

A cross-country adventure

deCycles Indiana pedals from Seattle to John Day en route to Denver

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

A cross-country cycling group based out of Indiana pedaled their way through John Day on June 18.

The “deCycles Indiana” group, which included 45 riders on a 1,600-mile ride from Seattle to Denver, were on day seven of their three-week tour. The group pulled into the John Day Church of the Nazarene to stay the night and showered at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

Norm Houze of Bloomington, Indiana, who has served as the tour director and on-road supervisor, said the trek is a “modern-day pilgrimage.” “Instead of riding a camel,



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Longtime deCycles veteran Norm Houze pulls into the John Day Church of the Nazarene.

I’m riding a bike,” he said.

Houze said a pilgrimage is a journey to an unknown place.

Houze, a veteran of upwards of 25 cross-country deCycles trips, jokingly said he had spent nearly half of his life “homeless” sleeping on church and gym floors across the country.

The 45 riders included a

wide range of students and young adults of all backgrounds and cycling abilities.

The group had riders as young as 13 and some as old as Houze, who is in his late 60s.

For some of the group’s younger members from Indiana, the trip provided them their first glimpse of a mountain.

Ezra Townsend, 15, of Columbus, Indiana, said seeing Mt. Ranier when pulling out of Seattle was like nothing he had ever seen in Indiana.

“It was just crazy,” he said. “I’ve never seen anything like it. It’s just completely different from what we have in Indiana.”

Townsend said he was always casual about athletics,



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

From left, Adam Reckers, Ezra Townsend, Cael Hickock and Kian Kadlec of the deCycles group stand in front of the John Day Church of the Nazarene after biking from Seattle on their way to Denver.

but the deCycles trip, to him, sounded like an adventure that he could not pass up.

Adam Reckers, who celebrated his 16th birthday in John Day, said his family is really into biking and traveling. He said, when he heard about the trip and that the group that was based an hour

away from where he lives, he was “all for it.”

Townsend and Reckers said they would encourage anyone, regardless of age or ability, to go on some kind of journey.

“Maybe not this specific trip,” Reckers said, “but just go out and enjoy the world.”

‘The Little Red Schoolhouse’ comes to life in Painted Sky production

By Steven Mitchell
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The Painted Sky Center for the Arts wrapped up its summer drama camp with “The Little Red Schoolhouse” production at the Canyon City Community Center.

The one-act play follows the story of Mary Bronson, a young teacher and her challenges to wrangle in her classroom of unruly students, which include giggling, gossiping girls, bullies, teacher pets and the entitled daughter of the head of the school board.

The play, directed by longtime Grant County resident and former Grant Union High School teacher Julie Reynolds, takes place in the 1940s. Reynolds said the script required some updates to ensure political correctness.

Wednesday’s production was Painted Sky’s first performance that did not come with pandemic restrictions.

Alicia Griffin, Painted Sky’s director of operations and the play’s sound director, said the center’s winter performance came with a “a lot of hoops to jump through.”

The kids were required to wear masks throughout the whole performance.

“It’s just great to be able to see their little faces,” she said.

The play, Reynolds said, was chosen for no other reason than it was a production that was doable for the cast, given the two and a half week window they had to prepare.

Painted Sky will host various camps throughout the summer. The schedule can be found at paintedskycenterforthearts.wildapricot.org.



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Maddie Bailey, left, looks on as Alyssa Catalani scolds Benjamin Finley during the June 30 production of ‘The Little Red Schoolhouse’ at the Canyon City Community Center.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

From left, Julie Reynolds, play director, talks to Sam Bailey on June 30 at the Canyon City Community Center before Painted Sky for the Art’s production of ‘The Little Red Schoolhouse.’



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From left, Josie Hollowell, Sam Bailey, Oliver LaFramboise, Christina Manitsas, Ivy LaFramboise, Emma Charette, Teagan Gibson, Arti McNab, Cleo McNab, Elliana Griffin and Gunner Gibson ahead of the June 30 production of ‘The Little Red Schoolhouse’ at the Canyon City Community Center.

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