

wend

BEYOND ADVENTURE

PLATFORM: *88Bikes*

FEAST: *China*

SNAP: *Skywalkers*

pilgrimage to the

MONKEY KINGDOM

bouldering among the ruins of an ancient Indian empire

+

The Kamchatka Project

PADDLING UNEXPLORED
WHITEWATER IN ONE OF THE
WORLD'S LAST GREAT SALMON
STRONGHOLDS

Fall in the Death Zone

SUMMITTING EVEREST DURING ITS
DEADLIEST CLIMBING SEASON

The Hero and the Leopard

BICYCLE TAXIING IN THE
FOOTSTEPS OF THE FIRST
EXPLORER TO TRANSECT AFRICA



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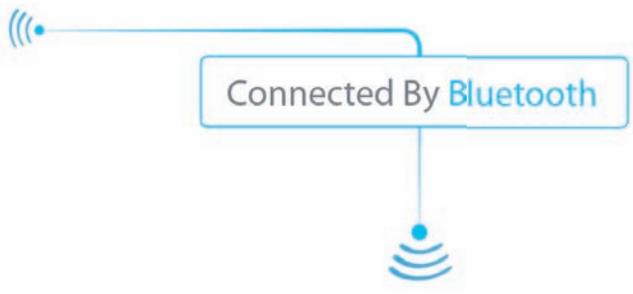
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Managing Editor Sami Ewers **Associate Editor** Sarah Esterman **Copy Editor** Cory Jubitz

Ad Sales
Robb Hengerer

Contributing Illustrator
Pyr Anderson

Editors at Large
Peter Frick-Wright, Rick Olson

Photographer at Large
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Cover Photo
Paul Bride

Chief Keyboard Drooler
Bennett Kendall Selland

Contributing Editors
Paul Bride, Neil Ever Osborne,
Stiv Wilson, Ethan Smith, Doug
Clark, Jordan Tybon, Eric
Larsen, Julian Smith, Helen
Thayer

Contributing Photographers
Paul Bride, Neil Ever Osborne,
Stiv Wilson, Ethan Smith, Shane
Robinson, Doug Clark, Jordan
Tybon, Eric Larsen, Julian Smith,
Helen Thayer

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About 30 years ago, a 16-foot, 1,000-pound-capacity inflatable beast of a canoe wended its way down the production line at a factory in Germany, where it was bathed in ultra-tough military-grade rubber coating before being shipped (at some point) to the United States, where—judging by its DIY patches and battle-worn exterior—it saw innumerable river journeys prior to landing on Craigslist and ultimately ending up the tattered gem of my gear closet. Deflated, the boat can be folded to the size of a small washing machine. Inflated, it has all the sex appeal of a bratwurst rotting on the side of a highway—its cracked, horse-crap-green pontoons so skin-crippingly hot in the sun you don't dare touch its molting German-language decals. But despite its various wrinkles, my aquatic Hindenburg still holds air like a champ and floats down the river (tracking surprisingly well, considering) with the slow-but-sure performance of an aged Olympic athlete.

Well-made equipment can endure decades of adventures, and be it tattered, torn, beat down or just plain foul, most outdoor recreationists seem to be hoarding at least one piece they can't bring themselves to get rid of. A recent spring-cleaning of my gear closet compelled me to ask some of the folks who contributed to this issue about the pieces of gear they've held onto over the years.

When on polar expeditions, Eric Larsen ("Fall in the Death Zone," page 40) relies on new gear, but he rocked the same sleeping bag from eighth grade until he was 29 years old and still regularly rides his first mountain bike—a 1988 GT Avalanche with the model name Arctic Snowstorm. "The thing is a tank,"

says Larsen, who in recent years converted the mountain bike to a single-speed road machine. "Whenever I ride it, I feel like a kid. I will never get rid of that bike."

A decade ago, Ethan Smith ("The Kamchatka Project," page 26) received an ugly fleece sweater for Christmas. Deeming it too hideous to wear for anything but kayaking, the paddler hid it away in his gear box, never guessing the sweater was destined to rise above the rest of the box's "perpetually rank" contents to become an expedition mainstay. "The base layers I wear while kayaking have been gradually updated over the years, but I have yet to find another fleece outer layer that's just loose enough, just thick enough, just perfect enough between my base layers and my drysuit or top," says Smith, adding, "It just will not die."

Paul Bride (cover image; "Dreams of Stone," page 12) recently said goodbye to some fleece—a pair of pants he'd been wearing on expeditions since 1998. "I climbed and skied in the Bugaboos, Himalayas, Waddington Range, Rockies, Coast Range, traveled to the Arctic and more in those fleece pants," says Bride. "I just threw them out six weeks ago."

The right piece of gear might last for years, becoming a thing of nostalgia—inexorably tied in the mind of its owner to the adventures it's been taken on. But when replacement time eventually comes, you want to be ready to make an educated investment in something that will provide the same quality for the foreseeable future.

Finding expert opinions about gear is easily accomplished online these days. But once you're down the rabbit hole of Internet searches, the multitude of reviews can get overwhelming

or—worse—begin to sound the same. Sometimes it's nice to hear from a completely biased someone who believes a piece of gear is so dependable that he or she trusts his or her life with it on major journeys and has every intention of using it until it disintegrates altogether.

For now, *Wend* isn't a resource for technical breakdowns of gear or a place to measure how outdoor brands stack up against one another (though you can expect to start seeing gear features online as we grow this year); it's a place for timeless stories and images about experiencing the world through human-powered outdoor recreation. However, whether they're using high-end GPS devices while climbing Mount Everest or homemade bamboo poles while trekking the Continental Divide, the equipment our contributors bring with them plays a major role in the experiences they have, which is why this year we'll be asking some of them to share their packing lists with you, starting with Eric Larsen's story in this issue.

Like my canoe or a fleece that's unwilling to die, well-made gear can stand the test of time—across borders and wilderness areas, mountains and rivers, for thousands of miles—enabling unforgettable adventures that help to form the characters of the people who rely on it. We are excited to be adding a taste of that experience to *Wend*.

Do you have a favorite piece of gear that's still clinging on after years of adventure? We'd love to hear about it. Send us an e-mail or—even better—post your story to our Facebook page so everybody can check it out. —KC

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*Eric Larsen with his team as
they summit Mt. Everest Oct.
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Julian Smith is the author of *Crossing the Heart of Africa: An Odyssey of Love and Adventure* (Harper Perennial), from which his article in this issue is adapted. His writing and photography have appeared in *Outside*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Smithsonian*, *Wired*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *US News & World Report*, and he's written guidebooks to El Salvador, Ecuador, Virginia and the Southwest. Along the way, he also somehow managed to launch and edit a peer-reviewed science journal and earn a degree in wildlife ecology studying grizzly bear tourism. Like half of the self-employed people in America, he lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife and daughter. Find more information at juliansmith.com.

Paul Bride is an adventure and travel photographer residing in Squamish, British Columbia, Canada. His editorial work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Outside*, *Alpinist*, *Rock and Ice* and the *Canadian Alpine Journal*, to name a few. In 2006, he was featured in the book *Carte Blanche*, a compendium of the best currently practicing Canadian photographers. He was recently chosen for the 2011 *Silvershotz* international fine art journal for his travel exhibit on natural elements, which took him to some of the most remote places on Earth. Paul recently opened his own gallery in Squamish. You can view his work at paulbride.com.

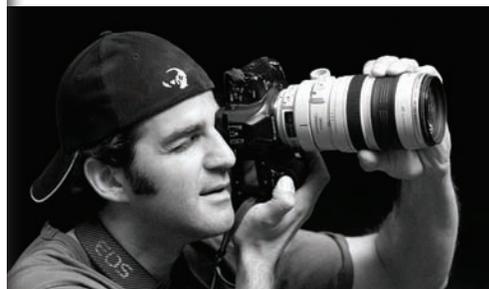
Modern-day explorer and expedition guide **Eric Larsen** has spent the past 15 years of his life traveling in some of the most remote and wild places left on Earth. On October 15, 2010, Eric completed the final leg of his world-record Save the Poles expedition: the South Pole, the North Pole and Mount Everest all in one year. His purpose? To travel to the front lines of global warming to document the changes occurring in these last great frozen places. For more information on Eric and his amazing journey, visit ericlarsenexplore.com.

Helen Thayer has represented three countries in track and field, won a USA National Luge Championship and pursued a career in worldwide mountaineering. After creating the nonprofit education organization Adventure Classroom, she earned a series of exploration firsts, becoming the first woman to solo the magnetic North Pole, the first woman to walk the Sahara Desert from Morocco to the Nile River and the first woman to walk the Gobi Desert west to east. Author of multiple books, including the best-selling *Polar Dream*, *Three Among the Wolves* and *Walking the Gobi*, Helen has been invited to share her experiences at the White House and the Kremlin. Follow Helen at helenthayer.com.

From his base in Portland, Oregon, **Ethan Smith** designs products with companies such as Nau and Eddie Bauer, develops websites and marketing strategies with organizations like International League of Conservation Photographers, records his adventures in photos and words for publications such as *American Whitewater* and participates in environmental projects around the globe. The Kamchatka Project, the latest such endeavor and winner of a National Geographic Expeditions Council grant, sent whitewater kayakers to Russia's Far East to explore rivers and raise awareness of one of the world's last salmon strongholds. Peruse Ethan's work at ethanfsmith.com.

Jordan Tybon is a professional dirtbag who pretends to be a photographer. He travels as much as possible for someone who doesn't have any notable source of income, trying to capture what it is he believes we, as humans, have forgotten or lost. However, not even he is sure exactly what that is, and thus he is clearly full of nonsense. Jordan is based out of Berlin, Germany, with the somewhereelseland team; together, they climb and establish new highlines all over Europe. You can see more of his work and follow the adventures of the team online at somewhereelseland.com.

Doug Clark is a writer, traveler and inadvertent adventurer. Some of his favorite memories include backpacking in his home base, the Uinta Mountains in Utah, playing chess with monks in Burma and hitchhiking through New Zealand. He is currently a Fulbright Fellow in Sumbawa, Indonesia, where he teaches English at a public high school and is completing a collection of short stories.



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- » Year 13-year-old Jordan Romero summited Mount Everest on May 22: **2010**
- » Number of days later the China Tibet Mountaineering Association banned all children under 18 from climbing it: **19**
- » Age of third-grader Tseten Sherpa, who plans to climb it anyway in summer 2011: **9**
- » Estimated fine, in dollars, he will incur if he does: **140,000**
- » Record, in hours and minutes, of the fastest ascent of Mount Everest: **8:10**
- » Year Tseten Sherpa's father, Pemba Dorje Sherpa, set this record: **2004**
- » Year he trekked to Everest Base Camp carrying a banner reading "350—Save Our Himalayas": **2009**

- » Amount of carbon dioxide, in parts per million, scientists say is the safe upper limit for Earth's atmosphere: **350**
- » Amount of carbon dioxide, in parts per million, in Earth's atmosphere until about 200 years ago: **275**
- » Amount of carbon dioxide, in parts per million, in Earth's atmosphere today: **388**
- » Year Apa "Super" Sherpa dedicated his historic 20th summit of Mount Everest to raising awareness about climate change on May 22nd: **2010**
- » Trash left by climbers, in tons, he and his team lugged off the mountain three days later: **5.2**

- » Tons of oceanic trash picked up by beach cleaners in 2009 on Hawaii's North Shore, a popular surfing mecca: **4**
- » Cameos Oscar the Grouch has in *Night at the Museum 2*, starring Owen Wilson: **1**
- » Number of stitches Owen Wilson received in his head after being smacked by his surfboard in a February 2011 wipeout in Hawaii: **24**
- » Months prior his brother, Andrew Wilson, was bitten on the foot by a shark while surfing in the same cove: **2**
- » Number of BlackBerry cords Andrew's friends tied around his ankle in an attempt to stop the bleeding: **1**

- » Cost, during the 2010 Winter Olympics, of the "Proud Canadian" BlackBerry app, which displays a maple leaf while playing the national anthem: **0**
- » Number of dogs Outdoor Adventures, controller of a Canadian dogsled tours operation, amassed to cater to Olympic tourists: **300**
- » Estimated number of those dogs that were shot "mass execution style" after business slowed in the weeks following the Olympics: **100**
- » Compensation packages for PTSD awarded to the employee who did the killings: **1**

- » Year the U.S. Army introduced Warrior Adventure Quest, a program that uses outdoor adventure activities to combat PTSD: **2008**
- » Cost of the program, in U.S. dollars, per participating soldier: **86**
- » Minutes of helicopter fly time that amount would buy in Russia's mostly roadless Kamchatka Peninsula: **1.5**
- » Percentage of all wild Pacific salmon that go to Kamchatka to spawn: **20**
- » Estimated weight, in pounds, of salmon poached from Kamchatka's rivers each year: **120,000,000**

- » Official yearly allowance, in pounds, of salmon to Kamchatkans in 1960, as dictated by the Soviet Union: **132**
- » Estimated minimum yearly weight, in pounds, of salmon needed to feed a Kamchatkan sled dog: **132**
- » Decade Soviet officials opted to exterminate Kamchatkan sled dogs rather than fill salmon quotas for them: **1960s**
- » Decade the mass extermination of aboriginal sled dogs that then spread across northern Russia and Siberia finally ended: **1970s**
- » Minimum number of aboriginal sled dogs estimated to have been killed during this time: **10,000**

Rolling through the fog on Mt. Tabor. See more in Survival Kit, page 54.





