

Kornfeld Gets Lessons, Blessings On Cross-Country Journey

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Amos Kornfeld's solo cross-county bike trip in the summer of 2017 included many amazing sights along the way, including the scenery at this stop in Cameron Pass, Colo. (Provided)

Amos Kornfeld, who serves as the special education coordinator at The Sharon Academy, has recently published a new book, "Biking, Lessons, Blessings, and Beer: Across the U.S. in 14 Gears."

It tells the story of a solo cross-country bike trip he took in the summer of 2017, which began at the driveway of his home in Norwich on June 8 and concluded in Scotia, Calif. on August 4.

The book is illustrated with color photos of "lots of the characters I met and landscapes I saw," Kornfeld noted, explaining that many of the people he stayed with were through an organization called Warm Showers—"a cross between couch-surfing and Air B&B, except it's free!

“Out of the 45 days of cycling 4,500 miles, I had no problems with a single unkind person,” Kornfeld said. “It gave me a lot of faith in humanity, especially going through areas of the country where I had never been. In the mornings, I’d stop at convenience stores and enjoyed having coffee with the locals.”

The book is full of vignettes from the trip about his many encounters— some of them quite surprising.

“One time in Idaho, I stopped for lunch and met the cousin of a person that I know in Tunbridge,” he recalled. “I stayed with people from their 20s to their 40s, who offered me everything from a warm showers or a meal, to a place to stay or a beer.”

He recently returned the favor by hosting a young couple from Argentina who were biking around New England.

Along the way, Kornfeld took a day off to visit cousins in Ohio and Iowa City, visited a lot of libraries, and used his smartphone to keep in touch with his wife, Jeannie, and post on Facebook.

“I lost my Visa card, and while I was waiting in Colorado for a replacement, I stayed with a person who went to Dartmouth and loaned me \$50 without me asking him to.”

One stop on his trip was in Missoula, Mont., where his son, Jacob, was farming at the time, and his daughter, Hannah, was there to meet him at the end of his trip in Scotia, Calif.

“It was so emotional for me when I put my feet in the Pacific for the first time in Oregon,” he remembered. “When I was a kid, I had a neighbor who had done something like this trip, and I thought it was so amazing, but I never dreamed I would do it, too.

“I never intended to write a book about it, but my brother loved all my stories about the experiences I had and said, ‘people need something inspiring like that to read.’”

To order a copy of Kornfeld’s book, email him at amoskornfeld@gmail.com.

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