

Roadschooling Ryan

Learn As We Go

Mary Lois Sennewald
with Notes by Ryan B. Costello

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Roadschooling—When the Whole World Is a Classroom

“I always thought there were better ways to educate our sons than to stick them indoors all day,” writes Mary Lois Sennewald in **Roadschooling Ryan: Learn as We Go**.

So, to prove her point, this sixty-year-old mother and seventeen-year-old son, Ryan B. Costello, left St. Louis in August, 2002, in a 1987 VW camper van. Their purpose: to see the world, take this one year of homeschooling onto the Open Road. For two semesters, they wandered up the Mississippi, across Canada to the northernmost tip of Newfoundland, down through New England (and Colonial History), deep into southern Mexico, finally coming to rest in Colorado high country.

Why? Because Sennewald believed that Ryan would learn more by seeing the continent and talking to people in other places and cultures than by spending hours in the classroom. Because, after mulling over educational theories and stories for decades, she wanted to give her own ideas a try. Because she wanted to kick Ryan out of complacency and into a new orbit. Because she was a traveler to her core and she desired to share her roaming skills with her son.

Roadschooling Ryan: Learn as We Go is a provocative account of bears and wolves, foibles and family, missteps, friendship, homeschooling rigors and magical moments. It challenges preconceptions about education, values and parental partnerships. By turns funny, poignant, and heart-warming, it is the story of a young man on the brink of adulthood peering into the world, and a mother insisting on doing his schooling her way. It is also about survival, relative sanity, and compassion in very close quarters, about astonishment, about having a great time, no matter what.

Sennewald does not flinch from reporting the trials of such a year, her mistakes and poor judgments. But neither does she minimize the ecstatic moments powerful enough to mark the two of them for a lifetime. Although written as a memoir rather than as a guide, anyone fascinated by the idea of loading up the car with books and kids and setting off can find plenty of practical information.

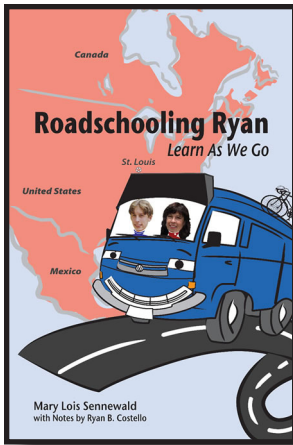
With all the frustration, dissatisfaction and questions about today’s schools, **Roadschooling Ryan: Learn as We Go** provides a glimpse into a world of possibilities.

More information on the odyssey is available at www.learnaswego.com.

Roadschooling Ryan: Learn as We Go is available in hardcover and paperback through:

www.iUniverse.com www.amazon.com www.barnesandnoble.com

It can also be ordered through local bookstores.



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PLAUDITS

Warning: Reading about this off-beat year will stir longings, laughter, and subversive fantasies of life's possibilities.

— *Jack Hill, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

Homeschooling takes on a whole new meaning when a creative, enterprising mother decides to take her seventeen-year-old son on the road for his junior year of high school. With the world as their classroom, Mary Sennewald and Ryan Costello embarked upon a once-in-a-lifetime journey that makes us less adventurous parents reevaluate the lessons our children are taught in school versus the ones they might learn from the world.

Stripped of friends, spouse, siblings, and standardized testing, Mary and Ryan share their experiences in this magnificent account of their odyssey. In so doing, perhaps those of us unable or unwilling to take on such a challenge can benefit from the lessons learned on the road, in the van, and most importantly, between parent and child.

This is the stuff Dr. Spock doesn't teach, but what every parent and child needs to know about the limits of imagination, courage, camaraderie, love, and the fact that our babies don't stay babies for very long.

