

AL SCHNEIDER

1. Why did you sign up for the hike? How old were you?
I was 40 years old when I walked with HikaNation. Although I knew about the walk early on, I decided not to join for the whole trip but instead to be the route guide for Missouri and to have the Missouri State Parks Department, for which I worked as the Ozark Trail Designer, sponsor the walk. Funding for my Ozark Trail job coincidentally ended while HikaNation walked through Missouri (Reagan stopped funding of many good things!) so I decided to take a leave of absence and I continued walking with HikaNation to the Atlantic.
2. What is your favorite experience from the hike?
I can't look back to a favorite experience; I enjoyed all the aspects of the walk: the freedom, friendship, and continual living in the real world.
3. Did you have a moment of enlightenment or "ah-ha moment" on the hike and if so, what was it?
I had no "moment of enlightenment", just day after day of pleasure.
4. What was your favorite state and why?
Although I led HikaNation through Missouri, my favorite state was Virginia because we walked the Appalachian Trail, real trail, not roads. Delightful!
5. What was your least favorite part of the hike?
I really had no dislikes about aspects of the walk, but if I have to choose something, it would be taking a bath out of a cup!
6. How did the hike change you?
HikaNation added to my love of walking, love of nature, love of sharing, and love of doing the right thing. It changed me only in the sense that it added to and reinforced what I was already.
7. What do you tell people about your achievement now?
I briefly talk about HikaNation when asked about my hiking experiences.
8. What would you have changed about the hike?
I can't think of anything I would have changed about HikaNation. Well, maybe being sponsored by someone with a better drink than Postum.
9. Did you pursue other hiking/backpacking afterwards? Long journeys or short weekends?
I continued hiking all my life. I did not do any long distance trails, but for the next 9 years after HikaNation I ran my own hiking and backpacking business and then and since I have been on the trail for 2-4 days every week.
10. What did you learn about yourself that you are willing to share?
I learned that I was on the right path of life.
11. Did it make you a stronger person?

HikaNation reinforced what I was and made me stronger in who I was.

12. Are you proud of your accomplishment?

Proud? Sounds boastful. I am glad I participated.

13. What was the dumbest thing you did on the hike?

I am sure I did some dumb things, but they are in past memories, long gone.

14. What was your most vivid memory from the hike?

Trying to pound tent stakes into the 10 below frozen ground in Missouri -- and walking down Pennsylvania Avenue with all of our state flags waving.

15. What was your funniest moment on the hike?

The funniest moment was taking clothes out of the washing machine after washing my clothes with those of Walking Bob. My clothes came out dirtier than when they went in.

16. What was your most embarrassing moment on the hike?

17. What was your nickname on the hike?

I don't remember any embarrassing moments and I don't remember having a nickname. Maybe others remember these -- and that could prove to be embarrassing.