



ABOVE Lucian and his dog Skipper. Beagles are known for their strong sense of smell and their ability to track game and for this reason, Skipper was an able and willing partner and very good at playing the seek side of “hide and seek” with Lucian.

OPPOSITE A quiet little pond in southern Ohio, is the foundation upon which a set of interactions between animals and plants that live around this pond function to support a web of life that is in balance.

CHAPTER ONE: HOW IT ALL BEGAN

On several occasions before the ride, I had a recurring dream. It was the year 2031 and I was now in my 70s. In the dream, I found myself in a house that was very cold. Although the lights were on, the room felt dark, although I had enough light to read a book. Then, my grandson walked in. He seemed to enter the room through some type of vacuum transition chamber. It seemed as if each room was “purified” before someone could enter or exit.

My grandson had a magazine with him and he wanted to discuss an article with me. A look of concern—maybe anger—was on his face. I noticed that the magazine in his hands was *TIME*, and the article he was pointing to was titled, “We Lost the Ecosystem. How?”

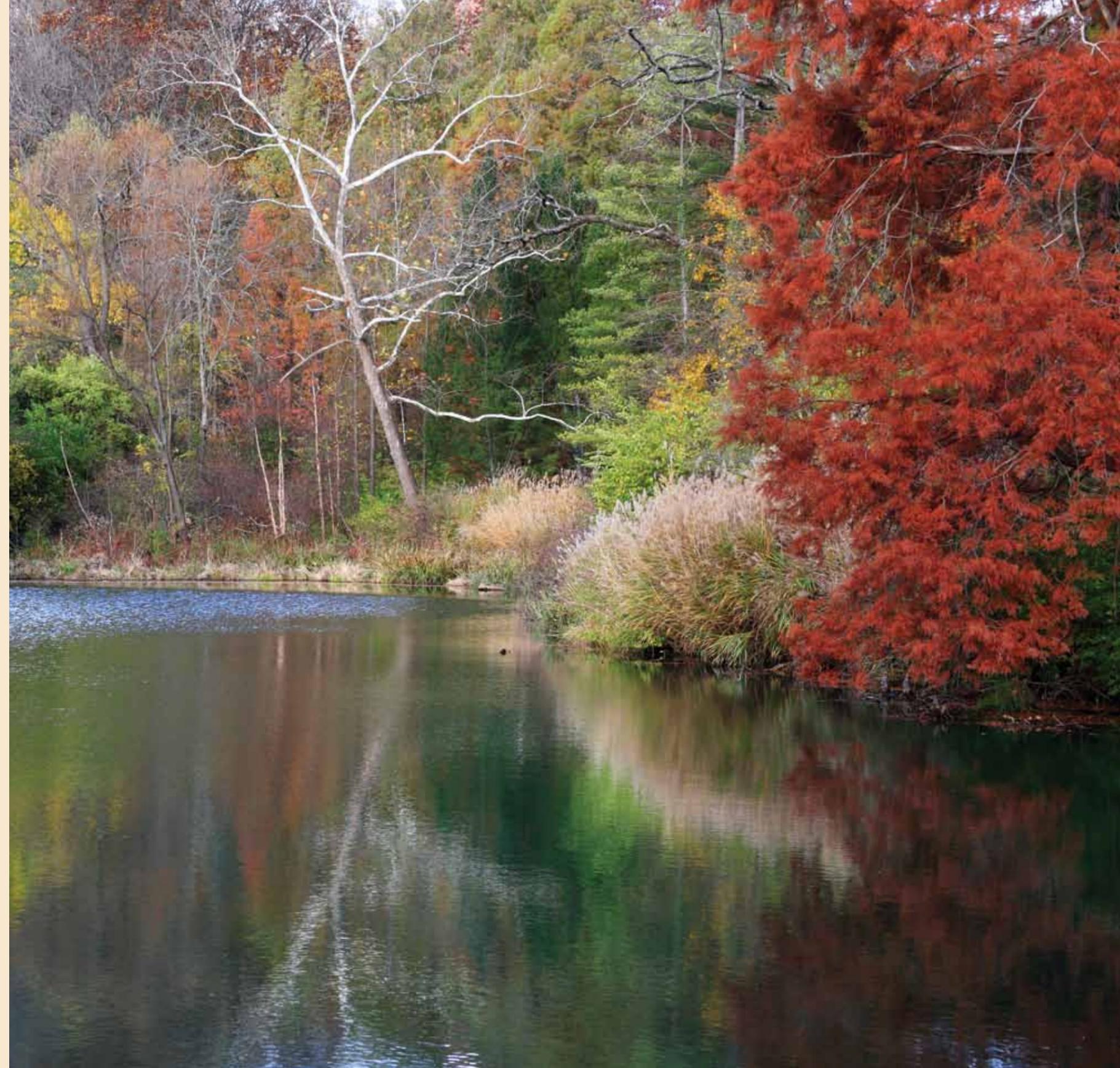
The article took the reader through a chronology of environmental and economic decisions, both bad and good, spanning 80 years. It explained why these decisions were made—economic and political reasons that were fueled by a growing population and a throwaway society.

