

## Bike trek

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honor of a mother fighting cancer, and a man from Missouri. Cyclists are common in Grangeville, which is on the Adventure Cycling Association's popular TransAmerica route. Everyone orders beer and tacos and trades road stories as the afternoon slips into evening. Around 5 p.m. a few dozen people arrive, more or less en masse. They're all smoke jumpers (firefighters who parachute into wildfires) or the friends and family of smoke jumpers, here to celebrate someone's birthday. The cyclists and the soccer fan join the party, drinking and laughing until nearly 10 p.m.

### TURNING POINT

"I wasn't totally committed. I wasn't all-in until we got to Grangeville," Frasier says.

But the impromptu gathering of fellow adventurers energized and encouraged her — so much so that 740 miles later, after Schuck's wreck and diagnosis of a fractured hip, Frasier decided to go on alone.

She had nothing to prove. She'd biked in all 50 states and already completed five cross-the-whole-country bike trips. Three of those cross-country rides were "self-contained," meaning she schlepped her luggage on her back rack and racks attached to her front wheel, rather than relying on a vehicle to ferry it from town to town. She'd slept in campgrounds, city parks and on grassy patches beside parking lots. She'd biked on paved trails, gravel trails and the shoulders of highways and interstates.

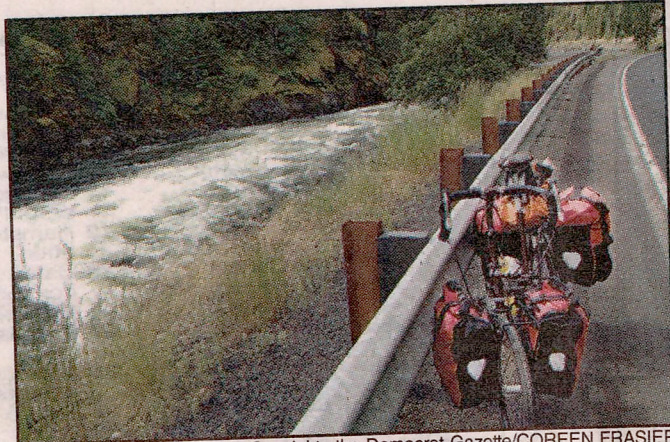
This trip, she was eager to reach the 240-mile Katy Trail in Missouri, so she could spend a week biking with her daughter, who lives in the area.

Schuck assured Frasier she would have done the same thing had their positions been reversed. And Schuck knew that Frasier understood what she was going through. In 1995, six weeks into a cross-country bike trip, Frasier came down with a fever in northwestern Nebraska. The local hospital diagnosed her with Crohn's disease and kept her for a week. A few months later, back home in Little Rock, she underwent a "routine" Crohn's surgery.

When she woke from anesthesia, her doctor told her to put her affairs in order. Frasier didn't have Crohn's. She had stage III colon cancer.

### BONUS YEARS

"I call these the bonus years, because I don't think I was really supposed to get through



Loaded with 44 pounds of gear in waterproof panniers, Coreen Frasier's Bike Friday sits beside a river during her trip.

that," Frasier says.

When she was diagnosed with cancer, she was 51. She had run a dozen marathons and was biking roughly 6,000 miles a year.

She underwent a month of radiation and a year of chemotherapy, relying on her 80-year-old parents, who briefly moved to Little Rock from Nebraska to help her through the worst.

During her treatment, at times Frasier was still running and biking. She even did RAGBRAI (The Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa), a week-long trek that she has made 25 times now. (She met Schuck, not in Arkansas, but at RAGBRAI.)

Frasier has outlived many friends, and others don't exercise the way they used to. Before this summer's trip, she visited a friend who lives in a nursing home due to mobility issues. Like Frasier, this woman is in her early 70s.

Frasier's first solo trip wasn't planned as such.

"On my 50th birthday," she says, "I was going to ride down to my daughter's in San Antonio, and then ride from San Antonio to Omaha" to see her parents.

She had recruited two RAGBRAI buddies to accompany her, a 54-year-old woman from Iowa and a 69-year-old man from Ohio. They were slated to leave in early summer, but that winter, both of her friends died — one of cancer, the other of a heart condition.

Frasier went anyway. At first, she overestimated her stamina, pedaling from Little Rock to Arkadelphia (75 miles) the first day and from Arkadelphia to Texarkana (80 miles) the next, in near triple-digit temperatures.

When she reached San Antonio eight days in, her daughter had a banner across the door of her apartment and a gold bicycle pendant on a chain to welcome her.

