

1) Why did you sign up for Hikanation? How old were you? I found out about Bikecentennial after that trip was over. It was a celebration of the bicentennial of the United States that encouraged/assisted slightly over 4,000 people to ride their bicycles cross-country during the summer of 1976. I promised myself that I'd pay more attention and not miss any more great adventures. When HikaNation came along, I jumped on it. I was 31.

2) What was your favorite experience from the hike? The whole enchilada. I loved every minute of it. It was the process. It was the day to day life on the road of hiking and camping.

4) What was your favorite state and why? Nevada. The race across California was over, and we were settling into the groove, getting to know one another, and healing the over-use injuries (remember *Seaborg miles?*).

5) What was your least favorite part of the hike? The end of the hike. Yes, it was an accomplishment, but IT WAS OVER.

6) How did the hike change you? I think, fundamentally, I remained pretty much the same. If HikaNation had been my first trip and had nudged me into a life of journeys, I would reply differently. I was, already there, though, so HikaNation "just" encouraged me.

7) What do you tell people about your achievement now? HikaNation was one among many major trips. I rarely bring up any of them. My hobby now is advocating for including bicyclists in the transportation mix by designating space on the public streets for bike lanes. I regularly mention during 'public comment' that I don't own a car and get around mostly by bicycling, walking, and transit.

8) What would you have changed on the hike? This is a tough one. The hike was a success, so in the big picture, I'd change nothing. The reality is that I can't change anyone else. All I control is my own attitude and behaviors. If I had the trip to do over, I'd adjust my attitude. I'd be more accepting of the quirks of others and less of an

ideologue. If I had it to do again, I'd take more surveys. Almost everyone with whom I speak who had been on the trip enquires about the surveys. Alas, I seem to have misplaced my journal of HikaNation. I looked through the archives when Jim Kern was working on his book and I couldn't find anything relating to the trip. So it goes. It was a good experience and apparently is destined to live on only in memory, unsullied by accurate records of the actual experience.

9) Did you pursue other hiking/backpacking afterwards? Long journeys or short weekends? The summer after HikaNation, I hiked the Appalachian Trail from Virginia to Vermont. In 1986, I thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail. I called that trip *The Augmented Appalachian Adventure*. We (one other individual whom I met while working as an adventure-travel leader in Alaska) started at the Gulf of Florida near Tallahassee, hiked to Springer Mountain, white blazed the AT, and then hiked from Katahdin up to the Gulf of St Lawrence in Quebec. In 1992 after finishing a masters in (what else?) recreation, I thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail. I "double-flip-flopped" to stay right with the snows, so ideological purists might have a problem with calling it a through hike, but I did cover every inch of the trail. The bicycle has been my main mode of transport of late. I bicycled the perimeter of Australia in 1988-1989. Over the years, I cycled five times across the US collecting national parks (308 out of the 372 existent at the time). This trip included visiting and cycling in all of the 48 lower states. I bicycled the perimeter of the US, southern South America, and bicycled around the world in 1995-1996. This trip was pre-9-11. The whole fabric of international travel changed that fateful day. I was afraid to go alone on that trip, so advertised for partners in several bicycling-oriented publications. The trip, named WorldWander (with a tip of the hat to HikaNation), was unsupported; we didn't have Monty to hold us together. 19 showed up at the starting point and 12 of us went around the world (though the largest group was 6). Stats: a

little over 20,000 miles, 19 countries, \$18,000 including purchase of the bike.

12) The accomplishment of which I am most proud was nudging the City of Pittsburg over the past 15 years from 4 miles of bike-specific asphalt to 44 miles of bike lanes on arterial streets, collector streets, and paths along utility rights-of way. During that time I managed to get myself appointed to the Planning Commission, and several city-, county-, and regional- bicycle advisory boards and committees. The low-hanging fruit has been plucked. Now comes the expensive part: connecting the disparate existing segments of bicycle facilities into a continuous network.

13) What was the dumbest thing you did on the hike? It was 35 years ago, you understand. I must have done many dumb things on the hike. But, ya' know, I don't remember any of them. Ah, the ravages of age. I beg your indulgence. I do recall one incident that could be considered dumb. I think it was in Eastern Colorado, Gudy Gaskil country. The route for the day along with a map was posted on the side of the trailer. As I recall, Butch, Kelty Mike, Lyle, I and maybe one other looked over the recommended route and figured that we could shorten the mileage if we walked between two segments of road that didn't connect on the map. We were in Eastern Colorado in late summer, remember. We rationalized that the locals probably connected those two segments of paved road with their four-wheel-drive pickups. When we got there we found a gorge. A chasm. A deep notch in the earth with steep sides. After discussing this revolting turn of events, we figured that the work involved would be less if we pressed on rather than turning back and hooking back up with the "official" route. It was work, but we made it. Fortunately, there was no water hazard in the bottom.

14) What is your most vivid memory of the hike? A thunder storm high in the mountains of Colorado. Copious rain. So much so that water was flowing in the well-worn path (ditch) inches deep. Thunder and

lightning ... close-by strikes. Hail. Wind. The thought came to mind that the power of Mother Nature is awesome. (And she doesn't care about individuals who get themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time.)

16) What was your most embarrassing moment on the hike? About half way through the western states portion of the hike, I don't recall which state exactly, I was ranting about end-to-enders compared with joiners-along-the-way. Lyle quietly reminded me that he was in the latter group.... Bite my tongue! I consider Lyle a friend and don't want to do anything to alienate him. I hope you can forgive me, Lyle.

17) What was your nickname on the hike? On the hike I was *Bruce*, the name that my parents gave me at birth. When I returned to California after the hike, I went to work for a small, prefabricated housing parts manufacturer. It had been started by a guy and his brother-in-law. Both were named *Bruce*. I was the first non-family member to work there. One of the owner's sons worked there. His name was *Bruce*. The other owner's father worked there. He, too, was named *Bruce*. It was obvious that I could not be called *Bruce* on this job. One of the nicknames for Ohlson, Olson, Olsen, (whatever the spelling it is pronounced the same) is "Ole." [Oh´ Lee] Neither of my parents nor any of my siblings used it, but my grandfather did. I asked him if I could, too. He said that he'd be honored if I took the moniker. I've been Ole ever since.

Bruce "Ole" Ohlson
Bike East Bay
Delta Pedalers Bicycle Club
Contra Costa Countywide Bicycle Advisory Committee
CCTA Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Caltrans District 4 Bicycle Advisory Committee
Disclosure: Pittsburg Planning Commissioner
Pittsburg Planning Commission appointee to TRANSPLAN