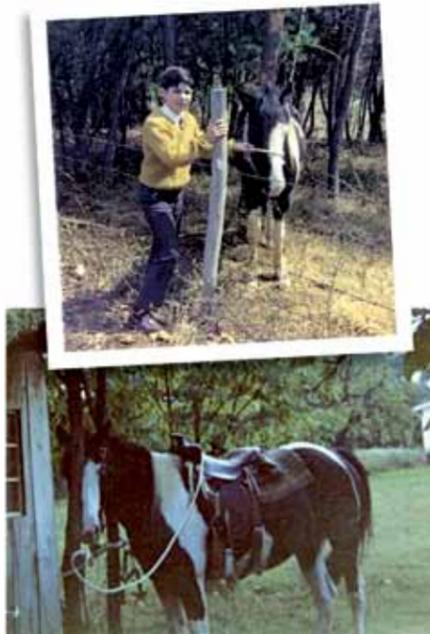
The article declared that in the 1980s, the environment became a trendy issue and many celebrities became involved. People worked very hard to bring attention to the issue and several even walked across the United States. Others circulated petitions, organized sit-ins and participated in protest marches.

One person even rode a horse across America.

The article then gave a detailed account of all the symptoms of environmental disease that were apparent to everyone: acid rain, global deforestation, ozone depletion, and so on.

My grandson then looked at me, not smiling, and asked, “When all of this was going on, what were you doing?”





ABOVE TOP Sunday after church was a big day for riding. Lucian is shown bringing Tim in from the woods for a ride.

ABOVE Tim is saddled up and ready to go down into Dobson Hollow.



A Red Tailed Hawk in flight.

I replied: “I rode the horse.”

He walked over to the window and looked outside. Then, very slowly, he turned back to me and said: “Is that all? Is that it?”

At that point, I arose from my chair and walked to the window to look outside. There I saw a crow sitting in a dead tree. It was springtime, about 1:00 p.m., just after lunch.

And it was dark outside.

My interest in the environment had its roots in my youth. My parents introduced me to the world of nature when I was very young, and even as a third-grader I understood that the world was operating under a kind of master plan. I was not, however, aware that this plan rested on a naturally balanced ecosystem. A naturally balanced ecosystem is a group of animals and plants within a unit that live or function together in natural balance. We humans are a part of this ecosystem.

Today, when I look back on my youth, my memories are of my days in Latourette’s Forest, Essex Pond, and Dobson Hollow in southern Ohio. Dobson Hollow was a very deep valley about two miles from my home. It featured huge rock cliffs above, with a red-tailed hawk nest and a clear stream and meadows down below. It seemed that very few people went down into this hollow, but my friends and I loved exploring the streams, ponds and valleys.

There were animals everywhere: deer, hawk, quail, largemouth bass, frogs, fireflies and turtles. I had the unique opportunity to gain an appreciation for the natural world through these sometimes aimless wanderings and explorations. I would spend many hours and sometimes days on my horses, Buck and Tim, or hiking with friends through the area.

My beagle, Skipper, accompanied me on many of these trips. Our favorite game was, “I hide, you seek.” I’d leave home and hike into the woods, sometimes several miles and try to disguise my trail. Then, I’d find a high vantage point—often a ridge—and watch my dog pick up my trail, following me through streams, over logs, from rock to rock and across wooden fences. I’d learned how to elude him by watching fox and rabbits as they were trailed. (Rabbits always return in a complete circle home.)

I also learned a lot about patience and persistence, both from my dog and from these forest animals. We used to photograph deer from tree stands in the early morning as they were moving into the apple orchards, and through these childhood experiences, I became educated, fascinated and appreciative of the natural world.

I sense that today, children and adults rarely take advantage of, or are exposed to, these kinds of opportunities, and because of this children today do not feel a connection to the natural world. We have grown away from nature, thanks in large part to technology, that double-edged sword, with its computers and video games substituting for the appeal

many children once found in nature. Without the most basic exposure, we will miss the vital connection we have with natural systems.

We as a society have isolated ourselves within our technology, and no longer feel the real cold or the rain or heat. Few of us question how or where the food we eat is produced. How many of us even know how it gets to our grocers? We need to rediscover nature and the fascination it held for many of us in years past.