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Dreams of Stone

words & photos: Paul Bride

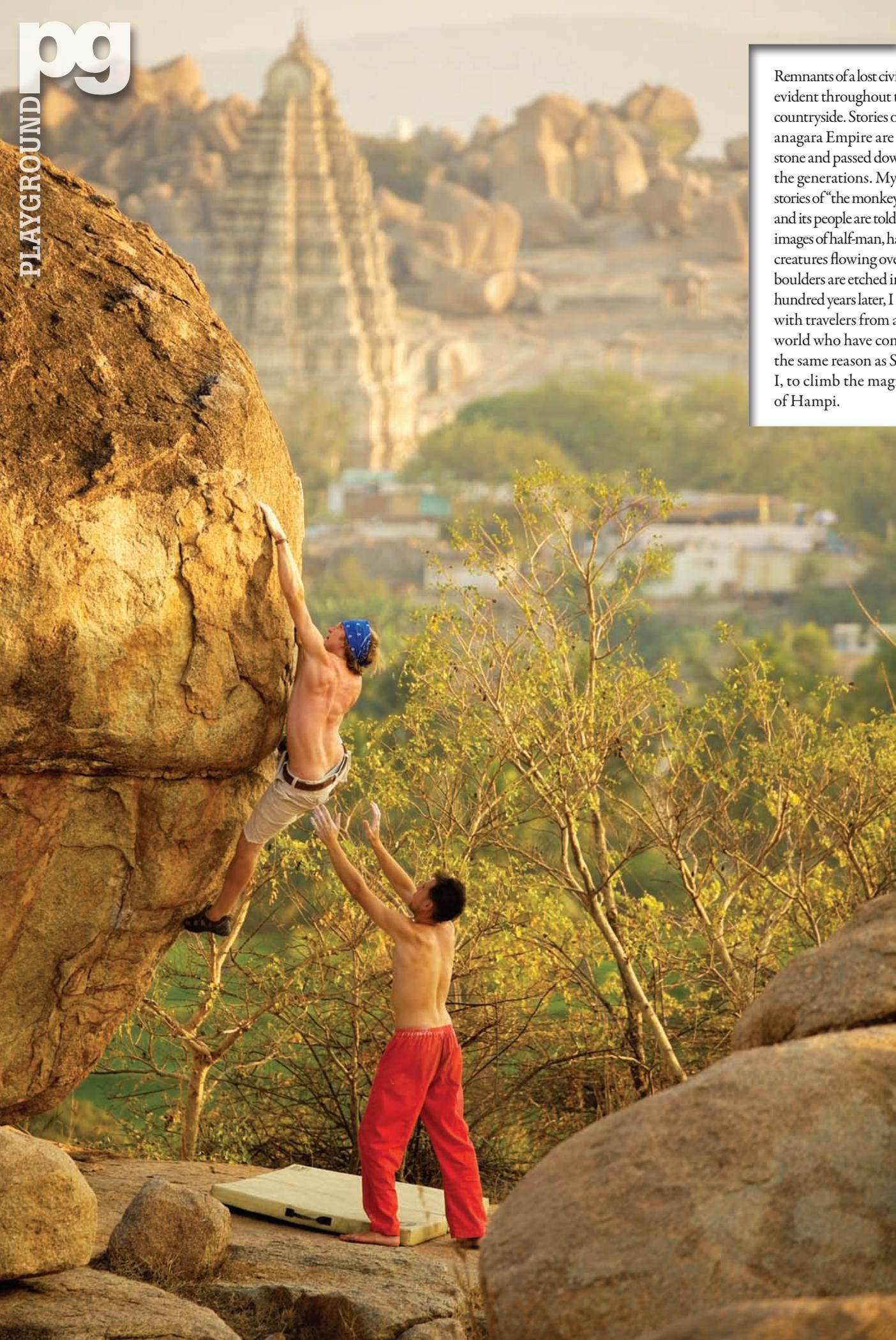
On the banks of the Tungabhadra River in the central part of the Karnataka state of India lie the ghostly ruins of Hampi. Stretching over 26 square kilometers, the surreal boulder-strewn landscape provides a backdrop to one of the largest complexes of ruins in India. During the 14th century, Hampi was the capital of one of India's most powerful empires, the Vijayanagara, whose kingdom stretched from the Arabian Sea to the Indian Ocean. Today, Hampi is a recognized and protected World Heritage site under UNESCO and the Indian government.

I first visited Hampi solo in 1995 after hearing tales of magical boulders that stretch as far as the eye can see. Legends of glowing rocks that radiate positive energy have been passed down through the generations, and many pilgrimages have ended among the area's ancient ruins. Now, years later, I return with good friend and elite climber Sonnie Trotter to climb and explore the endless wave of granite boulders.



During the final hours of daylight, the landscape of Hampi reveals its true magic. The vast fields of vegetation strewn throughout a panorama of glowing boulders are one of the most exotic sights I've ever seen. Setting out in the late afternoons, I trek for miles across the countryside just to immerse myself in the outlandish beauty of the landscape. Returning to my bungalow at night by headlamp, the distant sound of beating drums echoes through the valley, reminding me just how far away I am from home.





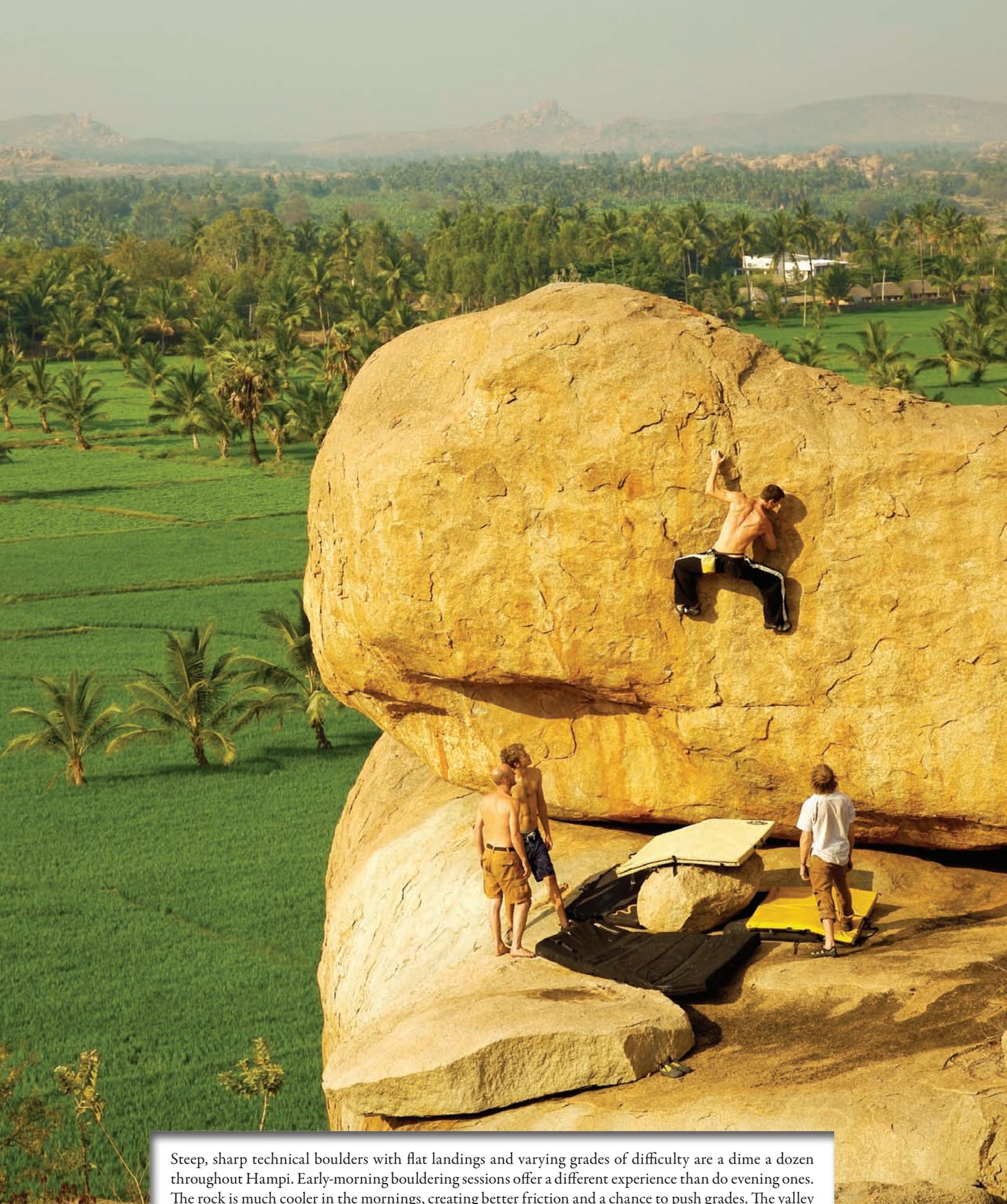
Remnants of a lost civilization are evident throughout the Hampi countryside. Stories of the Vijayanagara Empire are written in stone and passed down through the generations. Mythological stories of “the monkey kingdom” and its people are told to tourists; images of half-man, half-monkey creatures flowing over the giant boulders are etched in stone. Six hundred years later, I find myself with travelers from around the world who have come here for the same reason as Sonnie and I, to climb the magical stones of Hampi.



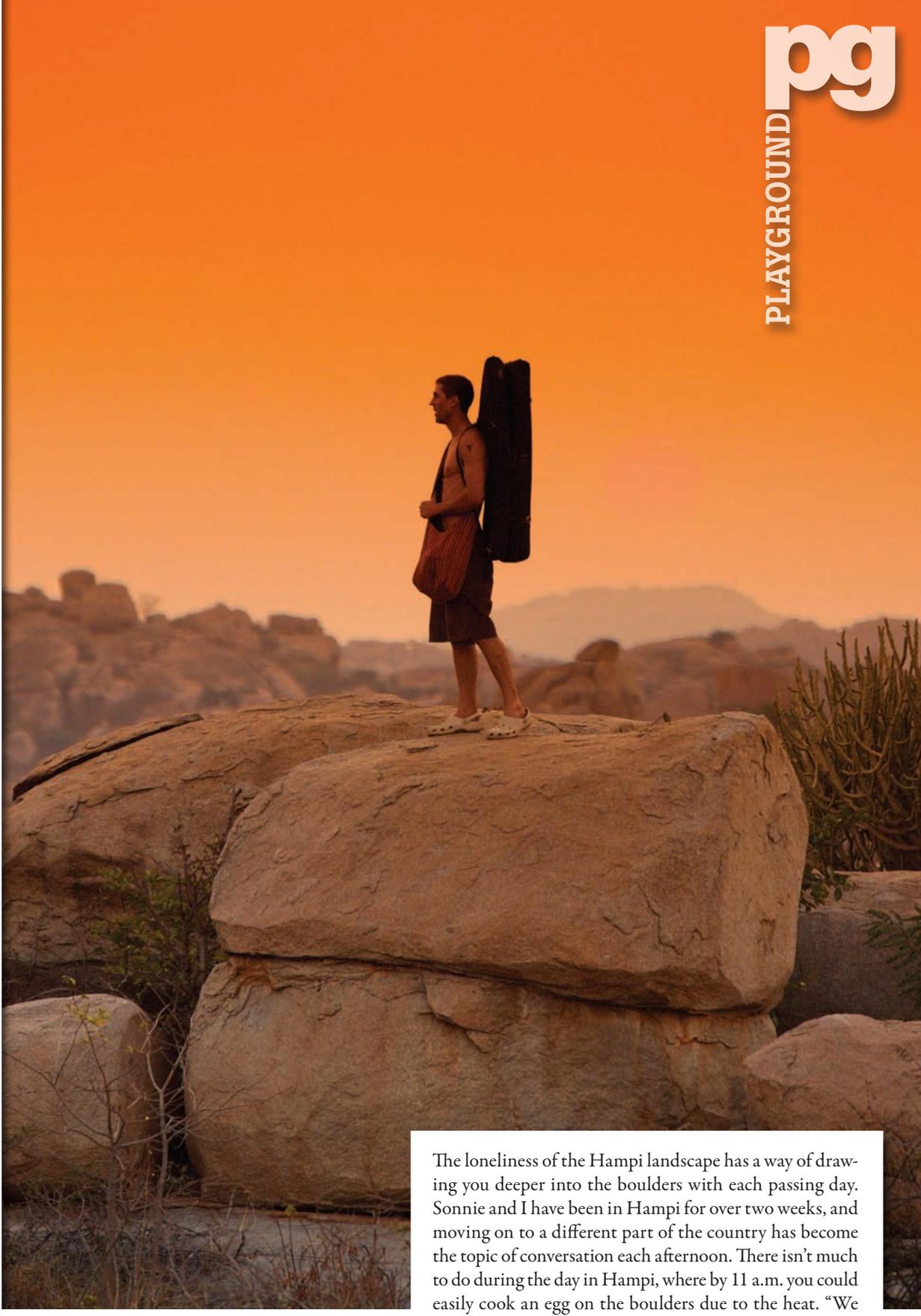


Accessing certain boulder areas requires long hikes through rice fields. These fields have produced food for the locals and provided them with a source of income since the Vijayanagara Empire some 600 years before. Walking through the damp grass in sandals provides cooling comfort on hot mornings or evenings, provided we don't dwell on warnings we've heard about the variety of scorpions and poisonous snakes that live in the area.





