

# HikaNation

## A Transcontinental Trek for Trails

April 12, 1980 to May 27, 1981

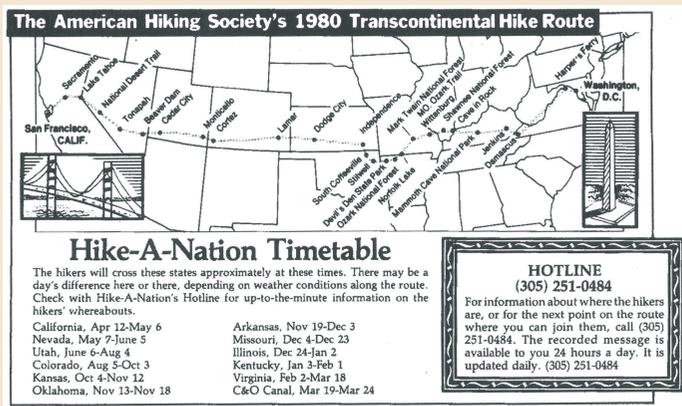
California • Nevada • Utah • Colorado

Kansas • Oklahoma • Arkansas

Missouri • Illinois • Kentucky • Virginia

West Virginia • Washington, D.C. • Maryland

Delaware



A TIMETABLE FOR THE HIKE PUBLISHED IN BACKPACKER MAGAZINE. Courtesy of Paula Guerrein.

### Organizing a 4,000-mile, year-long, cross-country backpack trip

required leadership from "the best of the best" within the nation's hiking community. Jim Kern, founder of the Florida Trail; William Kemsley, Jr., founder of *Backpacker* magazine; Paul Pritchard, the first full-time executive director of the Appalachian Trail Conference, and Nobel Laureate Dr. Glenn Seaborg—all of the American Hiking Society (AHS)—stepped up to lead what was soon named "HikaNation."



HIKANATION STATIONERY DRAWING CREATED BY HIKER RYAN BOZIS.

**Sponsoring the event**, in addition to AHS and *Backpacker*, were the U.S. Department of the Interior and Postum™, a healthy coffee replacement. HikaNation focused national attention on the growing demand for government involvement at all levels to provide more and better trails. Eighty-seven people responded to *Backpacker* announcements and paid \$30 each to participate in HikaNation, the only requirement being to provide your own gear and food.

### Recruiting top-notch hiking talent to serve as state guides

fell to HikaNation director Jim Kern. Among those who signed on were "mother" of the Colorado Trail Gudy Gaskill, Utah backcountry expert Al Frost, and Appalachian Trail experts Ed Garvey and Reese Lukei, Jr. Renowned California naturalist John Olmsted joined at various locations to film the hikers.

**Coordinating vital services for HikaNation**, as well as daily hiking routes and distances, possible campsites, arrivals and events in towns was on-site volunteer "Monty" Montgomery, a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel. His "sag wagon" Airstream and van was a welcome sight for weary hikers bearing their 1980s external frame backpacks for up to 20 miles per day.



ON-SITE HIKANATION COORDINATOR "MONTY" MONTGOMERY'S AIRSTREAM VAN. Courtesy of Jim Kern, *Trail Reflections*.

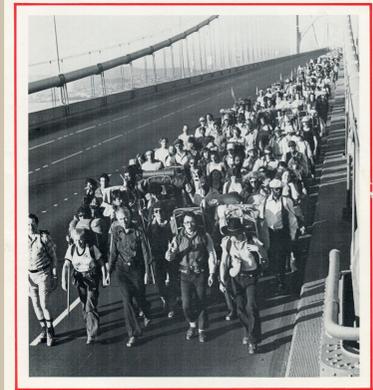


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: EDNA SCHOENFELD, JEANNIE HARMON (CALIFORNIA PATHFINDER), GLENN SEABORG (CALIFORNIA COORDINATOR), AND KURT BURKE (FAR RIGHT). Photo by Rex Halfpenny. Courtesy of Mike Reynolds.

### Walking across the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge

, the first and only traffic closure for pedestrians of that bridge, offered a memorable experience for the 37 hikers who would eventually complete the entire trek. An estimated 13,000 joined HikaNation at some point for a day, week, a month or longer as they crossed the mountains, deserts, forests, farmlands, trails and towns of America. The historical significance of hiking a 525-mile section of the Appalachian Trail and a portion of the C&O Canal was not lost on the hikers as they closed in on Washington, D.C.

### HIKANATION 1980



HIKANATION PRESS KIT COVER. Courtesy of American Hiking Society.



SWAG ON DISPLAY IN D.C., HIKERS OFTEN DECORATED THEIR BACKPACKS. Courtesy of Marce Guerrein.

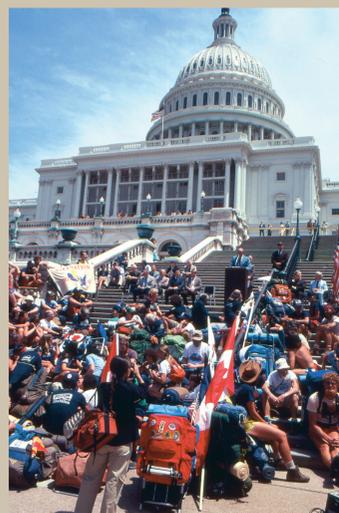


JUST BEFORE CROSSING THE ICY MISSISSIPPI AT WITTENBERG FERRY, MISSOURI. Courtesy of Tim Ernst.



**Carrying the HikaNation banner and individual state flags**, hikers circled the Washington Monument and then approached the Capitol steps to be greeted by members of the U.S. Congress. Speeches were accompanied by the U.S. Coast Guard band and warm embraces shared before the hikers continued eastward toward an appropriate ending of their epic journey.

**Fourteen months since leaving the west coast**, HikaNation ended as it began, with boots dipped in an ocean—this time the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware. The success of HikaNation continues to be reflected in the growth of America's trail system, particularly the development of the American Discovery Trail, and in advancing the role of the American Hiking Society as the nation's advocate for trails.



HIKERS SITTING ON THE CAPITOL STEPS AS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS PRESENT SPEECHES. THE COAST GUARD BAND ALSO PERFORMED. Courtesy of Reese Lukei, Jr.



THRU-HIKER SUSAN "BUTCH" HENLEY AT CAPE HENLOPEN, DE, LATER HIRED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BOTH AHS AND THE ADT. Photo courtesy of Rex Halfpenny.