"I've worn it around my neck ever since," Frasier says, fingering the necklace 20 years

later. "It brings good luck, I think."

### LOGISTICS

Even as a child, Frasier was athletic. She got her first bicycle at 6 — a rudimentary thing with a rubber belt instead of a chain, so that if she pumped standing up, the belt fell off and the pedals locked.

When she was in school, there were no team sports for girls. (This was before the passage of Title IX in 1972.) But in college, she was sports chairman for her sorority and played in the Women's Recreational Association. A year in, she changed her major from nursing to physical education.

Her father was wary. "When you get to a certain age, you're not going to be able to teach PE anymore," he warned her. Frasier taught in Nebraska schools and later in Little Rock at Parkway High School, Williams Magnet Elementary School and Rockefeller Early Childhood Magnet Elementary School. She retired at 61, but only because she wanted time for her massive bike tours and advocacy work.

Promoting Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas (BACA), Metroplan, the Arkansas Bicycle Club and the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America program have become her full-time volunteer job; and bike tours have taken her to England, France and Germany.

On this summer's trip, she rode a 28-pound fold-up Bike Friday. She carried 44 pounds of gear, which included a tent, sleeping bag, two changes of clothes, rain protection, a multitool, an extra tire, two inner tubes, snacks and a stove so small it fits in her palm.

She wore a roughly 2-inch mirror affixed to the stem of her sunglasses, so that in her peripheral vision, she could see cars coming from behind. But there was no way to prepare for everything that might happen.

### MID-AUGUST NEAR MOUNT STORM, W.VA.

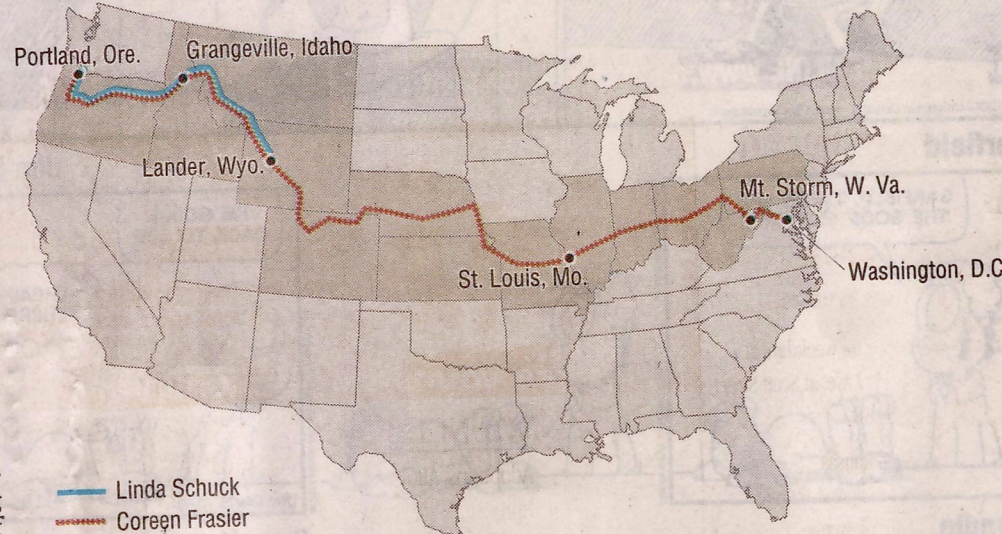
It has been raining off and on all day, and the windy Appalachian road is deserted. This is fine by Frasier, because earlier, every passing car sprayed her with oily water. She's drenched, exhausted, hungry and, when she spots the bright yellow sign, elated. "M-O-T-E-L" it practically shouts.

When she reaches the motel, a man comes out of a house next door and tells her the place has been shuttered for years. She wants to pitch her tent in the yard, but her questions and presence seem to annoy him.

"There's a motel down the road," he tells her. "It's just 12

## Coreen Frasier's Summer Trek

On June 2, Coreen Frasier and Linda Schuck set out from Portland, Ore., intending to bicycle across the nation. Schuck, 67, dropped out after breaking her hip in Lander, Wyo. Frasier, 71, continued on her own, reaching Washington, D.C., on Aug. 22.



SOURCE: Adventure Cycling Association route map



Coreen Frasier pedaled across the United States this summer on the bicycle contained in this case.

It's mostly downhill."

