

## Paul Caccamo's Postcard

August 1: There have been many milestones on this long journey; 100 miles way back in April, 500 miles in the Mojave Desert, and 1000 miles in the deep canyons of northern Yosemite were all big ones. Perhaps the biggest so far came last week however: 1332.5 miles, the halfway point of the Pacific Crest Trail. A rather unassuming spot, but we celebrated later that night at a ridgeline campsite in Lassen National Park. A fellow by the name of Allegheny from northern Virginia happened to have a stash of cigars with him of which we availed ourselves to mark the occasion. It took Figaro and I only three months to make it this far, and it does not take a mathematician to realize we will have to pick up our pace if we are to make the Canadian border by October 1.

Accordingly, we have been hiking longer miles and taking fewer days off. 25 miles a day is now our goal, and it is surprisingly easy when one considers that three short months ago a 15-mile day was the norm. But time is not necessarily on our side. The days are getting noticeably shorter and the sun no longer automatically wakes us before 5:30 am. Yes, we have many miles to go (1,163 to be exact) but today is a rest day in the sprawling metropolis of Mt. Shasta City. As usual the day off has been eaten up by things like laundry, shopping for food, eating (a lot), and finding internet access. We are hoping to catch the Simpsons movie tonight, but we also have a bunch of microbrews to drink. What is a poor thru-hiker to do?

It is certainly too early to get all introspective about what this journey has meant to me, but I can say with complete certainty that the best thing about it has not been the incredible scenery, it has not been the constant diet of fresh air and water and sunshine, it has not been the physical shape

that such a journey forces one's body into, nor has it been the ability to eat any and all junk food with no consequences whatsoever. No, it has clearly been the people I have met along the way. There is a camaraderie that comes with being crazy enough to think hiking 2650 miles is a good idea.

I have to leave this library computer, but here's a quick dose of reality: I don't enjoy hiking all the time. Very often I'm just looking forward to the next break when I can hang out with the people I'm with, drinking spring water straight out of a mountainside. If I didn't think this was worth the effort I'd be home tomorrow, so as long as you keep hearing from me, it means the good outweighs the bad by a longshot.

1506 miles in the bank, wish me luck, gotta go now!

Paul C



Paul Caccamo



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