Steep, sharp technical boulders with flat landings and varying grades of difficulty are a dime a dozen throughout Hampi. Early-morning bouldering sessions offer a different experience than do evening ones. The rock is much cooler in the mornings, creating better friction and a chance to push grades. The valley light pulls the creative mind in different directions; lines on boulders that are not there in the evening light suddenly appear. I have walked by this boulder on numerous evenings, never stopping to have a look, but on this morning the light presents a perfect line on small crimps hanging high above the valley.



The loneliness of the Hampi landscape has a way of drawing you deeper into the boulders with each passing day. Sonnie and I have been in Hampi for over two weeks, and moving on to a different part of the country has become the topic of conversation each afternoon. There isn't much to do during the day in Hampi, where by 11 a.m. you could easily cook an egg on the boulders due to the heat. "We will leave tomorrow," one of us will inevitably say, sweating. Then late afternoon will hit and the sinking sun will cast long shadows over the valley, allowing us to leave our bungalows again. The temperature drops a few degrees and we set out for long walks with nothing but a boulder mat, climbing shoes and a bottle of water. With over 26 square kilometers of alien landscape to explore, we always find a reason to stay one more day.



The Tax Man Killeth (Your Dog)

In late December 2010, officials in the Swiss village of Reconvilier announced that citizens refusing to pay the annual \$48.50 canine tax would have to hand their dogs over for lethal injection. When the story broke online several days later, the blogosphere and tweet-o-verse lit up, with enraged dog lovers from across the world demanding to know why pooches should be paying the ultimate price for their masters' debts.

It was meant to be a hard-nosed solution to a looming accounts receivable problem for officials of the 2,045-person, 280-dog community, part of their efforts to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid taxes. Unlike the iconic Alpine villages of postcard fame, the 3.2-square-mile, relatively flat Reconvilier can't depend on tourism

to bolster its mostly agricultural economy.

Searches for the village on Wiki-style travel websites result only in the occasional bleak listing, with one dubbing it "One of Switzerland's least visited destinations" before recommending that travelers go elsewhere. Reconvilier officials' threat to euthanize dogs—which they say is perfectly legal according to a 1904 law—succeeded in finally putting the tiny village on the map, if only as a place of curious infamy.

Just 22 miles away in the Natural History Museum of Bern, an estimated 100,000 visitors per year flock to see what's left of Barry, one of Switzerland's (and arguably the world's) most famous canines—a legendary Alpine rescue dog so prolific that a monument was built in his honor at the entrance to the Cimetière des Chiens, the world's oldest pet cemetery, near Paris.

The relationship between dogs and humans has a long history in Switzerland. In summer 2010, a 14,000-year-old fossil found in a cave there was labeled "the earliest indisputable, directly dated evidence of a domestic dog" by archaeologists. A 1904 newspaper report tells of Swiss smugglers using hundreds of trained dogs to sneak goods into Italy. And by 1979, rescue dogs had been credited with saving more than 2,500 lives in the Swiss Alps. These days in Switzerland it's legal to bring dogs into stores and restaurants and even on public transportation, though they need a ticket to ride like anybody else.

With dogs so ingrained in Swiss culture, it comes as no surprise that the local backlash (which included death threats) and global blitzkrieg of negative publicity ("Saturday Night Live's" "Weekend Update" reported: "Switzerland: Neutral on Nazis, tough on dogs.") generated enough pressure to cause officials to call off the dogs in Reconvilier.

A report published in mid-January 2011 on Change.org claims that Bern cantonal parliament members are in the process of changing the language of the law to ensure that no dog in the region dies a tax-related death. Meanwhile, back in Reconvilier, officials will have to add the village's tarnished reputation to the list of things they must account for.

Coetzee and the Crocodile

On December 7, 2010, legendary South African kayaking guide Hendrik "Hendri" Coetzee, 35, was leading a whitewater expedition in Central Africa when—while paddling the Lukuga River in the Democratic Republic of Congo—a crocodile crept up and plucked him from his kayak. Coetzee's tragic death sent shock waves through the kayaking world. But run-ins with dangerous wildlife were all part of the job (and thrill) for the renowned whitewater explorer, as he revealed on his blog, *The Great White Explorer*, in an account from his historic 2004 source-to-sea descent of the White Nile:

The eerie thing about a crock charge is the utter silence with which they happen. Not a word is spoken as we watch it approach. Dale and Marcus sitting in front are in the greatest danger as they calmly sit on the inflatable raft tube staring into the approaching row of teeth. It is close enough to see the plaque on its teeth when it launches itself out of the water and at them. An explosion of sound shatters the silence that has given the situation the detachment of a movie scene.

The plastic yellow paddle blades swung by Marcus and Dale, make contact with leather, flesh and bone in mid air. Dale slightly miss-hits with a deflecting blow but Marcus is on the money. Flashes of its white belly and green scales twists in the air like a sporting marlin before splashing back into the water from the direction it came from. A 900kilogram Nile crocodile takes some stopping, especially in its killing lunge but perhaps it is the surprise of being treated so disrespectfully that did the trick. Stunned, we sink back into silence for a second before exploding into "HOW FUCKING COOL WAS THAT!!!!!!!"



Famous St. Bernard Killed

Special Cable to The New York Times, September 8, 1910

GENEVA, Sept. 7—The renowned St. Bernard dog Barry III., who saved many lives on the Grand St. Bernard Pass, has lost his life in an avalanche after assisting in the rescue of two storm-bound travelers.

Barry last Sunday night guided Father Clavendier to two persons who had lost their way in a storm and who were safely brought to the Hospice. Then Barry disappeared. As he often passed hours in the pass, coming to the Hospice only when help was required, no notice of his absence was taken until Monday morning, when a search was organized and the dog was found in the debris of an avalanche.

Barry III is supposed to have been a direct descendant of one of the three famous St. Bernards to whom this breed of dogs owes its continued existence.

The monks of St. Bernard's Hospice had been breeding the dogs almost ever since St. Bernard founded the institution in the tenth century. In the middle of the nineteenth century an avalanche swept away the kennels in which the dogs were kept, and only three were saved. Their names were Pluto, Pallas and Barry. The last-named animal, which is said to have been Barry III's ancestor, was orange-tawny in color, with white legs, stomach, and collar, and a white blaze down the face. He had the reputation of having saved the lives of forty travelers. When he died his skin was preserved and stuffed, and it is still on exhibition in the Berne Museum.



Remarkable Discoveries by Explorer Grogan in Africa

Excerpted from: The New York Times, February 27, 1900

To read more about Grogan's journey, check out "The Hero and the Leopard" on page 48.

LONDON, Feb. 27—Some of the morning papers ... publish a remarkable interview with Mr. E. S. Grogan, who has just returned to England after a two years' journey in Africa.

Mr. Grogan, who traveled over 6,500 miles and represents himself to be the first European who has traveled through the continent from the Cape to Cairo, says that, after leaving Lake Tanganyika, with eight porters, he entered a region of active volcanoes, where he encountered "enormous lava streams, forming a veritable sea, forty miles by sixty, and a hundred feet deep." This whole region he found devastated, forests and herds of elephants being buried in liquid fire.

The neighboring country, he says, is occupied by some 5,000 Balekas, ferocious cannibals from the Congo, who live by man hunting. His guides told him that the country, covering 3,500 square miles, had been until recently densely populated, but that the people had virtually all been killed and eaten by the Balekas.

Everywhere he found evidences of cannibalistic practices. The very paths in the jungle were marked out by lines of human skeletons. The streams were full of decomposing remnants of humanity, half eaten and horribly mutilated.

These cannibals, according to Mr. Grogan's narrative, lived in grass cabins. He entered some of these habitations and witnessed horrible sights. He saw "cauldrons full of liquid with floating human skulls and the bodies of infants."

On one occasion the savages attacked Mr. Grogan's party, but he opened upon them with rifle fire. This staggered the cannibals, as they had never before seen a gun or a white man. Mr. Grogan shot two and the rest retreated. He says the Balekas are by no means repulsive to look upon. Although small, they are well built and have good features. Men and women go about stark naked. Their long hair gives them a peculiarly wild appearance.

Proceeding along the west coast of Albert Lake, Mr. Grogan found the natives terrorized by raids of the Belgians. He declared that he thoroughly investigated this matter, and found that the Belgian troops were in the habit of crossing the frontier, had shot large numbers of the inhabitants, and had carried off the young women and cattle, tying up and burning the old women while white Belgian officers were present.

He adds: "From the north of Albert Lake to Lake Mweru the whole country is in a state of chaos. It is administered by incompetent Belgians. Often the non-commissioned officers and troops are of the lowest type of native and they are almost invariably cannibals."



THE LOWDOWN FROM THE FRONT LINES

Snake River Salmon *words & photos: Neil Ever Osborne*

I'm half-submerged in Idaho's Cape Horn Creek, where the glacier-fed water numbs my elbows as I rest an underwater camera rig on the polished pebbles nearby, waiting for a wild Snake River salmon to enter the frame. Near me, Russ Thurow, a fisheries biologist working for the U.S. Forest Service, is searching for redds (hollows in a riverbed that female salmon create to lay their eggs in). We've trekked a few miles into the Sawtooth National Recreation Area—one of the wildest green spaces left in the continental United States—to get to this creek, and though my fingers feel frozen, I'm determined to capture these one-of-a-kind fish in action before we leave.

I'm in Idaho surveying salmon spawning habitats for the nonprofit Save Our Wild Salmon (SOS) as part of Tripods in the Mud, an International League of Conservation Photographers initiative that unites professional photographers with conservation organizations. My mission: to tell the story of the mighty but endangered Snake River salmon through images.

Navigating about 900 miles of waterways inland from the

Pacific Ocean to elevations above 6,500 feet, Snake River salmon reach their spawning grounds after traveling farther and climbing higher than any other salmon on Earth. The nutrients they bring back from the sea feed the rivers, trees and more than 150 other species that grace this wild country. At one time, up to 16 million wild salmon returned to central Idaho each year. Today, biologists note that as few as 10,000 successfully complete the obstacle-ridden migration, as four federal dams on the lower Snake River block access to their habitat.

Biologists agree that restored connectivity will enable these populations to thrive once again. Salmon advocates from SOS are making this issue more transparent, highlighting scientific data from biologists like Thurow in their campaigns.

The hours spent lying shivering in the creek finally pay off when a Snake River salmon swims so close that its tail brushes my rig. It's come all this way with one thing in mind. I'm lucky to have captured an image.



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Kavu | Helen of Soy skirt

Converting the protein found in soybeans into a textile—and blending this with a small amount of cotton and a touch of spandex—results in a smooth, silk-like fabric that breathes and wicks exceptionally well. This makes it perfect for Kavu's mid-weight, slightly stretchy and comfortable-as-hell Helen of Soy skirt. "The soy kind of gives it this luscious feel ... I'm pretty much set on using this for at least the next three seasons," says Kavu lead designer Leah Evans. Because of its unique fabric composition—not too thick and anything but flimsy, its hint of stretch as well as its natural performance properties, the Helen of Soy skirt is perfect for an active but fashion-conscious

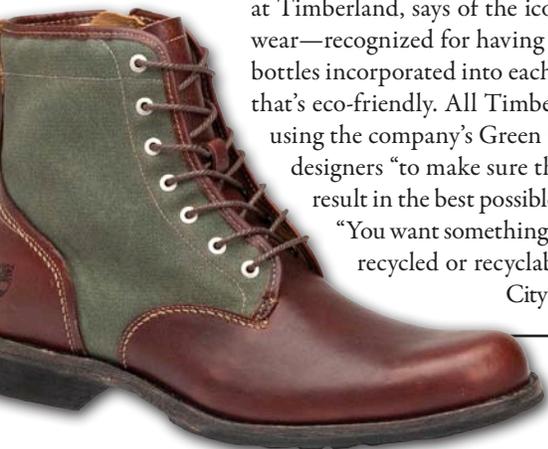
lifestyle. "You can wear it to a nice dinner or out and about, shopping in the market or ... whatever," Evans says. The soy fabric is inherently durable and tough and holds its dye without fading, so you can rough it up as much as you want without worrying you'll prematurely wear it to pieces. "After so many washes, it's still in great shape," Evans says.



Timberland | Earthkeepers City 6-inch boots

"We started to do a lot of this work just because it was within our value set," Brian Moore, vice president of men's product at Timberland, says of the iconic Earthkeepers line of footwear—recognized for having one and a half recycled plastic bottles incorporated into each shoe. But it's not just this line that's eco-friendly. All Timberland shoes are manufactured using the company's Green Choice Grid, a sort of map for designers "to make sure that what they're designing will result in the best possible green index," Moore explains. "You want something in every shoe that's sustainable, recycled or recyclable," he says. The Earthkeepers City 6-inch boot—made with recycled

rubber, plastic linings and laces and "Gold"-rated tannery leather (the highest industry standard for environmentally conscious leather production)—is a beacon of Timberland's ability to produce superior-quality products with green materials. Moore puts it like this: "People make the assumption that if they're buying a green product, it's lower quality. But if they go to Whole Foods and buy an organic product, they expect it to be higher quality." Through many years of constructing sustainable footwear, Moore believes, Timberland has proved the above assumption false. "You can make (a) very durable, rugged product that is still very green, and it'll hold up as well as any other Timberland shoe will," he says.



