



Six thousand miles on horseback delivers long-riding woman to Boulder for a stopover

The Boulder Monitor

by Amber Conger, reporter

Wednesday, June 1, 2011

Standing casually against a backdrop of books filled with stories, some of great adventures, Bernice Ende tells of her own adventures. Her hands fly out of her worn pockets and into the air as she gestures emphatically, sharing her tales of the trail.

In a uniform of faded jeans and a pair of broken in cowboy boots, she starts to piece the puzzle together. The callouses on her hands and the tan lines peeking out from under her bandana are clues.

She rides. She rides a lot. And she rides far. Sixteen thousand miles in seven years. Why? "It was one of those moments that just said go for it," explains Ende, known to some as "the lady long rider."

Ende claims she came out the womb riding and hasn't stopped since.

She recalls setting out on her first long ride in 2005, with tears streaming down her face. Before she was back home, she rode 2000 miles.

With no long riding experience under her belt, she pushed forward anyway. "I don't know how I did it," she reflected. "To me it was freedom; there was no greater freedom than horse and rider."

Speaking to a group of local residents in the Boulder Community Library Thursday, Ende went on to say she never planned to set out on long distance rides. "I had never even heard of a long rider," she said. "I was a dairy farm girl from Minnesota."

She says she never had big hopes or dreams of traveling the country on the back of a horse at four miles per hour. But she does it. And she loves every minute. "It is hard and dirty and dangerous, but whoa, yeah...that is why, that

single moment when it really hits me,” she says wistfully. She never rides with others, though many people she meets along her journey ask to accompany her. But she is never alone. “My mom is with me every second,” says Ende. “She is my guardian and I dedicate every ride to her.”

She is also in the company of faithful horses Hart and Essie Pearl and her dog Claire. Often Claire takes up a perch atop Essie Pearl, the horse who packs the gear. That’s where Claire was Wednesday as the long rider and crew rode into Boulder. After visiting with a few folks, she made her way to the laundromat to wash away the dust of the trail before bedding down at the fairgrounds.

Finishing up a 6000 mile ride that began in 2009, Ende is headed home to Trego, Montana. Ende has no partner or children, but she says she wouldn’t change a thing about who she is and what she does. Taking life one step at a time and living on a budget of around 30 dollars a week, Ende raises money for her travels by public speaking events where an upturned cowboy hat fills with dollars as she tells locals about her experiences living a unique lifestyle. For the fifteen or so people gathered at the Boulder library last week, the stories were well worth a small donation. As Ende spoke with heart and excitement and genuine love of what she does, the cowboy hat began to fill with dollars.

That is how Ende has made her way across more than 16,000 miles on horseback since 2005. Nearing the close of the current 6000 mile chapter, Ende pledged to continue living the way she loves – one step at a time – until the end of the trail.



The *Lewis & Clark* June 2011
Journal

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“Ende of the Trail” Comes Through TF

by Mary Hardin
- Journal Staff

Bernice Ende rode into Three Forks on a recent cloudy Thursday afternoon and, even though Three Forks is used to seeing horses on its Main Street, she drew attention and people asked questions. Where did she come from, what was she doing here, and, finally, what was the point of a “Long Ride?”

The first two questions are easy: Originally from Minnesota, Ende now calls Trego, Montana home - or,

rather ‘home base.’ For the past few years, her tent has been her real home.

Why she is riding is much more complex. She’ll tell you that she simply loves to ride and she always has.

“I’ve never *not* ridden,” she explains, “I was riding in my mother’s belly before I was born.”

She figures her adventures started when she was four or five years old and would take a “long ride” on their farm in Minnesota. She would pack her gear and head

somewhere not far from her house on her horse. It may have only been to the barn but in her 5 year old mind, it was an adventure out on her own.

“I’m just older and bigger now,” she jokes. She is also travelling much, much farther.

Even though she grew up and pursued a career in classical ballet and teaching dance, the love of riding never left her. She taught dance and fitness in the Portland and Seattle areas for many years. In the early 1990’s, she

moved to Trego, Montana (in the NW of Montana) where she taught both dance and riding. Ende retired in 2003 and was drawn back the idea of riding and, particularly, to “long riding.”

Ende headed out on her first long-distance ride in 2005. It wasn’t what she expected.

“I cried for weeks. I thought I knew what I was doing but it knocked me down so hard,” she recalls, “Nothing could have prepared me for that first ride.”

Two thousand miles and five months later, she was more experienced and hooked on a lifestyle - a lifestyle that is never easy but one that she loves nonetheless.

“I wish I could take everyone with me for a week and let them see life at four miles an hour,” says

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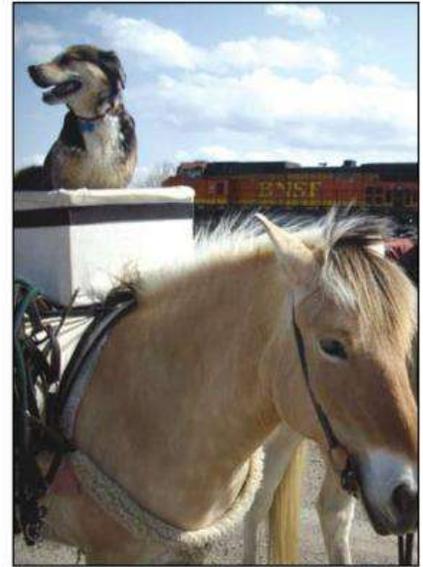


Photo courtesy of Bernice Ende
Bernice Ende’s dog, Claire, was found as a puppy abandoned in a ditch ten years ago and has since become her faithful traveling companion, sometimes walking along and sometimes riding.



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On the cover:
Bernice Ende rides into Three Forks in May as she nears the end of a 6,000 mile horseback trip around America.

Photo by Mary Hardin

The *Lewis & Clark*
Journal

Issue 6 Volume 8

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Ende of the Trail, continued from page 2

Ende.

Wherever she travels, she is amazed by the fascination people have of her journey. Within minutes of arriving in Three Forks, she has someone walk up to her and say "I would love to do this." It's something she hears wherever she goes.

"I'm not really sure why people stop for me. It's not about me - there is something bigger. Maybe it's that elusive image of freedom," she says.

Traveling with two horses and her dog, Ende has only her tent and some supplies. She finds shelter along the way - sometimes in a kind stranger's pasture, sometimes in a ditch on the side of the road. Though she is often offered a guest room in someone's house, she

prefers to stay in her tent near her horses. In Three Forks, she was permitted to stay at the rodeo grounds where her horses could be corralled. Because of the rain, Three Forks resident Brian Chandler offered his camper so she and her dog, Claire, would have a dry place to sleep near her horses.

Ende keeps her travels simple. She carries no cell phone or laptop computer.

"Good grief!" she exclaims, "Why would you want to be so attached to it all?"

She checks in with family and friends when she reaches a town and can use a library or senior center's computer.

For safety reasons, Ende carries a gun though she has never used it.

"I've had too many scary incidents to name

and I don't want to think about them," she says. The incidents, however, usually involve traffic.

"The roads are the most dangerous thing I encounter every day," she says. She sometimes follows railroad lines to avoid busy roads and always checks ahead to be sure mountain passes are clear before heading out. To get to Three Forks from the Headwaters State Park, Ende was absolutely delighted with the Headwaters Trail System which brought her right into town and over the river without dealing with motorized vehicles.

When Ende arrives in a town, they often know she is coming, having received quite a bit of media attention about her travels. A number of people stopped her in Three Forks to say "welcome" because they learned about her trip on the television news.

"It's like riding into smiles," is how she

describes her welcome into most communities. Even if people aren't so sure what to think about this single lady on her horse, they quickly warm up when they hear her story.

Ende isn't out to "change the world" as she puts it. She doesn't have a political agenda to share, nor is she riding for a cause. Ende's not even really trying to convince people they should go on a "long ride" themselves. Yet, she has learned a few lessons along the way if anyone is interested in hearing them.

"I guess, if anything, I hope to reach women and encourage them to get beyond their debilitating fears," she says. She wonders if people are fascinated by her because she is doing what so many fear.

"There is a fear of not finishing, a fear of asking for help, fear of people laughing at you," she says and she has faced and overcome these fears.

Her current trip started in 2009 and took her from Montana, across to Portland, down to Texas, up to Minnesota and now back to Trego - about 6,000 miles altogether. She has done three other long rides between 2,000 and 5,000 miles each.

She left Bozeman on a Tuesday morning travelling out on Baxter to Love Lane. She then followed the back roads to Churchill. She spent the night in the pasture of some friends she had made while in Bozeman. The next day, she packed up and took Frontage Road through Logan to the Headwaters State Park and camped there. She moseyed into Three Forks, on her 14 year old paint gelding named Hart, two and a half days after leaving Bozeman - a trip reminiscent in time and manner of our early settlers.

"It's a legendary image - the horse and rider. People are drawn to the

idea of leaving it all behind and setting sail," she says, "You really find out what you are made of."

"I've developed an appreciation for our country and its people. It's a testimony to our country that I can do this," Ende explains. She believes horseback, riding a bike or walking are the only way to really see and experience the U.S. - otherwise, you're going through it too fast. She makes friends along the way and often will give inspirational talks at a senior center, library or school when in towns about her adventure. She talks about this lifestyle she loves.

"I love my tent," says Ende "I love my horses, I love my life as a lady long rider!"

If you would like to read about Bernice Ende's travels in her own words, visit her website: www.endeofthetrail.com.

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On the Road



Fair weather for the The Lady Long Rider on Old Clyde Park Road.

Life Is a Long Ride

Drifter Passes Through Livingston and Bozeman on 16,000 Mile Ride

■ BY EMILY MCKEE

After seven years travelling 16,000 miles, at 4 miles per hour with horse and dog, Bernice Ende, the Lady Long Rider, embodies a lifestyle reminiscent of Western history. She is a strong woman who radiates curiosity and love for life. An explorer, wanderer, writer, and influential woman, she has the perspective of a 21st century nomad.

Ende is currently on the last leg of a 6,000 mile trip, having stayed the winter in an empty barn outside Forsyth, and in early May travelled through Livingston (entering town from the East on Old Clyde Park Road) and Bozeman (leaving May 17) on her way to a cabin in Trego. Her team is made up of Claire, her loyal and fearless dog, and two horses, Essie Pearl and Hart.

The day she rode the Old Clyde Park Road, the sun shone from a blue sky in the fullness of spring. The temperature broke into the 70s, and Bernice's ride was graced by the wonder of a beautiful afternoon. After the photographer (who shot the photo above) remarked to her about the beautiful weather, Bernice said emphatically, "It's all about the weather." Indeed, the weather turned just days later on her ride to Bozeman. Rain pummeled her dog, two horses, and Bernice the entire way. Temperatures at night settled into the 30s, and one can't help consider the courage required to embark upon and continue such a journey.

Ende was raised on a dairy farm in Minnesota, and riding has been an integral part of her life. She moved to the west coast in 1973,

taught classical ballet, then for 10 years owned the community dance studio in Trego. However, her relationship with Montana goes much deeper. "Montana has been in my head for as long as I was able to think," she said. "My mother, father and grandparents all had ties to Montana. As a child I paged through a black and white photo album my mother put together from the years her mother came from Minnesota out to Montana as an 18 year old looking for adventure. She taught school, married a local rancher's son, wrote and illustrated a book called *The Little Gray Cabin*, and gave birth to my mother before they all went back to Minnesota. My mother went to Montana after serving in the Navy to work at Glacier Park as a waitress, when she met my father (also from Minnesota) who was working as a maintenance man and wrangler at the park. So, Montana has been floating around in my head and heart from the get go."

In Trego, Ende reflected on some of the things that brought her joy as a child, and one was horseback riding. Drawn back to riding, Bernice felt the pull of the open road and adventure inherent in serious riding. Her mother, Cornelia Ende, is an inspiration for Bernice and Bernice dedicates each ride to her.

"I grew up on a small dairy farm that my father's grandparents settled in Minnesota in the early 1900s. Basically we were poor dirt farmers and my father had little time for anything but work. From him I learned the art of improvising and the determination of *can-do-ness*. (He also liked to talk, got that from him, too). But it was Mother that

Continued →

...Long Rider

Continued

added color, embellishment, remembered holidays and birthdays. She gave us music and encouraged us to look past the horizon. She was not an exceptional woman by any means; she simply had a heart of kindness and curiosity. She said "Live your life to inspire others and you to shall be inspired. Inspiration comes from within, Bernice—*inspire yourself!*" With her mother's words in mind, the open road calling, and with curiosity about the unknown, she embarked on her first ride May 5, 2005.

"Approximately a 2,000 mile ride from Trego, Mont. to Albuquerque, New Mexico," she said. "Rode down to see my sister Mary Ann. You know I am not sure how it all got started, there were so many reasons that drew this hand, I think the bottom line was that there was a void and a window of opportunity, a moment that said, *Jump—go now!* It was an idea that sat down in my living room and screamed relentlessly, until I...committed to the ride."