Given all the above, I decided that now was the time to bring this awareness to the rest of America—by riding across it by horse.

Organizing the Ride

I entered college with the hopes of being an environmental engineer. Like so many in my age group, I caught the tail end of the environmental movement in the ’70s—and then it started to fizzle. So I changed my major and got caught up in the business of making money, or to rephrase that, the business of *chasing* money.

In 1985, I began traveling extensively for work and had the opportunity to see the rest of the world. While working in Mexico, Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and Japan, I found that these countries, like the United States, were all confronting similar environmental challenges.

As time went on, I became more and more restless. At first I thought it was my job, so I changed jobs. That wasn’t it. Then I thought it must be because I was a budding entrepreneur, so I started my own successful business.

But it wasn’t any of those things, and I finally came to the conclusion that I was in the wrong field and that my original inclination to work with the environment had been correct. I also began to worry that the world was on some kind of collision course with the concept of “finite resources.” Early evidence of this was the decline in the world’s rainforests. Most important, I realized that we humans, with our technology and consumptive tendencies, were the culprits behind much of the damage to these natural systems.

In 1987, I told myself that I would once again get involved in the environmental arena. However, I was conflicted. I had become accustomed to a lifestyle that was not frivolous, but not exactly frugal, either. Now, I could afford what I needed when I needed it and some luxuries to boot.

I had also developed a good reputation, along with my successful business. I was not sure that I was willing to give all this up and make the transition to environmental zealot.

It was at this moment that I had an opportunity to link up with some of my old friends from earlier in my life, when I was pondering an environmental career. Fresh out of college, I had been involved in trekking and mountain climbing expeditions, and my friend, Lane Larson, and I climbed Mt. Orizaba in an effort to set a world record for the highest altitude scuba dive. This was a semi-active volcano with a pool of water at the summit above 18,000



The web of life in southern Ohio—an Eastern Box Turtle; a Whitetail Fawn in spring; and the very vocal American Bullfrog.

feet. As I was contemplating this adventure with Lane and his wife, Wanda, he nudged me about our many talks about my becoming an environmental engineer.

And, as only a good friend can do, Lane also reminded me that my life in business was somewhat superficial and that if I didn't begin making changes soon, I would probably become very successful in business, but not a truly fulfilled human being. I decided to opt for change, and soon thereafter, the planning for the ride really began to take shape.

In 1988, I attended an "Up with People" performance at the Al-Marah Arabian horse ranch in Tucson. My friend, Tracy Church, and I were invited to this performance by her sister's husband, Dale, who was a vice-president in the organization.

The performance was held in an outdoor show ring. I was impressed with the facility, and asked Tracy and Dale to introduce me to the owners of the farm, but we couldn't find Mrs. Tankersley in time for an introduction. However, as we were leaving, Dale pointed her out in the crowd. Then, we took a drive around the property and I realized how enormous the operation truly was. We stopped by the main office to pick up some promotional material on the ranch and then left. But I continued thinking about Al-Marah days later, and I sensed there was a connection to explore at some future date.

The Al-Marah ranch was nestled down low along a small stream that came out of the mountains and, as a result, was hidden from view. More than 200 acres in size, it was located in the heart of a growing residential area on the east side of Tucson. Today, it is home to about 450 Arabian horses year round. The operation also includes ranches in two other Arizona locations.

At the time, I was a partner in two businesses. We had a manufacturing and assembly operation in Tucson and a much larger operation in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. We assembled products for other companies, such as Laidlaw drip-dry coat hangers, IBM computer circuit boards, radios for the U.S. military, the Wonder Bra, and a host of other products.

I had received an invitation to attend the "Up with People" performance at the Al-Marah Arabian ranch at the right time, knowing from my research that any attempt at a cross-country ride would have to be well financed and well organized. To achieve that, I would need credibility and a track record. I needed winners, people who could go the distance and were committed to the event.

After returning from the ranch, I spoke with several people about Al-Marah and found the general consensus to be that if Mrs. Tankersley decided to take on a project, it was as good as done. I wanted to set up a meeting with her, so I put together a brief letter and sent it by Federal Express to get her attention. Four days later, I got a phone call from the Al-Marah marketing director at my office in Tucson setting up a meeting.

When I met with our potential benefactor, I explained my interest in the rainforest issue, and my belief that the ride could bring attention to this cause. I believed that people along the route and the public in general would not be familiar with the issue and its implications.

Therefore, a Ride Across America and the attraction people have for horses could help us break the ice and allow us to introduce the issue to the general public. I told Mrs. Tankersley how committed I was and that we could, in fact, make it across the country with good planning and strong support.