Arc'teryx | Strato hoodie

According to the creative minds at Arc'teryx, the company approaches sustainability by designing products that will perform better and last longer than anything else in your closet. As Arc'teryx designer Carl Moriarty explains, "We are really focused on the concept of longevity. Combining durable materials and construction techniques with a timeless aesthetic to ensure that our products give people the longest possible service life. ... We think this approach provides genuine sustainability for our customers." Arc'teryx openly states that these "durable materials" are primarily derived from non-renewable resources—which perform the best and last the longest, the company maintains. So, when Arc'teryx introduced its first-ever recycled-material item—the Strato hoodie—made with Polartec Thermal Pro Cobble fabric, composed of 64 percent

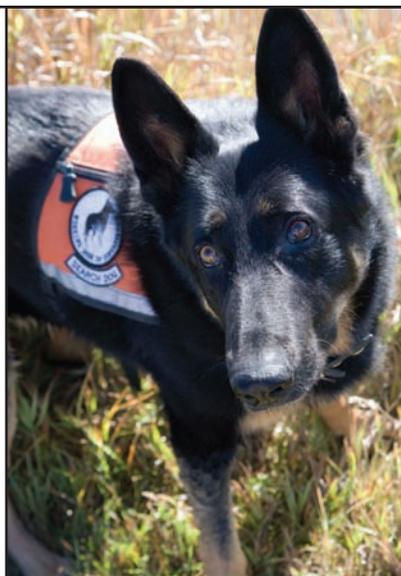
post-consumer recycled plastic bottles, it only did so because the material performs the same as virgin polyester. The Strato hoodie—a mid-layer for snowboarding or skiing—is the only product in the company's entire line that's made with recycled content because, according to Moriarty, "the Cobble fabric is one of the few recycled materials we feel withstand our durability tests. And it's essential that all our materials stand up to the abuse that Arc'teryx consumers put (them) through."



North American Odyssey

Teaching young adults about nature conservation through an epic three-year North American journey

Amy Voytilla and Dave Freeman are on the journey of a lifetime—the North American Odyssey (NAO), an 11,700-mile expedition by way of kayak, canoe and dogsled—in order to gain public support and protection for North American wilderness areas. “When it comes to appreciation of nature, starting young is key,” Voytilla says. That’s why she and her partner are targeting America’s youth, conducting live school assemblies to share their journey’s studies and impart a strong appreciation of nature to their audience of 100,000 elementary and middle school students. The first of six NAO stages began by kayak on Earth Day 2010 on the Pacific Coast with a study of Northwest marine life and temperate forests. Now, the pair is embarking on the third stage, in Norman Wells (Northern Canada), by dogsled—the best transportation option for this terrain. “We will certainly not be the first people to travel by dog team in the Northwest Territories,” Voytilla says, referring to the Dene people and Inuit, who traditionally used various dogsled techniques to move along the icy terrain. “This is ideal for the snow conditions and narrow trails winding through the woods found here,” she says. Voytilla and Dave contend that the dogs—all 12 of them—are a “huge draw for students following our journey.” But the dogs are also a draw for them: “It is like adding 12 new expedition partners. They all have different personalities, strengths and weaknesses,” Voytilla says. “It is hard to stay in a bad mood around these critters.”



Working Dogs for Conservation

Using canine olfaction for scientific inquiry, research and species preservation

Working Dogs for Conservation (WDC) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to help save endangered species and their habitats by using dogs’ keen sniffing skills, which provide a non-invasive way in which to sniff out scat, plants and live animals in order to gain important information about wild species. Alice Whitelaw, who co-founded WDC with three other women more than a decade ago, explains, “Having spent the majority of my career as a wildlife biologist using traditional methods—trapping, collaring and handling various species for vital information—I wanted to push the envelope on non-invasive techniques to gain some of the same information acquired using the traditional hands-on techniques.” Because quality DNA samples can be gleaned from animals’ fecal matter, which the dogs are trained to seek out, WDC is able to, as stated on its website, “(i)dentify species’ presence, abundance, food habits, parasite loads and habitat use.” DNA from scat can also be used to “identify species, sex and individuals, and determine population size, home range, paternity and kinship.” Whitelaw explains that the work humans and canines do is beneficial to all parties involved: “Working with dogs that love the job, finding information, helping answer questions that are so important for many species and

ecosystems—corridors and connectivity, invasive species and wildlife monitoring—while giving highly driven dogs a wonderful and fulfilling life with us as partners,” that’s what WDC is all about.



CONVERSATIONS WITH ACTIVISTS

88Bikes *Real-life bicycle fairies provide kids with wheels*

Dan Austin is executive director and co-founder of 88Bikes, a nonprofit organization that delivers bicycles to children who face challenges due to war, conflict, poverty, disease or other regional hardships. To learn more about 88Bikes, visit 88Bikes.org.

Wend: Tell us about the humble beginnings of 88Bikes.

Austin: My brother, Jared, and I were going to do a ride across Cambodia, and we decided to give our bikes away at the end. Through some contacts at *National Geographic*, we found a good orphanage in Phnom Penh. We realized a couple (of) weeks before we left, though, that there were 88 kids in the orphanage, meaning 86 kids would be left out. So we threw a fundraiser, launched a website and within four days we had all the donations we needed to give bikes to all 88 kids. It was such a scene of jubilation and pure, unbridled happiness that we knew right then that we needed to do it again.

Wend: What value do you hope kids will get from these bicycles?

Austin: For our second project, we hauled 200 bikes in a truck way up to this refugee camp in northern Uganda, and we endowed them to kids who had been rescued from being child soldiers in the Ugandan civil war. The kids who get bikes from us tend to have been through a lot, and I hope the bikes are a way to—obviously, they're a good way to get to school and make some money or whatever, help their families out, but I hope they're more a way to reconnect these kids with the lost fragments of their childhood. It's about happiness; it's about them getting out there and enjoying the world.

Wend: What are some of the challenges that face your organization?

Austin: The initial challenge is finding the best bikes, which we buy in country, from locals. We try to find the prestige utilitarian steel-frame bikes: no derailleurs, just simple, easy-to-fix machines that will last forever. Getting the bikes to the villages can also be a challenge. We'll be delivering 300 bikes to this rural village in central Mozambique soon, but the village is so isolated that the only way to get them the last 14 miles is to ride them there. We've got 70 local volunteers set to ride the bikes into the village (and) then walk back and do it again. Probably our biggest challenge of all is finding good partners. We need strong NGOs on the ground that have the kids' best interests in mind—ones that have been there a long time and developed honest working relationships with their communities.

Wend: Tell us about your volunteer program.

Austin: We send back volunteers to each site, usually at least twice a year, to spend a couple of weeks with the kids teaching bike repair and safety workshops, taking them on rides and encouraging them to see the bike as a starting point from which they can expand. In India, our volunteers led kids in painting this incredible mural at the orphanage that represents the things they want to do on their bikes in terms of exploring the world. The kids in Mongolia actually earned their bikes by painting a huge mural. The governor donated a stand in the middle of town and brought the cherry picker out to lift the mural onto it.

Wend: What's an exciting project you're working on this year?

Austin: We're partnering with this tremendous NGO called DesignBuildBLUFF that works with architecture students to design and build sustainable housing on the Navajo Nation reservation in Utah. I met with them about a year ago and asked if they'd be interested in building a sustainable bike shop. They were. I just got the first designs yesterday, and it's going to be amazing. They're using cars that have been crushed and piled up on the reservation to build it. We had one of our volunteers (a bike mechanic) suggest how the space (should) be configured so that the bike shop would have the truing wheel and everything they need in a small space. It's built on a trailer so it can be hauled around the reservation for different workshops and things. We're going to endow 50-150 bikes—depending on what we can do—to kids on the reservation when they open the shop this summer.

Wend: How can readers become more involved?

Austin: They can always go to our website and make a donation of \$88 (the cost of a bicycle in a developing country). Beyond that, we're just happy to have people following us on Facebook. Folks can definitely contact us if they want to volunteer, especially if they have bike mechanic skills. We work in tons of sites around the world and always need people to go back. Volunteers will have a great time working with the kids, fixing up their bikes, and we have strong partners on the ground to host them. **W**



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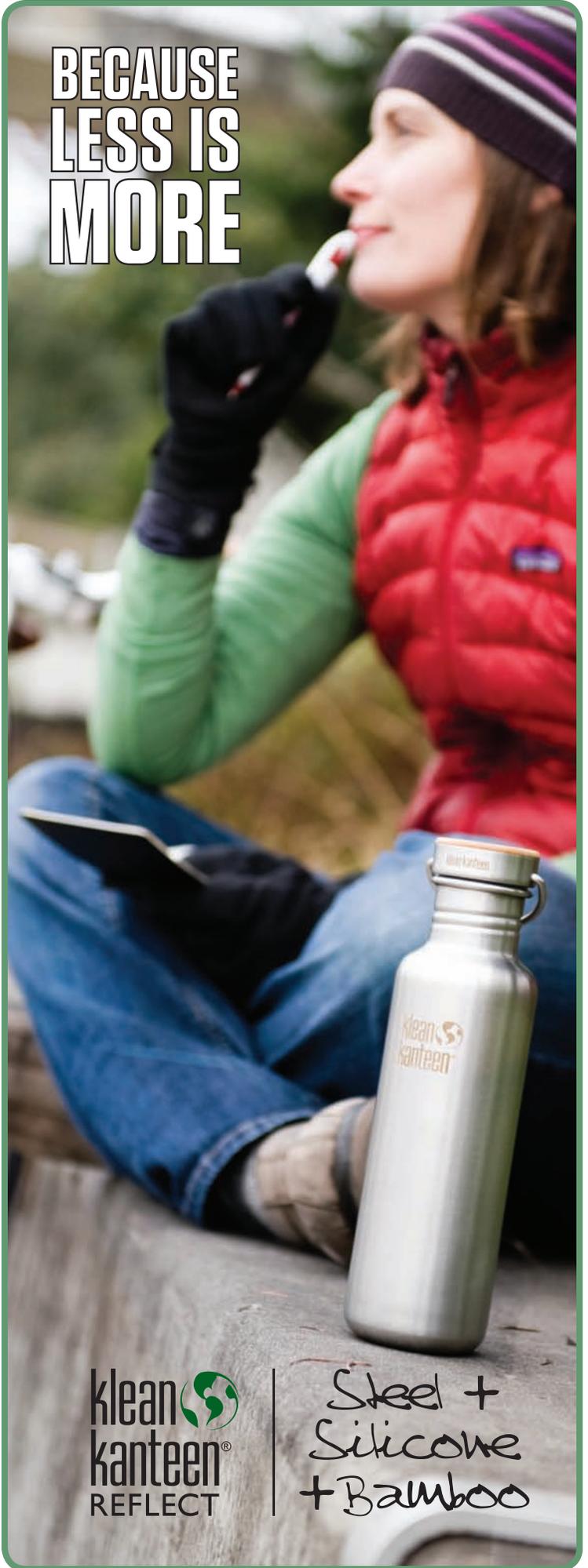
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THE KAMCHATKA PROJECT

HOW A VAST, VOLCANO-STREWN WILDERNESS
IN SIBERIA CAME TO BE ONE OF THE LAST
STRONGHOLDS FOR PACIFIC SALMON

WORDS: ETHAN SMITH, PHOTOS: ETHAN SMITH AND SHANE ROBINSON



My ears ring with the whining drone of two giant turbo shafts as the 35-foot blades of the Mi-8 helicopter force the air into a maelstrom of sand, water and lily-infused grasses over the Karymskaya River. As the immense Soviet helicopter slowly defies gravity, a mushroom cloud of ash explodes from Karymsky, a large cinder cone that dominates the skyline before us. Moments later, the roar of the helicopter is swallowed by a roll of thundering bellows as the volcano erupts again, spitting another cloud of ash to join the long train of puffs that interrupt a clear cobalt sky. The Mi-8 disappears over the valley's rim, leaving the six of us gathered near our kayaks, standing in reverie at the foot of this prehistoric sight. The hundreds of hours of research, networking and setbacks we've experienced seem a trivial price to pay to be standing here, in the middle of nowhere, on Russia's remote Kamchatka Peninsula, one of the last great Pacific salmon strongholds.

Our plan in Kamchatka involves paddling nearly 100 miles of unexplored whitewater and joining locals and media crews to investigate several threatened rivers in the region. Back home in the Pacific Northwest, critics have dismissed our mission as selfish, pointing out that we'll be collectively burning thousands of gallons of jet fuel, using donation and sponsorship monies that could go toward other causes and exploiting the glamour of a threatened species, all to be the first to paddle our beloved plastic boats down a few pristine rivers in the Neverland of Kamchatka. To them, we're just a bunch of waterfall-happy kayakers parading around as environmentalists. Technically, they're right. But there's more to the story than that.

The seed of our expedition was planted along the Columbia River in the summer of 2008 over a dinner of salmon, stewed cabbage and vodka. There is a place the size of California, my friend Rob explained, where the topography is akin to the kayaking playgrounds of New Zealand and Japan, but where none of the difficult rivers have yet been explored, and where human populations are nearly nonexistent. A place, he continued, with one of the highest concentrations of brown bears on the planet, where the only way around is via outrageously expensive helicopter charters, and where the mafia calls the shots. With those morsels of information, Rob set a plan in motion that came to define our lives over the next two years. That night, none of us could stop talking about it:

Kamchatka. Within days, the idea sprouted into an obsession as we pored over every online article and description we could find on the mysterious place. We quickly realized that we were in for more than just another international kayaking trip.

