

Gena Karpf , Castle Hill, Australia

"We recived our ALDHA-West membership notification the other day . . thanks. In 1996 I walked 1700 miles of PCT. Kris (Spike) walked Walker Pass to Echo Lake (1996) and from Echo Lake to Belden in August 1998. In May 1999 he will hike from the Mexican Border to Walker Pass. Together we are currently walking the Great North Walk from Sydney to Newcastle. It's entire length is a mere 250km and we are doing it as a series of day hikes. In August, 1998 as a part of our honeymoon, we hiked the Chilkoot Trail to Lake Bennett, Yukon Territory. Who would have known when I started hiking from Mexico in May of 1996, that I would meet one Kris Spike just north of Walker Pass at Joshua Tree Spring and that we would end up marrying each other." - Feb 3, 1999 -

Ed note: I met Kris near Tyndal Creek, spent the night together and hiked over Forester Pass together, off he goes at a very strong pace; then met Gena at Glenn Pass and leap-frogged to Red's Meadow in 1996. More from them in a forthcoming issue.

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'Willis Whoa' Jarvis -

Dec 1, 1998 - "As a new ALDHA-West member, I would like to be in touch others thinking of the CDT in '99. I believe in ultra-lite packs and my footwear is homemade rubber tire huaraches sandals, good if not too much snow."

Feb 2, 1999 - "After five years pondering lessons learned from my PCT thru-hike in 1994, and living since then as a homeless-by-choice wilderness wanderer, I am ready for another long hike, a thru-CDT northbound '99. This time around I would like to slow down in order to see more. My PCT pace of 22 mpd over four and one half months was much too fast. Sadly the only memories that remain are of the rest days, not the blur of the trail: the luxury of reading a book, the pleasure of watching a movie, the extravagance of eating in a restaurant. On the first thru-PCT hike I had already learned from a '93 Mexico-Oregon PCT hike the all-important Jardine lesson of travelling light, so that I did not have to fight my body which was lean and hard from the very start. Maybe it was too easy.

The challenge before me this time is to practice self-restraint. A typical 15 mile day:

- Wake up before dawn on an empty stomach,
- Practice sitting meditation before first light,
- Pack up quickly,
- Hit the trail before sunrise,
- Stop at 8:00 AM for breakfast,
- Stop again at noon for the day's main meal and the last cooked meal,
- Stay in camp (here is the hard part) until about four, resting, mending, cleaning, writing, observing nature, external and internal,
- Late afternoon until sunset, walk a few more pleasant hours,
- Find a small level spot to spend the night without tent or fire, beside my 20 lb. pack.

In following this kind of regimen, my goal is to raise my level of awareness more than to reach any particular destination. To remind myself to slow down, I've chosen the trail name of "Willis Whoa".

Williswhoa@yahoo.com, - January, 1999

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Steve Queen, Tigard, OR

"Plans for this year are quite modest. I'll be taking 4 or 5 days to hike Clackamas Ranger Station near Timothy Lake to the Columbia River. There are still sections that I haven't laid eyes on since I became Mount Hood Area coordinator for the PCTA in 1993. In fact (and I truly hate to admit this), I have never hiked Benson Plateau. On my 1981 PCT trip, I chose to descend to the gorge via Eagle Creek and circumstances have never brought me to this spot. This hike will fix all that."

- Feb., 1999 -

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Marmot - ALDHA-West Board, Vancouver, BC



"Long distance hiking gives me the present of artificial fences around what I want to do. Those fences keep away people who make demands from me. Those people are sometimes real (bosses, family, friends) and sometimes in my own head (all those 'should' voices that I carry around). Who could possibly say that I shouldn't walk from Mexico to Canada? Its' so amazing and huge an undertaking that

it pushes me over any hurdle I might put in my own way. I find, living in the city, that my hiking gets pushed aside for things I should do. The way I get around that is by getting a job as a guide. I take out beginner groups two times a week.

I also give slide shows and workshops on hiking and long distance hiking. I have three of those in March. The most important feeling I want to convey in those public talks is that most people can do the hikes. Its not about taking myself to the limit or challenging nature or anything that I've even heard others say about doing endurance sports. Its just about staying out there, where I feel the best for as long as I can.

The list of the type of people who are active in this sport from children to elders, blind people, people missing limbs is an important part of my talks. I believe that should be and has clearly been an important part of what ALDHA-West does. We are a helping hand to get people out on the trails, help to take away those fears that people don't need to carry; and arm the new hikers with information so that they don't wear themselves out dragging anchors of useless equipment and preconceptions. I feel we fill a 'knock down the walls' role. That's what my first encounter with a couple of hitchhikers in Yosemite did for me, knocked down the wall of what I imagine people could do. It took me another two years (and three days at an ALDHA-West Gathering) to stand on Springer Mountain heading for Mount Katahdin. I will never stop hiking the long trails. Of course I also can't wait for the chance every year to see people that I have met on trails. Its lovely to be around others who have experienced being out on the trail for months. It only takes one maildrop and I'm "living on the trail". That's why I'm much more drawn to long distance hiking rather than backpacking. Continuously moving forward with everything on my back makes me free. I hate returning to some trailhead. Its the only place