Twelve miles translates into another hour and a half in a downpour, on a day when she'd already pedaled 70 miles and scaled three mountains. Sighing, she mounts her bike and heads out. She's only a few minutes away when thunder booms and lightning begins to slash the sky with alarming frequency.

Forty-five minutes later, she spots a convenience store.

"Coffee! Warmth!" she thinks, abandoning her bike against the side of the building, exhausted, hungry and, when she spots the bright yellow sign, elated. "M-O-T-E-L" it practically shouts.

When she reaches the motel, a man comes out of a house next door and tells her the place has been shuttered for years. She wants to pitch her tent in the yard, but her questions and presence seem to annoy him.

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ing the area around the store. It's entirely concrete.

Defeated, she retreats to the fluorescent glow, curls in to a wooden chair and nurses her coffee. The store's grill is closed, so dinner will be cold cereal. It's 7:30 p.m. and dark, and she has nowhere to stay.

One of the employees finally takes pity on her.

"I get off at 9. If you want to hang out, I'll take you to a hotel," the woman offers.

### HIGHLIGHTS REEL

"West Virginia was the pits," Frasier says, a month after her return to Little Rock. (She arrived in the nation's capital on Aug. 22 and flew home from there.)

It wasn't just the unfriendly former motel owner. The hills weren't hills: They were walls. The shoulders were riddled with chunky rocks, tossed in the road so vehicles could gain traction in the snow but never swept away. The interstates

were full of "road-snakes," those thin, silver wires that become exposed when big-rigs throw a tire, and they can flatten a bike tire in minutes. (Frasier went through five tires on this trip.)

And West Virginia's Route 7 was the worst road she encountered. It had such a narrow shoulder that she spent miles sprinting from driveway to driveway, in 60-second breaks between traffic. (She figured that somewhere, unseen, there was a traffic light regulating her brief respites.)

But the bad times were offset by the kindness of strangers.

In one of the few West Virginia bright spots, a car pulled onto the shoulder, and a young woman bounded out, clutching a chocolate bar, an apple and a soda. "Which do you want?" she asked Frasier, enthusiastically.

As Frasier sipped the soda, the woman explained that she was on her way home (New Jersey) and had biked cross-country just last summer.

Another time, a trucker slowed beside Frasier and offered her \$20, mistaking her for a vagrant. Locals bought her dinner and drinks, and she was interviewed by half a dozen newspaper reporters, all of them wanting to know if she gets bored biking long stretches.

She says her mind stays busy.

"I found myself rehearsing how things were going to be when I got to the next town... Was I going to go to the grocery store, to the restaurant? 'Oh, I hope they have roast beef sandwiches' ... you know, just stuff," she says. "And memories. Really, really good memories. Because I've done a lot of really wonderful things in my life."

She knows her age surprises people. "I'm sure it's weird from the outside, to see an older lady doing this ... but it doesn't seem weird to me. It's just my life."

She's not really sure why she continues to make extreme pilgrimages by bike. Maybe it has to do with that Robert Hastings essay she read in 1991. Titled "The Station," it encourages readers to "climb more mountains, eat more ice cream" — advice she has taken literally on her bike tours.

Or maybe, it's just "because I can," Frasier says and grins.

"We wish we didn't have to charge anything," Barnes says. "So really just barely covers what it cost to print it, but that's the point. It's supposed to be an Arkansas resource. It's supposed to be accessible by anyone and everyone."

But why does anybody need a book when cellphones can download a tree-ID app? Fox says, "There are changing needs, and paper and books are still a viable medium. Some of us, especially my age, still need books."

"If you've got third- and fourth-graders, they can understand this book, and it's something that teachers can take into the classroom when they don't have iPads and other things."

"I would add that the electronic media and tools are not invalid, they're just another tool. And from another standpoint, paper and books are not invalid, they're one of the tools we use."

Barnes says, "This will work when Wi-Fi doesn't work in the middle of the woods."

"You don't have to connect to a satellite for it," Fox adds. Trees of Arkansas can be ordered online at forestryarkansas.gov or bought at the commission's offices around the state.

## Master Class

Adding strength multiplies the body's energy use and helps subtract fat.

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# ACTIVESTYLE

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ARKANSAS ONLINE [www.arkansasonline.com](http://www.arkansasonline.com)

## Because she can



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/JOHN SYKES JR.

For her sixth bicycling trip across the United States, Coreen Frasier set out from Portland, Ore., with cycling buddy Linda Schuck on June 2. But after disaster struck in Wyoming, Frasier forged on alone.