My final argument was that to do it right and gain publicity for the issue, I had to instill the belief in people that we could make it. To convince them, I needed some credibility because at that point, I didn't have any. I told her that her commitment and support would give the ride the credibility we needed to bring on two environmental groups and several other co-sponsors.

To my great delight, she actually said, "Yes." Now, we were off, if not at a full gallop, at a fast trot!

My next step was to sign up the two most appropriate environmental groups I could find. I needed strong anchors on both the east and west coasts and preferably in Washington, D.C., so I went after Rainforest Action Network (RAN) and the Environmental Policy Institute (EPI). My first call was to RAN, where I was put through to Randy Hayes, the Executive Director, who thought the idea of the cross-country ride had some potential. However, he was not entirely convinced that we could finish.

Randy loved the idea from a "grass roots" standpoint and thought that if we could complete the event, it would be an appealing story that could draw attention to the endangered rainforests. I offered to send him some material, again by FedEx, the next day.

On my next trip back East on business, I met with the people from the Environmental Policy Institute, as well as my Congressman, Jim Kolbe. The presentation to the Environmental Policy Institute went well, and CEO Michael Clark walked out with me afterward. He told me a ride across America was an impressive idea and that he would give it serious thought.

Several weeks later, the EPI had a meeting with its board of directors and the idea for the ride was on the agenda. Most of the board members were a little concerned about the lack of financing, the safety issue, and the odds of whether we could, in fact, make it. When EPI staff member Sharon Benjamin mentioned to the board that Mrs. Tankersley had agreed to support the ride, EPI board member Marie Ridder spoke up and stated, "If Bazy is involved, it's on the up-and-up." As a result, the vote to participate went through and I had my first environmental group.

Excited, I then called Randy Hayes at RAN, told him we had EPI's support, and asked him to participate as well. He agreed to come on board, and we had our two groups! Congressman Kolbe also agreed to support us, so all in all, it was a very productive trip to D.C.

On the shuttle back, I found out that all flights were delayed because Mikhail Gorbachev was returning from his tour of New York. As a result, there was a major traffic jam, which for some reason slowed air traffic as well. Amazing, I thought, the impact one person can have on a metropolitan area the size of New York. He had shut down the whole city! I asked myself, "How are we ever going to ride a horse through here?"

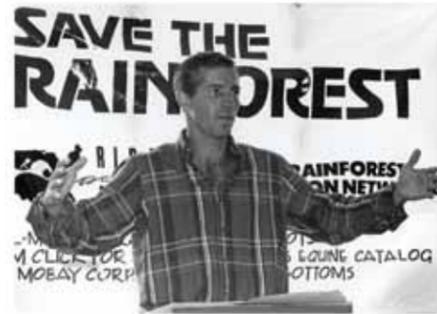
Sunrise on the farm.



Bazy at the training barn with the Australian-born stallion Bremervale Andronicus in November, 2009.



The Rainforest Action Network's successful 1980s campaign against World Bank funding of economic development projects in South America and other rainforest regions of the world.



ABOVE Lucian would ride all night and into the early morning and then drive sometimes 100s of miles to speak with a group of supporters like this group in St. Louis, Missouri.

OPPOSITE March Along, Ted Danson, and Lucian saddling up for a ride after the press conference in Tucson, 1989.

When one becomes involved in an event like this, or any other major undertaking, one has to jump in with both feet to pull it off. However, this is often easier said than done.

Case in point: I'm Lucian Spataro, an entrepreneur and business owner known in Tucson for my expertise in manufacturing. Suddenly, I begin asking friends if I should take nine months off without pay so I can train and ride a horse across America. Predictably, many of my friends thought I was crazy.

My friends and peers at the time tended to be more concerned with the chit-chat at the local bar, Fridays, after work than about environmental concerns. As I look back now, all of us were chasing the money and each other. It was becoming clear to me as I looked around that time moves like smoke through a keyhole, and if you don't manage the wisp that it is, you'll wake up 20 years later with nothing to show for your efforts. With these pressing thoughts on my mind, the ride across America began to consume my every waking moment.

I decided to cut back to a half-day at our business and worked from noon till about 4:00 p.m. daily, spending the morning and then late into each evening training and working on the ride. Our training was simply to ride and ride and ride some more. The horses, as well as I, needed to get used to traffic and their new daily routine.

I rode each day at 4:00 a.m. or 5:00 a.m., as I would have to do on the ride, ending at around 11:00 a.m. We spent a lot of time on the streets of Tucson during early morning rush-hour traffic. Sometimes, I saw friends on their way to work at 7:00 a.m. Those encounters ran like this:

"Are you heading for work, Lucian?"

