

July 7, 2010

Hello William, (*William is with the Arizona Republic*)

Just wanted to let you know I'm in Tok, Alaska and on my way back home to Arizona. I have had the time of my life being a Hoka Hey rider.

I have met people throughout my travels who ask whether I think the Hoka Hey and its organizers are legitimate. I have to tell you I think they are all a bunch of great people and they did a great thing.

I think the negative talk about this great event that we participated in was started by a bunch of old hens (some riders) who created a story and then had to "one-up" each other until it got out of control. Even the media is focusing on the 'possible truths,' rather than what took place.

I'm shocked at how fast some of the riders have forgotten all that was done to make this event great for all of us.

If the organizers are not legitimate and their intentions are not honorable, then they spent thousands of dollars for no reason. They rented a convention center, bought us food, t-shirts, bandanas and Hoka Hey coins. They arranged for seven checkpoints with trucks and trailers, not only meeting us at those checkpoints, but also watching over us as we slept in parking lots and more. They built support and had camera crews who were excited to meet us and passionate about the event at the checkpoints and along the way to cheer us on, interview us, etc.

They worked so hard to make this event something special. They worked hard to bring attention to the American Indian, taking us through numerous Indian Reservations, allowing us to meet the Chief of the Lakota Tribe and more. I sat at the Chief's table, I ate of his food and I got my picture taken with him.

The only ones who are disgruntled are those who set their sights on winning the gold and did not do so. The rest of us got way more than we ever expected or hoped.

I am saddened by those who have stirred up so much negative and untruthful stuff, trying to discredit those that made this wonderful event possible.

If the intent of the organizers was to skip with the money, they would have skipped before we showed up in Florida. They certainly wouldn't have spent thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours meeting us all along the way, cheering us on, greeting and feeding us at the finish line and providing a celebration party.

It was a great event and I am very proud to have taken part in it and to have met the organizers. I am so proud to be a Hoka Hey rider.

~ Sam (*last name may be First*)

*Picture of Chief Red Cloud meeting President Bill Clinton from Chief Red Cloud's living room.*

