

Ride Across America will benefit rain forest

By HARRIS W. SACKS
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It's a long trot — 3,000 miles — from Los Angeles to New York City, but Lucian Spataro, 32-year-old equestrian trainer and business consultant from Tucson, Ariz., is doing it — to save the precious rain forests of the world.

The electronics engineer and environmentalist began a cross-country ride on May 19, first on Sweet William, and now on March Along, both Arabian horses owned by Al-Marah Arabians, Tucson, co-sponsor of "Ride Across America."

On Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Wilson College Science Center, Chambersburg, he will explain how he hopes to raise more than \$1 million, or \$400 to \$600 a mile, in the event he founded.

He will show videos of his journey to date with a slide presenta-

tion about the rain forest deforestation currently being discussed before the U.N.

Between 4:30 and 5 p.m. Friday, he will arrive at Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, in the field between the cafeteria and U.S. Route 15, to speak.

On Thursday, the horseman will be a guest of Connie Driscoll, of WGTU-FM and WGET-AM, an equestrienne who is a native of Tucson and who also lived in Flagstaff, Ariz. Mr. Spataro will not make a public appearance in Gettysburg.

The ride, which along the way will establish a Guinness World Record for time and distance, will generate exposure for the Arabian breed, endurance riding and the Al-Marah firm.

The route followed is Los Angeles to New York via Albuquerque, Amarillo, Oklahoma City,

St. Louis, Indianapolis, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia. Average daily mileage is 15 miles.

Al-Marah has supplied a support team of trainers, veterinarians and farriers to monitor the ride and offer consultation.

The support crew includes Sheryl Studley, 34, an attorney from Santa Cruz, Calif., and her dog, Patches. They travel a short distance ahead of the rider to set up camp.

The groups directly benefiting from the event are The Environmental Policy Institute of Washington, D.C., and the Rain Forest Action Network of San Francisco, Calif.

Spataro calls the rain forests the most productive ecosystem on Earth, and since the mid-1950s, man has destroyed 50 percent of

the natural forests housing untold plants and animals.

He said that the National Cancer Institute states that 70 percent of the 3,000 plants identified as having cancer-fighting properties are from rain forests. Seven thousand medical compounds derived from the rain forest plants are used.

The National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., reports that more than 50 million acres (the combined sized of England, Scotland and Wales) are permanently destroyed or degraded each year. This averages to 100 wasted or abused acres for every minute of the day.

To obtain information about pledging for the event, contact the Rain Forest Action Network, 301 Broadway, San Francisco, Calif. 94133. A pledge of \$15 equal 15 cents a mile ridden.