— *Crystal Hubbard,*

Catching The Moon: The Story of a Young Girl's Baseball Dream

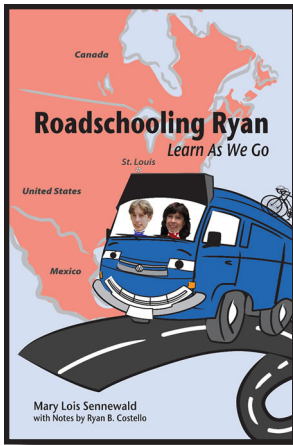
It was Mary Lois Sennewald's harebrained and inspired idea to take her teenaged son out of high school in Missouri for a year and onto that great teacher of generations—the Open Road. Had she known the perils that awaited—an almost fatal blizzard on the back roads of Canada, and outwardly idyllic Mexican town that would later erupt in riots and death—one suspects she might never have left home. It is her great gift to readers that she did. Here are moments of high drama and low comedy, of countless frustrations and magical epiphanies. This is a book about travel, but it's much more. It is about mothers and sons, despair and elation, the kindness of strangers and the cruelty of nature. Sennewald felt the lure of the horizon and the relentless pull of home, and on their journey together, she and her son learned things infinite and profound. Read this and you will, too.

— *Steve Friedman, The Agony of Victory: When Winning Isn't Enough*

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MORE PLAUDITS

Every once in a while I come across a gem which really works for me. This book inspires and brings alive of my dreams, to home school and travel with my own children. As a dedicated parent, I plan to do a similar journey with my teenage son and daughter. I appreciate how Mary Lois and Ryan explore this unique life experience, seeing both the golden moments and the challenges. Thank you for reawakening my dream.

--Rudy Stroble: Geologist and father, Calgary, Alberta

This book presents a great roadschooling curriculum: Literature, language, social and cultural reflections, archeology, geography, North American History (Canada, Mexico, U.S.), reflective thinking, creative writing along with more conventional online high school trig and history classes. An added value is the page-turning quality.

--M. Lavin, ScD, Professor of Nursing, St. Louis University, inveterate traveler and learner

In **Roadschooling Ryan: Learn as We Go**, Mary Lois Sennewald shows that life experiences can play a crucial role in the education of our present-day teenagers. While chronicling her travels with Ryan, she raises tough questions about how best our young people learn. Although she does not have all the answers, Sennewald went on her way courageously to discover what worked for her son. While most parents won't hit the road for a year, all can actively engage in their children's learning. Sennewald's book deserves a careful reading from anyone concerned about our schools and what our young people take from them, as well as giving direction to parents who are homeschooling. Over a hundred years ago, the education philosopher, John Dewey, said: "We learn by doing." Mary and Ryan did it and showed us that IT WORKS.

--Anne S. White, Reading First Consultant, mother and grandmother, St. Louis, Missouri

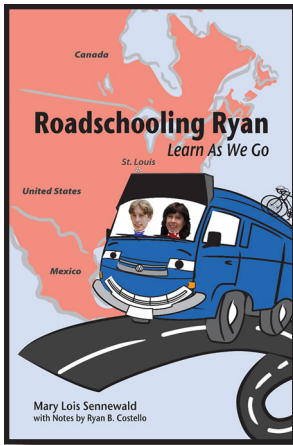
Mary takes us on a fantastic trip, with adventure and reality on every page. A wonderful mother-and-son experience that will inspire all.

--Rev. Wil Goatley, D.Min. Minister and Hospice Chaplain

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ABOUT MARY LOIS SENNEWALD AND RYAN B. COSTELLO

Mary Lois Sennewald LCSW is a psychotherapist, educator, award-winning journalist, and adventurer. An avid traveler, she circled the globe with a backpack, taught in Bolivia, Morocco and Egypt, and gladly soaked up the culture wherever she went. Professionally, she taught classes from Head Start to university writing courses, directed a literacy center in St. Louis, worked as a clinical social worker and maintained several businesses.

Eager to initiate her two sons, David and Ryan, into the wonders of the world, she drove them to Alaska one summer when they were old enough to put up their own tents, then followed that with a summer in Mexico. Both young men retain a love of the road.

Sennewald is passionate about encouraging life-time learning in her students, working for international understanding among peoples, walking in the mountains, and schlepping off to Mexico at a moment's notice.

She divides her time between Missouri and Colorado, continues her writing and is preparing to publish a children's book.

Ryan B. Costello has pursued his wanderlust, studying and traveling in Europe and Mexico. He majored in Spanish at universities in Boulder and St. Louis, has done stand-up comedy, and presently works in a Spanish restaurant in St. Louis.



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