we rode 13 miles, climbing 2560 feet, and hiked 4 miles, climbing 680 feet today, it doesn't seem so bad.

Kathy and I arrive in camp at about 3:30 P.M. Just 2 miles away is a lake suitable for swimming, but we don't even bother going to see it. We are just plain done climbing for today.

Bari and most of the others do go, however. Bari gets there first and washes some clothes and is drying them on a rock when the others arrive. They try to go swimming or wading. There is a lot of silt near the shore, so everyone walks out on logs to deeper water. Apparently the water is slightly cool and incredibly clear.

We do indeed have chicken and rice for supper, and a cauliflower salad, green beans, and an apple-betty type of dessert. Afterwards, the usual take-a-walk crew goes for a walk part

way around the pond next to our Weitas Meadows camp.

Being next to a pond, there were plenty of mosquitoes for everyone. We see a deer and fawn on the other side of the pond.

The hiking crew saw a “fool’s chicken” and lots of “bear poop.” This fool’s chicken is a large bird that is apparently so stupid that people can walk up to within a few feet of it and kill it by throwing a rock at it. It’s so easy to hunt that no one hunts it.

Barb and Harland dig up some local roots to show us. They find “Indian tea leaves” which you dry and boil for an hour or more to make tea. They also find “Koos Koos”, a white root that you chew on to help your throat.

It is cold by supper time and gets colder all the time. I usually spend the whole year in shorts and sandals, even when it gets down to freezing in California. Tonight I have socks, sweat pants, and a polar vest on and I am beginning to get chilly. I want to stay up and watch the stars, but I am getting cold and am already tired, so Kathy and I retire at dusk. Bari, however, sees a satellite in the evening sky.

Day 8, Thursday, August 18

Four nights down and two to go, I think. This trip isn’t so much fun to me as it is a test for me, and I’m just waiting to finish it. The biking is interesting enough, and the food is either pretty good or great, but the camping just isn’t fun anymore.

I don’t like squatting over Porta-Potties and having to squirt the cleaner in afterwards. I don’t like not being able to adequately bathe for days on end. The hard ground, the rocks, and the other hard bits are leaving bruises on my hips and shoulders.

And last night was cold. Cold and wet. When we awake, there is frost on the tables. Every-

thing outside is soaked from condensed water. I try to dry out the tent a bit before I pack it up, but there just isn’t enough time.

Today’s ride is a short one to camp, only 8.5 miles and 1300 feet of climb. At Boundary Junction we set up camp and ride down a 4 mile trail to where we cross the original Lewis and Clark trail again. From there, we hike 4 miles, come back, go 4 miles back to camp again. Only Bari, Gus, Alan, and Dave ride their bikes back to camp. The rest of us are smart enough to go back in the Suburban. Bari hurts his knee in the return bike ride.

The hike is on a trail that was barely distinguishable. In fact Harlan is one of the few who knows where this part of the trail is anymore. Harlan’s knowledge of Lewis and Clark and the trail has earned him the title of Docent for the Smithsonian Institute. The Smithsonian regularly sends people out under his guidance to explore the trail.

We have to take a slightly different path to cross a creek, and then come back to the trail again. We’re going to go through Horsesteak Meadows on to the Jerusalem Artichoke campsite.

Hiking uses a different set of muscles than biking and, while it is a relief not to strain our biking muscles, it is a good amount of exercise for other muscles to go to the campsite. The last segment involves climbing down a long and very steep side of a mountain and crossing a stream into a clearing.

Harlan tells how when Lewis and Clark camped here, it was the site where he parted from the greater part of his Indian companions. The Nez Perce Indians lit up one of the huge pine trees like a roman candle in celebration before they left.

I feel that I will probably be the slow one going back, so I start back on my own early. That mountain side looks daunting. As soon

as I try to cross that last stream, my foot slides into it, soaking one foot. Actually, it feels nice as far as the cooling effect on the feet, but bad as far as the squishing it causes and the abrasion of the wet sock against the foot.