"Yeah, you need a ride?"

I began working on a regular basis on strategy and training with Dr. Cartwright and Dr. Hancock at Al-Marrah. As you might guess, this schedule put a real damper on my social life and consequently, my girlfriend moved to San Francisco. Afterward, I threw myself even more actively into the training process.

In January 1989, we put together a press conference to kick off the event and started serious training. We invited environmentalist and actor Ted Danson, Randy Hayes and Michael Clark to Al-Marrah. Ted Danson had recently started his own environmental organization, the American Oceans Campaign (AOC), and was familiar with EPI. In classic Danson style, he spoke as one who truly cared, and it was obvious to all that he understood the issues. The media picked up on this and the conference went off very well.

Mrs. Tankersley and Al-Marrah rolled out the red carpet and walked March Along, the horse I'd be riding, into the room in which the press conference was being held. This really caught the media by surprise, and gave me my first class in Media Management 101. At this first press conference, I studied closely as Danson and the others controlled the exchange of information, constantly redefining and focusing what they said so that what would appear in the papers and on the news would be clear and on point. I knew I would have to learn this technique quickly if we were to be successful with the media aspect of this event.





“When Lucian first came to me with the proposal to use Arabian horses for a coast-to-coast ride to bring attention to our issue, I loved the gutsiness of the idea...a real grassroots approach. It worked wonderfully and became the event that you will read about today.”

—Randy Hayes
 Founder
 Rainforest Action Network

OPPOSITE A big part of organizing and completing the ride was administrative and included fund-raising with very helpful donors like Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, applying for and obtaining 66 permits and or route approval from hundreds of municipalities and government entities, and then also the related insurance that was required to use the faster “along the string” route we rode.

After the interviews were over, we had a chance to do some riding. Ted Danson, Bob Sulnick, Randy Hayes and I all took off for a short ride around the ranch. From that point on, I was increasingly excited about the event as it began to gather momentum, and turned over operational control of the business in Tucson to my partners.

I was now working full time on the ride and on training for it. I set up a timetable for activities that we needed to complete and used this schedule to coordinate with both environmental groups. To firm up the route, I needed to negotiate with each state to use the road I wanted, and they would either require that I had a shadow vehicle, or no support vehicle.

In the western states of the ride, only the permit was required, and no support vehicle. In the east, states often required that we had a vehicle in high-traffic areas and that I avoid rush-hour traffic. To our surprise, some states allowed horse traffic to actually take precedence over vehicular traffic!

In most states, no permits were required on secondary roads, and in those states I rode on through. In the west, however, we were traveling the Interstate, which required dozens of permits, it seemed.