Initially, our team was just three: Rob, an educator; Jay, a marketing pro; and me, a photographer and product designer. To round out our team's overall set of credentials, we soon brought on friends Jeff, a biologist; Shane, a lawyer and avid photographer; and Bryan, an adventure-film maker.

The authors of the articles we read described Kamchatka with a sense of starry-eyed wonder. And many of them reiterated the sentiments of the first story we came across, which warned readers to avoid the region for fear that too much interest would destroy the very thing that makes it so special. Our trip would almost certainly open the door for more kayakers to come to the peninsula. The onus was suddenly ours to balance the negative side effects of our expedition with something positive, something we could give back.

One message in particular stood out in every story we read: Kamchatka is one of the last great ecosystems that haven't been severely degraded by humans, and it provides spawning grounds to roughly a quarter of all Pacific salmon. But these fish and the exceptionally bountiful ecosystems their nutrients support are beginning to face severe threats from human activities as much of the world remains oblivious. Indeed, many of our friends and families didn't even know Kamchatka existed and were fascinated to learn there was still a place where salmon, the same salmon that return to our home rivers in the Pacific Northwest, annually choke rivers by the tens of millions.

At first, we were dubious about trying to integrate an issue as significant as salmon, something we knew relatively little about at the time, into the expedition's mission and objectives. But the eventual decision to expand the scope proved to be a pivotal one. After word got out, researchers, like Nicholas Zegre, Ph.D., a hydrologist at West Virginia

University who needed samples from rivers in Kamchatka, began approaching us about the expedition. Before long, we were having extensive conversations with organizations like Wild Salmon Center, The Freshwater Trust and World Wildlife Fund. Our network of advisers grew to include one of the leading salmonid ecologists in the world; a Kamchatka fly-fishing guide who has spent the past decade leading trips on the Kamchatka Peninsula; and the manager of the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery in the Columbia Gorge. Kamchatka's whitewater potential soon took a back seat to our fascination with a species that we've since come to know very well.

Salmon are integral to the history, culture,

LIKE A GENTLE SMILE GLIMPSED ACROSS A CROWDED PLAZA, THE LANGUAGE OF WATER AS IT FLOWS OVER, UNDER, AROUND AND BETWEEN ROCKS IS UNIVERSAL.

ecology and modern politics of our home in the Northwest, and as kayakers we've long shared a fascination with these impressive creatures that battle their way up many of our favorite runs every year to spawn. It was no secret to us that humans have made it tough on salmon in most of Europe and North America. Industrialization and overfishing over the past 200 years have all but wiped out Atlantic salmon, and dwindling stocks of wild Pacific salmon have been dealt endless challenges on their upstream journeys as dams and agriculture have been developed in the United States, Canada and Japan. But as we dove into ecology textbooks, attended conferences and spoke with more and more experts, we began to recognize that in terms of salmon conservation, Kamchatka represented something special: humanity's last opportunity to get it right.

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Kamchatka is the land that time forgot. The 700-mile-long peninsula is nearly the size of California yet has less than 100 miles of paved roads. As recently as 300 years ago, the peninsula was densely populated with small tribal communities that lived along the coastlines and throughout the river valleys. Conflicts that arose with Russian settlers following the expeditions of Vitus Bering in the early 18th century led to the demise of the majority of this indigenous population as small European-style fishing villages and ports were erected and the peninsula became intrinsically tied to the Russian Empire. Due to its proximity to Alaska, the Soviet Union placed a top-secret nuclear submarine base on the southern end

of the peninsula and forcibly depopulated the area during the Cold War. It was not until 1989 that Russians were allowed to move to Kamchatka and not until 1991 that foreigners were allowed to enter. As a side effect of this designation, Kamchatka avoided the massive development boom and population growth that occurred in nearly every corner of the globe during the mid-20th century, and instead became the unique exception.

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The river is familiar—it always is. Like a gentle smile glimpsed across a crowded plaza, the language of water as it flows over, under, around and between rocks is universal. The six of us leapfrogged to eddy as the broad valley pinches

down to bedrock slides, opens up to shallow riffles and pinches down again, collecting bits of flow at every bend from bubbling spring-fed tributaries. When we reach horizon lines we can't see over, one of us gets out to find a good vantage point to scout from, making a racket to alert bears of our presence. Often, the rest of the team is signaled to take a look, the rapid or slide or waterfall being big or complicated. Bryan, Shane and I find locations to set safety and shoot photos and video while Jay, Rob and Jeff decide on lines and forge ahead.

Few places on Earth have evaded exploration by kayakers, and while there are plenty of rivers that have yet to be run, it's rare to find an entire region that hasn't at least been scouted by people who understand whitewater. In every other corner of the globe, we've found at least a trickle of secondhand information about flow seasons and potential drainages or, at best, a like-minded kayaker who has understood what we're looking for. Two years of research produced no such intel on Kamchatka. So we paddle forth into the unknown, noting the river features, geology, flora and fauna we pass, aware that the information we collect will provide a jumping-off point for future kayakers to come explore this region.

Over its 26 miles, the river unfolds like a dream, and we plunge through an endless series of waterfalls, slides, gorges and wide-open boulder gardens. Occasionally a waterfall will land on rocks and we are forced to portage among gnarled groves of birch and through the desperately thick 8-foot-tall understory of grasses and willows that define this region's

vegetation.

Continuing toward the Pacific, we pause at every noticeable tributary while Jeff drops a probe to record data for Dr. Zegre. Kayakers are water geeks by nature, but our knowledge is generally limited to what we can see and feel: flow, sediment load, color, temperature. As we move downstream, the water-quality multiprobe lent to us by Dr. Zegre's university lab opens a window of understanding and fascination about how dynamic water chemistry is. The information we gather will bolster understanding of Kamchatka's rivers and hopefully provide agencies information they need to help protect its salmon.

The morning of our fourth day on the river is bittersweet, as we spot a white speck on the horizon that slowly takes the form of a 36-foot Bavaria at full sail, our chartered ride back to Kamchatka's capital and only major city, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. By the time we pull into port the next day, we'll have already begun to shift gears in preparation for the next segment of our expedition.

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First a gentle tug, and then *sha-zing!* A wild explosion of water exposes a gargantuan Technicolor beast, which in a flash turns on its nitro boosters and propels itself—and a sprinting Jeff—toward the ocean through knee-deep, fast-moving current.

"Yeeeeeeeee-haw! Let 'er run, and hold on tight!" shouts our fishing guide, Ryan, a lanky and typically soft-spoken fishing fanatic from Northern California, as he steers his 12-foot oar frame across the wide channel to help.

"Bring her in. Gently now! That fish'll run you all the way to the Pacific!" counters Zeb, the host of the National Geographic Channel's "Monster Fish" television series, jumping into a second raft.

Within a few minutes, a circus of 12 or 13 gawkers holding a quiver of expensive camera equipment has assembled in a shallow eddy around a panting and grinning Jeff and the ever-cool and swift-handed Ryan, to whom Jeff has handed off his rod for the final haul and netting. The trout *is* gigantic. Ryan measures it at 30 inches and 10 pounds, one of the largest he's seen during many seasons of guiding on the legendary Zhupanova River, where the fish outnumber humans 100,000 to 1 and even fishing neophytes like us occasionally stand a chance at landing a big one.

At some point in any expedition, idealism collides with reality, and compromises have to be made. A year into our planning, we applied for and were awarded a National Geographic Expeditions Council grant for \$25,000. As



part of the deal, we were assigned to integrate our journey into the storyline of an episode of “Monster Fish.” This completely changed the dynamic of our expedition: The constraints of television production meant that we couldn’t spend our entire time and budget in Kamchatka paddling Class V rivers. At the same time, it gave us an opportunity to broadcast our message to a much bigger audience and meet some interesting experts on Kamchatka’s rivers.

As kayakers, we are adept at looking at rapids and understanding how water courses through them in order to choose a safe line of passage. As a fly-fisherman since before he can remember, Ryan can casually glance at what appears to us as a still pool and know exactly where fish are resting in the shadows. We all understand how to talk about rivers, but we see them from entirely different perspectives.

Floating over thousands of fish, each species taking advantage of different riverbed features, we begin to grasp what makes this place feel so special. In addition to the exceptionally large rainbow trout the Zhupanova is known for, this 1.1-million-acre drainage is home to two species of anadromous char (Dolly Varden and Kundzha) and six species of wild Pacific salmon (chinook, sockeye, coho, pink, chum and masu). Above the waterline, forests of birch, alder and willow similar to those we found on the Karymskaya grow tall and strong, nourished in part by the bountiful nitrogen these salmon carry upstream from the ocean, providing habitat to countless species of brown bears, Steller’s sea eagles, foxes, wolves and wolverines, to name a few.

On our second-to-last day on the Zhupanova, we spot a mother bear with three young cubs fishing from the left bank. We pull into a calm eddy 40 feet away on the opposite bank to watch. Undeterred by our presence, the sow continues to work from her perch on a riverside boulder. Every few seconds, we see the shadow of another 30-inch pink salmon muscle its way up the current past the bear’s nose. She’s analyzing every sushi boat that passes, and when an unfortunate entree is in the right place, she lunges her front paws into the current with claws extended, her hindquarters anchored to the boulder. Over the course of an hour, we watch her successfully catch five, six,

locals on a short stretch of the Bystraya River for a completely different type of fishing.

We watch from shore as Dmitri and Sergei load a faded green gill net with floats crafted from plastic milk cartons into their narrow two-person paddle raft and push off toward a slowly sinking sun. The two roughneck locals, hand-rolled cigarettes dangling idly from their disinterested lips, lay a net across the main channel, wait a few minutes and, after observing a few tugs on the floats, haul the catch into the raft and paddle back. We approach Dmitri and Sergei as they pull over a dozen struggling trout, salmon and perch from the net, tossing the plump females into a bag of “keepers” and

FLOATING OVER THOUSANDS OF FISH, EACH SPECIES TAKING ADVANTAGE OF DIFFERENT RIVERBED FEATURES, WE BEGIN TO GRASP WHAT MAKES THIS PLACE FEEL SO SPECIAL.

seven huge and violent pinks, each of which she carries up the boulder-strewn bank and shares in an excited and messy ordeal with her cubs.

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While the salmon in the Zhupanova worry about bear claws, eagle talons and the occasional dry fly, their brethren in other parts of the peninsula are beginning to face an entirely different kind of threat. As Kamchatka is slowly developed, the type of pristine salmon-based ecosystem we encountered on the Zhupanova is becoming less common. A few hours after landing back in Petropavlovsk, we ditch our kayaks where we’re staying and join a pair of

the rest into a bloody pile that will be left as carrion on the banks. When asked about the best part of these fish to eat, Dmitri expertly opens a switchblade from his back pocket, selects a female chum from the net and slits open her belly, exposing a sac bursting with hundreds of bright-red eggs, or roe. But, he nervously points out via our translator for the evening, his family and friends will be eating all the parts of the fish they keep.

“The fish have been here forever. They will be here forever,” relays our translator. “Our fishing has no impact on them.” Two minutes later, when asked how long he’s been fishing



like this, Dmitri states without apparent irony, “The fishing was much better here 10 years ago. There were many more fish. Bigger fish.”

The type of fishing we’ve just observed is technically illegal in Kamchatka: All sport fishing is supposed to be done with rods, and the daily catch limit is small. But this seemingly trivial evening spectacle provides an indicative window on the engine that drives much of Kamchatka’s loosely regulated gray-market economy—and one of the greatest immediate threats to Kamchatka’s abundant salmon population and biodiversity.

Salted salmon roe, or red caviar, is a prized delicacy served throughout Asia and Europe, and Kamchatkan red caviar is judged second to none. On the open market in Petropavlovsk a week earlier, we chatted with women selling the red delicacy in bulk from huge flats for as much as US\$20 a kilo. In Moscow, St. Petersburg and Japan—the largest markets for smuggled red caviar—it goes for five times as much. As a result, poaching for roe offers a quick escape from poverty, and many of the peninsula’s 350,000 inhabitants depend directly or indirectly on the US\$1-billion-a-year red caviar smuggling trade for their well-being.

While small-scale poaching like we just witnessed isn’t terribly destructive on its own, a fisheries researcher from Petropavlovsk we speak with says the cumulative effect caused by thousands of others doing the same is gradually killing off much of the aquatic life, particularly salmon, in the rivers surrounding Kamchatka’s populated areas. Much larger, mafia-run operations spread among Kamchatka’s most productive

salmon runs on its west coast often net entire rivers near their mouths, catching everything attempting to swim upstream, extracting roe and leaving truck-sized piles of carcasses to rot in their wake. By preventing the flow of nutrients to vast regions inland, this extraction can cause massive shocks to ecosystems that depend on returning salmon as a keystone species in their complex food webs. A number of the scientists and anti-poaching patrollers we talked with spoke of rivers they’d encountered on Kamchatka’s west coast that flooded with millions of salmon only a decade ago, and now only receive the paltry numbers we’re used to seeing at home in the Northwest.

Targeted investment from the Russian government and international NGOs over the past several years has set aside a number of protected areas and bolstered anti-poaching enforcement along Kamchatka’s most-at-risk rivers. But budgets for these programs are relatively small, and deep-pocketed poachers still vastly outnumber and outmaneuver patrollers. Recent attention from Russia’s prime minister and most infamous environmentalist, Vladimir Putin, has many hopeful that more poaching operations might be thwarted and destructive oil and mineral exploitation kept at bay, but for now it’s just a hope.

