

June 2, 2013

Hello World!

A challenger for the crown! Say, "What?" I watched a teaser for the news announcing a cross-country skateboard attempt by a young man. That is worth opening a bag of canteen-bought popcorn. I will munch on it in celebration of a dreamer. Not in the sense that his goal is not obtainable, but on the contrary, because all grand achievements begin with a dream.

I said, "Challenger," because in 1976, to commemorate our country's bicentennial, I strapped on a 50-pound backpack containing clothes and energy bars and in 18 days I skateboarded from the Oregon-California border to Dana Point in southern California. It was 920 of the most twisting, turning, and incredibly breathtaking miles of the Pacific Coast Highway that could be imagined.

My body ached. I wore out five pair of shoes. I lost 20 pounds. I met strange and hospitable people. Then as I crossed the finish line, and the news flash bulbs went off, I realized my dream.

Over the last 37 years I have watched would-be champions skateboard 275 and 610 miles, but none to my knowledge have surpassed 920. These young men did their best, and if they had known of my feat, possibly they would have gone farther.

I said, "If they had known," because it is obscure.

At the conclusion of my trip, Hobie Skateboards, the company that sponsored me, submitted documentation to The Guinness Book of World Records. Their reply was: At this time, skateboarding is not a worldwide activity. Therefore, your accomplishment does not meet our criteria for inclusion. Regardless of this decision, congratulations. And with that I went on to other unfortunate things.

At 52-years of age, I momentarily look back on fond memories, and sincerely wish the challenger a wonderful adventure. These days, my focus is still on a dream. That is to make amends to all who I have caused pain, or at the minimum, to let them know I am trying. Will I succeed? That is not the question because no finish line exists to cross. Will my attempt become obscure? Possibly, but if one person's pain is eased then that feat will live on forever.

Thanks for checking in on me.

Cordially,

Gregory Barnes Watson

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Novel: A Thundering Wind

Journal: A Year in a Life Sentence

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