Taking on such an adventure, Bernice jumped in with both feet and found beautiful challenges and surreal opportunities awaiting her. Little did she know at the time, her first 2,000 miles began to unwind a path that would lead her to 14,000 miles more over a 7-year time frame, and she is far from finished.

Her second trip, May 2006 to September, took her 5,000 miles through the West and Midwest.

Her 2008 trip totalled 3,000 miles, from Nevada to Trego, MT.

In the fast-paced lifestyle we 21st century folks tend to live, Bernice has had the opportunity to spend many of her 7-years of long-riding moving at 4 miles per hour.

"Well, at 4 miles per hour, I can see between the rows of corn, the rich black earth from which it grows. I see thousands of dead animal carcasses hanging, caught in fences, struck by the speed of people. Deer, antelope, racoon, porcupines, dogs, cats, coyotes, cattle, rabbits, armadillos—you name it. The ditches are unmarked graveyards. I feel like the days and nights are not clearly defined, a week is a very long time."

Bernice continues to perfect her way of living, as the draw of the open road always calls her back. Beyond the welcoming dandelions, the teasing horizon, and the drive that keeps her moving, people have been an important part of her journey.

"One of the most frequently asked questions I get is, *How have people treated you?* I feel that if there is a message in any of this—it's that we are a country of good people, of cultural diversity and beliefs that challenge us to be free and open and to live together under one nation. That is not always easy. Well, it is never easy, but I meet such good people everywhere I go, people who care about their families and communities, people who are good neighbors and committed to their faith and friends. I meet intelligent young people who are eager

and looking forward to the future of this country, this world. I remain hopeful."

According to Bernice, small towns are the heart of the country and she is continually amazed by the kindness and generosity of the people she meets along the way. Sometimes she is offered a place to stay by a passerby, if not she pitches her tent on the side of the road or in a ditch.

Passing through Livingston and Bozeman in May, the last leg of her 2009 to 2011 ride, she will finish once she gets to northwest Montana.

"Bozeman, Montana," she said. "You get a Blue Ribbon award."

"Bozeman has been...friendly. Exceptional Senior Center. Bustling, open air feel of the historical downtown. Huge fairgrounds; well kept and great location. Dog friendly. Bicycle friendly. Many small clean parks. Mountain views. An obvious commitment to the people that live here to create a quality community. What can I say...but *Thank you I had wonderful visit... Happy Trails!*"

Ende has no phone, computer, credit card, or GPS. She stops at libraries and community centers where she connects with loved ones and friends and updates her website: endofthetrail.com. With a personality that radiates she has met many people, and many who love and care for her, and who follow her journey on the internet.

Beyond a genuine love for what she does, Bernice has found that her experiences, insight, and perspective have created an opportunity to reach out to others through public speaking. More than just an animated storyteller, her adventures and honest determination have been inspiring to thousands, often leading them to pursue their own dreams, just as she has pursued hers.

"I do hope that in some small way my rides might in some way inspire other women to reach, to go past their debilitating fears, to seek out that which moves them. We are all on long rides, be it motherhood, school, marriage, jobs... *Life is a long ride. How are you going to ride your long ride?* That is a question nearly all of us can ask ourselves. I am a reminder of the past, a living history. To many the long rider is a symbol of freedom. Not a day goes by when I am not filled with gratitude; I know that hundreds of kindred spirits ride vicariously in my saddle each day. I have had hundreds of people say, *I wish I could go for so long a ride, I have always wanted to do a long ride, or I wish I had done that when I was younger.* Do not let life race past without participating in your own long ride."

Ende is hoping to arrive in Trego before the end of June. Next year she has her sights set on Canada, a 6 month, 3000 mile ride.

"No I am not looking at stopping this foolishness any time soon," Ende says while packing up her things at the Bozeman Fairground.

Visit endofthetrail.com to learn more about Bernice or email emily@endofthetrail.com for information on Bernice's whereabouts.



Hearings tomorrow on Air Force training complex

By AMANDA BREITBACH
RAGSDALE Star Staff Writer

The U.S. Air Force is holding two public hearings in Miles City on Friday to solicit comment about the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed Powder River

Training Complex. The proposal would dramatically expand the airspace in which the Air Force can conduct training exercises with B-1 and B-52 bombers stationed in North and South Dakota.

The hearings in Miles City will be hosted at Miles Com-

munity College from 1-3:30 p.m. and from 5:30-8 p.m. on Friday.

At the hearings, U.S. Air Force pilots and subject matter experts will present information about the proposal, and the public will have the opportunity to formally comment on

the EIS.

Currently, the Powder River Training Complex is centered near the border where South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana meet. The Air Force proposal would expand the training area for B-1-B Lancers from South Dakota's Ellsworth

Air Force Base and B-52 Stratofortress bombers from North Dakota's Minot Air Force Base to include portions of southwestern North Dakota and additional areas in northwestern South Dakota and southeastern Montana.

See "Hearings," page 5



Candidates Forum

Tonight at MCC
7-9 p.m.
Free, open to public

Judge charged with DUI in accident

By CHRIS WOSTER
Yellowstone Newspapers

In mid-August, Rosebud County Justice of the Peace Mary O'Hara Kunst inexplicably resigned.

Several days later, she was involved in a minor fender-bender that has resulted in a misdemeanor charge of driving while under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

In the meantime, an auditor reviewed the dealings of the justice court. According to Rosebud County Commissioner, the auditor's findings are not yet available.

Neither is Kunst's reason for resigning, as she declined comment at the time.

The story began with a resignation letter to county commissioners, letting them know that on Sept. 3 her resignation would be effective.

But on Thursday, Aug. 26, Kunst was accused of backing into a Federal Express delivery vehicle on Forsyth's Main Street.

State Trooper Troy Marti investigated the incident.

According to court records, the incident happened in front of the local liquor store. Kunst and an unidentified man and woman encouraged the FedEx driver not to report the minor accident to police.

The FedEx driver reported that the man and woman told her the defendant had been through a lot and didn't need any more problems.

However, the driver had no choice, because of her responsibilities as an employee of FedEx, which dictate that she must make a report or she could lose her job.

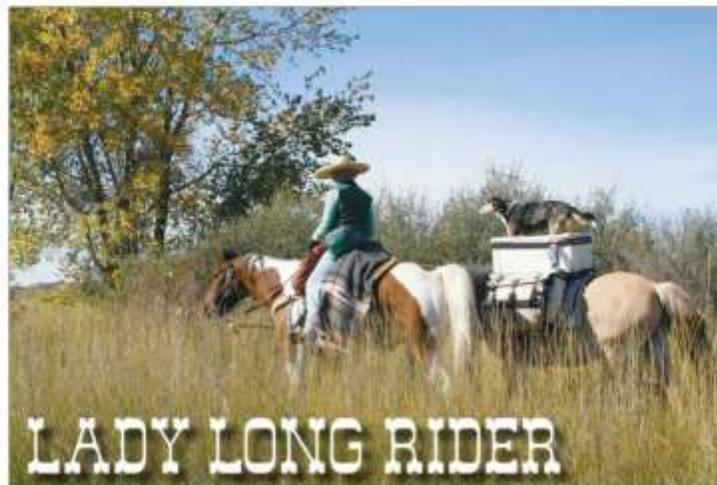
In her report, she said she believed that Kunst's breath was emitting the odor of alcohol, and Kunst had slurred speech and unsteadiness on her feet.

When officers traveled to the former judge's home south of Forsyth, her damaged Ford Explorer was present, but she would not answer the door to be interviewed.

According to the complaint, Marti interviewed her two days later, when Kunst admitted to drinking one alcoholic beverage and stated that she was on several medications. Kunst said her doctor told her that one drink would be all right.

Since the case involved a sitting judge, the evidence landed in the office of the state attorney general. There, Assistant Attorney General Joel M. Thompson reviewed the case.

Since there is a conflict with the former judge being tried in her former court, Kunst is



STAR PHOTOS/Amanda Breitbach Ragdale

ABOVE: Lady long rider Bernice Ende nears Miles City on Wednesday afternoon with her team of fellow travelers - Hart, a paint gelding, Essie Pearl, a Norwegian Fjord, and Claire, a unique horse-riding dog. BELOW: Ende (right) makes a presentation to kids at the Miles City Public Library on Thursday. Claire, the horse-riding dog, was a big hit with both children and adults. Local Marilyn Arnoldt (left), who had heard of Ende's ride before her arrival in the area, was on hand to lend assistance.

Woman nears end of 6,000-mile journey

By AMANDA BREITBACH
RAGSDALE Star Staff Writer

Lady long rider Bernice Ende arrived in Miles City on Tuesday afternoon, on the final leg of a 6,000-mile journey.

As she rode into town with her team of fellow travelers - Hart, a paint gelding, Essie Pearl, a Norwegian Fjord, and Claire, a unique horse-riding dog she describes as "a rare breed of unknown origin" - she was jubilation.

"Miles City has been so far away for so long," she said, adding that it was especially fun to ride into a town that was so "legendary" in Western history.

Ende set out from Treps, Mont., in March 2009, planning to cross the U.S. horseback on her fourth and most ambitious



long ride so far. Having already completed three rides over 2,000 miles since

"All I am is a reminder of our past ... before life went 70 miles an hour. Seventy miles is three days!"

- Bernice Ende, lady long rider

2005, she is a member of the elite Long Riders Guild, an invitation-only organization

of men and women who have ridden more than 1,000 continuous miles on a single equestrian journey.

"I carry on the tradition of long riding and a history lesson on how we used to travel," she told a group in Miles City on Thursday. "All I am is a reminder of our past ... before life went 70 miles an hour. Seventy miles is three days!"

Though she travels alone, Ende is supported on her journey through the efforts of local people touched by her ride and its symbolism.

"I've been looking for her since Thursday," said Marilyn Arnoldt on Tuesday afternoon when she caught up to Ende at the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce.

Arnoldt said her son, Chad, saw Ende riding between Glendive and Fallon and talked to her. They tried to guess when she might be passing by their place and finally connected with her Tuesday morning on the highway between Kasey and Miles City.

See "Rider," page 5

Gov. is death row inmate's last hope

HELENA (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear the case of the only known Canadian on death row in the United States.

Ronald Allen Smith, of Red Deer, Alberta, was down to the final appeal of his death sentence in Montana. His case will go back to a Montana court to set an execution date. That means Smith's last hope will lie with Brian Schweitzer, the state's governor.

The 52-year-old Smith, who has argued he had ineffective counsel, was convicted in 1983 of fatally shooting Browning cousin Harvey Mad Man, 23, and Thomas Running Rabbit, 20, while he was high on drugs and alcohol. At the time of the 1982 deaths, Smith was 25 years old and had crossed the Canadian border on foot the previous day with two friends and a sawed-off .22-caliber rifle.

Prosecutors said he robbed the cousins and shot them execution-style in the woods near East Glacier.

Canadian officials have requested clemency for Smith, but Schweitzer said last week the wishes of the victims' families also carry weight.

The governor could not be reached for comment Wednesday, nor could Smith's attorney, Greg Jackson of Helena. Smith's case will be sent back to Flathead County District Court in Kalispell, where a judge will set an execution date. He will then have 10 days to file an application with the Board of Pardons seeking executive clemency. The governor's decision could cap a legal battle that has been waged for several decades.

Smith pleaded guilty to two counts of deliberate homicide, as well as two counts of aggravated kidnapping. In February 1983, he was offered a plea agreement that called for a term of 110 years in prison, which he rejected in favor of a death sentence.

But Smith changed his mind in 1984 and has been fighting his death sentence ever since. His appeal took the case to the Montana Supreme Court in 1986, which upheld the death penalty. He also requested that the U.S. Supreme Court review the case, but that was denied.

Air Force: Great Falls to lose F-15 fighter jets

HELENA (AP) — The Montana Air National Guard will lose its F-15 fighter jets to another base, the Air Force confirmed Thursday.

The loss of the fighter jets had not been previously announced, though the future of the F-15 mission was ques-

tioned last week by Air Force spokesman Gary Stranburg said Thursday.

"The plan is to move those aircraft to Fresno once an environmental impact statement is completed on the new location," he said.

That impact study has not yet begun and a date for the

move of the C-27s arrive (in Great Falls) will be said.

The Air Force announced Wednesday that the Montana Air National Guard's base in Great Falls beat out Boise, Idaho, as the preferred location for the new C-27J transport mission. A final decision

atly clear how many jobs would be attached to the C-27J mission, and Stranburg said that number has yet to be determined.

