

35th reunion survey – Bob Rowe

Q: Why did you sign up for hike and how old were you?

44 years old. I was looking for a long walk. An exercise companion in Bisbee, AZ, told me about a California newspaper he saw advertising it.

Q: What is your favorite experience from the hike? All of them.

Q: Did you have an “ah-ha moment” on the hike and what was it?

I had more than one.

Q: What was your favorite state and why?

Every state while doing it.

Q: What was your least favorite part of the hike?

Being soaked to the skin by rain. Also, fearing attacks by locals on my tent. In KY, just east of the Mississippi, on two occasions, we were attacked after bedding down for the night.

Q: How did the hike change you?

I'm sure it did but it's not anything I can really remember now.

Q: What do you tell people about your achievement now?

That it was one of the greatest achievements of my life. I can't explain why. Maybe it's too personal.

Q: What would you have changed about the hike?

How do you change something that was already perfect?

Q: Did you pursue other hiking/backpacking afterwards? Long journeys or weekends?

The next year I did 1,200 miles with Marce on the AT. I did 25,000 miles in Europe, half of it on the pilgrim trail.

Q: What did you learn about yourself that you are willing to share?

Memory loss is a grim feature. I lose a lot of my experiences and being able to talk about them.

Q: Did it make you a stronger person?

I feel sure it did.

Q: Are you proud of your accomplishment?

Very proud. Though I don't throw it in peoples faces and say, “Look what I did.”

Q: What was the dumbest thing you did on the hike?

Hmmmmmm....

Q: What was your most vivid memory from the hike?

Seeing a tornado tear a town to smithereens a few miles away in eastern Kansas. Also seeing a manufactured home burn to the ground in 5 minutes (mid-US, not sure what state it was).

Q: What was your funniest moment on hike?

Seeing a walking companion mimic someone on the trip and making stupid expressions.

Q: What was your most embarrassing moment on the hike?

Accidentally catching a walking companion making fun of me!

Q: What was your nickname on the hike?

Monty called me "Hey you"; he liked it. "Walkin' Bob" was the other.

Q: Anything else you want to add?

I'm not the same person now as I would be without doing HikaNation. I also learned that I could slog across the country in winter and live to tell the tale.