



25 September 1991

**An Account of the
Lost Coast Journey
or
The Grand Hodge-
Podge
of Nineteenth
Century Fiction
with
Special Apologies
to
Robert Louis
Stevenson**

by Geoff Bower

Chapter One: The Adventure Begins

The Company is Joined -- Bidding Farewell to Friends and Family -- The Company Sets Forth -- A Drive Through the Fog -- Camping

Herein lies the story of the adventure and of the five bold adventurers who journeyed to the Lost Coast of Northern California in the region of the Sinkyone State Park. The company was first joined on the second Wednesday of September and consisted of Captain Josh and First Mate Carolyn, with whom, reader, I am sure you are familiar, Peter, a UC Davis man moved to Berkeley, Caroline, an Aussie, and your narrator, newly arrived from the Eastern Coast and ready for adventure. (It may have been Captain Carolyn and First Mate Josh, for all we know. At any rate, we may be certain that they were indeed mates, of which more will be said later.) Together we wished to follow a coastal trail that, legend has it, was first blazed by the great explorer Sinkyone himself. There was promise of rugged hills, beautiful coastlines and strange wilde beasts. We were not to be disappointed.

After bidding farewell to friends and family at the Friday frisbee match, we set forth with gaiety in our hearts. The journey to the trailhead was to be made in the comfort of a Volkswagen station wagon with Josh at the wheel. Along the way we cheered ourselves with tales of faraway lands. All agreed that a journey

to Australia, the 'Land down under,' would be most pleasant. As night gathered, our cruiser was soon enveloped in fog and we were nearly blind, spotting patches of road and glimpses of great trees to the side. Finally, after much driving we made a camp. Here the astronomers in our troop attempted to gaze upon the stars through the fog, a pursuit that would occupy their energies for the duration of our journey whenever night fell. This effort failing, all settled for a restful night. In the distance, the great ocean could be heard to roar.

Chapter Two: Into the Mist

Waking to Golf Balls -- Carolyn Cooks on Credit -- The Hikers Set Forth -- Peering Into the Fog -- The Cliffs and the Dead Sea Lion -- Camping Under Redwoods -- Psychedelic Drugs -- Some Serious Hanky Panky

We awoke to find ourselves sharing our campsite with a tribe of natives. A number among these amused themselves with the hitting of small white balls across a field with a club, a sport which in their strange tongue they named 'golf.'

Breakfast was begun under the hand of Captain/Mate Carolyn. Unfortunately, we were ill-prepared for the rigors of this uncivilized lifestyle. Hasty planning and a hurried departure left us without an essential of wilderness survival: a spatula. 'The horror, the horror...,' Carolyn was heard to whisper as freshly poured pan cakes sizzled on the fire before her. Ingenuity was to the rescue, though, and soon Carolyn was joyously flipping those same cakes with the aid of a pair of unwanted credit cards,. This provoked much jollity and 'Don't leave home without it' was certainly heard more than once.

This meal accomplished, we began our trek, only an hour before midday.

Quickly ascending into the coast, we found ourselves in a wonderland. Dense fog surrounded us, obscuring any view of the ocean that we could so plainly hear below. Trees rose out of the mist like ships from the fog. Some among us (well, at least one among us) thought that perhaps our gazing off into this damp denseness was but a mirror of a soul's Search for Truth through the Shroud of Night. Others thought this was a bunch of hooey.

Pressing onward, we found ourselves rising above the fog,. Below us, the mist stretched over that Pacific Ocean as an ocean of mist, wrapping its grey arms around the shoulders of mountains. Here we rested to enjoy this Beauty and bask in the warm sunshine before we descended the opposite slope. The sky was exceedingly blue.

This, then, was the regular pattern of our journey. A climb through shrouds of fog to a pinnacle that stood above the clouds followed by a quick descent into the next valley. Only on rare occasions did the fog lift sufficiently to allow us a glimpse of the thunderous ocean beneath us, but when it did so there was great amazement.

Riverbeds at the base of the valleys afforded us excellent opportunities to reach the shores of that creature. On many occasions we took the tortuous path of these small, but delightfully burbling brooks to the sandy edge of the sea. And there we were treated to many wonders: waves that carried black sand and rose the height of a man, caves and cliffs carved by the pounding force of Nature, giant strands of kelp longer than a bullwhip, pelicans and other unusual birds of the air, and, most marvelous of all to this observer, Sea Lions, monstrous and wild. These great creatures swam asea of us. Only once did I have the opportunity to gaze fully upon their enormity. At the base of Anderson Gulch we came across

one washed ashore, dead and rotting. The attraction to its Beauty nearly equaled the repulsion to its odor (nearly, I say).

