

HikaNation Gathers for 35th Reunion

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October 13, 2015 – Today American Hiking Society celebrates its 39th anniversary. As we focus on the tasks still before us, we also want to take a moment and reflect on those who blazed the trail for us. AHS is pleased to share thoughts offered by Paula Guerrein, daughter of Marcie Guerrein, who was one of the original HikaNation hikers. Paula shares:

More than 30 people gathered at Estes, CO, in September for a 35th reunion of HikaNation, sharing pictures, memories and good times of the historic 1980-1981 cross-country hike of 4,236 miles. A core group of 40 hikers made it from California to Delaware, highlighting the need for more hiking trails. The hike was sponsored by American Hiking Society and promoted by Backpacker Magazine. HikaNation was the inspiration for the American Discovery Trail (ADT).

In attendance and giving an oral history of the hike were Jim Kern, founding President of the American Hiking Society (AHS), and state coordinators Gudy Gaskill (CO), Stan Adamson (KS) and Al Schneider (MO). Paul Pritchard, another founding AHS board member was part of the conversation via phone. Also in the audience was Larry Luxenberg, president of the Appalachian Trail Museum Society and current AHS board member.

Gaskill continued to follow her passion for trails and is recognized for her work building the Colorado Trail, while Adamson still stays involved with trails by editing and updating a book on climbing Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain Park. And Al Schneider is now a well-known Colorado wildflower expert. His [website](#) was just accepted by the Rocky Mountain Biological Lab and features over 5,000 wildflowers, with three new species found and named by Schneider.

Reunion co-chairs Janet Parsons-Hartowicz and Doug Marshall were thrilled with the turnout. Janet went on to say, “Jiamie Pyles celebrated her 36th birthday at our reunion and entertained our group playing guitar. Last time I saw her she was just a baby in a makeshift cart on the trail with her parents, Gomer and Rainbow.”



Jiamie & Gomer Pyles, Jim Kern, & Gudy Gaskill



Cake! Nobody told us there'd be cake!



“HikaNation was a game-changer for me,” said Tim Geoghegan. “I quit my job and sold my belongings to go on the hike. Monty Montgomery, the hike coordinator, told me the best thing I could do after the hike was to go to college. I did and I am thankful for his advice.” Of those surveyed at the 35th reunion, most all said that they developed more self-confidence and found that even with fantastic scenery, it was the people on the hike and along the way that were the most memorable. “The hospitality and friendliness of everyday people in towns we went through was amazing,” said Jeannie Harmon.

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More information on the reunion and HikaNation is available on the [HikaNation Facebook page](#), as well as the [HikaNation website](#). The HikaNation website manager is accepting articles, photos, and videos for uploading to the website. He can be reached by emailing hikanation@gmail.com. HikaNation would also like to hear from anyone who has participated in HikaNation anywhere along the cross-country route in 1980-81.



The 35th HikaNation Reunion Group

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