The Montana National Guard said during Wednesday's announcement about the C-transport mission that

Montana's congressional delegation was briefed by the Air Force on the development in the possible C-27J mission. The briefing included the finding that Great Falls held an advantage over Boise in landing the trans-

This is the continuation of the above FRONT PAGE article on our Lady Long Rider. As soon as I get the next page I will post it!

Arnoldt said her son, Chad, saw Ende riding between Glendive and Fallon and talked to her. They tried to guess when she might be passing by their place and finally connected with her Tuesday morning on the highway between Kinsey and Miles City. Arnoldt and her family met up with Ende again on Wednesday night, bringing a table, chairs and dinner to her camp at the Eastern Montana Fairgrounds.

Local Sandy Lee also was watching for the horse and rider. Alerted by friends in Terry, she drove up and down the Milwaukee Road looking for Ende three times before discovering her below the Tusler bridge Monday night. Since Ende was already preparing to camp, Lee returned in the morning and treated her to breakfast at her home before helping her haul the horses across the bridge.

Similar encounters occur all along the trail, Ende said, and she is always grateful for the friendly curiosity and assistance of local people.

"It's such a legendary, romantic image," she said of the horse and rider. "What it does to us! I don't know why."

"I'm surprised to hear people say, 'I've always wanted to do that,'" she added, noting that it was never her dream to travel this way.

Ende took on her first long ride of 2,000 miles six years ago. Retiring from her career as a ballet teacher, she found herself with no family obligations and the opportunity to try something new. Though she cried the first day she left home, Ende said now she is pulled on by a love of the ride.

Her background in teaching is evident, as she uses stops along the way to present to local groups of senior citizens and students. In Miles City on Thursday, she presented to students at Washington Middle School, kids at the Miles City Public Library and residents at Eagle's Manor. In town until Saturday morning, she hoped to schedule more presentations through the Chamber of Commerce.

When she began this trip in 2009, Ende planned a route that would take her to Portland, Ore., then south to Texas and join up with the Appalachian Trail through the Adirondacks, then back to Montana through Canada. In February 2010, she lost Honor, her grey thoroughbred mare, in a corral accident in Austin, Texas. Offered seven different mounts by area people, she chose Hart, a big paint gelding that had not been ridden in 10 years. "He was a pasture potato, soft as butter," she said of her new mount.

Ende decided to change the route, uncertain about crossing the mountains on a new and inexperienced horse. Instead, she rode north into Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and stopped in Minnesota to visit family before heading back to Montana. Though she had hoped to make it home before winter set in, Ende

said she is now considering wintering in the Forsyth area to avoid crossing the mountains in the snow.

Already, she is planning her next ride, a tour through Montana highlighting historically significant women and their lives.

To learn more about Ende and her rides, visit her Web site, www.endeofthetrail.com. To schedule a presentation on Friday, contact Terri Newby at the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce, 234-2890.

Listen to a recording of Bernice on Altyered State Record:

<http://www.alteredstaterecords.com/podcasting/?s=bernice+ende>

Hassan native rides into town with her 'dog and pony show'; 16,000 miles as solo long rider

Click image to enlarge



CUT 1

"Lady Long Rider" Bernice Ende's current long ride began March 20, 2009 in Trego, Mont. She headed west to Naselle, Wash., then down to South Central Texas.

From there she traveled through the panhandle of Texas into Oklahoma, central Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and is heading back home hopefully before the snow flies in Montana.

BY MINDY MATEUSZCZYK

Published: Tuesday, September 7, 2010 1:00 PM CDT

Hassan Township native Bernice Ende recently brought her dog and pony show back to town.

While Bernice does travel on a similarly meager budget (about \$40 a day) as the original dog and pony shows of yesteryear, her "show" is drastically different. It is her life. Since 2005, the ringmaster of this adventure, known as Lady Long Rider, has been living more than half of her life out on the open trail with only her dog and horses as her constant companions.

By the time her fourth long ride comes to a close later this year, Ende will hang her hat in her northwestern Montana electricity-free log-cabin home for the first time in almost two years. With this ride alone she expects to have traveled 6,000 miles that will bring her cumulative total to 16,000 miles as a solo long rider.

Her journeys have evolved from a post-retirement flash in the pan adventure to a full-fledged way of life sustained through sponsorships, pass-the-hat chats and through the kindness and generosity of strangers.

Although Ende is able to continue her journeys through the generous funding of sponsors and donors, there is nothing self-promotional or contrived about this dog and pony show. In fact, Ende's endeavor immediately dispenses with the hullabaloo of life and presents living a slower life as the main attraction.

SETTING THE STAGE

Ende was raised on her family's dairy farm in Hassan where she grew up riding horses and swimming in the muddy Crow River. By the age of 4, she knew how to bridle her own horse and riding was always an integral part of her life.

As a young woman, Ende left Minnesota farm country and pursued a career in classical ballet. She settled in Trego, Montana, where she owned a dance studio for 25 years. She managed to find room for both of her passions as she also gave riding lessons.

At first glance, the feminine world of ballet's beauty and grace may seem at odds with the rugged outdoorsy rigor of horseback riding but to Bernice it was the perfect marriage.

"I trained in dressage which is really the ballet of riding," she said. "I'm convinced all the ballet training I've had is also what's made me capable of being a long rider."

Furthermore, there is definitive element of choreography required in being able to train and manage two horses and a dog on her own for thousands of miles.

SADDLING UP

In 2003 Ende sold her dance studio and retired. She began toying with the idea of a long ride.

"I was training horses for the McCurry's when the idea popped into my head. And it would just not go away," she said. "I kept trying to talk myself out of it and couldn't. I just didn't believe the doubts I would try and convince myself I should have. I finally told some friends that I was going to do it and that committed me."

Once she'd given voice to her idea, despite anyone and everyone trying to talk her out of it she continued to make plans. She recounts how, despite all the planning and preparations she made, the first night out in 2005 was a make or break moment. Faced with a horse that challenged her every step of the way she had to make a decision.

"I could turn right and go home or I could turn left and keep on going," she said. "I knew I couldn't go back home, I couldn't bear to think of facing everyone. So I kept going and we worked it out."

Looking back on the trials and tribulations she faced during her first long ride in 2005, Ende says she realized it wasn't dehydration, physical ability, rough landscape or even wild animals that threatened to get the best of her. Instead, she discovered overcoming her own fear was the greatest challenge.

"There were times I'd be overcome with fear," Ende said of that first ride. "I'd think, 'I don't know what I'm doing here.'"

She admits tears were shed and fear was present but with encouragement from friends she found her inner strength and pushed on.

It took four months but Ende successfully made it to New Mexico and back atop a borrowed young gelding named Pride, a Tennessee Walking Horse. Ende's dog, Claire, was her faithful sidekick for the journey.

"I knew I was hooked after that," Ende said. "People who do long rides usually only do it once in a lifetime. For me, it's become a way of life."

This way of life is a throwback to a time gone by. It's a life where needs rule the day.

Ende currently travels with her mount, Hart, a big paint gelding and her pack horse Norwegian

Fjord, Essie Pearl. Rounding out the traveling entourage is Claire Dog, her 9-year-old dog who has faithfully accompanied her on all four long rides.

Restricted by what she and her horses can carry, meals often consist of beans, rice and even wild berries. Coffee is a luxury as is a meal showcasing meat. Shelter options have included everything from abandoned barns to ditches interspersed by the occasional hospitality from strangers or former strangers who have become friends through her journeys. Although she always asks to stay in the barn with her animals, she is often invited in for a hot shower, a warm meal and a comfy bed. These are luxuries she appreciates ten-fold.

Her travel gear has evolved from her first ride. Since she began traveling with a packhorse she can travel in more style most notably, with a tent for impromptu shelter. The luxury of a packhorse also saves Claire Dog's feet as she has learned to ride amid the packs on Essie Pearl's back to save her paws.

ALONE IN

THE UNIVERSE

Bernice often fields questions about loneliness on the open road.

"I may go days without seeing another soul," Ende said, referencing portions of rides for example through sparsely populated mountain ranges and passes. "Sure it may be a little lonely but I'm never alone."

Ende enjoys the slow pace and the solitude that allows her time to think and ponder. She also enjoys the scenery as she adds new routes into each ride.

The tenderness in Ende's voice when talking about her animal family is evidence of her close ties to her traveling companions. But even with that, Ende says her long rides are actually, "primarily about people: meeting people, inspiring people, sharing stories with people."

Ende believes America's greatest treasure is its people.

"If anyone questions if there is any good left in this world, they need only do what I do, see what I see," said Ende.

Along with the miles she's logged over the years, Ende has collected countless encounters with strangers who have become fast friends. Ende has been faced with knocking on a stranger's door for food and shelter and America has answered the call. Strangers all over the country have opened their homes and barns to Ende and her traveling companions. They've given her a place to sleep for the night, a warm meal, camaraderie and a concrete faith in humankind.

From the Gomez family inviting Ende into their New Mexico home to celebrate Christmas to the shelter and help in finding a horseshoe ferrier from the staff at Voss Park in Butterfield, Minn. this past July, Ende fills the pages of her journal with the contributions strangers have made. She acknowledges them all as "part of the story."

The story is that of a long rider as a legacy to our country.

"The image I create, of a horse and a rider is a powerful symbol of freedom and independence which everyone can relate to on a fundamental level," Ende said. "It represents a quality of time, space and freedom the human heart will forever seek. I simply carry on the tradition."

A SILVER LINING

There are lessons to be learned on the open road and Ende has set out not only to learn them, but to share her wisdom with others. But there are also lessons to be learned about coming home again.

However, in the 1960's her parents' farm was bought up by the park district to become what is now part of Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, off Territorial Road. She believes her father never fully got over the traumatic experience of being forced off the land that was in his family for generations, all for what many people at the time thought was an absurd idea. Her father's dairy barn along with their old white "Sears & Roebuck" house complete with its outbuilding were all burned down to make way for the park.

During her recent visit, area residents Leigh Harrod and Rayma Smith accompanied Ende on a ride through the park reserve that enveloped her family's dairy farm all those years ago. The silver lining that punctuates the distress caused to the families like hers all those years ago, is best expressed in Ende's own words:

"We were one of the many families that were forced to move from land that had been settled by early ancestors. I have some idea what the American Indian must have felt as they were pushed off land that had been theirs for centuries.

"It was odd to ride trails and small roads that were once tread by my bare feet. Or better yet, small sandy dirt roads that I galloped along, bare back of course on my big sorrel horse Pepper.

"The reality of it is that what is now an incredible source of enjoyment for thousands of people who come to use that land, refresh themselves with nature, who love and appreciate it from bird watching to fishing to horseback riding to snowmobiling, those hundreds of acres would have gone as all else went in this area, into developed land packed with homes and businesses. So it was not with a sad heart that I rode ... along old roads and pathways. Delightful memories

were sparking left and right as I rode Essie Pearl, bareback of course, leading Hart. I was glad to see that not everything had changed.

"It was with great foresight that we have this parkland and here I was 50 years later riding, riding, riding with a smile and look of adventure for all that surrounded me. Grateful, deeply grateful that not all had changed. What a gift!"

The Lady Long Rider continues her trek toward home probably somewhere near the North Dakota- Montana border by now.

She travels without the modern-day communications technologies of a cell phone, GPS or Internet. She carries only a digital camera to capture images of her life on the road. When she finds occasional Internet access at libraries or other sources, she sends images and updates to a website manager.

Followers of the trail can keep up with Ende's travels at her website www.endeofthetrail.com.

Wimberley, Texas

Share the road: Long rider hoofs it into Wimberley
By Austin Prowse

Eleven months and 3,000 miles ago, Bernice Ende set out on horseback from her home in Trego, Montana. It is her fourth long ride since 2005 when she first hit the trails on horseback to see her sister in New Mexico.

Bernice, her two horses and two dogs began their most recent journey in 2009, traveling into the great northwest stopping in Naselle, Wash. They next traveled to south-central Texas, which brought Bernice and crew through Wimberley last week.

It was an unlikely family reunion. Bernice's sister, Carol Ende, and brother-in-law, Jim Hammond, live in the area. Bernice said she misplaced their phone number and as luck would have it she ran into her sister and brother-in-law while passing by their business, Eden Alternative located in the Wimberley Mountain Plaza, where she was so graciously welcomed.

"We knew she was in striking zone when she was in Blanco," said Hammond. Bernice praises Texans as being friendly and helpful ever since setting hoof in the state.

"West and central Texas has blown me off my saddle with hospitality," said Bernice. "Every night it has been hot showers and hay."

Bernice, who thoroughly cherishes her time long riding, has set up a dog basket atop Essie Pearl, her Norwegian Fjord who packs the gear and helps to carry the dogs some of the way. Heading the crew, Bernice rides her 11-year-old thoroughbred, Honor, through mountain ranges in the U.S. and eventually Canada. She realizes the danger involved in the long ride, as they all four routinely traverse paths more commonly traveled by automobiles.