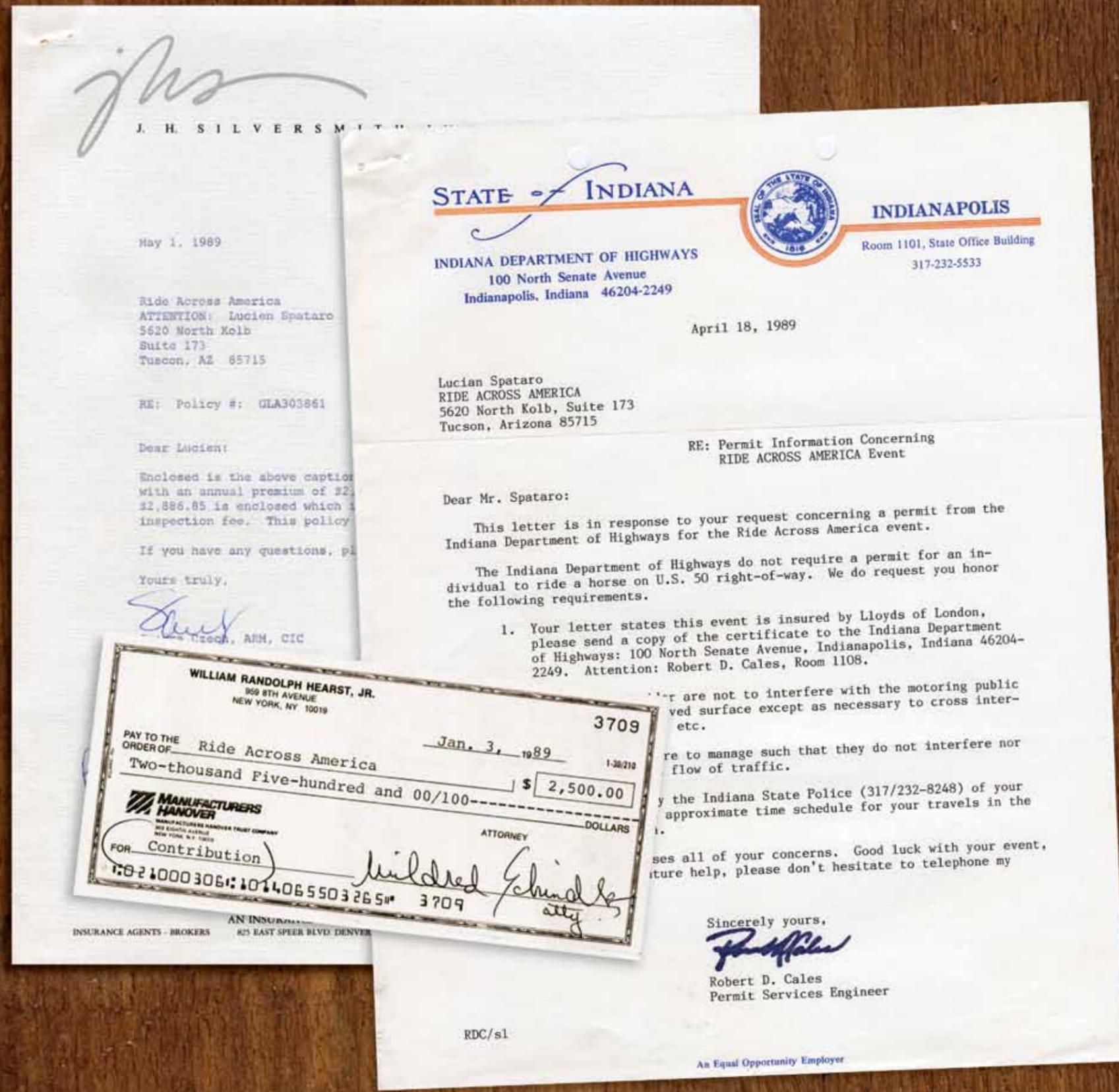
Our insurance policy was with Lloyds of London, and we worked with the Equestrian Department of Lloyds and the directing manager, Adrian Pratt, to obtain this policy. We also purchased horse mortality insurance and personal injury insurance: \$250,000 for myself and the other team members.

On behalf of the ride, Al-Marah sent letters to clients and friends like Michael Landon and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, who agreed to serve on the board of advisors for the ride. Soon thereafter, Mrs. Hearst sent a check to help in our fund-raising efforts.

Mrs. Tankersley had given me the number for the Hearst Castle in California, so I called to thank her for the financial support. I was completely unprepared when she answered the phone. We spoke for about 20 minutes, and after that phone call, I felt that we had a very good chance of finishing the ride and raising a substantial sum of money.

We still had a couple of other holes to fill. We needed a crew person to handle the horses, a vehicle to take the place of the English coach, and a shadow vehicle as well. We needed an alternative to steel shoes for the horses and we needed more corporate sponsorship. I also needed more help from both environmental groups. The Rainforest Action Network and I were doing most of the work, and EPI was just hanging in there with us as a sponsor in name only.

Although EPI had committed to help, they simply could not organize sufficiently in the midst of their pending merger with Friends of the Earth (FOE). Their lack of involvement led to several very emotional phone conversations. One thing led to another and EPI/FOE flew in an outside consultant named Bob Harvey to give them his opinion of our project. I spoke with Bob for over six hours. He gave me a copy of his six-page report on the status of the ride, and I agreed with almost everything he said. I thought the report was extremely accurate.



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As a result, I was shocked when EPI/FOE chose to withdraw from the event six months after they initially agreed to be part of it and one month before the start of the ride! While at the time, their withdrawal seemed catastrophic, looking back it was a blessing in disguise. It allowed us to regroup and to focus and rally a smaller and more active team, which in turn helped us get organized.

From that point on, we moved at a much quicker pace. Two of the board members, Leslie Barclay and Marie Ridder, who represented EPI on the "Ride Across America" board stayed on with us, which helped lessen the impact of EPI's official withdrawal. These people, along with the rest of the board members, became very important to us during the event.

One of our big concerns was funding. With two months left to go, we barely had enough funds to complete the event. Fortunately, The Rainforest Action Network was confident enough and committed enough to carry us for the balance. Randy Hayes was utterly committed to the ride, which bolstered our morale. The railroad companies fell through and so did JB Spirits.

Later, Chevron came through with an educational grant to RAN on behalf of RAN's educational efforts, one of which that summer was the ride. By May, we had enough funding to get the ride off the ground and hoped that further efforts along the way would raise the balance.

We were still having some problems determining which saddle we were going to use, and were struggling with when we might need to switch to Easyboots to preserve the horses' feet. I also assembled a list of farriers who might help us care for the horses' feet while we were crossing the country.