So on that second evening we camped under the Giant Sequoias that grew there common as maple and oak in my native land. This location was indeed remote -- we had seen less than a handful of people on our day's journey.

As the evening wore down and we digested our meal of roast Sea Lion and wild Boar (OK, vegetables and couscous), talk turned, as it often does in such cases, to the topic of psychedelic drugs. Various tales were told until it was mentioned that if one rubbed one's eyes in the proper fashion, geometrical shapes of all design would materialize. This claim was hardly out of the speaker's mouth before Caroline was to claim, 'Eureka! It works!' Soon all felt compelled to participate in this mind-altering behavior.

Our time passed pleasantly there and not long after the sun had set, the company settled itself for bed. As we gazed on the night constellations and listened to the murmurings of Little Jackass Creek, a woman's exclamation was overheard (this is the sex part), 'Hey, you can't put your hands there if they're cold!' This led to considerable embarrassment upon the part of two well-known travelers.

Chapter Three: The Way Home

A Long Sleep -- Return to the Ocean -- Hiking South -- Blah Blah Blah -- Etc Etc Etc

So, we slept a lot, went down to the ocean for a while, hung out and watched the waves. We did the beach. Then we left. (How did these 19th century people keep up this style for an entire book?) It was late when we left (1pm). We walked for a while. We stopped at a stream named Dark Creek. Josh, Peter and I followed the stream down to the ocean which was fun.

At the base of the stream was an enormous cliff that we estimated to be over 100 feet above sea level. We could see the stream spout off the edge of the cliff. Out in the water was an enormous shit-covered rock called Big White Rock. This was pretty neat. There were a lot of birds. I highly recommend this viewpoint. So then we hiked out. On our way home we stopped at an all-you-can-eat place in Fort Bragg on Redwood Street. I think it was called the Redwood Kitchen, but I'm not sure. Buffet was about \$8 but they had a lot of food, including ribs, chicken, fish and a pretty good salad bar. We stuffed ourselves.

And we left Friday the 13th

by M.A. Minard

Since this is Berkeley, I had gone to visit the tyromancer before the trip. She lives in a squalid windowless room above Telegraph, with all the furniture done in purple velvet and a real Rembrant still life (of cheese, of course) on the wall. By candlelight she stared at the odiferous hunk of Gouda I brought, examining the intricate pattern of blue and green mold. After a time she began to intone darkly: "You are about to undertake a journey ... a long and arduous journey. The four elements will not be where you expect them. And oh, beware of Friday the Thirteenth! This year," <dramatic pause>, "it falls on a Saturday! Dark spirits abound, and they are coursing through the ether to wreak havoc on your voyage!" No doubt about it, she really is worth the ten bucks.

I kept the dire predictions to myself and went home to pack. We met at Willard, dined on luscious Spaghetti á Dee Dee. Later that night, we piled into cars and set off for Yosemite. My own little car had a

great deal of difficulty with the mountains, but we arrived safely at the camp.

The next day, we reached the park gates after a very short drive. Glenn had called ahead to check on conditions, and we expected to hit the trail at about 10:30. Matt was to catch up with us later on his motorcycle. The weather was beautiful and we were set. Until the rangers kindly informed us that they had changed plans, they were going to start a small 110 acre fire on our trail to Lake Vernon and could we find something else to do please? We compromised on a different trail to Laurel Lake, leaving notes for Matt scattered hither and yon. (Mostly yon, because we kept taking the wrong roads. My car was not too happy ... smoking brakes in the mountains are not a good sign.) Eventually, at about 1:30, we reached the gate of the park. Matt still hadn't caught up with us, which was strange. We thought that his motorcycle might not be able to take the road, but it turned out that he had just been following our directions and so was off on a completely different road.

We finally got started, setting a brisk pace from lake Eleanor in order to reach the lake by sunset. The hike was indescribably beautiful, with crystalline lakes and oaks and pines and the odd garter snake. And mountains and big rocks and all that other stuff we all love to see. We didn't encounter anyone at all along the way.