The others don't follow for quite a while, so I begin to examine the trail we took. At first, the trail is almost indistinguishable in the woods. In fact, I begin to worry that if the others end up taking a different trail back, I might be lost.

But after a while, by concentrating on little details, I can see where spider webs are broken or whole, and where leaves on the ground are a slightly different shade where they were recently overturned, and where recently broken twigs still have a trace of green on their edges. With a lifetime of practice, I could probably become a tracker.

After more than 30 minutes pass, the others catch up with me and we work our way back to where we left our bikes. Kathy, myself, Joan and the Marasco's decide to ride back in the Suburban rather than go up the 4 miles of climb to camp.

Today's chant, and tonight's dinner are "lasagna"—the best I've ever tasted.

Day 9, Friday, August 19

Around 5 A.M. or so, I have to get out of my sleeping bag, walk to a nearby tree, and, uhm, er, "commune with a Moose." Well, that's a polite way of saying I need to take a pee. In the distance, I hear Bari shouting "Booga, Booga... there's a bear out hear, I'm not kidding." I also hear one of the nearby campers say, "There's a bear out there." Kathy thinks they are making fun of me standing naked out in the woods.

But that isn't it. Bari walks out of his tent, near the center of the campsite, and comes practically face to face with a 3 year old, 175 pound black bear. It is about 10 feet away scratching



Portage over a log after Bari has trimmed the branches.
(l-r) Alan, Judy, Kathy, Bari

at a tree—the same tree where we shot the remains of some buns that we didn't eat last night. Close enough that Bari could have jumped and kicked the bear, if he were so foolish.

Earlier along the trip, we had discussed what to do if we saw different types of wildlife. For instance, brown bears are very aggressive. If you see one, and want to live to tell about it, you need to back away quietly without turning your back on the bear. Black bears, however, are more timid and can often be scared away by loud noises.

So, when Bari sees the bear, he thinks, "Now what do I do to scare my sister Patti? Oh yea, I go 'booga-booga!'" And that's what he shouted at the bear.

The bear begrudgingly leaves the camp, but shows up again later, near the Marasco's tent

on the other side of the trail from the center of the campsite. By then, Kathy and I have time to put on our clothes and come see what the excitement is all about.

The bear moves from behind the Marasco's tent towards Barb and Harlan's sleeping bags. They didn't use a tent and the bags are just out in the open. "Get him Harlan before he slobbers all over our sleeping bags," shouts Barb. Harlan's brother runs to get something and we think he is planning on shooting the bear. Actually, he only runs to get a camera.

Harlan takes off on his long legs but he gets there too late to prevent the bags from being slobbered on. As Harlan approaches, the bear hugs the nearest tree and just shinnies up. The bear's arms and legs are wrapped around the tree on one side and his belly is on the other. Every time he comes to a branch, his just ignores it and shimmies farther up, breaking off the branch and leaving the lower part of the tree like a polished pole.

Harlan stays down below and begins rolling up the sleeping bags. After a few minutes, the bear begins to come down. Harlan grabbes one of those big branches and faces the bear. Back up it shimmies. Harlan then goes back to work on the sleeping bags and the bear begins to come down again.

This goes on for quite a while. A few people go for their cameras. Me, I hear the bear breathing harder and harder and I keep trying to get everyone to just leave the area so the poor thing can climb down and take off. After maybe a half hour or so, Harlan takes the bags and such and leaves the area. The bear makes a quick descent and takes off into the woods.

This is the beginning of a really fun day, finally. We get to do some real mountain biking today. Harlan points out a trail to us that is off the trail we have been riding. He said he thinks it was possibly only suitable for hikers, but if we wanted to try it, he would wait for us

at the other end. I don't need to be asked twice.

The trail is "single track." This means it is narrow, where it exists at all, and only a single bike rider going one way on the trail can use it at a time. There is no room for passing a rider in either direction.

I take off like a shot. There are ferns and other plants that come up to about 3 or 4 feet on either side of the 6 inch or so wide trail. They overhang the trail, making it difficult to see where I am going or what lies ahead. Berms¹ lie everywhere.