The strategy we settled on was to ride using the steel shoes as far as we could go. Then, we'd switch to Easyboots for the balance of the ride.

The choice of a saddle and riding gear was not as easy, and took some experimentation. We started the ride with the EPIC Endurance saddle, endurance stirrups, a cantele bag, a pommel bag, a saddle pad and a saddle blanket, a water bottle, lead rope, stethoscope, a watch and flashlight. As the ride wore on, I began to jettison much of this equipment and changed saddle and blanket combinations in search of the best combination. Through trial and error we eventually ended up with a single wool blanket, a Porter endurance saddle, a water bottle and collapsible water bucket, a cantele bag and a pommel bag. The larger and heavier Porter saddle was much better at distributing my weight over the horse's back.

I kept the endurance stirrups when I made a saddle switch. These stirrups were instrumental in allowing me to ride the distances I did each day. They were much wider than a normal stirrup and averaged about 3" front to rear. They were also padded and much more comfortable and practical than narrow stirrups. Much of the gear we eventually settled on was supplied to us by Patty Phelan as a donation from her company's catalog.

Many people asked me how I chose the route. My first concern was time and weather, and my second concern was media exposure. I wanted the shortest path possible that would present us with the greatest opportunity to talk with people about this issue.

Easyboot[®]



ABOVE Switching to Easyboots in Arizona was a critical decision point in the ride. These boots protect the hoof and allowed us to ride through rough terrain and often areas that had broken glass on the side of the road, additionally, they were not slippery on asphalt.

OPPOSITE Promoting the ride, and in turn the rainforest issue, was a big part of the event and publications and sponsors like the Phelan catalog were a big help in getting the word out.

**ic Schooling
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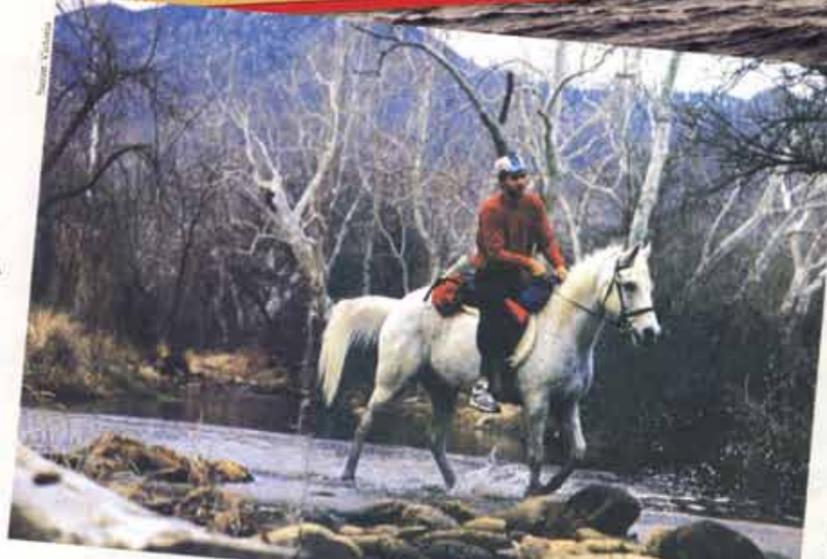
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EPIC Endurance Saddle

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Lucian Spataro and AM March Along training for a real "cross country" ride.

EPIC General Purpose Saddle

A beautifully designed saddle for the versatile rider—anyone whose weekly routine may include flatwork, schooling fences, trail riding, you name it. Unlike a forward-seat saddle, this General Purpose saddle has a deep seat and a long straight flap. Minimal knee rolls provide added support. We've added two D-rings on each side of the saddle for trail riding (although not pictured in photo). The General Purpose differs from our EPIC Endurance Saddle in its narrower waist, narrower seat, and lighter weight (only 13 pounds), but has EPIC's customary impeccable British quality. Medium and wide tree widths, seat sizes 16, 17, and 18-inch, in black or dark chestnut brown.

■ General Purpose #116 \$925
When ordering your saddle, please inquire about our full line of saddle accessories.



EPIC General Purpose Saddle

The EPIC Endurance Saddle

What's most conspicuous about this international-award-winning saddle is the high quality of British craftsmanship, but what's most important about it is the extraordinary comfort it provides for both horse and rider. It was designed for competitive endurance riders, but it will reward anyone who spends much time in the saddle.

From the horse's perspective: the spring tree has panels which extend beyond the cantle, maximizing the distribution of the rider's weight. The saddle's cut-back head prevents impact on the withers, and a deeper than usual gullet increases airflow along the horse's spinal column, reducing overheating and fatigue.

