



*Jim & Josie Wales, 2002*

In 1963 I was starting my first professional job, with the Navy. They sent me to San Diego for a week's indoctrination. I sat there, the lone civilian in a sea of uniforms, greeted by the salty Captain, who introduced the instructors: Naval, Marine, and Marine Air Officers. One of the latter, a young lieutenant, started off: *Sir, we don't call ourselves Air Officers. We are Unlimited Officers!*

Four decades later, as I neared retirement, I set off with my wife Helen on a two-week trek in the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming. We'd been doing that nearly every summer for 25 years.

This would be our third with llamas. Too aged to carry our own stuff, we became "certified" llama wranglers, and rented a pair in Pinedale, WY. Their owner delivered them in his van, 75 miles up a rocky, muddy road to the trailhead at 9400 ft. They were a sight arriving, peering over his shouldethrough the windshield!

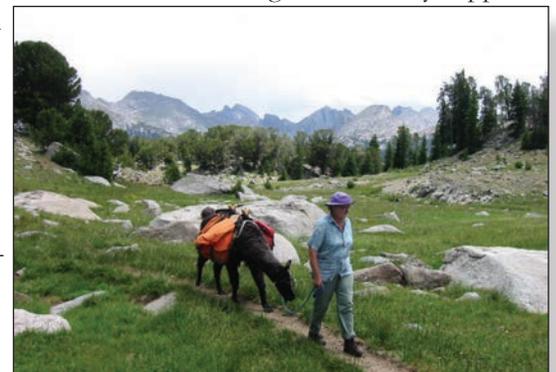
Omar Khayyam had gone with us twice before, but this was Josie Wales's first trip with saddle and packs. He still had much to learn. Omar had shown him how to cross rocky creeks with steep banks, but he hadn't previously encountered puddles on a trail. He'd stop suddenly, reconnoiter, then take a big 3-foot leap and crash into me. He hadn't learned how wide he was with the packs. After an easy day's walk, we hadn't quite reached our intended campsite when both llamas went on strike and sat down. We hadn't experienced that before. We tried to get them up but they just rolled and dislodged the packs. We gave up for the day and improvised a camp and grazing.

The next day they weren't happy but we made it down a very rough trail to the East Fork River, where we knew there was good grass. We were setting up camp when a ranger, Les Scharnberg, showed up. About my age, he was small, vigorous, gregarious, and clad in a neat green uniform. He cautioned us about camping so close to the water, even in an established horse camp. But he wasn't an enforcement officer, just there surveying conditions, especially for signs of grizzly bears, for the entire summer. He was provisioned periodically by mule train.

He asked how we were doing, and we described the llama conspiracy. He hadn't noticed them yet, was surprised, and told us that he was also traveling with llamas. He checked their halters. Then he said to Josie— FOOT! Josie had learned that: he let the ranger look at his front feet. His toenails were too long! His owner had been ill and had evidently neglected to trim them after months of Spring pasturing. The ranger told us to meet him a mile upriver after dinner, and he'd trim them. He'd brought the right snips.

The llamas were glad to walk there without packs. The ranger's son held Josie's halter tight, I draped myself around Josie's shoulders holding on to his neck, and the ranger laboriously clipped the nails. Josie wasn't cooperative, kicked once, and sent the ranger flying. But he was successful. Omar, more experienced, was mellower. Our trip was saved! We chatted for a while afterward.

We had much in common. I specialize in foundations of mathematics and logic. During the school year, Les Scharnberg served as professor of philosophy at College of the Redwoods in Eureka, CA. And he was the only Rabbi with a congregation on California's North Coast. I call Rabbi Les a truly Unlimited Scholar!



*Helen & Omar Khayyam*