Having traveled over 13,000 miles in the past five years, Bernice makes frequent stops in towns across the nation where she gives talks about the legacy of the long rider. Riding horses long distances is not only a hobby or passion, but a way of life which revolves around faith and embraces freedom.

Bernice's next destination is Yoakum, where she will meet with her saddle maker, Tucker Trail Saddles, for a few days according to Hammond.

10 - FEBRUARY 18, 2010 MENARD (TX) NEWS

Long Rider Pays Visit To Menard County



ONE LUCKY PUP - Long Rider Bernice Ende picked up this abandoned pup on the side of the road somewhere west of Eldorado. The young dog now goes by the name of Francis



- Tyler Wright helps Bernice Ende with the horses. Each of the two packs weigh

Early this month Menard had the opportunity to play host to a Long Rider, a member of the Long Riders' Guild. It is an international organization dedicated to preserving the independent, adventurous spirit of the horse and rider.

Bernice Ende, a Long Rider, visited in the community for a day or so on her two and half year, 7,000 mile journey across much of America - by horse back. She left her home in Trego, Montana on March 20th of 2009 and stopped at the Menard home of Odie and Hedy Wright to spend the night on February first.

"In the morning, I'll fix you a big country-style 'Texas breakfast'" Odie told Bernice as she surveyed her lodging for the evening. She was to spend Monday night in the barn, actually more like a lodge, complete with shower, fireplace and piano.

As we left her to herself we could hear the piano playing. The next morning at breakfast Bernice acknowledged that she had taken not one but two showers, and enjoyed reading by the fireside before falling asleep.

The evening before she had spent the night at Ft. McKavett with Litane Kothmann. When it became bedtime Bernice had declined a freshly made bed and set up her small tent, as she

does most evenings, to stay close to her two dogs and two horses.

At the Wrights' place Odie had a fencible trap ready for her horses, complete with a bale of fresh hay, so she and the dogs felt secure staying under a roof. She and her entourage headed east, Tuesday afternoon, but returned to visit some more Wednesday.

Speaking before the Menard Businessmen's Association at noon on February third, she said that before beginning her journey she noted the size of Texas on a map, but had found that the map didn't accurately show the size of Texas hospitality.

Since entering Texas she has almost been passed from home to home, with someone always waiting for her at the next stop. Before staying with Litane she was a guest at the Sam Henderson Ranch east of Eldorado. From Menard she waited out the rain at Larry Isom's place, the Last Dollar Ranch, just west of Hext. It was reported that Bernice enjoyed a visit to London Hall.

On Friday Tyler Wright and wife Paige treated her to lunch at The Hext Trading Post, which she loved. It is run by Pat and Joe Fostenberry. Then it was off to London, and a weekend stay with Tommy and Holly Nixon.

Bernice was keen to see Fredericksburg, knowing that it was originally a German settlement. She calls herself a "Minnesota Farm Girl", being raised on a dairy farm in that state. Her forebears were immigrants from Germany.

Yoakum is her Texas destination, to visit the Tucker Saddle Company.

They have provided some sponsorship for her journey. The present long ride that she is on is the fourth. Her first was only a 2,000 trip in 2003. Before becoming a Long Rider Bernice was a classical ballet teacher and a fitness instructor.

After reaching Yoakum she will spend a few days with a sister in Wimberley and head north. She hopes to spend the next winter in Minnesota with family before heading home to Montana.

She travels with Honor, an 11 year old thoroughbred mare, Claire Dog, an 8 year old rare breed unknown canine, Essie Pearl, sturdy Norwegian Fjord (jack horse) and in addition to a pup she found starving on the side of the highway west of Eldorado.

Bernice comments on "the absence of speed", most of her trip is at about a four mile per hour pace and most nights she is in her tent. A person sees a lot at that pace that is missed at 70-miles per hour.

She and her four four-footed group travel without a support crew, but when they must pass through a city, four-wheeled transportation is required.

In describing her trip she says "our rich and diverse country is embellished by generous neighborly people". Bernice seems to not tire of telling what a beautiful country America is and how welcoming and kind our people are.

Progress of her journey may be followed on her website at www.endofthetrail.com

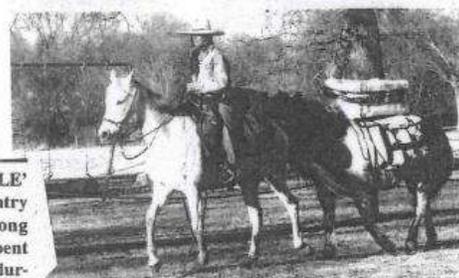


LONG RIDER COMES THROUGH MENARD - Bernice Ende, left and her team of critters (two horses and two dogs) pitched a tent for the night at, right, Litane Kothmann's place in Ft. McKavett while passing through on her 7,000 mile journey.



BREAKFAST 'TEXAS STYLE'

BREAKFAST 'TEXAS STYLE' - Odie Wright prepared a country style breakfast for, right, Long Rider Bernice Ende. Bernice spent the night at the Wright's barn during her recent stay in Menard.



RIDING THE WAY - Bernice Ende heads in for the evening. The Odie Wright family was Menard. She is on a 7,000 mile trip that began in March of 2009 at her home in Trego, Mt and her at Kothmann's Country Store and guided her into town.

February 17, 2010

A former ballet dancer and instructor, Bernice Ende is a long way from home.

Traveling across the United States and into parts of Canada, Ende, who hails from Trego, Montana, is an adventurer at heart. After retiring from teaching ballet and giving riding lessons, Bernice wanted to ride. More specifically, she wanted to be a long rider. To be a long rider, a rider must ride for 1,000 or more consecutive miles by horseback, relying on their own fortitude to survive.

This is her fourth ride, and having already ridden more than 10,000 miles on her previous three treks, this ride will take her over 5,000 miles and will last about two years.

Ende travels with her eight-year-old mare, Honor, her seven-year-old Norwegian Fjord, Essie Pearl, Claire, her “Montana original, origin unknown” dog and a new dog that she picked up somewhere around Andrews, Texas.

Currently she is heading to San Antonio with her crew. This past weekend found her in Lukenbach, and according to Andrea Brantly, who had the chance to speak with her, Ende had never heard the song made famous by Willie Nelson! Campers at Lukenbach invited her to stay for the weekend, and she agreed. She and her traveling companions settled in for good times and good food.

On Sunday, as she headed out, she was traveling down 1888 towards Blanco when the cold front moved in. With wind blowing at high rates of speed, she decided to set up camp in a ditch just off the road and settle in for the cold, frigid night. By morning, the group was on its way again, and wouldn't stop for the night until they reached Blanco. Coming into town on 1623, Ende told Kelly Silvernail that she was heading to Yett Park for the night before moving on to Wimberley on Tuesday.

Brantly said that Ende told her that “Texans have a great zeal for life.” Seems to me that Ende is the one who would know best. Her zeal for life is evident in her quest to follow her dreams of being the Lady Long Rider. For more information on Bernice Ende and to track her progress, visit www.endeofthetrail.com.

Thursday ★ January 28 ★ 2010



The Big Lake Wildcat

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Single Issue
Price
Still Only
75¢
Volume 86
Issue 4

REAGAN COUNTY, TEXAS — BIRTHPLACE OF THE FABULOUS PERMIAN BASIN OIL FIELD

Ende on 7,000 mile trek

Bernice Ende is experiencing life at 4 mph. "At four miles an hour life rushes past us, as we [her team] slowly make our way through a life that once was," she says.

Ms. Ende is a Lady Long Rider. She is currently on her fourth and longest ride yet, one that will take her some 7,000 miles on a 2 1/2 year journey.

She arrived in Big Lake last Tuesday with her faithful four-legged companions, Honor, an 11-year-old thoroughbred; Essie Pearl, a Norwegian Fjord; Claire Dog, the team's mascot and fearless leader, and the newest addition, Frances the pup. The team camped Tuesday and Wednesday night on the 4-H grounds before continuing on Thursday morning.

To see the crew in transit is quite a site. Ende rides Honor, with Essie Pearl, who packs the gear, in tow. Then, there is Claire Dog, who sits atop Essie Pearl in her custom made box, and Frances, who rides in a backpack.

Bernice also walks much of the way, alternating to take some of the load off of her mare. They travel 20-25 miles per day before finding a place to set up camp.

She began this ride March 20, 2009, from her home in Trego, Montana. From Texas, she will continue up

the Appalachian and Adirondack mountains crossing into Canada and back east to Montana, on her final stretch in 2011.

Ende began this new chapter of her life in 2006 as she embarked on her first 2,000 mile journey. She rode from Montana to New Mexico to visit her sister. The ride also gained her eligibility for the Long Riders Guild, an international organization dedicated to preserving the independent, adventurous spirit of the horse and rider. She was invited to join.

In 2006, she ventured out on her second ride of 5,000 miles. Her route took her through much of the western half of the United States - Nebraska, Oklahoma, New Mexico, California, Utah, Nevada, Washington and Idaho, returning home in 2007.

In 2008, they were once again off on a third ride, a 3,000 mile journey. This ride was a little different and more accommodating for Ende, as she now had Essie Pearl, to pack her supplies. This allowed her to carry a tent, a sleeping bag, more supplies and, Claire. Before the addition, Bernice slept on the ground much of the time with a tarp and wool blankets. Claire walked every step of the way.

Her trips are partially funded by sponsors, and

SEE ENDE on PAGE 7



PHOTO BY MANILA HARGRETT

Ende and her team made their way through town last week as she continues her journey.



PHOTO BY MARLA DACKERT

Bernice Ende shows her routes mapped out from her four journeys throughout the United States.

Ende on 7,000 mile trek

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Individual donations, which are often pass-the-hat donations as she speaks at senior citizen centers, schools, and other public functions. She tells her story often on the side of the road and in parking lots, as those passing by will stop for pictures and questions.

Ende functions on a budget of about \$40 per week. She uses a propane stove to prepare meals, which largely consists of rice and beans. All of the team enjoy raw vegetables and fruits.

She relies on the generosity of others to assist with food, noting that she lives from stock tank to stock tank for her girls. But, finding water and shelter is sometimes challenging. She may sleep in a shack, barn, horse trailer or ditch, but she says you have to make the best of a situation sometimes.

In today's world of technology, one might think Bernice has the modern conveniences of GPS, an iPod, and Smartphone. That couldn't be further from the truth. Bernice carries only a digital camera for uploading pictures to her website. She successfully navigates through maps, journals her happenings, and communicates via email and snail mail, when she reaches a destination with public access.

The most common question

she is asked is why she does this. She is quick to tell you that it takes immeasurable faith to do what she is doing. "I ride for many reasons - to remind people of how we once lived and traveled. Seventy miles is not an hour, it's a 3 1/2 day ride for me," she jokes. "I also believe the Long Rider is a legacy to our country, part of our cultural heritage...a representation of our freedom."

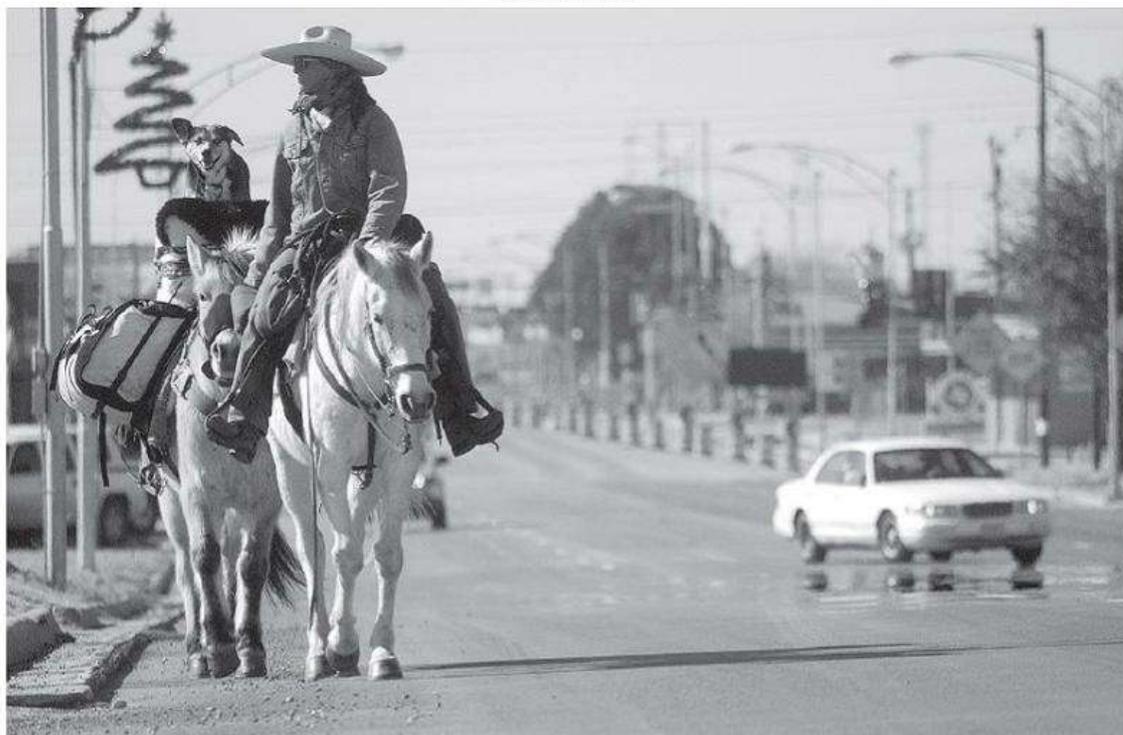
Her rides are dedicated to her mother, Cornelia, whom she says was a great inspiration. Bernice grew up on a dairy farm in Minnesota. She taught classical ballet for 25 years, and also taught riding lessons in Montana before retiring from both in 2003. To date, she has ridden 13,000 miles, all of which her 8-year old companion, Claire Dog has accompanied her.

