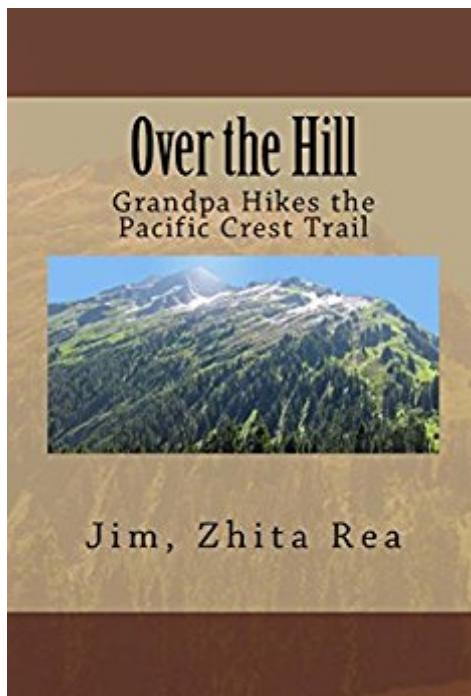


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Over The Hill: Grandpa Hikes The Pacific Crest Trail



Synopsis

After retirement, Jim Rea became determined to take on and complete a major challenge. He set out to hike the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada, his first try at a long hike. He hiked several weeks each summer for seven years, mostly solo. He was rescued only once. He needed to resupply each week, so Zhita, his wife, decided to be his support team. Driving to locate remote meeting places brought her adventures of her own.

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Customer Reviews

I've met Jim and Zhita at the Y in Lakewood. Very nice people and the book is true.

Good reading for a rainy day!

Great for hikers and for those who just want to "hike" the crest the easy way.

I completely enjoyed this account of the PCT hike. His perseverance is an inspiration for the ones of

us to come after.

Hiking is (mostly) a young person's game: two years ago, as I trudged through a long dry stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail, a young lady shared with me her secrets for hiking thirty miles in a day. I listened with interest, since I wasn't doing even half that many miles. But the thought that went through my mind was that a big part of the secret is being under 30 years old. That said, with proper planning, conditioning, and pacing, even someone well into their 70s can hike a long distance trail. Jim Rea would know, because well into retirement he decided to do just such a trek, and this book is the story of his life on (and off) the trail. Purist readers, the kind who want to see hiking protagonists complete a trail straight through will be a bit disappointed with the book. As much to accommodate his marriage (to Zita, co author of this book) as his age and a few health concerns, Jim decided to do a multi year journey rather than attempt the trail in a single long summer. I think this was a wise choice on his part, and I've adopted it to some extent, though where Jim took 7 years, I am working on finishing in 30. The book chronicles not only his hiking narrative but also his training for each summer, planning, and preparation. If you are thinking of doing several long sections of trail, this book might be a good starting place. But Jim's hike included a few rather dramatic moments, including a trail rescue which likely saved his life. Seen from the perspective of both Zita and Jim in their summaries of what happened and what they were feeling during this time, this and other incidents give the reader a more realistic view of some of the dangers anyone, but especially older individuals, can encounter on the trail. I also came away with a greater appreciation for how nice it is to have a life partner willing to meet you on a regular basis and help with supplies and logistics. Reading the book, I'm fairly convinced Jim would not have completed his trek without Zita. Most of Jim's hiking came in before the explosion of trail popularity following the publication of *Wild*, by Cheryl Strayed. Those hoping for a similar redemption story will be rather disappointed, as an aside. But you will get a glimpse of the trail in an era when only 300-500 hikers attempted it per year. Today, that number is over 2,000, with growing numbers of section hikers as well. Although Jim often hiked with a companion, he waxes eloquent about the joys of solitude. Those joys are a bit less common now. But a good section hiker can still enjoy long periods for reflection and appreciation of nature, even if they are "over the hill" in every sense of the term.

I enjoyed reading this book. It was interesting to read a different perspective of a husband and his loving wife writing about a journey on the Pacific Crest Trail that took years to accomplish. Kudos to them both in their devotion to this hike as well as to each other and friends and family. My one true

regret was that there were no maps or pictures I, myself am 71 years old and could never have the stamina to walk even a small portion of the trail. Thank you for sharing. Janet S. Andrews

I loved reading this as my son wants to do the exact thing when he retires. he has walked a section already BUT, I saw no reason for the wife to tell us her stories. Yes, about her bringing him food and her other help, but why did we have to hear about HER activities? I skipped her sections after Awhile! She needed to write her own autobiography if that was Intent! Great book about HIM though!

Grandpa gave some good trail descriptions at times. Many times a chapter started with him arriving at the trail and then the second paragraph it's 5 days later and he's meeting his wife. And she took at least half of the book talking about her shopping trips and the lives of family and friends. This could have been a really good book about hiking the PCT, but was mediocre at best. Glad I didn't spend much on this one.

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