•••

The next day’s weather proves too poor for us to reach our destination, a lake near the southern tip of the peninsula that boasts Eurasia’s most productive sockeye spawning ground. Instead, we explore Petropavlovsk, where we discover a small two-story ecology learning

center filled with informational posters and children’s drawings of Kamchatka’s landscapes, flora and fauna. Tatiana, a well-dressed woman in her mid-30s, tells us in broken English about how her organization, funded in part by the United Nations Development Programme, promotes environmental awareness to businesses and children throughout the peninsula, participates in efforts to protect at-risk areas and works to develop an ecotourism industry. Tatiana represents a large group of Russians we’ve encountered who have a strong global awareness and see Kamchatka’s salmon and ecological bounties as a rare gift to be treasured and protected. These small, localized efforts are among Kamchatka’s best hopes against overfishing and the destructive oil and mineral exploitation that threaten this global treasure.

We leave the learning center to see that the clouds have begun to lift. I glance up toward the three snowcapped volcanoes that stand partially enshrouded over Petropavlovsk and recall the stories that got me so excited about coming to this enticing land two years ago. Perhaps we are simply kayakers on parade here. But the starry-eyed wonder exuded by those authors is now within me. And though it will be impossible to quantify the effects of our own small efforts to broadcast the ecological importance of Kamchatka, I feel good knowing that the people who read this article, who watch the television special and who have followed our journey online will at least know that such an amazing place still exists. **W**



Dog Days of China

WORDS & PHOTOS:
Doug Clark

As a *happa*, a person of half-Chinese descent, I've returned to China to excavate my roots. I've tracked down relatives lost in the turmoil of World War II and the Cultural Revolution and dug my fingers into the mud of the paddies my family has farmed for hundreds of years. There's only one thing left to do, something that being raised in America has made me profoundly uncomfortable with: eat dog.

Eating dogs has been part of Chinese culture for thousands of years. Exactly when the practice began is unknown, but by 1500 B.C. it was so common that the Old Chinese symbol for "to roast" showed the dog character—*犬*—on top of a fire—*然*. Around 300 B.C., the Chinese philosopher

Mencius wrote of the "three beasts" bred for food—pigs, goats and dogs. One of the heroes of Ancient China's Han Dynasty, Fan Kuai, rose to become a celebrated general from humble beginnings as a dog butcher. In particular, Chinese people from Canton, the southern region of my family's origins, have been renowned throughout history for their love of dog meat. A famous Chinese joke goes: "What're the only things with four legs that Cantonese won't eat?"

The answer: "The table and chairs."

The market where I search for dog meat in Guangzhou, Canton, proves the joke right: Frogs are roped together in bundles of 10; eels writhe in paint buckets; and customers select snakes they want decapitated and bled to make a fresh blood tonic. The dog butcher isn't hard to find. His current piece of work hangs from a bamboo tripod. A second offering, stiff with rigor mortis, lies on a wooden board on the pavement.

Even before I see the flies picking their way over the dead dog, I have found the idea of eating dog nauseating. (And I'm not a picky eater. Earlier in the trip, I swallowed a sheep's scrotum still fuzzy with hairs.) Having grown up in an Americanized household, barely able to string together a sentence in Mandarin, I am more American than Chinese. But, ironically, my discomfort tells me this is an ideal chance to step out of my Western upbringing and try something really Chinese.

Tentatively, I ask the butcher for the smallest possible portion of dog.

Eating dogs has always been a cultural flashpoint between East and West. When the British won port concessions in China, they ridiculed the Chinese culinary habit in tabloid-like articles. Missionaries saw the consumption of canines as an extension of godlessness and tried to save the Chinese and their soon-to-be meals. For many Westerners, the idea of eating man's best friend has been only one step less horrific than cannibalism. But eating dogs is ensconced not just in China's history; it is also part of the practice of Chinese traditional medicine.

In Chinese traditional medicine, humans derive syllogistic benefits from ingesting plant and animal parts. *Eat a tiger penis and perform like one in bed*, a famous prescription states. In this scheme, dogs are the "fragrant meat," the "mutton of the earth," their warming yang properties (as opposed to cooling yin) said to promote vigor and fortify the body against the winter's cold. Such beliefs are so influential, they may even shape menus for the country's astronauts. On Day 3 of a 2009 mission, along with "baby cuttlefish casserole," Chinese spacemen ate "Huajiang dog," perhaps to warm them against the frigid vacuum outside their capsule.

To a country whose astronauts eat dog, Western criticism of canine cuisine can sound like cultural imperialism. Indeed, the language of critics often takes on uncomfortable tones, calling the practice "barbaric," "uncivilized" and "backwards," words that the Chinese resent. In China, a strict division is kept between domestic dogs and "edible dogs." This distinction originates in ancient Chinese philosophy: There are "watchdogs," "barking dogs" and "edible dogs." And, despite sensationalistic rumors of street dogs and dog-napped pets ending up on the plate, in China canines bound for the kitchen are reared on special farms. Farm-raised dogs are often even genetically different from domestic dogs, a special offshoot of Saint Bernards favored for their fast growth and meatiness. Thus, to the Chinese, whose culture has never echoed the sentimental feelings of Westerners toward their pets, consuming an "edible dog" is no different than eating a cow is for an American, though a domestic dog is off limits.

But as China westernizes, public opinion is shifting. Rather than trying to persuade the Chinese public that eating dogs is wrong—a losing battle in Chinese culture—reformers have focused on the cruel practices of dog farmers and butchers. They've had some success. The Chinese Companion Animal Protection Network, whose goal is to limit the consumption of dogs and cats, has grown to over

But as China westernizes, public opinion is shifting. Rather than trying to persuade the Chinese public that eating dogs is wrong—a losing battle in Chinese culture—reformers have focused on the cruel practices of dog farmers and butchers.

40 chapters and since 2006 has staged demonstrations in major cities throughout southern China. During the Beijing Olympics, officials warned restaurants to remove dog from their menus so as not to offend visitors' tastes. And in January 2010, a bill was introduced in the Chinese parliament to outlaw the consumption of dog meat, though it is not expected to be effective even if it survives the lengthy draft approval process and is passed into law.

In the Guangzhou market, old women compete for customers with shrill cries. The hills of spices, fly-speckled raw meat and produce (both fresh and rotting) breathe out a nose-wrinkling funk. I grimace as the butcher draws his knife along the dog's spine, its skin peeling off like an unzipped coat. He cubes a 4-ounce steak and turns it over to me wrapped in a black plastic bag. The first restaurant I enter agrees to cook me a stew from the meat.

When the stew is brought to my table, I have to admit it looks and smells good—savory, with fiery highlights of red peppers, tantalizing undercurrents of cumin and a warmth that promises to banish the winter cold of the unheated restaurant. The cook has even been kind enough to mix in some chicken in case I can't handle the dog. My chopsticks pinch a morsel and raise it toward my lips.

Am I really going to do this? I wonder.

In the end, dog doesn't taste like sin or ambrosia. It's a dark, fatty meat, best compared to a very chewy beef. Its extra grease gives the sauce an earthy undertone. I finish chewing and swallow. A full bowl of uneaten dog steams in front of me. My chopsticks hover. After a lifetime of hearing both sides of the argument, I will have to define my identity by my own tastes. **W**



SN
SNAP

Skywalkers Versus the Storm



Stepping onto the line from the Black Monk and walking toward the North Wall, Mich Kemeter gets the first send, on-sight late in the seventh day.



WORDS & PHOTOS:
Jordan Tybon

I stumble into the bivouac, relieved to crawl out of my soaking-wet clothes and remove the 100-pound pack that's become fused to my back. Outside, the storm rumbles. The echoes of my teammates' boots fade as they drag themselves over the wet ledge. The last 100-meter scramble up the 70-degree wall of loose rock has been a poignant summary of our entire miserable approach.

The plan is to walk two slacklines in Switzerland's Lauterbrunnen Valley, a popular destination for BASE jumpers and big-wall climbers that's known for its massive limestone cliffs. The two lines will be suspended 4,200 feet off the ground and extend 225 and 187 feet (respectively) from a huge tower called the Black Monk to the North Wall. Time constraints allow us only eight days to complete both projects before we need to leave, and if this weather doesn't clear soon, we'll miss our window.

The approach should have only taken us about five hours. Between hauling heavy gear, the storm, crossing bigger rivers than should be attempted at night and getting separated and lost, it ended up taking us two days. Now, listening to the rain pound against the canvas, I wonder if we'll even get one line rigged.

We spend the next four days in our bivouacs, waiting out the storm. Twice we head out into the gale; the first time, we're able to set up fixed ropes and do some bolting, but the second the punishing weather sends us back like misbehaving schoolchildren. On the seventh day, the clouds lift, but we're only able to complete the bolting and rigging of the shorter line.

Stepping onto the line the next morning is bittersweet. The storm has taken its toll. Out of food and exhausted, I wonder, *Am I even going to be able to walk this today?* But the sun is shining and the line is warm beneath my feet. I take a deep breath to clear my mind, allowing a moment for the doubt to pass before walking across.



sn

SNAP

Hiking from the bivy to the highline was a dangerous two-and-a-half-hour adventure unto itself. The storm had made everything wet, and even a small slip here could have led to a serious and potentially deadly fall down the huge cliffs.



Bernhard Witz making an attempt right before sunset. Bad lighting and exhaustion prevented him from completing the line until the next day.

sn
SNAP



sn

SNAP

Faith Dickey steps off the North Wall and onto the line during the last morning of our expedition. We'd spent the night before perched on the side of a cliff in tiny leaking quasi-bivvies.



sn
SNAP

Jan Galek works hard for the full send. Walking directly toward a wall like this can make your vision spin and cause you to lose all sense of horizon.



At 11:30 p.m., the radio crackles to life. Bursts of static interrupt Tshering's voice as he issues a series of instructions in Nepali transmitted from Base Camp nearly 8,500 feet below our current position—Camp Four on the South Col of Mount Everest.

"La ... la ... la," Passang Dawa replies quietly into the handheld. He pauses for a moment to catch his breath and then looks over at me. "Time to go, Eric." I try to reply, but no sound

comes out. I am too nervous to speak.

Within a few minutes, we are geared up and climbing toward an uncertain outcome: the summit of the tallest mountain in the world and the potential completion of the last leg of my Save the Poles expedition—a world-record journey to the South Pole, North Pole and summit of Mount Everest in a continuous 365-day period.

We climb for hours in the dark and cold.

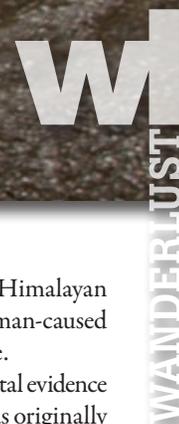
My whole world is pared down into the small circle of light cut through the inky dark by my headlamp. The limited visibility hides potential hazards while simultaneously calming my frayed nerves. What I can't see I choose not to fear. I am completely immersed in the physical act of climbing. Step. Breathe. Breathe. Step. Breathe. Breathe. At this altitude, even thinking seems to require extra energy.

After four hours of steady effort, we eventually

Fall in the Death Zone

Whiteout conditions and an insufficient amount of rope threaten Eric Larsen's Mount Everest summit bid—and the completion of his entire Save the Poles expedition

words & photos: Eric Larsen



reach the “Balcony”—a small, flat-ish thumb of rock and snow. The wind has died considerably, and it is crystal clear. I’ve been in many remote places and seen amazing night skies, but nothing has prepared me for this. The Big Dipper, to my right, stands upright, awkwardly balanced on the end of its handle. Cassiopeia sits weirdly inverted. We are so high and the air is so clear that I feel like I could reach up and grab any star. Looking out, I am dumbfounded

to see the vault of the night sky stretch above, across and even below us. It is one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen.

Eventually, a dim glow in the east grows into a full-fledged sunrise. Slowly, the surrounding peaks brighten and the entire valley unfolds below me. Rivers of ice snake into the distance. Hanging glaciers cling precariously to the sides of lower peaks. I scan the ice and snow looking for evidence to further prove what I know

already to be true: that the Himalayan glaciers are melting and human-caused climate change is to blame.

Trying to provide anecdotal evidence of global climate change was originally only a side goal of my expedition. I’m a lover of cold places and ice, not a climatologist. I had envisioned that my journey would serve more as a springboard for individual actions and national legislation. Instead, I’ve spent much of

my time off the ice engaging media by simply corroborating evidence of a warming Earth—a scientific fact that’s been established for decades. Repeatedly having this outdated conversation has been both frustrating and revealing: A recent report published jointly by Yale University and George Mason University found that the percentage of Americans who believe that the earth’s climate is changing actually dropped 14 percent between 2008 and 2010.

As someone drawn to these extreme en-

Due to a tight expedition schedule and funding limitations, we are now climbing the world’s highest mountain in the fall, the most dangerous season for summit attempts.

vironments, my ultimate goal is to create a connection—awareness that will lead to action—through experiential documentation. But my data is only usable if I survive to bring it back. Due to a tight expedition schedule and funding limitations, we are now climbing the world’s highest mountain in the fall, the most dangerous season for summit attempts.

Waiting for Passang Dawa to catch up, I wonder about hazards that we’ll encounter during this final push and whether or not I’ll return safely to share our story with the world.

When I first met 21-year-old Tshering Dorje

Sherpa, our *sirdar* (climbing organizer), in Kathmandu, he said flatly, “I think we have a 25 percent chance of success.” Having already summited Everest three times, he knew what he was talking about. My heart sank, and I had to seriously consider calling off the mission.