As Bernice spoke at Trail Blazers last week, she commented that nothing has compared to the hospitality and generosity of West Texas. Her calling card thanks each and everyone who has helped, shown interest and encouragement on her journey. "Our rich and diverse country is embellished by generous neighborly people. I could not have done it without you."

You may follow Bernice's journey on her website:

www.endeofthetrail.com.

LONG RIDER



Bernice Ende and her "team" make their way down East Broadway Tuesday afternoon. They were heading to Tom Tyler's place.

THE LONG HAUL

Long rider throwback Bernice Ende makes her way through Andrews

By SAM KAUFMAN
sam@basinbroadband.com

It would be safe to classify Bernice Ende as an adventurer.

Ende is a long rider throwback in modern, technological times. But the 55-year-old Ende is living the real life, she said. It's a slow and simple life at four miles per hour that presents a whole different perspective.

She may not know where her next meal or drink of water or shelter is coming from, but the adventure aspect keeps her and her two horses and dog going.

They're presently in the midst of a 7,000-mile ride

that began in Trego, Montana, in 2009, and likely won't be finished until 2011. It's the longest of rides yet for this female long rider.

"This is a legendary image that is part of this country's culture and a reminder of freedom," Ende described of her passion.

On Tuesday afternoon, it was an image of stark contrast as Ende was riding one of her horses and pulling another with her dog Claire aboard down construction-riddled Broadway near downtown Andrews. The transportation ways of today were being torn apart and fixed, while the long rider was making her way down



Bernice Ende and her team will be heading to San Antonio.

one side of them.

Ende was heading east about six miles out of town where she and her animals will stay at Tom Tyler's place. Tyler witnessed Ende's mini-animal caravan near Andrews and stopped to talk with her as so many do when they first view the extraordinary image. He promised Ende a bale of hay for her

horses, as well.

"I'm planning on leaving in the morning," she said.

But the anticipated colder weather—which truly isn't all that frigid for a native Montanan—could mean a longer stay, she added.

The previous night Ende and her animals found shelter in an old corral two or

See RIDE Page 14

Ride

Continued from Page 1

three miles west of Andrews, she said. There was even water available for all of them.

That was home for a night, Tom Tyler's residence is next, but after that, Ende isn't certain. It's part of the excitement and challenge of the long rides. There have been days when she and the animals have gone without water.

"We've stayed in ditches, back yards and a lot of rodeo grounds and fairgrounds," Ende noted. "The challenge is to overcome the anxiety of locating food, shelter, water and care of the animals. You just have to jump in and trust and know that something will happen and it does. There's an immense trust and faith involved."

There are also numerous talks Ende gives at anywhere from schools to service clubs and retirement centers through the towns and cities she travels. None of them are pre-arranged. They occur at the spur of the moment when it's learned she's riding through

town.

Different groups of people want to know different things, she added.

"For the school children, it's the inspirational aspect," Ende said. "It's 'The Long Ride of Life.' Senior citizens, on the other hand, want to know the specifics—the miles and distances involved.

"The horse people want to know about equipment," she added. "They want to know how I shoe."

Most of the organizations she visits "pass the hat around," which helps support her rides, she added. It's not uncommon for passersby to stop their vehicles and converse with Ende about Ende's adventures. On Tuesday, a woman got out of her vehicle on Broadway to photograph the group.

The "team," as Ende describes it, consists of her, an 11-year-old thoroughbred mare name Honor, a Norwegian Fjord name Essie Pearl who packs the gear and Claire Dog. Claire is the group's "mascot and fearless leader."

Ende describes the eight-year-old dog as a one-of-a-kind, rare breed of unknown origin.

Ende was raised on a dairy farm in Minnesota and grew up riding. She later moved to Montana where she taught ballet and gave riding lessons. Once she retired from ballet teaching, Ende got an itch to ride, she said.

She made her first long-distance ride of 2,000 miles in 2005 and later went on a 5,000-mile ride. Ende will be heading toward San Antonio once she leaves Andrews. The group will head northeast up the Appalachian and Adirondack Mountains in 2010, before heading toward her home. She's already traveled 2,700 miles.

"Our rich and diverse country is embellished by generous, neighborly people," Ende wrote on a bio card. "To each and every one of you whose path I cross, a hearty Thank You for the help, the interest and the encouragement, I could not have done it without you."

Long rider in town



LEVI HILL/NEWS-SUN

Bernice Ende rides in to Hobbs Monday with her two horses and her companion Claire Dog. Ende has ridden 13,000 miles in the last decade and is in the middle of a 7,000-mile horseback trek.

A rugged life becomes inspiration

■ With no children or husband anymore, Bernice Ende decides the prairie is her home

LEVI HILL
NEWS-SUN

The miles stretched out behind Bernice Ende like a line of 13,000 train cars Monday as she rode into town on her horse Honor with her companion Claire Dog perched beside her on the packhorse Essie Pearl.

Thirteen thousand is how many miles the Royal Academy of Dance trained ballet dancer has rode on horseback since 2004 when she began her first 2,000-mile horseback ride.

Ende, who describes herself as being "old as dirt," didn't hit the road with a grand plan in mind. Instead she was seeking a change, an escape perhaps the open road offered.

"I was living by myself and living a

very rugged life, no electric, and I lived all day long with these children," Ende said of her 10 years leading up to her first ride while living in a rugged Montana home teaching ballet dance during the winters and horseback riding during the summers.

"I was doing these hours of community work and at the end of the day I didn't want to go home," she said. "I had no children or husband. I just didn't want to go home. I never thought this would happen. The day I left for my first ride I cried. It was so scary."

That fear quickly fled and in its place Ende found something she felt she had been missing all her life.

"I don't know how I finished it," she said. "I just stepped out with horse and went. It was very difficult, but by the time I finished my first ride I fell in love. I couldn't think of how I would go back to my normal life. So I went back and prepared for a 5,000-mile ride. This is how I live, that is it."

Ende has ridden a handful of long rides varying in length, but the cur-

rent ride is her longest at 7,000 miles. It has taken her from Montana to Washington state and southeast to central Texas.

She started the ride March 20 and expects to finish sometime in 2011 when she winds back up through the country into Canada and back to Montana.

Some of her companion horses have changed over the rides, but her ever-present companion is Claire Dog. A dog Ende calls a "rare breed of unknown origin."

Claire now spends a portion of each day's ride atop a special saddle on the pack horse Essie Pearl, but for the first few rides she walked the entire distance.

"Claire has been with me from the beginning," Ende said. "She walked the first 7,000 miles."

Ende sleeps in a tent most nights, except when generous strangers offer her a barn or shed — she often refuses to sleep indoors, sharing the burden of the elements with her horses.

SEE RIDER, Page 4

Rider

from PAGE 1

"I was invited inside one night because there was snow on the ground. I didn't want to, but I didn't want to be rude," she said. "The horses came and stood by my window all night."

For meals Ende eats lots of beans and rice — easy to pack and fix foods.

It sounds like a hard life, but Ende doesn't see it as such.

"This is how I live and I'm learning how to be good about it," she said.

Ende averages 25 miles per day on her long trek and often spends a few days in a town speaking to school children, prison inmates or even elderly people in a home. She said her life's purpose now is to inspire

others and show them that dreams should always exist.

"I feel this is the most important thing I can do," she said. "I don't believe this is about me. It is about all of us. The kind of people we are and I am just a reminder of the kind of people we are."

"I am amazed how many people say to me this is something they have always wanted to do," she added. "How often can you hear it and not feel the ache of their captivity or their responsibility? But it is a trade off. I don't have what they have — families, homes and opportunities. You don't want to trade the family for this, but I think we still need room in our lives for our dreams. I hope what I do inspires people to follow their own dreams."

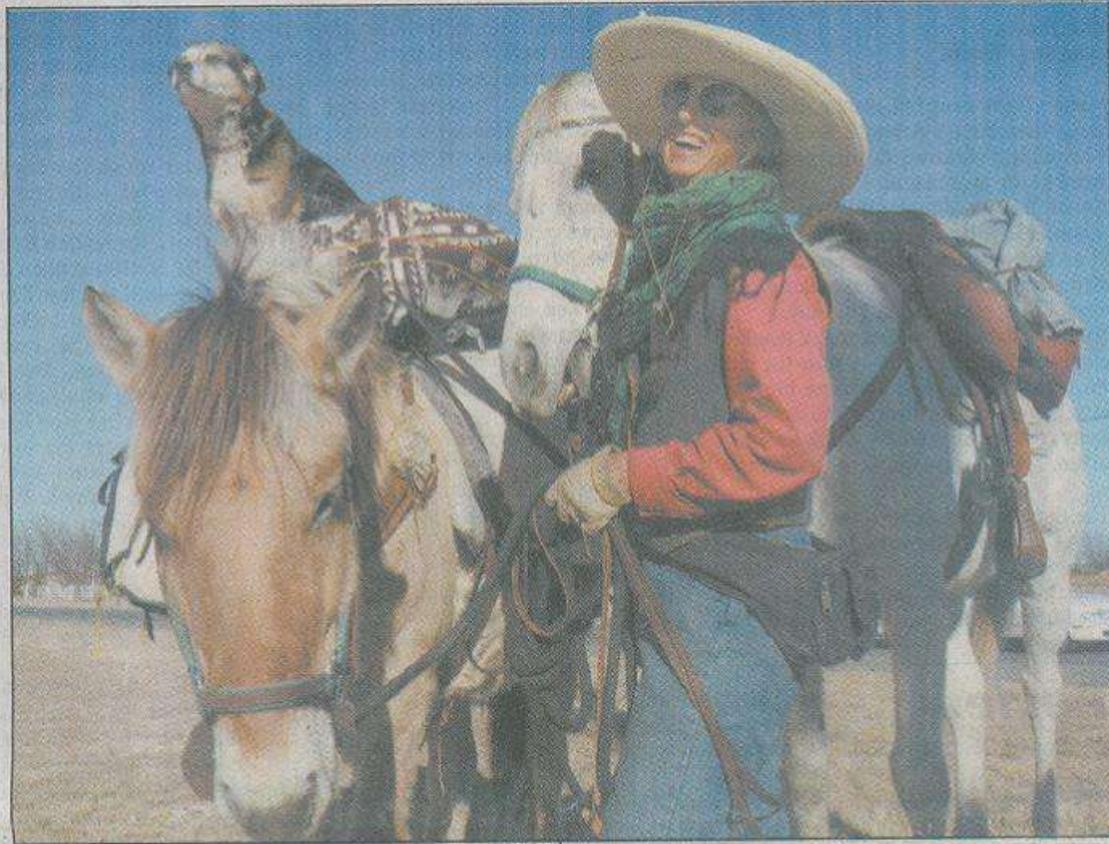
Ende is quick to point out

that her lifestyle is just that — a lifestyle and not a dream — but it is a lifestyle she has found comfort in.

"It was not a dream of mine, but I understand the ache," she said. "This is so much more than I ever could have imagined. I never could have imagined what it would be like to ride a horse thousands of miles."

The interview winds down and it is time for Ende to keep moving. That is no more apparent than by the growls and barks from Claire as she urges the pack on. As they ride out for their next stop Ende adds one more thought to her oration on her life's purpose.

"Live your life to inspire others," she said. "Through living your life to inspire others, you inspire yourself."



Mark Wilson Photo

Bernice Ende of Trego, Mont., takes a break with Claire, Essie Pearl and Honor during a visit to Roswell, Wednesday afternoon, carrying on the tradition of the Long Rider.

Lone, lady traveler conjures images of mythic West's romance, freedom

ANDREW CONE
RECORD STAFF WRITER

Bernice Ende arrived in Roswell at about 1 p.m. Wednesday with two horses and her dog, part of a 7,000-mile journey which will take her to

just about every corner of the U.S. and parts of Canada.