EPIC Multi-Bride

The most convenient, versatile, and sporty-looking leather bridle around, made in England by EPIC of fine black leather and solid brass fittings. Great for trail riding—you can securely tie your horse and drop the bit for feeding or watering. There are six brass buckles for easy adjustment, assuring correct fit and access from either side of the horse. The flat leather is the



EPIC Multi-Bride

Don't you sometimes want to get on your horse and just keep going? You can ride anywhere. Beginning in May 1989, Lucian Spataro and his Arab gelding, AM March Along, are riding across America—in this case to help draw support for global environmental causes. Some of Phelan's staffers are riding a few miles with him. Perhaps you'd like to join him if he rides through your neighborhood. The planned route goes from Los Angeles to New York City with stops in Flagstaff, Albuquerque, Amarillo, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. Individuals or companies that would like to donate funds (for each mile completed) may do so with the proceeds going to Rainforest Action Network and The Environmental Policy Institute. For more information call EPI at 202-544-2600.

most popular, but for a dressier look the rolled leather beautifully sets off a fine head. Both styles available in full or cob size in either black or dark brown leather.

- Multi-Bride with Flat Leather #210 \$94
- Matching Flat Reins #211 \$48
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- Matching Rounded Reins #216 \$56

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I took out a map of the United States and a string, and located the two largest cities, Los Angeles and New York. Then I laid the string down on the map in a straight line from L.A. to New York. I then taped the string to the map and stuck it on the wall. That was going to be my route, or as close to it as possible. The shortest path between two points is a straight line, so I concluded that the closer I could stay to this line, the shorter the timeframe for the ride.

Further calculations showed that the straight route, as the crow flies along the string, was about 2,200 miles, using the legend on the map. I knew I could not ride right along the string because in many places there were no roads. We needed water and feed, and we needed to make good time.

I knew from experience that it was much faster riding along a road than bushwhacking across the desert or some other wilderness area. With this in mind, using local and regional topographical and street maps, I then found all of the roads, highways, and trails that were parallel with this string. Staying as close to the string as I could, I simply highlighted these routes, connecting super highways with power lines and then secondary roads and so on until I had my own route along that string.

In the end, the route ended up being a mish-mash of roads, highways, power lines, railroad rights-of-way and ad-libbing. This route meandered north and south of the string, adding about 800 miles to the route, but generally we tried to stay as close to that string as we possibly could.

I then calculated the distance and our pace, located the various metropolitan areas along the route, and began working with Francesca Viotor at RAN to schedule media events and fund-raisers. I obtained the permits in the same manner, systematically working with each state along the master route until we had three folders full of permits and letters of approval for specific routes.

This ride was both an endurance ride and a media event. These two goals were not always compatible with each other, which made the actual riding and the planning for this event difficult. Often we were torn between riding farther on a particular day and altering our route so we could make a media commitment. Our need to meet both our media commitments and our ride goals was an ongoing cause for debate and discussion among team members and others involved.

On the one hand, I would suggest to anyone inclined to try to break our record that they focus on the ride and not use it to attract attention to a specific issue. Even though that focus was successful in accomplishing our objective, it could sap your energy and slow you down.

On the other hand, I thought when I first began the ride that our team could make the crossing in four months. I now believe that a team in that timeframe using three horses and one rider would need to rest a week for every month of riding, which we essentially ended up doing. Looking back, I believe our short rests along the way were essential and that the media commitments helped break the routine. This led to a much-needed injection of energy and enthusiasm.



The ride was both an endurance ride and a media event. These brochures doubled as both an information packet and mailer for those we met along the way who were inclined to donate money to our cause.



The training, when combined with the ride itself, would be nearly a year-long, very strenuous event, and for me its purpose—to bring attention to the rainforest issue—was a significant motivator. If it were not for this objective, and for the many people we met along the way who were now cheering us on, we might not have reached our goal.

On a side note, when I first started thinking about getting back into the environmental arena, I considered finishing my Master's in Environmental Studies as a good first step. I settled on Ohio University and their environmental program within the Geology Department. Geoff Smith, the head of that program, and I spoke on several occasions, and after the ride, in 1990, I decided to take the leap and enrolled in the program. I ultimately completed a Ph.D.

This is the abbreviated version of the planning and significant events behind the ride. There are many more activities that took place and countless other details that we had to contend with, but those described above were the most significant.

Athens, home to Ohio University, is a historic college town located along the scenic Hocking River in southeastern Ohio. Athens is a real "tree hugger" community and a qualified Tree City as recognized by the National Arbor Day Foundation and a beautiful city in the fall of the year.