No one had summited Everest in the fall in the past four years. More snow, little or no infrastructure, greater avalanche danger, increasing cold, severe weather and a hefty price tag had kept the attempts to an extreme

minimum. Had we been climbing during the busier spring season, there would have been nearly 1,000 climbers and support staff in Base Camp working to carry supplies and establish the route. But with good weather, we could do it alone. And I knew that some aspects of climbing during the slow season might actually make the attempt safer. I’d heard stories of people who suffered frostbite while waiting for lines of climbers to clear the more technical sections and of near falls caused by inexperienced climbers. With the odds and the clock working against us, we decided to climb. And

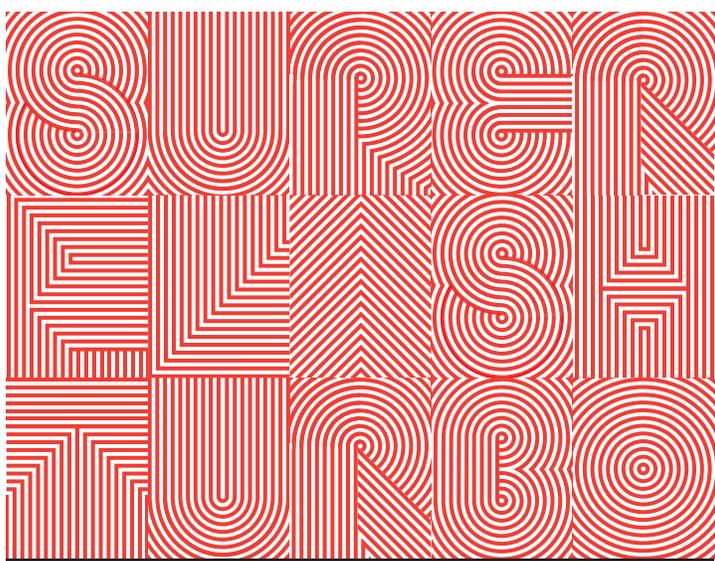
we have—for several weeks now—been the only team here.

The sun is out, and for the first time during our summit bid, I feel relatively warm. It is obvious that we’re climbing Everest. As I look out, every other peak is below us. I listen for the quiet hiss of oxygen entering my face mask from the tank inside my pack, push back my growing fears and take one more step. Then another. With no other tracks but ours, I feel incredibly lucky and completely overwhelmed at the same time.

Only 100 meters above us, Nima, Passang Temba and Dawa Gyaljen are having a quiet discussion as Nima belays Chhering, who is even farther up fixing the route. I can tell that something is wrong. Having been the only Westerner in this group for over a month, I’ve learned to watch gestures and interpret voice inflections. My knowledge of both Sherpa and Nepali is limited to please, thank you, a few simple questions and several expletives. I instantly realize the problem and curse myself for not picking up the large spool of climbing rope Passang Temba tied off below the Geneva Spur yesterday.

Being the only group on the mountain means we have to fix the route to the summit while climbing and breaking trail, a bit of added





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photo: Ryan Bonneau

effort that requires carrying large spools of rope up along with our gear. In the spring, we wouldn't face this problem, because the route would most likely have been fixed over several days prior to any major summit attempt. The exact length of rope needed to fix from the South Col to the top of Mount Everest was a quantity based on an educated guess. Hence our current dilemma: running out of fixed rope well below the South Summit.

Taking matters into his own hands, Passang Temba veers off to an exposed band of crumbling rock and then takes out his knife and cuts the lower end of a fraying older rope. It's possible that this rope was left here in the spring, but I'm guessing it may be even older than that. He reaches up, grabs the rope, and then heaves himself higher hand over hand. I am awed by this gallant but seemingly futile effort. We will need more rope than this 100-foot section, and there is no certainty that the rope's anchor, whatever it may be, will hold his weight. Yet he continues to climb as his crampons scrape away large chunks of rotten ice and rock. At this altitude, his feverish pace seems more like a death wish than a solution. Regardless, he pushes hard toward Chhering, passes off the rope and collapses under another rock ledge.

Closing in on nearly 29,000 feet of elevation means it doesn't take much effort to feel exhausted. We're in the Death Zone, where our bodies can't compensate for the lack of oxygen. We've been climbing steadily for nearly 10 hours, and none of us has slept in

"Do you think it's safe?" I ask Chhering, knowing that despite being an extremely capable climber, his definition of expedition safety and mine differ.

"No problem," he replies, smiling.

over two days.

I stop to take a drink of water and eat an energy gel. I hold on to the insulated flask with a vice-like grip even though there are only a few sips left. A few hours earlier, Passang Temba had dropped his bottle and I'd watched it careen downward hundreds of feet. *That could easily be me,* I'd thought.

Shouldering my pack, I gaze out across the Khumbu Valley and realize my nearly empty water bottle is the least of my concerns. An ominous line of clouds is racing toward us.

Speculation about a favorable weather window for our summit attempt had been a regular theme during conversations at Base Camp. In Kathmandu, we had all assumed that our bid for the top wouldn't happen until the end of October and even possibly into November. But after only three weeks of climbing, acclimatizing and fixing ropes, we

were, for the most part, ready to summit. We all knew that to wait longer would invite failure as temperatures dropped and accumulating snow buried fixed ropes.

I had received a forecast predicting a narrow potential weather window from October 12 to 14. Wind speeds would be on the high side but definitely manageable. Conditions would deteriorate dramatically on the 15th to snow and whiteout at all levels. The forecast didn't offer a lot of wiggle room, but as pulling up snow-encrusted fixed lines at extreme altitude was no one's idea of a good time, shooting for the window was a risk we were all more than willing to take.

At the South Summit, my brief elation at being able to see the Hillary Step turns quickly to stark fear. In ideal conditions, it's a 15- to 20-minute climb to the summit from here, but the line of clouds blowing over the ridgeline and snowy step indicates otherwise. I've been in enough polar whiteouts to know the effects of blowing snow, wind and limited visibility: It's almost impossible to stay on course, much less keep your balance. Falling in Antarctica means you drop 3 feet and then get back up. Here, we would plummet 3,000 feet to our deaths.

Between labored breaths, I try to assess the situation. I feel surprisingly detached and objective as I tally variables that are stacking up exponentially in both frequency and degree: no rope, extreme fatigue, lateness in the day, dehydration, lack of oxygen and an impending storm.

Most deaths on Everest are the result of one or more of these factors. I look at my watch. It's 11:30 a.m. I've been in more life-threatening situations than I care to count, but this is by far the worst. To go on is certain suicide.

We are so close. Heartbreakingly close. I think about all the obstacles that I had to overcome to get here—not just physically on the mountain but with my overall Save the Poles expedition. There were seemingly a million hurdles: training, logistics, funding, team members, weather conditions, over four years of planning, almost six months in a tent this past year in subzero temperatures. Ending here would mean failure. But at least I'd be alive.

"I think we should turn around," I say begrudgingly to Chhering when I catch up near the base of the Hillary Step. His finger is frostnipped, and he is digging in his pack for another mitten.

"You sure? OK," he replies quickly. Just like that. No anger. No frustration. No emotion. As an up-and-coming climbing Sherpa, he has as much riding on our success as I do. Reaching the summit for him and the rest of the team would have big payoffs in prestige, notoriety and, most important, future work.

"No. I'm not sure," I reply.

A few minutes later, Passang Dawa arrives carrying another section of rope he found just below the summit. It's a tangled mess and shows substantial UV damage. But using it to get up the Hillary Step would mean we wouldn't have to poach our fixed line, which spans from our current position back to the South Summit. This puts me oddly at ease.

"Do you think it's safe?" I ask Chhering, knowing that despite being an extremely capable climber, his definition of expedition safety and mine differ.

"No problem," he replies, smiling. Remarkably, during the time we've spent talking, a small window of blue has opened above us, and with the extra rope I'm at least willing to wait to see if Nima, now tying into the sharp end of the rope, can make it up the snow-choked Hillary Step. I curl up in a ball trying to keep warm and shelter myself from the increasing wind gusts.

How many times have I huddled in snow and cold places trying to keep warm?, I wonder. Too many. Behind me, Dawa Gyaljen hangs back. He was supposed to be bringing fixed line forward but now doesn't have to. Instead, he is just standing, fully exposed, on the ridgeline, not moving forward or back. Later, we will learn that he has accidentally turned his oxygen off and is struggling to keep moving.

I turn my attention to Nima, now on the Hillary Step, which is easily the crux of the entire climb. He has consistently been the slowest climber in our group, often reaching camps over an hour behind the rest of us. If the climb has sapped all his strength now, he doesn't show it. There's no hesitation in his efforts. He stashes his ice ax in a drift for a few minutes to better scoop out steps with his hand. He has been to the summit of Everest nine times in a climbing career that started as an assistant Base Camp cook. If anyone knows about hard work, it's Nima. I'm astounded by his rekindled and focused strength.

Both Chhering and Passang Temba are now past the step, and it's my turn. I clip my safety line and then jumar onto the faded red rope. Passang Dawa taps me on the shoulder, smiles and yells across the wind, "Eric, 100 percent chance of success now."

I try to smile, but my face is covered by



PACKING LIST

Eric Larsen shares how he geared up to climb the world's highest mountain

Base Layer *Terramar: Helix, Thermawool and Geofleece*

There's no such thing as cold weather, just bad base layers.

Jacket/Pant *Sierra Designs: Fiend Down Jacket/Fiend Down Pant*

The double thigh pockets in this super-light, toasty warm two-piece suit provided easy storage for snacks and gear.

Tent *Sierra Designs: Mountain Meteor*

We climbed up to Camp One to find this tent almost completely buried by several feet of snow. We dug it out and slept in it that night.

Power *Goal0: Nomad 7*

One of the most versatile and easy-to-use solar panels ever invented. I used it on Everest and I use it at home.

Stove *MSR: Reactor*

We were able to melt snow and boil water efficiently—even at 26,000 feet.

Food *Clif: Clif Bars, Bloks, Shots, MoJos, Builders and Crunch Bars*

At extreme altitudes, your appetite changes dramatically, but Clif products remain tasty even at 8,000 meters.

Illumination *Princeton Tec: Apex Pro*

The lightest and brightest headlamp I've ever used. Saved my you-know-what coming down the Khumbu Icefall in the dark.

Boots *Scarpa: Phantom 8000*

Not totally like hiking in slippers, but pretty close ... they're warmer!

Glasses *Optic Nerve: Roger That*

Bendable arms and polarized lenses make these glasses a must for any mountain.

Hydration *Stanley: Outdoor 1.0-Qt. Vacuum Bottle*

After 13 hours of climbing in below-zero temperatures, the Sherpas and I were still drinking warm water at the summit.

Blade *Wenger: EvoGrip 16 Swiss Army Knife*

You have never seen one knife do more things in such an extreme environment.

GPS *DeLorme: Earthmate PN-60W*

An easy-to-use, weatherproof GPS, emergency beacon and tool to update my Facebook page.

my oxygen mask. Instead, I just stare back. The weather is holding for the moment, but I'm still not totally confident in my chances.

As I start climbing, I focus all my attention on foot- and handholds. I would say that I'm nervous—if I allowed myself to think like that right now. Instead, I push all my anxiety and fear deep down, swallow hard and take another step. In just 10 minutes, I'm past the most dangerous spots and have to unclip from the rope's end. I look down to see that Chhering's ice ax was the only thing holding the rope in place. From here on out, we will have to climb unprotected.

It is a steady, easy climb to the summit. But because of the exposure and lack of protection, I put all my energy into basic climbing techniques. I will all my crampon points into place and shove my ice ax deep into the snow. A misstep here would be fatal. Thirty yards ahead, I can already see Nima and Chhering celebrating. For the third time today, I am overcome by emotion. A few minutes later, they both cheer my arrival at the summit. They are ecstatic.

"Climbing Hillary Step in fall very difficult," Nima shouts to me in a classic Sherpa understatement.

I would say that I'm nervous—if I allowed myself to think like that right now. Instead, I push all my anxiety and fear deep down, swallow hard and take another step.

I am more relieved than excited. I can't believe that I'm standing here. I pause and take a deep breath before reality creeps in.

We still have to get down!

I take out my satellite phone and call my girlfriend, but it's so windy she can barely hear me speak. I also send a position update through my GPS tracker to my website confirming for anyone with an Internet connection our official arrival at the summit.

I had wanted to take a 360-degree panorama of pictures from the summit, but all I can see is clouds and white. We are in the only clear spot in a swirling storm. After about seven minutes and a few token summit shots, we head back down into a growing whiteout, arriving exhausted at the South Col nearly four hours later. I collapse in the tent and try to sleep, but my mind is still racing.

Nearly six months ago, I was standing at the North Pole; a few months prior to that, the South Pole. Now I lie in my sleeping bag listening to the winds tear at the tent fly, our

successful summit push still fresh in my aching legs.

While achieving the summit of Mount Everest and completing the Save the Poles expedition is the realization of a dream, it's only one small part of a larger journey. More than ever, our society seems determined to ignore scientific observations. Save the Poles was designed as a fresh and nonpolitical way to generate interest in the world's great frozen places and serve as a simple reminder that as the climate warms, they are slowly and surely melting away. I have seen this.

It was said that in going to the moon, we discovered the earth. Can the same thing be said about going to the poles?

