

## **PAULA GUERREIN**

1. I was 22, in college, when I joined mom on the trail in Pindall, AR, Dec. 9-26, 1980.
2. **Favorite Monty memory:** When I got off the bus, in the rain, and he emptied my pack. "You don't need this, that, or...." I know it saved me a lot of blisters and backaches.
3. **Best time:** The party in Arkansas at Billy Jo Tatum's house where I ate hunter's pie...god knows what all rodents and road kill were in it (found out later it was squirrel, possum, quail, and pheasant). Slid down the fireman pole she had in her house, joined in the square dancing with local musicians playing including dulcimers, and the libations certainly were welcome. According to my notes, Billy Jo made sassafras tea spiked with bourbon!
4. **Worst time:** The long bus ride home with a hangover that was hot, long, nauseating, creepy and stopped in every small town. I did not drink wine for a long time after that ride.
5. **Favorite memory:** Hiking 18 miles on a logging road. I amazed myself that I could do that distance having never hiked much.
6. **I will never forget:** Getting up one night from the tent to pee and seeing the stars so bright and close, I thought I could grab them in my hands.
7. **An odd journal item:** A tour of Blanchard Caves, where I learned that bat guano sells for a lot of money, (\$5-7/lb.), used as fertilizer.
8. **Second Monty memory:** Tim Ernst has his mother fix an absolutely delicious 20lb chocolate and vanilla cake with trail and boots going across... and celebrating Monty's bday with a roast, including skits and songs about him. I wasn't in on a lot of the jokes but what I did pick up was very funny.
9. **Third Monty note:** He got involved in Hikanation because he failed to complete his hike on the Pacific Crest Trail. "I came home from that failure and read about HikaNation and asked to be involved in the managerial aspect of the hike."
10. **My hike with Bruce Dolinec per journal:** He was into bike bitches, snortin' and had dreams of making an existence on summer pot crops. "I like radical women." Too bad he isn't here, he'd be quite the entrepreneur in Colorado! A man ahead of his time....
11. **Stumbled onto John Stout:** making a fire in a creek bed, who shouted, "It's for survival!" My notes say it was 6 degrees the night before, and my orange had

frozen. After half an hour went by with no one else walking by, we backtracked to find out we were five miles off track.

12. **Kiss and tell:** It was border-crossing day and notes say... “they actually pull out a red carpet and serve wine. Tim, the state coordinator, kissed all the girls and gave them a rose.”
13. **Did it change me:** Yes, I’m a hiker, mostly a day hiker. Would like to do more AT section hiking and Camino de Santiago Trail as thru-hiker. Who knows, maybe more! We did a lot of hiking with mom after HikaNation with several of you.
14. **Coincidences:** Though I was only a short timer on the trail, I ran into a few of you on trails around the country. **Al Schneider**... in the middle of a mosquito-laden, swampy trail that no one goes on in the middle of the Everglades! He was coming one way, I was going the other and I recognized him right away! **John Cannon**...My husband and I were sitting in a pickup truck at a visitor center parking lot in AK, and he notices an Oklahoma State ball cap walk by. It reminded us of the only person we knew from OK and sure enough, John Cannon walks by after that. Ran into **Pierre** one time on a trail, I think it was the AT.
15. **Thoughts on hike are many:** I have memories also shared by mom to me; she was very wise and my best friend. “Everyone should have one adventure in life, “ she wrote. This was her big one and it was a game changer.
16. **What I learned from mom’s experience:** You are never too old to change your life.
17. **What I’m thankful for:** All of you, her second family, who accepted her and helped her find a new dream----a new chapter in her life that included hiking and the outdoors.
18. **Do you know how special you are?** I am checking with Guinness World Book of records to see if this was the longest, largest group hike in America. On a whim, I also called the National Explorers Club in NYC to find out if this adventure qualifies for recognition from the Explorers Society, which has a lot of big names you would recognize.... She said the expedition would have to be for research and discovery. Hmmmm. Regardless, you each have bragging rights for being on this hike.
19. **The reason for it all:** Stay tuned for the panel discussion on Saturday with Jim Kern and friends! Not to be missed!

**A final thought from Marce: “It was one long handshake across America.”**