On March 20, Ende left Trego, Mont., with her dog, Claire, and her two horses, Essie Pearl and Honor. She traveled to Portland, Ore., to visit a friend and then headed south.

Since then, she has traveled through Idaho, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico visiting friends and family and camping along the way.

"I must have had 100 people stop

See LADY, Page A3

Lady

Continued from Page A1

me coming into town," she said. "I must have had 300 photographs taken of me, and that's not unusual."

Ende often ponders what it is about her and her animals that attracts people's attention, and said she has come to believe she represents a symbol of freedom.

"It's a legendary and romantic image," she said. "The horse and rider is something that has been with us for a long time."

Ende travels mostly on public highways, and said she hasn't had any problems with the police. "The horse still legally has the right-of-way on the roads," she said.

She earns money along the way by giving inspirational talks and selling CDs that contain music and information about her travels. Ende lives on about \$30 to \$40 a week.

"I don't have a husband and I don't have children," Ende said. "My parents have both passed away and I was at the end of my teaching career when I decided to go for it."

Including her latest trek, Ende has made four cross-country trips to date, all of which have brought her to New Mexico to visit her sister, Mary Ann, who lives in Edgewood. She stayed at her sister's house for a month before continuing her

journey south.

Ende said this is her first time in Roswell, but has already found locals to be friendly and hospitable.

"I ran into the owners of Roswell Livestock and Farm Supply and they're bringing me a bail of hay for the horses and taking me out to lunch tomorrow," she said.

Her latest journey is expected to take two and-one-half years. Ende rides Honor, an 11-year-old thoroughbred mare. Claire rides on a custom-built dog couch perched atop Essie Pearl, an 8-year-old Norwegian Fjord, who also packs the gear. On average, the group travels about 20 miles per day.

Ende plans to camp out at the Eastern New Mexico State Fairgrounds for two nights, before leaving for Hobbs. From there, she plans to continue to San Antonio, Texas, where she will turn northeast and follow a route along the Appalachian Trail up through the Adirondack Mountains and on to Ottawa, Canada.

After reaching Ottawa, she will turn west and return home to Trego. Ende regularly updates her Web site, endeofthetrail.com, which tracks her progress and gives highlights of her journey.

Ende said each trip has involved a real leap of faith.

"I don't know where my water is going to come from. I don't know if there's going to be food that night. I don't always know where I'm going to stay," she said.

acone@roswell-record.com

**Albuquerque Journal article
December 10, 2009**

LONE RIDER

Bernice Ende and her horse cover thousands of miles as they traverse the country, seeking the 'unattainable horizon'

By Rosalie Rayburn Journal Staff Writer

Somewhere in southeastern New Mexico a 55-year-old woman, two horses and a dog are continuing a 7,000-mile journey that will take them across the heartland of the continent.

Bernice Ende and her animal companions began their odyssey eight months ago in the snows of northwestern Montana, spent Thanksgiving in New Mexico, now they're headed for Texas. From there they will trace a route east and north via the Appalachian and Andirondack mountains to Canada, then west to Montana, by mid-2011. Once they return to base in Montana, there will be more open roads, more journeys, following the call of what Ende (pronounced N-dee) calls the "unattainable horizon."

Since 2005, when she began her cross-country rides, Ende has covered about 11,000 miles on horseback; learning to live off the land, shoe her own horses and cope with the constant dangers of the road. Despite the perils and hardships, Ende has no plans to stop. "I don't see myself ending this lifestyle any time soon," Ende says. "I imagine it will be my body that will complain enough to make me stop. I feel there must be another five years left in me."

Dressed in her signature jeans and broad-brimmed sun hat, Ende looks weathered but fit. Her skin is tanned, her blue eyes piercingly intense. The trips began, Ende says, four years ago when she felt drawn to ride down from Montana to visit her sister in Edgewood, and knew it was time to change her life. Trained as a classical ballet teacher, she spent 25 years living in the small community of Trego, Mont., growing her own food, cutting wood for heat and making a subsistence living teaching dance. "It was just time to go," Ende says, "I had no idea that I would ride this long."

Each of her four horse treks has taken her to New Mexico, where she spends time with her older sister, Mary Ann Ende. Mary Ann Ende says she was taken aback by Bernice's initial suggestion to make the trip on horseback. "I think I was just amazed. I didn't know if it was really doable."

Bernice Ende admits the first 2,000-mile trip was the toughest. With only one horse and no tent, she had to sleep on the sheepskins she used beneath her saddle, covered with blankets and a tarp. About 1,000 miles out, after passing through a storm in Wyoming's Red Desert, sore and exhausted, she hit what runners call "the wall." "I was sobbing," Ende says. "I couldn't go any further. I was just tempting myself to give up." The next day, a rancher's daughter spotted the lone horsewoman and the dog and offered them shelter until they were fit enough to go on. "After that, I realized I had fallen in love with this," Ende says. "There was something here I wanted to learn, something I found was buried inside myself. 'I'd been pulled by this undeniable pull to the horizon.'"

As she talks, her voice becomes soft, mesmerizing, like a monologue in a play. Living outdoors, away from the conveniences of houses and motorized transportation, you become acutely aware of your surroundings, Ende says. Preparing for her first journey, she pored over hundreds of maps. Gradually she learned how to navigate, using forest and county roads, railroad lines, power line easements, canal routes, anything to find the shortest route, to cross the rivers and minimize the danger from traffic. “A semi whizzing by at 70 mph just sucks you along.”

Water is a constant challenge. Even with the pack horse she now has, she is able to carry only about 2.5 gallons at a time. She searches out stock tanks, stops at ranches and asks for water whenever she can. Crossing a desert, she has learned to follow a storm. “After a storm you’ve got puddles, and puddles in the desert last days on the packed sand.”

The horses mostly graze along the way. Honor, Ende’s mount, is a 12-year-old Thoroughbred. Her Norwegian Fjord pack horse, Essie Pearl, 7, carries equipment including a gun for personal protection, horse shoeing tools, Claire, her mixed-breed dog, and food. Ende lives mostly on rice and beans. She typically carries molasses, salt, carrots, apples, cabbage — which she shares with the animals — and olive oil. The latter serves as a food additive and a lubricant for saddlery, hooves and skin.

Over the years, she has honed her travel skills. Alternately riding and walking beside her horse, she usually covers between 20 and 30 miles per day, stopping every five days or so for a rest day. Using this routine she can cover about 400 miles before pausing for a longer rest. During the day, she soaks her rice and beans in a water bottle. When she stops she either uses a single-burner propane camp stove or makes a small fire, boils the food for about 10 minutes then wraps the container in her wool blanket to save fuel and let it cook while she makes camp. Her nightly chores include setting up her tent, grooming the horses, cleaning herself and the saddlery. “Everything needs to be kept clean,” she says. “My appearance is very important. I’m in and out of churches and schools and I need to look presentable.”

Talks she gives to groups along the way help bring in enough to support her \$30 to \$40 per week budget. She is frequently invited into homes. She recalls spending several nights in a mobile home with a family west of Albuquerque, followed by invitation to stay at a highend hunting lodge near Magdalena. Everywhere, she says, people are eager to hear her stories. “The horse and rider is such a legendary romantic image. Thousands of people have said they would want to do this. I know how hard this is, but it’s a dream. It’s freedom.” A thick, palm-size notebook is packed with addresses of people she has met along the way. At the end of every trip, she sends them cards to let them know she has made it safely back to base.

Ende's journeys have earned her widespread admiration, but those close to her still have concerns. Mary Ann Ende says, "I recognize what an incredible accomplishment this is. But I still worry about her safety because of the hardships and dangers." Long, dusty trail

Long-distance horseback rider Bernice Ende is on her fourth cross-country trek and has no plans to stop. Though based in northeast Montana, Ende makes a point of visiting her sister in New Mexico on each trip. Here's the short version of her horseback rides so far.

2005: 2,000 miles. Left Montana on May 6 to visit her sister in Edgewood, N.M., returned to base on Aug. 28.

2006-2007: 5,000 miles from Montana to Minneapolis, where she visited family members, to New Mexico, back home via Death Valley, Calif., through Oregon, past Mount St. Helens in Washington state to Montana.

2008: 3,000 miles. Left Montana early February for Needles, Calif., then to Yuma, Phoenix and Flagstaff, Ariz., and on to New Mexico, Kansas, South Dakota, arriving at Montana on Nov. 2.

2009-2011: 7,000 miles. Left Montana on March 20, to Portland, Ore., crossed Sawtooth Mountains in Idaho, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico. From here will head to Texas, via Roswell, northeast to Arkansas, over to the Appalachian and Andirondack mountains to Ottawa, Canada, then west to Montana, planning to arrive midsummer 2011.

Ende keeps a Web site detailing her journeys: www.endeofthetrail.com

Information about longdistance horseback riding is available at www.thelongridersguild.com

Bernice Ende, carrying on the tradition of the long rider

By **MARY BERNARD**
Express Writer

Bernice Ende closes her eyes in a moment of remembrance and begins to tell her story by

spreading her arms wide to signify the expanse of the Minnesota prairie.

"I would ride as far as my little horse would take me," Ende says, explaining her long-ride roots. "My mother would pack food for

me and I would take the whole day for a ride."

She credits her mother as a source of her dream.

"I feel like I was made for the long ride," Ende says, whose first journey took her from her home in Trego, Montana to Albuquerque, N.M. four years ago "I just made up my mind to do a long ride of 2,000 miles to visit my sister."

Ende says she called her sister with news she'd be traveling south riding a 12-year-old Tennessee Walker. Fear of the unknown gripped her before she hung up the phone, saying "I was in tears thinking about the decision I made."

Still, she left her home and ballet dance studio, where she taught for many years, saddled her horse and leashed Claire Dog for the long ride.

That was in 2005. Since then, Ende says she has "crossed the deserts and mountains four times, logging over 12,000 miles either in the saddle or walking alongside the horses."

The current ride finds Ende and Claire Dog traveling with an 11-year-old thoroughbred mare named Honor and a Norwegian Fjord mare named Essie Pearl.

"I share in the life of the horse and they, in mine," Ende says. "Together we are tapped into each other's spirit. It's like a dance."

Still, the animals are dependent upon Ende's meticulous care. The horses, never ridden to exhaustion, remain well-shod, rest frequently and allowed to

graze wherever possible. Claire rides Essie Pearl in a pet bed configured like a couch so the dog can lie down.

"We made Claire's couch in Yakima complete with blanket and soft sides," says Ende, "which I hope to make even deeper to protect her better."

Ende started this year's ride in Trego and headed west to Washington State then through Utah on the way to south central Texas for the winter. The group will head north and east through the Appalachian and Adirondack Mountains and into Canada for the trek west and back to Montana.

The group covers anywhere from 20 to 25 miles a day.

"It will take us two and half years to travel the 7,000 miles of this journey," says Ende, who notes that virtually everything she's ever done has "prepared her for this long ride."

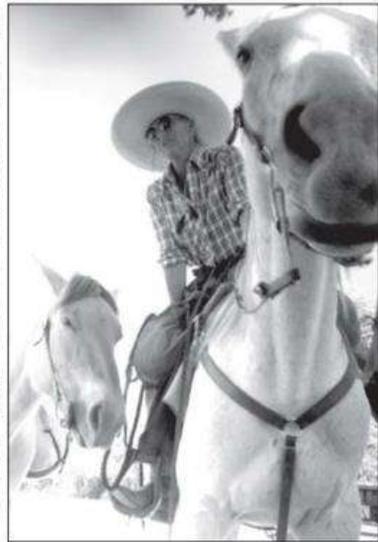
"The long rider is a symbol of freedom," she says. "A historic symbol of the horse and rider. I ride with hundreds of hundred spirits across the country."

Whatever the motivation Ende carries on the tradition of the long rider, Ende is a member of the Long Rider Guild, an international group of equestrian explorers whose member have undertaken rides of 1,000 miles or more.

To track her journey visit Bernice Ende at www.endofthetrail.com or nbernard@vernal.com



A drowsy Essie Pearl snoozes in a stall at Western Park. Essie, a Norwegian Fjord horse, is a breed native to Norway's rocky mountains, which makes her ideal for the long ride. (Mary Bernard/Vernal Express)



Ende pauses for directions to Western Park; to give her horses a few days rest, on her 7,000-mile-long trek across country. Honor an 11-year-old thoroughbred noses into the camera while Essie Pearl takes a quick nap. (Mary Bernard/Vernal Express)

NCLB SCORES

Eagle View makes progress

By **VAN PRESTON**
Utah Basin Standard

Eighty-seven percent of Utah schools met requirements of the No Child Left Behind act for 2009, as compared to 80 percent last year. In Duchesne County, 93

percent of the schools received passing marks on the Adequate Yearly Progress reports released Sept. 15.

"We did well," said Duchesne County Schools Superintendent John Aland, referring to the fact that 13 out of the district's 14

district schools passed.