## Misfortune, rain, rudeness can't stop bicyclist, 71, on cross-country trek

### CHERE FRASIER

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE  
It's roughly 4:30 p.m. on a mid-July day and bicyclists Coreen Frasier, 71, of Little Rock, and Linda Schuck, 67, of Arkadelphia, are muscling their way through the hills on the Wind River Indian reservation near Lander, Wyo.

Suddenly Frasier sees Schuck's bike flop to one side, spilling her friend in the path of oncoming traffic, had there been any. But Schuck immediately pops to her feet.

"Oh good, she's not hurt," Frasier thinks. Then, "but why isn't she getting out of the road?"

### ABOUT A WEEK EARLIER

It's 2:30 p.m. and lunch is long overdue. Frasier and Schuck have already pedaled 7½ hours today. They lock their bikes next to a bar advertising all-you-can-eat tacos and head inside.

A man at the bar is watching the World Cup. He notices their bikes and asks where they're heading. They tell him they're biking to the District of Columbia. They left Portland, Ore., June 2.

"There's supposed to be a campground in Grangeville, [Idaho]. Do you know where it is?" Frasier asks.

He doesn't, but why don't they just stay with him? He

has plenty of room.

Frasier and Schuck exchange glances, and then Frasier turns to the waitress. "Do you know him? Is he safe?"

It wouldn't be the first time Frasier has stayed with strangers. When they learn the house is within walking distance, the women order beer — something they don't do when they plan to get back on bikes.

A bit later, more cross-country cyclists come in — a young couple from Oregon, riding a tandem bike, with their heads shaved in



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/JOHN SYKES JR.

A near daily habit of leisurely social rides with friends prepared Coreen Frasier to pedal across the country. Janice Peters (left), Ted Goodloe, Frasier and Charlie Jacob prepare Oct. 7 to pedal the Arkansas River Trail.

See **BIKE TREK** on Page 6E



Adriane Barnes looks Oct. 7 at the newly released updated edition of *Trees of Arkansas*, a publication of the Arkansas Forestry Commission. With 15,000 copies printed at UALR at a cost of \$40,000, the book is available to the public for \$5 a copy.

## Trees identified in color paperback

### STORY AND PHOTOS

BY CELIA STOREY  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE  
*Trees of Arkansas* just burst into color.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission this week is releasing an eighth edition of its 64-year-old identification guide, *Trees of Arkansas*, and for the first time, the paperback book has color photos.

It also has been reorganized and updated.

"The trees haven't changed, but the way we talk about them has," says Adriane Barnes, the commission's public information officer.

"What we know about them has changed," adds State Forester Joe Fox.

The new book, available to the public for \$5 a copy, includes:

- Descriptions of 116 of the state's estimated 160 species, including three that were not mentioned in the seventh edition in 2011, and all alphabetically grouped under the common names for botanical families;

- 271 color photos of leaves, buds or bark and 124 black-and-white leaf drawings.

- Color-coded chapters;
- An easy-to-see botanical key in 11-point type as well as line drawings to help users understand technical terms used in the key;
- Statistics concerning the state's 19 million acres of forested land;
- Information on the state Champion Tree program and its Bigwood Index;
- A history of the forest industry's boom times in the 1920s;
- Biographies of this edition's editor in chief, Eric Sundell, as well as the book's seminal author Dwight Munson Moore;
- A glossary and two indexes.

### C. CLAIBORNE RY

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Q: Since the flu virus can persist on surfaces should a person avoid contact with a dog that was petted by someone who has the flu?

A: The possibility of transmission cannot be ruled out. Medical studies suggest, but catching the flu from a dog that was recently petted by a flu-infected person would seem to require the illumina-



MC1/Fotolia

Drs. Carrie and Alton Barron tout the health benefits of knitting, which research has found benefits the joints and can improve one's mood.

ingfully triggers healthy engagement and activity in about 60 percent of the brain, Alton Barron says.

The rhythmic, mathematical nature of knitting and crocheting keep the mind absorbed in a healthful way, providing an escape from stressful thoughts but allowing for internal reflection, Carrie Barron adds.

While television can engage people from the outside, the mind requires

stimulation from within in order to "free associate" or think imaginatively, she says.

The psychiatrist suspects the return to knitting is a response to the rise in technology, much like the arts and craft movement followed the industrial revolution.

"There's something so gratifying about taking strings and pieces and making them whole," she said. "There's something primi-

tive and innate about that. The fragments of the mind also come together in that process. It's a parallel process between the mind and the hands."

