

# Pilgrim to discuss 500-mile walking quest

As part of Phelps Mansion Museum's Monday lunch series, Mike Hudak will discuss his pilgrimage when he walked nearly 500 miles through Europe.

During the Middle Ages, Santiago de Compostela was among the most popular pilgrimage destinations in Christendom, as Christians sought forgiveness of their sins by visiting the purported tomb of St. James the Greater.

With the coming of the 18th century Enlightenment, interest in the pilgrimage waned and remained low through most of the 20th century. However, the public's interest began to increase by the 1980s. For example, the Camino Frances route was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987.

From these developments and promotions through books, cinema and the Internet, the number of pilgrims visiting the cathedral in Santiago has soared from 690 in 1985 to more than 215,000 in 2013. Be-

yond whatever spiritual benefits one may receive by visiting the tomb of St. James, the pilgrim community of the Camino exudes a sort of energy that people may wish to experience for a variety of reasons that span the social, physical, psychological and spiritual realms.

Hudak took the Camino Frances from St. Jean Pied-de-Port to Santiago in 2013. Since the mid-1980s, Hudak has hiked hundreds of miles on trails in the United States, primarily in the West to enjoy nature and to investigate environmental damage caused by ranching on public lands. When walking the Camino as a 34-day psycho-social-spiritual-physical exercise, he also had several self-imposed disciplines, such as the maintenance of a plant-based (vegan) diet.

Hudak will speak about his experience on at the museum (191 Court St. in Binghamton) on Monday. Lunch starts at noon and is \$12, but Hudak's program is free and starts at 1 p.m.

Thursday, November 20, 2014

GOOD TIMES