The only school with a failing grade was Union High School, the largest high school in the district. In the six years since testing began, Union has only failed once before, in 2007, and just like this year, that low score was due to a poor showing by students in Language Arts.

Jack Bell, assistant superintendent for the Duchesne County School District and testing director, tried to provide some perspective about the test



Claire Dog, Ende's mixed breed companion dog, rests during the heat of the day and is a frequent rider of Essie Pearl in her special-made riding couch. (Mary Bernard/Vernal Express)

DON'T DO IT!



A 7,000-MILE RIDE--Long Rider Bernice Ende of Trego, Montana passed through Soda Springs Wednesday, Aug. 19, on a 7,000 mile ride over two-and-a-half years that will take her from Montana to the West Coast, down to Texas, up along the Appalachians, around the Great Lakes and across Canada to Montana. She has ridden over 12,000 miles in the past 12 years. Travelling with her are Honor, her thoroughbred mare, Essie Pearl, a Norwegian Fjord for the pack horse, and dog Claire, who often rides on the pack saddle.

Long Rider to Cover 7,000-Mile Loop of U.S. and Canada

A journey that will take 2.5 years and cover 7,000 miles brought Bernice Ende through Soda Springs and to the Caribou Senior Citizens Center for lunch Wednesday, Aug. 19--along with her faithful companions, a dog and two horses.

Ende, a tall, thin woman with elegance and tanned skin, was raised on a dairy farm in Minnesota. After a career in classical ballet and teaching dance, she moved to a cabin on a mountainside in northwest Montana, continuing to teach ballet and giving riding lessons.

When she retired in 2003, her focus changed to riding and the open road.

On the journey with her is Claire, a unique dog of "unknown origin" who she found among a litter abandoned in a ditch. Claire is a fearless leader, Ende said, and often rides on top of the pack saddle to ease the wear and tear on her pads.

The saddle horse is Honor, a thoroughbred mare who she saved from "going to dog food" and who has "always given 100 percent," Ende noted about the mare out of Native Dancer stock.

Essie Pearl isn't really your typical pack horse, but fits right in with the rest of the "nontypical" outfit. She is a 7-year-old Norwegian Fjord who carries the home away from home.

The pack horse allows Ende to

travel further between stops, but adds to additional maintenance and work along the trail with another horse.

Ende told the group at the Senior Center, where she stopped to give a talk and eat lunch, that all her rides are dedicated to her mother, Cornelia Ende. But she also rides to carry on the spirit of the long rider.

"Thousands of people have said, 'I'd love to ride with you,'" she told the seniors.

"It's not easy and it's dangerous and it is dirty."

But the upside is defined by words like freedom, a simpler and slower life, courage and independence. And the former ballet dance instructor notes it is part of our culture and heritage that needs to be carried on.

She travels about 25 miles a day and may cover 100 miles before taking a couple of days off to graze the horses, clean up the tack, and take a rest.

The long rider will be heading towards Montpelier and will lay up a couple of days. It seems she got kicked in the ribs on her back when the horses spooked at some vehicles and she got tangled in the stakeout rope and went down with the horse.

When asked, she confided to the seniors that she does carry a Smith and Wesson revolver. "I'm not afraid of what's out there, but there are some crazies around.

"I meet people like you every where I go. I've never been yelled at and I do trespass. I need water and I may have to crawl through a fence to get some to carry back," she said about very understanding landowners who could care less when she explains to them what she is doing and what her needs are.

Ende does her own horseshoeing but does not claim to be much of a farrier. She has the shoes hard surfaced by a blacksmith or welder before putting them on the horses. The hard surfacing allows the shoes to wear much longer on the pavements and hard roads she travels.

She carries a small supply of horseshoeing materials and vet supplies and she oils the horses' hooves daily to keep them from drying out and cracking. Bugs can be a real problem and Ende has face masks for the horses and bed sheets to cover them that are treated with a special herbal insecticide.

The horses and dog eat a lot of what she does--carrots, potatoes, apples, cucumbers, or cabbage. Her philosophy is it saves on having to pack grain or special horse feed or dog food for Claire. The horses were in good flesh and the dog looked no worse for the wear, either.

Ende takes time to give talks to groups and schools as she goes, explaining what she does and the why of it.

Long Rider gallops through life

Brandy Stagle
Staff reporter

When Bob Cossman met Bernice Ende, she was on the last leg of a 5,000 mile horseback ride through rugged country.

"And I'm sure I looked it," she said, with an easy laugh and wide grin sparkling under the brim of her straw hat.

Cossman, who was on a camping trip with friends just north of Mt. Adams at the time, invited Ende to their camp. The two struck up an amiable conversation and became fast friends.

Fast forward two years and Ende is lounging in a lawn chair in front of the Cossman's Battle Ground home. It's rare for her to make repeat stops, she said, but for the Cossmans she made an exception.

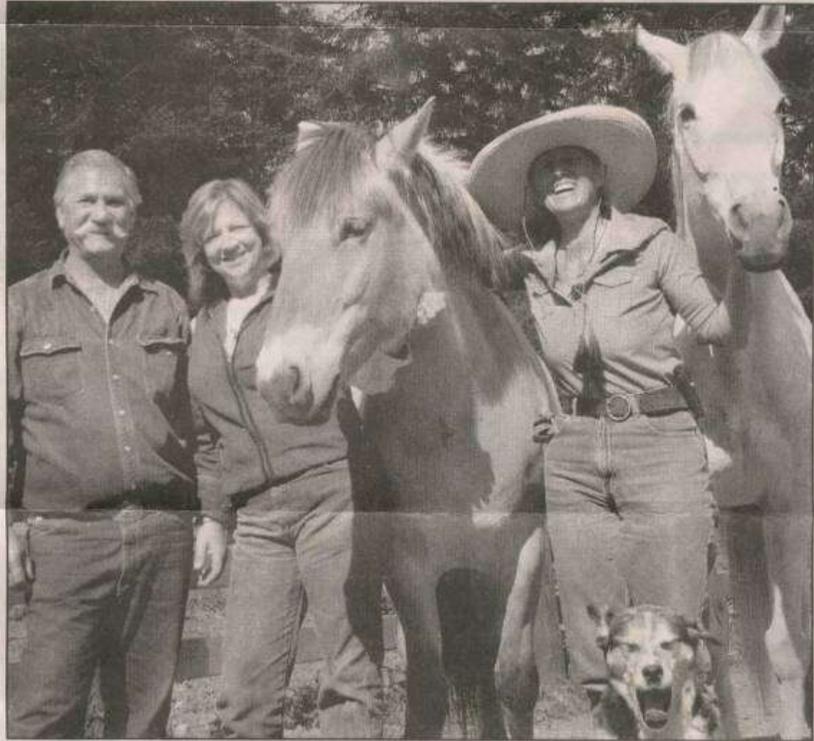
Also known as Lady Long Rider, Ende has covered over 10,000 miles on Honor, her 11-year-old thoroughbred mare, Essie Pearl, a Norwegian Fjord who packs the gear, and her 8-year-old dog, Claire. The entourage have embarked on a new 7,000-mile cross-country trek starting in Trego, MT, looping through the southwest, up the Appalachian and Adirondack mountains into Canada before returning home. The journey should take about 2.5 years.

Riding a horse across the nation is physically demanding work, but Ende said there is no way to compare the way she experiences the countryside.

"You know how some people say they have their feet on the ground," she said. "Well, I have four feet on the ground. I'm connected. I make it about 20-25 miles on a good day."

At the end of that day, Ende faces sleeping in a ditch, a shack, on rodeo grounds or "wherever the dice falls," she said. And on the good days, those dice lead to connections with people such as the Cossmans.

Ende taught ballet in Montana for 25 years before setting out on the trail. Her students danced in a studio that was warmed by a wood stove in bitter winters, and in the summer



BATTLE GROUND residents Bob and Jeanne Cossman welcomed "lady long rider" Bernice Ende to their home. Ende has traveled 10,000 miles on horseback.

months she taught riding lessons. Nobody had much money, and the students demanded more and more of her time.

Finally, Ende said enough. Having practiced a way to switch off her horses on long rides at a Tennessee Valley Horse ranch, she began to envision a new chapter in life.

"There was no husband, no kids, and I decided one day very simply, I would go and see my sister," she said.

It took Ende six months to prepare for the 2,000 mile ride to Albuquerque, NM, and she wasn't about to let anything stop her.

"I had never gone on a ride like that," she said. "It was never a lifetime dream of mine. It just came to me suddenly, and I was very sure of it. I didn't have

the money, the tack, but I wasn't going to let that get in my way."

She made it about 1,000 miles before breaking down on her knees, she said. But she wouldn't turn back. Ende found a ranch where she could rest for a few days before heading back

out on the trail.

Asking for help from strangers was terrifying at first, she said. She worried that people would laugh at her or would refuse to help. Before she had left, friends and family had filled her head with all of the



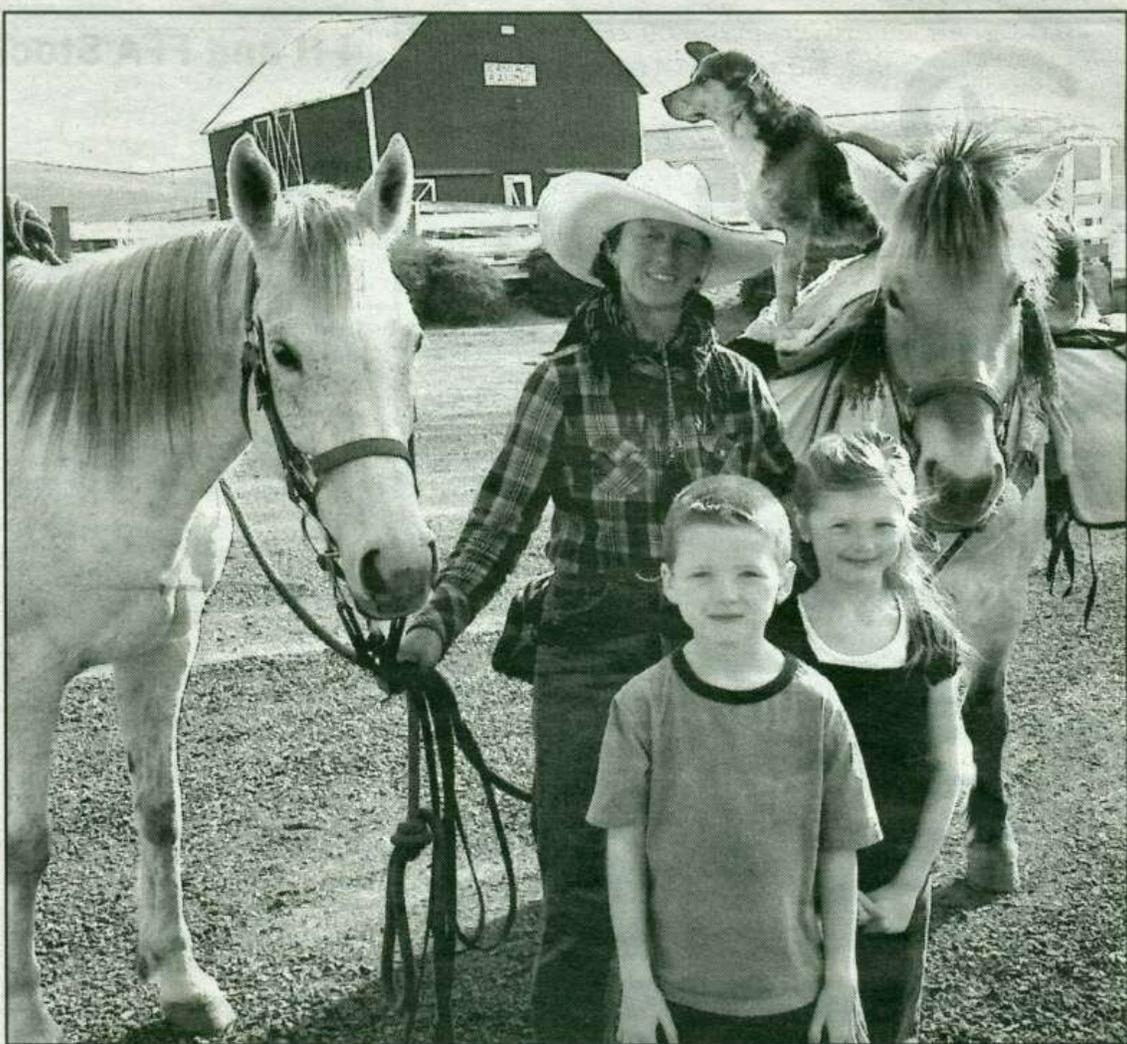


PHOTO BY ERICA WILLSON

Long Rider makes her way to John Wayne Trail on 7,000 mile journey

Mary Kate and Ryan Willson became acquainted with Long Rider Bernice Ende and her traveling companions while riding along the Gene Webb Road west of St. John. Ende planned to follow the John Wayne Trail from Ewan to Ritzville. Ende told the Ritzville Journal that she began a 7,000 mile cross country journey on March 20, in Tego, Mont. She has logged over 10,000 miles across the country with her four-legged companions.