During one downhill section, it is so steep that my bike nearly rolls over forwards. The trail itself has a lot of loose dirt and leaves on it, making stopping and even steering extremely difficult. Near the end of this long, steep, twisty descent, lies a few trees that had been sawn into sections to make a passage for the trail.

I come upon the logs doing more that 15 miles per hour, on this steep, winding, twisty trail and can't stop. My bike is heading right for the butt end of one of the 3 foot high logs. I finally hit a berm and go head over heels off my bike. As I hit the ground, I kept trying to stop myself with my arms, but I keep going right towards the log. I think I am going to die, smashed like a bug.

I stop inches from the log and then begin to just laugh, and laugh. Tears form and my sides hurt from the laughing. This is what mountain biking should be—this is fun!

There were a few short steep climbs for the rest of this trail, but it is more or less flat or downhill. Several times we come to places where we just can't ride anymore and we have

1. A branch, trunk, or other such obstruction which was usually mostly buried and crosses the trail. Often, berms are placed in a trail to control erosion.

to get off and carry our bikes.

At one point, Bari takes out his pocket knife and begins sawing the branches off a log that was probably downed during the winter snows. We can then carry our bikes over the log. At another point, we have to form a portage line and pass bikes from the back of the line to the front. Then we have to help each other climb over the maze of logs. Harlan keeps appearing from out of no where along the trail.

Eventually we come to paved street. Biking is a lot faster here, but the road has a lot of logging trucks on it, and they aren't expecting a bunch of mountain bikers to appear from around corners.

We stop at a beautiful little stream area, Salmon Trout Camp I think, to eat lunch. It has a log across the stream and we sit on the log and look at the water flowing. We're all covered with cuts and scrapes from the off-road biking.

We continue on paved roads to several other Lewis and Clark sites where Harlan gives us more history. I begin taking pictures of butterflies and flowers along the way.

Finally, we arrive at Lolo Creek for the night's campsite. The campsite we were going to use is taken by a bunch of rowdies that are drinking and firing off their guns. We just go across the road about as far away as we can get from them.

We climb down to the river and just sit down in it. It is cold and refreshing. That night, Heather's parents shows up and we hear them talk about Heather's plans for college, and the work and adventures she's had working for the Opdahls.

I didn't record the distance that we rode - it was probably less about 12 miles. We only climbed 780 feet today, though. For supper, we had Filet Mignon and baked potatoes.

Around the campfire later, we made s'mores.

Day 10, Saturday, August 20

Finally, the camping is going to end! Even though I had to listen to the drunken campers across the way fight all night, and the dogs making noise all night, I'm ready for a final ride. Harlan insists that there isn't much climbing today, but we can see the mountain behind him while he tells us this. We've learned how to reinterpret Harlan's climbing characterizations.

We're expecting quite a downhill ride today. We're going to drop most of 5,000 feet before we reach Kamiah. So, one final "Barb's Special" breakfast, pack up camp, and we're off.