"Engaging in Cognitive Activities, Aging, and Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Population-Based Study" was published March 1, 2011.

See **KNITTING** on Page 3E

## Bright starry night highlight of trip

After more than 1,500 miles of pedaling, Linda Schuck's cross-country bicycle adventure with her friend Coreen Frasier crashed to a halt July 6 in Lander, Wyo.

Friendly locals helped her to a hospital, where she learned her hip and knee were too damaged to continue. She had to return home to Arkadelphia. But even so, she says, she has good memories of her trip, which began June 2 in Portland, Ore.

### Her favorite?

"We were at Suttle Lake in Oregon. It was high altitude and cold, 28 degrees that night, and we were camping in a primitive campground, which means there was no electricity. ... During the night I had to get up, and when I opened the door to my tent, the stars in the sky were so bright."

"I'd never seen so many stars, and then they just seemed so close and so big."

— Cheree Frasier

## Trees

Continued from Page 1E  
obviously needed entirely new descriptions written, and so Patrick Glass, one of our foresters, wrote those," Barnes says. "And Dr. Sundell's daughter-in-law Corri Bristow Sundell did the drawings for our new species."

Every tree except one was photographed in Arkansas by an Arkansan. "The lone exception is one of the book's two images of the pumpkin ash, which was provided by Christopher Tracey of the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program "because it's so rare," Barnes says. Forester Tom Lindsey shot the other photo of the ash.

(All five of the state's ash species are included; and those pages have also been posted on the commission's website as part of its effort to stop the spread of the emerald ash borer, an invasive insect.)

### GOOD, BAD, UGLY

The lion's share of the trees in the book are native plants, Barnes notes. But not every species in the forest has always grown here.

"So nonnative trees need to be there to help everyone identify what's out there. Be-



State Forester Joe Fox (left) and public information officer Adriane Barnes look over a draft copy Oct. 7 of the newly released updated edition of *Trees of Arkansas*, a publication of the Arkansas Forestry Commission that dates from 1950.

yond that, pushing the limit — and it kills foresters to hear it — some invasive species are in here," she says, tapping a spiral-bound draft copy of the book. "We have to help people recognize them."

Invasives threaten the health of native trees by aggressively competing for water and sunlight. Two of the three new species are invaders.

"The good one is the pignut hickory, a super-cool, very odd tree that grows with a very

large trunk base," Barnes says. "The other two, the ugly ones," are the Callery pear and the Chinese tallow tree: "Now considered an invasive species, no longer recommended for ornamental use," their descriptions say, in bold print.

### LONG TIME COMING

This revision began under two former public information officers, Christina Fowler and Jerry Lambert "finally put their foot down and said, 'We've been hearing this idea

for years that people want photos in *Trees of Arkansas*," Barnes says. "It was Jerry and Christina that began the effort. So the picture collecting began about seven years ago."

"They collected and collected. They put together a skeleton [layout]; and then both of them unfortunately left the agency before this was poked up again."

Staff forester Bill Chaney hid on to their work. When Barnes took her job in November, they handed it to me and said, 'Please pick up the project.' And at that point it was about halfway done."

The work was finished between March and August. Barnes did its layout, design and copy editing.

### SUNDELL EDITION

Although the text has been revised for every edition, reflecting changes in scientific understanding of plants' relationships and evolution, "this one is a huge re-edit," Barnes says. "Dr. Sundell edited it about eight times before it was through. ... Without his help in reviewing the eighth edition, the project would not have been possible."

Moore based his first, 1950 booklet on "Common Forest Trees of Arkansas: How to Know Them," an 84-page

pocket manual for botanists by John Theodore Buchholz and Wilbur Reed Mattoon that was issued as a University of Arkansas Extension Service circular in 1924.

At the time a biology professor at the University at Arkansas at Fayetteville, Moore (1891-1985) wrote for botany enthusiasts. Although anyone could carry the little book into the woods and squint at its tiny-type key to identify a twig or a leaf, species descriptions were in chronological order related to when in history botanists placed their origin.

"Which changes all the time," Barnes notes, "based on what they find out about evolution."

The new organization of families is alphabetical, by tree families' common names. "In the most recent 2011 edition," the most notes, "readers could find the pine family — Pinaceae — in the very beginning of the trees because of the taxonomic order based on evolutionary history. Now readers will find the pine family in the 'P' section."

### PUBLIC SERVICE

The commission has ordered 15,000 glue-bound copies of the new book at a cost of \$40,000 from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's print-