

# 'THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME'

Bike Trip America: three Boy Scouts, three bikes and a summer spent making unforgettable memories

**B**ike Trip America crew leader Bryce Nurdning and his two biking buddies, Ryan Tallman and Jonathan Williams, have summer plans full of high elevations, high temperatures, high adventure and high points.

It's Ready. Set. Go! And go! And go! From Oregon to New York: 59 days; 3,521 miles; and 12 states. The three teenage Astoria Boy Scouts — Troop 255 — will cycle their way across the northern U.S., from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic. Departing June 18 from Fort Stevens State Park, they begin their biking odyssey. If all goes according to plan, they will arrive in New York City Aug. 15.

Their support team consists of two adults and a dog. Don Child, a bike savvy former Vietnam infantry medic now living in Hawaii, will bike with the boys. His passion for cycling evolved as he became dedicated to commuting without polluting. He writes in his *donsbike.blogspot.com* — which he'll update during the cross-country ride — that biking helps “burn carbohydrates, not hydrocarbons.”

And master of all off-road strategy is Gearhart resident Pat Wollner. Wollner, a retired nurse, (an avid biker herself but not on this trip) and her 4-year-old black lab, Annie, will take care of everything but actual on-bike riding and on-road bike maintenance — or so she says. Think sleeping, eating, acquiring ferry tickets, providing for the daily whats where, and that's just for starters. Her duties also include the piloting of a super-organized, fully packed Suburban van able to seat the driver, five people passengers and one dog, and their gear if needed. Want to see a self-contained kitchen in a bag? Ask Wollner.

Nurdning, the 16-year-old crew chief, has spent months detailing the trip, and it shows. A super-sized

three-ring notebook is packed with his equipment lists, contacts, route maps, lodgings, locales, mileage and more. The trip is partially sponsored by local and non-local organizations. American Legions across the country (with particular support from Astoria's Legion Post 12), will host the cyclists in several locations, providing or arranging for meals, lodging and hot showers. The Astoria Co-op Grocery, AAA, Subway, Fultano's Pizza, Gearhart's By the Way Gifts, Warrenton Costco and private contributions are all part of the ride with more lending support as the boys' departure grows close.

Experiencing a lifetime impact, the boys are also riding for a specific cause. Every mile the crew covers

is honoring and raising awareness and funds for Operation Comfort Warriors. A 100 percent non-profit with no administrative costs, “It is different from other charities in a lot of ways because all the money that is donated actually goes to the veterans,” said Nurdning in the June 2015 American Legion Magazine, which featured an article about Bike Trip America.

Operation Comfort Warriors provides comfort items to injured, wounded or ill veterans not usually supplied by the government. Child said he was especially interested in joining the Bike Trip America crew when he became aware of its support of the wounded warriors for whom he feels great appreciation.

As the June 18 departure draws closer: Medical releases signed and filed? Check. Tail lights and head lights working and in place? Check. Duffle bags stowed in the van? Check. Tents and canopies in place? Check.

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the northern United States aiming for front tires dipped into the Atlantic.



Photo by Joshua Bessex

From left: Don Child, Annie (the dog), Jonathan Williams, Bryce Nurdning, and Ryan Tallman stand outside of the American Legion Post 12 in Astoria. Child will bike across the country with the three Boy Scouts to raise awareness and money for Operation Comfort Warrior.

For more information on Bike Trip America, visit [www.biketripamerica.com](http://www.biketripamerica.com), and check out Don Child's blog about the trip at <http://donsbike.blogspot.com>



Photo by Joshua Bessex

From front: Bryce Nurdning, Don Childs, Jonathan Williams, and Ryan Tallman bike along the Warrenton Waterfront Trail near Caruthers Park, training for their cross-country summer ride.

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As they travel along their route, they will celebrate August birthdays; they will see state and national parks; take in monuments; visit museums; and meet and greet people from across the country.

“People are doing a lot for us. We are representing every biker on the road. This is the trip of a lifetime,” said Nurdning.

Watch for occasional Bike Trip America highlights and updates in Coast Weekend's Grab Bag back page as the group makes its way across the country. If we can't be there, we can share in their adventure.

## Coastal Life

Story by MARILYN GILBAUGH