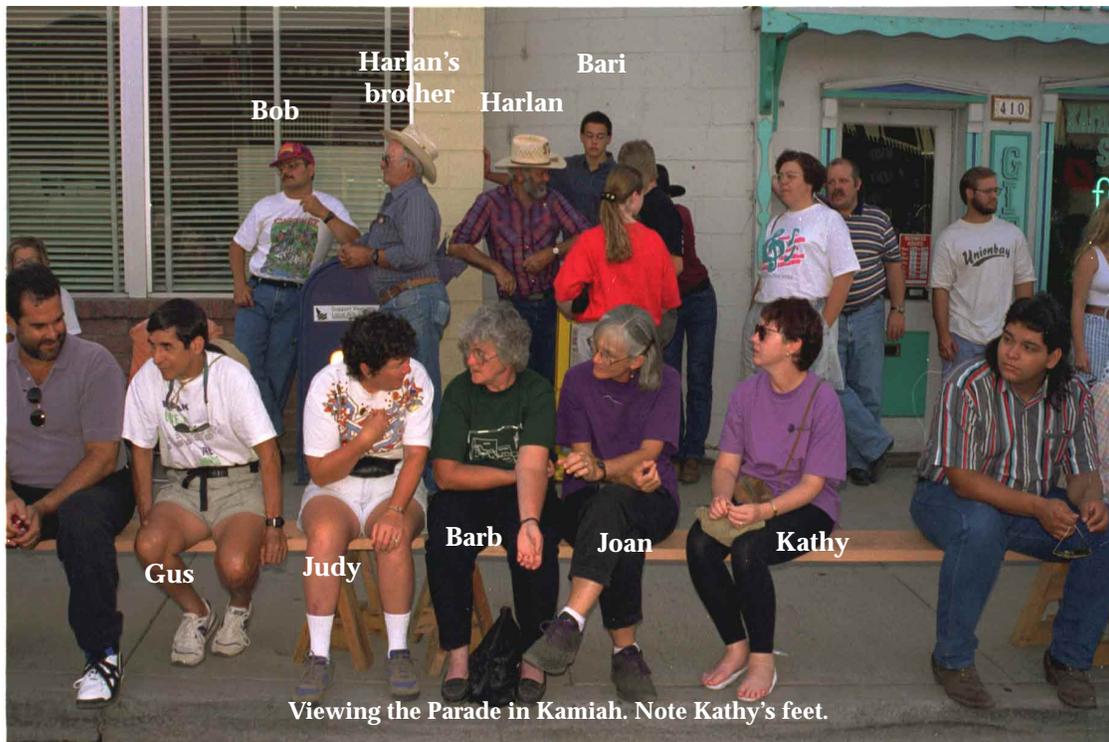
The initial few miles is steady, unrelenting climb. At least it's on pavement, so it isn't bone jarring like every other ride we've done so far. It is still hot, however. The climb just seems to go on and on. Well, in fact we have to climb 1250 feet up the side of a mountain before we begin our descent.

And what a descent. I maintain an average speed of well about 30 miles per hour on the descent. Even that slow speed was because I have my brakes on most of the time. I can smell the rubber burning in my brakes. I am worried that the heat will warp my tire rims at high speed.

And there are the ever present logging trucks all the way down. They are not very concerned about us, so we have to be very concerned about them.

At the bottom of a valley, we hit road construction. Naturally, construction never occurs on the down side of a hill where you can just pick up again easily. It has to be at the bottom of a hill where you have to really grunt to get going again.

Our tour guide, Dave, has a bee fly into the



Viewing the Parade in Kamiah. Note Kathy's feet.

opening of his shirt while he is in high speed descent. He has a half dozen welts from stings.

Eventually, we come to the Lolo river and cross over the bridge into downtown Kamiah. The hotel is just on the other side of the bridge and we can't wait to get into our rooms and take a real bath again.

We only have a short time to rest before we are off to the Indian feast at the high school. There is a big Pow Wow tonight, so there is quite a convocation. We sit in the gymnasium bleachers and watch as they set up the feast. The elders come in and are seated specially at an area near the head of all the tables set out on the floor.

Harlan and Barb go to talk with some of them, and we became their special guests at the feast. This doesn't earn us any favors other than the honor of being allowed to attend, and an announcement of our participation in the event.

When the time comes, we go down and sampled everyday sorts of foods, and a few special treats, like elk meat.

After the lunch, we go back to the motel and gather up clothes to take to the laundramat. Kathy tends to the cleaning while I wander down the two streets in the town. Well, there are a couple more than two streets, but principally there were just the two.

We all get together at a local pizza place before the parade and pig out on various pizzas. Then we all go over to the parade site. There are several vehicles decorated much like floats, a lot of horse riders, and dozens of dancers. The parade winds down to the Pow Wow site which is just across the road from our Motel.