Pictured here are Honor, a thoroughbred mare; Essie Pearl, a seven-year-old Norwegian Fjord; and Claire, the entourage's canine leader. According to Ende's website this long ride will take two and a half years to complete. She started in the northwest corner of Montana and will travel west to the mouth of the Columbia River. Her long ride will take her down to south central Texas, up through the Appalachian Mountains past the Canadian Border. She plans to ride west back to Montana through the Canadian provinces.

Ende said she retired from a 25 year career in classical ballet and teaching dance in 2003. Since then she has completed three long rides each time traveling at least 2,000 miles.

Tradition's gait-keeper

Horsewoman's 7,000-mile route takes her through the Valley
— all in the name of honoring our nation's riding roots



Bernice Ende's entourage includes a Thoroughbred named Honor, a pack horse named Essie Pearl and a dog named Claire. The dog also rides horseback.

MORE ON THE WEB

For more information about Bernice Ende, go to www.endofthetrail.com.

By PHIL FEROLITO
YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

WHITE SWAN — Standing outside the Cougar Den restaurant on Monday, Liz Gwinn recalled the day she found Bernice Ende camping atop Signal Peak in the closed section of the Yakama reservation.

Gwinn was picking huckleberries with her mother and a friend when she came across Ende, who was riding horseback from her home in Trego, Mont., to see her sister in Albuquerque, N.M.

"She looked pretty thirsty," Gwinn recalled.

The three women took Ende to their Harrah home, where they fed her and gave her a place to sleep.

"And she sleeps outside with the horses," Gwinn quipped.

After three days, they parted ways. That was two years ago.

Now Ende, who describes herself as "well on my way to 60," is on yet another

journey that's taken her back to the Lower Valley.

A long rider, Ende has traveled thousands of miles cross-country on horseback on various trips.

In March, she embarked on a 2½-year, 7,000-mile ride from her home that will loop across the country.

She's now headed for the mouth of the Columbia River. Once there, she'll head south to Texas before following the Appalachian Mountains to Canada and eventually returning to Montana.

ON FRIDAY, HER PATH crossed Gwinn's again.

On Monday, they again parted ways at the Cougar Den, where passers-by asked Ende if they could take pictures.

Ende was clad in blue jeans and matching jacket and a straw hat and boots.

A handful of students gathered

SEE RIDER PAGE 3B

RIDER/Averages 25 miles per day

Continued from Page 1B

around her horses — a Thoroughbred named Honor and a Norwegian Fjord named Essie Pearl — and asked if they could pet them.

Ende's dog, Claire, who also rides horseback, nudged students, seeking some affection.

"This is like every stop," Ende said of the interest in her horses.

White Swan resident Blanch Williams said she rushed to the Cougar Den just to meet Ende after seeing her on the news.

Williams said she was amazed by Ende's courage at being a woman taking on such a journey.

"I believe God is with her," Williams said.

Williams wrapped her arms around Ende, uttering

a prayer in her ear and wishing her well on her journey.

The retired teacher said she was raised around horses and takes long journeys on horseback to remind everyone of the nation's roots.

"The long ride and the long rider is a legacy to this country," she said. "It's still represents something important to all of us: freedom."

LONG RIDERS is a worldwide a group of men and women who travel horseback on various excursions to explore the countryside and tell others of their adventures. She regularly posts details of her travel on a web page.

Ende travels about 25 miles a day, and often sleeps

in backyards, fairgrounds and empty corrals. Most people she comes in contact with are helpful, offering her food, water and a place to camp, she said.

After students began going about their business again, Ende began walking her horses along Signal Peak Road toward the Cascades. Like before, she received permission from the tribe to camp at the guard gate of the closed section of the reservation and pass through.

She carries no cell phone nor relies on any electronic navigating systems.

"I'm a modern-day rider, but what I'm doing is very old."

● Phil Ferolito can be reached at 577-7749 or pterolito@yakimaherald.com.

Ende having a great ride as 7,000-trek across U.S. continues

By CONOR CHRISTOFFERSON
Staff writer

SANDPOINT — To say Bernice Ende enjoys horseback riding would be a massive understatement.

Ende, a Trego, Mont., native and former ballet dancer, has spent the last several years riding her horse from one end of the country to the other, racking up more than 10,000 miles in the process. A rare breed, Ende is a "long rider," a title reserved only for those who can claim rides of 2,000 miles or longer.

After completing a 5,000-mile trek in 2007, Ende is in the early stages of her most ambitious ride to date, a staggering 7,000-mile trip that will take her across the United States and into Canada before returning to Montana in

2011.

Long riding, though inherently fun, is not a hobby or leisure activity for Ende. While admitting that it is difficult to explain, Ende sees the practice more as a philosophical way of living, and she said everyone has their own long ride.

During her recent stop in Sandpoint, Ende said everyone is responsible for navigating their own journey through life.

"How do you ride the long ride?" she said. "Isn't that the question for all of us?"

With her mare, Honor, a Norwegian Fjord named Essie Pearl and a dog named Claire as her traveling partners, Ende has a lot of time to ponder the bigger questions in life.



Montana's Bernice Ende recently embarked on a 7,000-mile horseback trip across the country.

—Photo by CONOR CHRISTOFFERSON

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Her travels have taken her through barren wastelands as well as big cities, but Ende said it is her time in the nation's many small towns that fuels her journey.

"The quality of small towns is pretty true. I still find people that care about each other and live the right way, and that really blows me away," she said. "The reality is not what you get from TV or radio. Our country is made up of really good people."

Ende survives mostly on the kindness of the strangers she meets along the way,

and she said she's found an abundance of kind strangers in every town she visits. When not riding, Ende reaches out to others through public speaking to share some of the many insights she has picked up along the way.

Despite traveling through extremely rugged terrain and sleeping outside in harsh weather, Ende said she is never scared on her rides, although she does face challenges.

"Not knowing is the most challenging part. Not knowing where the next food will come from or water or shelter," she said. "You have to believe that somehow you'll be provided for or you'll be consumed with anxiety."

Sleeping outside with a couple of horses and a dog while eating what she lovingly describes as "gruel" might not seem like an ideal lifestyle to most, but Ende said she wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

Perhaps the quote written on the inside roof of her small tent best sums up Ende's feeling: "I love my life as a lady long rider," it reads.

To learn more about Ende's long ride and for periodic

updates, visit www.endeofthet-rail.com

The Ritzville Adams County Journal

May 7, 2009

Lady Long Rider: Ende embarks on 7,000-mile ride

By Jennifer Larsen

News editor

Journal photo by Jennifer Larsen

RIDER EXTRAORDINAIRE. Claire, the canine leader of this foursome, announces it's time to leave as Bernice Ende, Long Riders' Guild member known as the "Lady Long Rider," leads her packhorse Essie Pearl (left) and her mount, Honor, from the Lind Lions Club Rodeo Arena for a speaking engagement at the Lind Senior Center on April 23. Ende is on her fourth long ride, a trek of 7,000 miles that began in Montana in mid-March.

She sits at her makeshift campsite as Claire rustles about in the tall grasses, sniffing out some varmint. Honor and Essie Pearl are out in the pasture, grazing on the fresh spring growth indicative to Eastern Adams County in early spring. Barely visible under a wide-brimmed hat and a complete covering of clothing, Bernice Ende greets one and all with a quick smile after agilely leaping to her feet from the ground.

Bernice is instantly the hostess, offering something to drink or eat to her guest – water, coffee, whatever else she might rustle up from the tent that's pitched on a small cement pad at the Lind Lions Club Rodeo Arena.

Stacked next to the tent are two large packs. In front of the tent is Bernice's 'kitchen' – a small saucepan and small camp stove. She looks to the land for nourishment – water crest, lamb's quarters, dandelions and nettles are currently in season.

She tries to carry potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, beef jerky, tea, oatmeal and mineral salt for the horses, which eat raw foods as much as possible.

Sounds a bit rougher than 'roughin' it,' but Bernice is in her element and wouldn't have it any other way.

Bernice is a Long Rider, a title reserved for riders who have completed a continuous ride of at least 1,000 miles, and has embarked on her fourth long ride. She and her four-legged companions – Honor, a thoroughbred mare; Essie Pearl, a seven-year-old Norwegian Fjord purchased for last year's ride; and Claire, the entourage's canine leader – began the trek that would take them on a 7,000-mile cross-country journey on March 20 in Trego, Mont.

The first month of their journey was spent crossing Montana, Idaho and Washington states heading toward the mouth of the Columbia River at Naselle, Wash., for a friend's 89th birthday party.

She moseyed into Adams County on the John Wayne Trail on April 20, stopping for directions in Marengo. Pat Hennings directed her to the Benge-Ralston Road, and Bernice spent the night on Cow Creek where she bathed and shod one of the horses.

After a night's rest, Bernice met Steve Taylor, who introduced her to Colleen Ruzicka, who in turn contacted Dorothy Allert.

Bernice, after setting up camp at Pizarro Station on the Lind-Ralston Road, met Louis Allert, who was working on irrigation pipes in the field.

Louis hauled water to the campsite and later grilled hamburgers for the evening meal. A filling breakfast at Dorothy's started the day on April 22, when Bernice rode into Lind.

Numerous people spied Bernice trekking through the county. It wasn't hard to spot the rider – a packhorse, a white mare and a dog who's usually hitching a ride on one of the two mounts.

Pat Stark of Washtucna called on Bernice at Lind. The duo met during the rider's 16-month journey in 2007.

While in Lind, Bernice shared her experiences and insight with Lind Elementary School students on April 22 and area residents the following day at the Lind Senior Center.

Public speaking and casual conversations are Bernice's trade, something she does readily and with a smile. On every leg of the journey, she speaks at community centers, schools, reservations and social gatherings to encourage others to 'live the dream,' move beyond their fears and find freedom, as she has as a Long Rider.

She's reminded daily "that our country is great, filled with great people." Each long ride is possible through the generosity of those she meets on the trail. She's learned how to repair and make everything, including learning how to shoe horses. She has no cell phone, but does carry a digital camera to post images to her Web site.

"The horse and rider is an image of freedom," she said. "The Long Rider is a part of our cultural heritage. It's a legacy to our country. I think it's worth having a horse and rider riding off in the sunset to remind us that we didn't always travel at 70 miles per hour. It takes three days to ride 70 miles."

Each long ride covers thousands of miles and landscapes varying from barren range to steep mountain trails, yet it's the journey – and yes, occupation – Bernice has chosen to pursue.

She looks to her childhood, raised on a dairy farm in Minnesota with riding an integral part as the reason to choose the life of a Long Rider.

When she retired from a 25-year career in classical ballet and teaching dance in 2003, Bernice returned to riding.

Most riders do one, maybe two long rides, Bernice explained. For most, it's the journey of a lifetime, to return to 'normal' life after completing a long ride.

"It's not about getting back for me. It's about this," she said, "talking and meeting the people." She carries a small notepad on every long ride, writing down peoples' names and how she met them. At the end of each month, Bernice sends thank you notes to those people.

"I couldn't do this without them," she said. "It's not about me riding for a cause. It has to be more than that. It encompasses more... I've had thousands of people climb in my saddle vicariously and ride with me."

The first long ride of more than 2,000 miles in 2005 was to visit her sister in Albuquerque, N.M. Although Bernice was new to the long rider life, "By the time I finished that ride, I knew I found what I wanted to do."

After that first long ride, the Long Riders Guild, an international organization dedicated to preserving the independent, adventurous spirit of the horse and rider, invited Bernice to join.

Bernice just completed a 3,000-mile ride last fall, taking her total miles ridden to 10,000. The 5,000-mile ride in 2006-2007 allowed Bernice the opportunity to broaden her experience as well as launch a public speaking endeavor to encourage people, especially women, "to go beyond their fears" and pursue their dreams.

After the 2006-2007 ride, Bernice wrote about the experience on her Web site at <http://www.endeofthetrail.com>. She departed on her second long ride of 5,000 miles stretched through 14 states in May 2006 and ending on Sept. 22, 2007.

"I have said many times before that I've returned with a greater appreciation for our country than when I left.

"Yes, perhaps I did see the best of America, the heart of America. Our small towns, rural communities, homes and families that reflected goodness and generosity...

"Why do I ride these long rides? Many reasons I suppose. Some private, some personal. I do believe the Long Rider is a legacy to our country. It represents a quality of time, space and freedom the human heart will forever seek.

"I simply carry on the tradition. The tradition of the Long Rider."