Of course, we also took the wrong trail. This was good, because it meant that we would have different scenery on the way up than on the way down. Whether we would make it to camp by dark remained to be seen. But we found the right trail and in the process got a view of Hetch Hetchy we might otherwise have missed. So we jogged up the mountainside, racing the sun. We might have even made it if the aforementioned forest fire hadn't

decided to claim part of our trail. It was eerie and awesome and majestic, and also a trifle scary. When a tree falls in the forest, it does make a sound. Sort of like a cannon. But it delayed us just enough that we were stuck in the middle of somewhere (where?) in the darkness, with three and a half flashlights for eight people, little water, and a dilemma. Fortunately, Brian brought a compass. Glenn decided we could trudge through the bush, go around the fire, and rejoin the path further up. Which we did. Picture eight people walking across a fallen sequoia in total darkness. But we made it! We even found the path! And we were so excited that we promptly missed the next turn off and forgot to consult the map.

There was no more hurrying, since we had to navigate with precious little light, and we were probably very near the lake. We couldn't find it, but we were near it. Peter found a beautiful Trail Closed sign (see exhibit A, in Eshelman). We expected to run into the lake at any minute. Even so, we sat down to rest. We camped right there, in a mostly flat spot, while Glenn, Matt, Joseph and I went to get water (we were the thirstiest). We had a nice cold supper because we found out that we had completely forgotten matches. Not that anybody was in the mood to build a fire. Or hang food in the trees (assuming we could have found the trees). We assumed that the bears wouldn't come this near the fire, which they luckily didn't. The stars were absolutely incredible, and the moon was a perfect half.

In the morning, we awoke to find Glenn gone. We discovered that we camped in an area which had been burned last year, with enough charcoal lying around to bake a camel. We had a leisurely breakfast, and soon enough he returned skipping to camp, matches in hand, shouting "Friday the Thirteenth is over!"

I've found the lake! It's about a half mile from here!" etc.

Much cheered, we hiked over to Lake Laurel. We had a good swim in !!cold!! water. Most everyone ('cept me) swam the 1/2 mile or so across the lake. We had a nice lunch of curry rice, courtesy of Tamra I believe. At least, she carried most of the food. (We ate very well this trip.) We also discovered that first aid kits always have matches ... oh, well. We then walked back. We ran out of water again, but nobody got seriously dehydrated, just really thirsty. We made good time going back, and after discovering that no pizza places in Groveland are open after 9 p.m. on a Sunday night, met in Oakdale for pizza: a good end to a good trip.

Desolation Wilderness

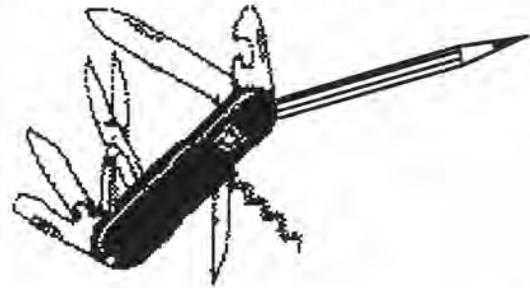
by Dr. X

This weekend of 15&16 September Doug led a backpack trip to Desolation Wilderness. We walked from Meeks Creek trailhead to Eagle lake parking lot. It was a gradual walk up past several lakes. We spent the overnight at lake Velmha, and defended ourselves from a continuous onslaught of ducks. The next day we walked out a short and downhill trail that was fairly populated. If Doug ever asks you over for dinner don't say no.

The Trip Journalist

On each trip, be sure and remember to designate a "Trip Journalist". This person will write a paragraph or two about the trip you went on, for the Bear Tracks newsletter. We want this newsletter to be

a digest of past trips, among other things. Anyone else on the trip is welcome—no, *encouraged*, to write an article as well; our publishing criteria is pretty minimal: Write in English (and exceptions can be made to that.) In fact, writing anything about club-related stuff pretty much assures publication in our distinguished newsletter, so go for it! Submit articles, blurbs, cartoons, memorable quotes, trip announcements, equipment for sale, and other material to Carolyn at each meeting, or call me at 643-3422. (If you have a Macintosh, and can submit on disk, do so! Otherwise, paper is fine.)



All this blank space could be filled with your writing, so be sure to submit stories for the next Beartracks, and thanks to all who contributed to this one.

Coming next issue: How to ride a bike 100 miles in a day and still enjoy the scenery (being on the back of a tandem bike helps...) -- Mountain Biking in Mammoth -- and much more (but I don't remember who promised me stories, other than Diane and she still hasn't written it. Nudge, nudge). Also, old spring break or summer stories (with dates) are welcome.

Thanks for all the typing Josh.

-Carolyn 