

Larry “Coach” Hoff Q&A: Bio: Larry is a retired PE Instructor and football coach from Wisconsin. During 2006/07, Larry paddled solo from Washington DC to Astoria Oregon which included an entire upstream paddle of the Missouri River from St. Louis to Montana and beyond. Larry is an avid hiker and cross country cyclist when he is not paddling. You can read about Larry’s journeys at:
<http://lhoff.com/index.html>

Here is what “Coach” had to say:

1. What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome the situation? *“Being away from family is always the toughest for me. I started in Washington D.C. the end of May and got to St. Charles, MO just before July 4 th and flew home. Bass Pro in St. Charles was kind enough to store all my gear until I got back. Spent about a week at home and flew back and continued on to Bismarck, ND. That was the stopping point for the first half of my trek. The following year I continued on from Bismarck to Astoria, OR. I did not go home that year until I finished. Although, lots of phone calls were made.”*

2. What do you feel was the most important thing that you planned for on your trip that you actually benefited from? *The key for me is to be self supportive when doing my long distant treks. So my bike portage system was key. I used a fold up bike and aluminum pipe “T” trailing to portage. The pedaling turned out to be great therapy for my knee. Three weeks before I started I had a half knee replacement and the pedaling was great. Along the Potomac I had to pedal more than I’d expected. Potomac was not much of a paddle river so did a lot of portaging along the C & O Canal Trail that followed the Potomac to Cumberland, Maryland. Actually became one of best parts of my trip. Met lots of nice people wondering what I was doing pulling a canoe!*

3. Was there anything that you planned for then you felt was unnecessary or overdone? *Nothing that I can think of. I do very little planning. In the past I’ve hiked the Pacific Crest Trail and bicycled around the perimeter of the USA so pretty much knew what to expect.*

4. What were the 5 most important pieces of gear you carried on the trip? *A. Life Jacket B. Waterproof pack that would float C. Water Filter E. Small 1st Aid Kit F. Spare paddle (My wife would say, cell phone!)*

5. Prior to your trip, what was your weakest asset or least skilled or qualified trait for the trip and how did you overcome this? *Not sure, I never think in weakness, maybe that is it.*

6. What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for? *Back when I hiked the Pacific Crest Trail, I learn, never carry anything that you will not use everyday unless it has necessary safety value. Although, in a watercraft trek one can carry more than one needs. On this trip I brought a small, one ounce radio!*

7. What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate. *Two things. 1 st . I got to Bismarck way sooner than expected. I could have easily done the entire trip in one year. Although, glad I did it over two years. 2 nd . Bike portaging was more fun and helpful than I expected. I love exercise and I looked forward to bike portaging because it became a better workout than paddling. Also, gave my core area (hips, waist, legs) a very important workout.*

8. What kind of boat did you paddle and what were its good qualities and also the things you did not like about it?

Kruger Canoe! Why? Because the number one long distance paddler in the USA was Verlen Kruger. I am Norwegian, but smart enough to know you go with number one! Not one thing I did not like about it. Larry with Kruger Sea Wind.

9. How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this? *Again, I used my Pacific Crest Trail experience for food. Most of the time, each day, or every other day, I could find a place I could eat along the river and/or resupply. I always carried at least two days of food, consisting of: oatmeal (morning) / sausage, tuna fish, block cheese, tortilla raps, honey, peanut butter (lunch) / package Lipton Dinners with dried potato mixed in for dinner. Also, some of my lunch items at dinner. During the day I munched on trail mix. (Drank water all day long.)*

10. What was your system for obtaining drinking water and what were the benefits as well as the disadvantage you had dealing with water? *When I hiked the PCT I got girardia in the Sierras. Not good!!! So now I always carry a quality water filter. You are on a river, so with a quality water filter you have it made. Most of the time I had plenty of bottled water with me. I think I only used the filter once.*

