

German couple crosses North America

by C.F. David

from contributions from Cynthia and Angela LeGrand, and website information.

Detlev Henschel considers himself to be a “Ronin” a drifting man. The title comes from Japanese Samurai lore. When a Samurai lost his lord or leader, he was cast adrift to roam, becoming often leaders themselves, rogue warriors, robbers and sometimes murderers. Henschel’s Ronin philosophy in a nutshell is “Life is sudden death overtime. One today is worth two tomorrows.” “I am the opposite of a crank who can only think one thing, he writes.” The philosophy made Henschel turn his back on the German business/industry in which he trained as a banker and educated himself in science. (He has a Doctorate in Botany.) He explains that as an executive who “walked away” he is not welcome back. In response after several adventures around the world, and a brief stint at owning and running an African Safari company, Henschel founded in 2000 Ronin-Doc, a consulting company. In 2004, he founded Ronin Productions to produce documentaries.

According to text on Henschel’s website, (www.detlev-henschel.com), he fears that “Germany will discuss themselves down to a third world nation like Angola .”

His walk across North America is sponsored and funded by such corporations as Ecco Shoes, Panasonic and Lecia Cameras.



This trek is only one of many but one of four with books written or in the publishing pipeline. He has books on crossing Japan , Siberia , and Australia . He has hiked the mountains of Crete , across Sweden , the Japanese Alps and Mount Fuji , and crossed the German Alps solo. He has also gone around the Polar Circle in a Sea Kayak.

He lists as his hobby- “Extreme living and thinking”.

He is fluent in German, English and Swedish and “can survive” with lower German, Afrikaans, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, and Danish.

Henschel’s companion, Katrin Frommhold is educated in video journalism.

She is 40, (He only writes “Yes” under his date of birth), and has been with Henschel for about 14 years; previous to two years ago she joined him for two weeks each year in one of his “adventures”. Then in 2005 she quit her job and joined him full-time, using her journalism background to begin shooting documentaries about their travels. She drives the RV and makes sure that Henschel is picked up dropped off in the same place, so that each day’s walk begins where the previous day ended.

She learned her English by living in the U.S. and Canada before attending a University in Bremen.

Henschel’s decision to cross North America came from his publisher’s claim that he had seen America , (New York and L.A.). But, in 1982, Henschel had hitchhiked across the

U.S. "...in search of Jack Kerouac" the beat generation author of the 1950s. In any case Henschel assured his publisher that he hadn't really seen America, so he came back to hike parallel to the Santa Fe Trail. In "seeing America" he is alarmed by individuals smoking in Madrid, N.M.; chides us of being frightened of strangers because of our barbed wire fences with signs reading "If you see something worth your life, be my guest." Also he champions the fact that we Americans of the Southwest honk and wave, and stop and visit, whether it's a Navajo, offering water, or a down on his luck hitchhiker offering his last bagel, (this unselfish act shook him to his core, and made everything else that day seem meaningless).

He marveled as he passed through a mountain pass and saw before him vast grasslands.

Henschel also loves the American Southwest, reveling in the fact he'd seen rattlesnakes sunning themselves, heard coyotes and wolves, and seen turtles crossing the roads.