After the parade, we go to the Pow Wow area and look around at the various booths selling Indian wares while we await the Pow Wow. I buy a couple of necklaces. Kathy doesn't join us because her ankles have swollen up to epic



The Kamiah Pow Wow

proportions. It is almost frightening how large her feet and ankles have become. She goes back to the motel to try to drain her feet but joins us later again at the Pow Wow.

As dusk approaches, the Pow Wow begins. The circle in the center is Holy ground. No one can commit any aggression in that area. The circle is ringed by bleachers. I am fortunate to sit next to a half Indian who talks to me for hours about what is happening, explaining it all.

After the dancers enter the circle, there is the singing of the National Anthem—but not the United States National Anthem—it is the Indian's song.

I am told about all the different themes of the costumes and dancers. Unfortunately, I've already forgotten most of the overwhelming details. I remember, though, the "grass dancers." These are mostly the younger dancers.

Their costumes are decorated to resemble the tall grass. When a tribe stopped to form a new camp, it was necessary to trample down the grass to form an area for the camp. People, mostly the children, would run around and stamp the grass down. The costumes and their dances celebrate this act.

Besides the hawk dancers, I don't remember the other dance groups. My companion tells me about all the details of the costumes—what each feather means, what the colors means, the different parts of the costumes, how they are made, and so on.

He also tells me how Indian tribes in the northern part of the United States usually dance in a clockwise direction around the circle, while those in the southern part usually dance in a counterclockwise direction. Sometimes an Indian will dance in a different direction if he wants to honor someone from a tribe that dances in that different direction.

One of the Indians I see has a really surly look about him and hardly moves in any dances. My companion said that it would have normally been in poor taste to act that way in a Pow Wow, but there are reasons it could be acceptable—spiritual reasons.

When the dances start, I can't see the pattern in the singing, the language, or the dances. With a little help from my companion, I begin to see quite a few patterns and subtleties in everything around me. I really become entranced by it all. Kathy leaves by 8 or 9 P.M. to sleep, but I want to stay up all night with the Indians and take this all in.

At one point, everyone at the Pow Wow is invited into the circle to dance. I am tempted, but stayed in the bleachers to watch. Quite a few others do go in.

I am enthralled by some of the dancers. The lead dancer is, as I recall, one of the hawk dancers. His movements, his control, his concentration in what he did is astonishing. This is no random swaying to the music like you see portrayed in movies. He is in a trance as he moves, and every move is precise, controlled, and wildly expressive.

When the women dancers come out, one of the groups do what was deceptively a simple dance. There are few movements in it, but it is all so amazingly precise. Everyone steps at precisely the right time, precisely the right direction and distance, and displays no emotion during the dance.

By 11 or 12 P.M., the week's riding and camping have caught up to me and I head back to the Motel to sleep.

Day 11, Sunday, August 21

We wake up early, have breakfast at a restaurant, and head out. If we had some way of getting our car and belongings from the motel in Missoula to Kamiah, we could have saved

ourselves a lot of time going home, since we are planning on coming back through Kamiah to try to save time on the trip back.

Back in Missoula, we drop off the rented bikes that the Marascos had picked up, and go to the Motel where we first arrived. In a short while, all our good-byes are said and we are off down the very road we just came up back through Kamiah and over the state line into Oregon.

We made it back to Walla Walla tonight and stay at some motel we picked out from the AAA travel guide we carry with us.

Day 12, Monday, August 22

We could have decided to take it easy on the way back and take an extra day, but we were vacationed out. So we drive as far as we can.

Day 13, Tuesday, August 23

We finally make it home. We saw a few places that we wanted to come back and explore again sometime. For instance, we want to get over to Mendicino some day, but it was too far off the main road for this vacation.

Epilogue

As so often happens in life, when you look back on something, you tend to remember the good parts and forget the less pleasant parts. As I write this story a year and a half later, I find that I have forgotten the bad aspects of grueling rides and sleeping on rocks in freezing weather. If it weren't for my journal I kept, this story would come across as a lot more fun.

Still, we've signed up for another week long guided bike trip this fall. This time we start in Tucson, Arizona in October.