Today was Chhering's fourth successful Everest summit bid. In the U.S., he is barely old enough to share a beer with me. Back in Kathmandu, he and the rest of my teammates will be given a hero's welcome. But the success of my own mission will be more difficult to determine. **W**



The Soma Saga: **Where will it take you?**



Writer, photographer, adventurer, Rick Gunn recently spent 3 months in India surfing, taking photographs, soaking in the culture, doing some volunteer work, and of course riding - over 2,200 miles worth, with nearly 100 lbs. of gear - on some roads that would make a grown man cry.

Rick chose to build his ultimate touring machine using a Soma Saga frame.

Go to soulcyclers.com to find out more about Rick's experiences and his SoulCycler shows.

Go to somafab.com to see our bicycle frames, handlebars, and other accessories.



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The Hero and the Leopard

Traveling by bicycle taxi while re-creating the words & photos: Julian Smith
epic journey of the first explorer to transect Africa

We cast a strange shadow as we roll across the Dona Ana Bridge over the Zambezi River: two men, a bicycle and a backpack. Workmen in yellow hard hats laugh, and other bike riders, mostly men ferrying crates of empty beer bottles, swerve around us. Women with babies tied on their backs simply gawk, heads swiveling as we pass. I'm sitting on a homemade bike rack on the back of a two-wheeled steel tank called a Hero Royal, doing my best to keep my heels out of the spokes. My arms are around the waist of a rosy teenage boy who stands on the pedals. Below us, the early-morning sunlight eats through the mist that lingers over garden patches on the floodplain. Malawi is somewhere up ahead. Behind is Vila de Sena, a village in central Mozambique.

As we near the center of the bridge, I recall how it felt, sitting on the lumpy mattress in my hotel room last night, exhausted after a day of buses and bush taxis, to be pulling out the first of the eight red envelopes in my pack—one for each week of my journey across Africa. The letters were a parting gift from my fiancée, Laura. When—if—I make it home, we're getting married.

Laura and I had become engaged six months prior, on Valentine's Day. But I had always had a bad case of cold feet. It wasn't that I didn't want to be with her—we'd been together seven years, and I knew she was The One—but as an independent only child, the idea of making a lifetime commitment to someone else, even one as wonderful as Laura, terrified me.

Then, a few weeks into our engagement, I had stumbled upon a book that mentioned a rebellious young British explorer named Ewart Grogan. In 1900, the 24-year-old Cambridge dropout had become the first person to walk from one end of Africa to the other, taking two years to travel 4,500 miles "from the Cape (of Good Hope) to Cairo." He did it to win the hand of the woman he loved, New Zealand beauty Gertrude Watt. She was rich, and her snobby stepfather had challenged Grogan to prove his worth. Grogan proposed his Africa expedition, a journey that would almost certainly kill him. Naturally, the stepfather accepted.

I was hooked. Not just because Grogan's was an incredible, virtually unknown story, but because the more I read, the more I became convinced there was a lesson in there—some insight into the wisdom, courage and conviction it took to go to such extremes just to be with someone else, to make a life-changing leap and follow through to the end, no matter what.

I then made a second, stranger proposal to Laura: I asked for an eight-week leave of absence from our pre-marriage countdown to retrace Grogan's journey, 21st-century style, from South Africa to Sudan, all by public transportation. In so many words, she said that if this was what it would take for me to settle down—and if we could finalize our guest list before I left—she'd buy my plane ticket and drive me to the airport. Five days ago, she'd done just that, pressing the envelopes into my hand in the departures queue at the terminal.

Sitting on the lumpy mattress in Sena, I tore open the first one. "I can't wait to spend the rest of my life with you," the card inside read. "Let the adventure begin!"

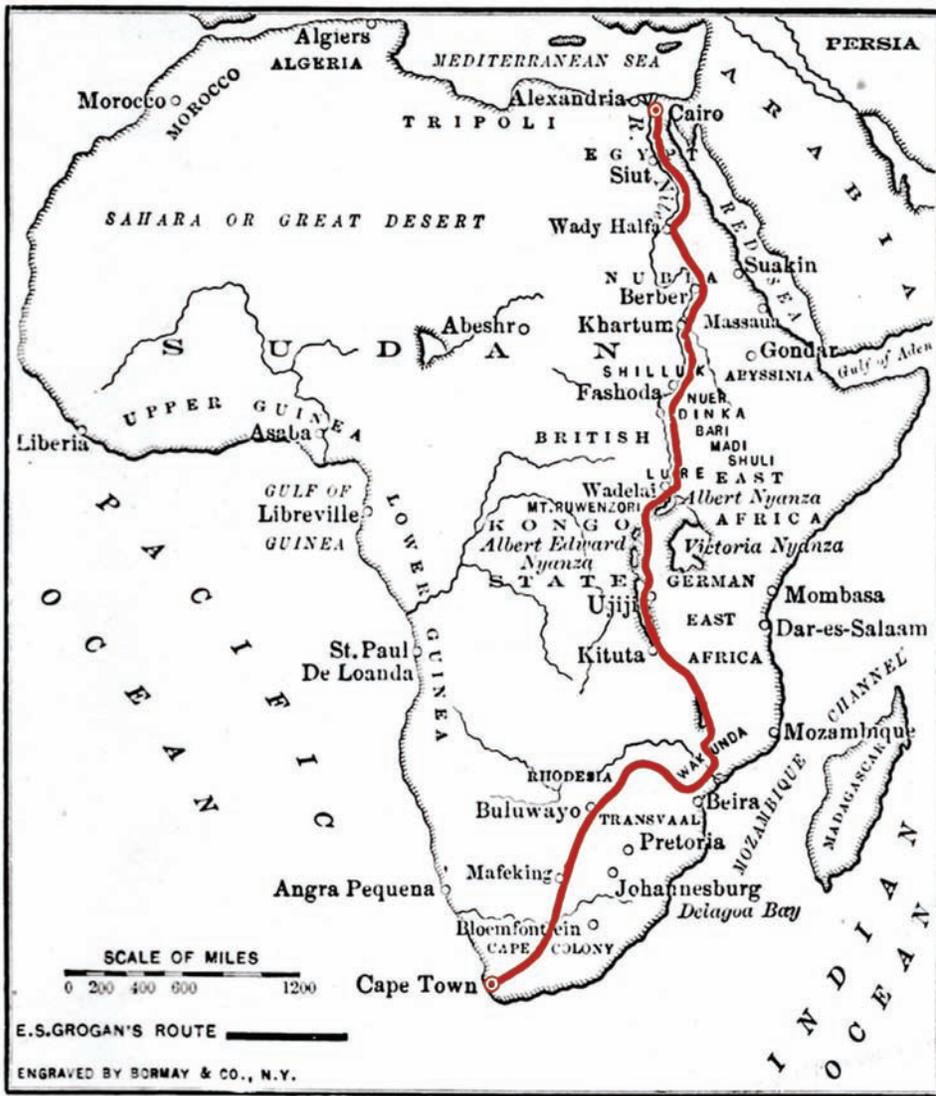
It made me smile with a stab of longing. But the feeling soon faded. I hadn't been away long enough to miss her badly, yet. This early in the trip, my mind was full of Africa. Traveling here, especially by public transportation this far off the tourist trail, demanded a radical mental adjustment. Everything was different here, from the utter absence of personal space to the constant smells of leaded gasoline and strange things burning.

I pulled out a well-thumbed copy of *From the Cape to Cairo*, Grogan's book about his journey. In 1900, Africa was one of the most dangerous places on Earth. The golden age of African exploration was morphing into an era of colonization, the so-called "Scramble for Africa." By the turn of the 19th century, European governments had sliced most of the continent into colonies and protectorates. Now they were fighting over poorly defined borders and wiping out native groups that stood in their way. Much of the interior was still terra incognita.

Grogan's route wound north from the Indian Ocean through the huge lakes and volcanoes that marked the edge of the Great Rift Valley, and every mile held new dangers. Wild animals, fierce native tribes and diseases unknown to science were just the beginning. In the Congo, native troops were revolting against their brutal Belgian masters, and a Muslim army was warring with the colonial forces of Egypt and Britain in the Sudan. Grogan and Harry Sharp, Gertrude's uncle and his companion for part of the journey, were heading straight for the heart of this bloody maelstrom.

"From end to end every tribe seemed at war with its neighboring tribes or with the white man," Grogan wrote, which "rendered the success of our enterprise extremely problematical."

But Grogan forged ahead with a confidence beyond his years. He was 6 feet tall and strikingly handsome, with a strong jaw, a narrow nose and startling yellow-green eyes that seemed to spark with intelligence and humor. It was because of that piercing gaze, and his almost superhuman determination, that his porters had nicknamed him "Bwana Chui": "The Leopard." Back in London, his razor-sharp mind had taken him to Cambridge, and his restless energy had gotten him kicked out for pulling pranks. At 22, he was elected the youngest-ever member of the London-based Alpine Club—the oldest mountaineering association in the world—and fought as a soldier in



southern Africa, where he accidentally killed a man in a bar fight over a woman.

His route is still a cross-section of a continent on the brink. Significant chunks of the nine countries along the way, including the eastern Congo, northern Uganda and southern Sudan, are active war zones. I want to follow his trail as closely as possible, but I'm not willing (or required) to risk my life like he was. I will have to make some tough choices in the weeks ahead about how far to push things, and I'll still have to be wary of danger—and lucky, too.

We're most of the way across the Zambezi River now. Both the bridge and the river seem to go on forever. It's 7 a.m., but workmen are already busy; they're converting it from a car to a railroad bridge. Right now, the only access is the meter-wide wooden bike path along the side of the bridge that we're using. Below us, swallows swoop and fishing boats carve whorls in the wide brown flow.

It's tough to stay balanced with my backpack on, my knees bent and my feet on two

tiny pegs near the rear hub. The bike sounds like a swing set disintegrating in a hurricane, though it could probably survive one unscathed. The single-gear black metal monster has a plastic seat and metal shafts instead of brake cables. It probably weighs twice as much as my mountain bike at home.

After five days and a thousand miles, I've learned that traveling in the African backcountry mostly consists of learning to wait. Peace of mind is proportional to giving up control.

People on foot look and smile and say things to the boy pedaling the bicycle I'm sitting on as we roll by—words of encouragement, I assume; with my bag on, I weigh about 225 pounds. Normally I'd feel ridiculous being pedaled around like this, but I'm already learning to let that go, part of the adjustment process. When you're the only white person, let alone Westerner, in sight for days at a time, it's pointless to waste energy on self-consciousness—even when children point at you and yell "Mzungu!"

the universal term for white man in most of sub-Saharan Africa, like that one in the fraying Miami Dolphins T-shirt just did.

Bicycles are the slowest but most intimate mode of transport I've found in Africa. Unlike in a bus or a taxi, there's nothing between you and your surroundings while sitting on a rack made of bare rebar. While buses and cars are the fastest way to get from point A to point B by land, bicycles offer the closest feel to what Grogan experienced on foot. (I only have two months to cover what took him two years, so walking is out.) Sometimes, they're the only option.

The rider leaves me on the far side of the bridge, near a pickup parked in the shade of a thorny tree. I see a man with a scrubby moustache and bright white tennis shoes standing nearby, next to a bicycle. I ask him if the truck is going to the Malawi border. He nods.

"When?"

"Oh, not until it is full. There are not many people today."

After five days and a thousand miles, I've learned that traveling in the African backcountry mostly consists of learning to wait. Peace of mind is proportional to giving up control; things happen when they happen, or don't, often for no discernible reason. I've found the best strategy is to simply sit tight and hope that everything will eventually work out.

"I would like you to come to my house for breakfast," he says with a serious expression. "We have tea and cassava."

I accept, and the man introduces himself as Tomé and holds his bicycle—a Hero, of course—while I climb on the back. It's a two-minute ride down a dirt road. He's closer to my size, so he doesn't struggle as much to pedal as the teenager did over the bridge. We roll to a stop in front of three mud-brick huts with thatched roofs. Chickens scratch in the packed dirt. Tomé pulls up two plastic chairs and introduces a

young woman with cornrow braids as his wife. She disappears into the nearest building and three toddlers emerge, a boy and two girls, all wide-eyed at the pale stranger with the big green backpack. His wife re-emerges with mugs of steaming clear liquid, a cup of brown sugar and a bowl filled with bone-colored chunks of cassava root. I take a polite sip and nibble one of the fibrous, tasteless morsels, clucking appreciatively when Tomé says he built the buildings himself.



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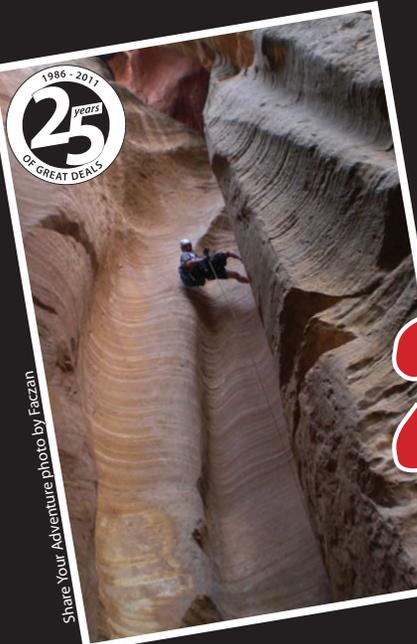
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Paint and light bulbs are the limits of my contractor skills. I trust I'll learn more when Laura and I buy a house, which, knowing her motivated personality, will come soon after the wedding. Paying a mortgage as a freelance writer is another story. Three years ago, we had both quit full-time jobs and joined the ranks of the self-employed. Her assignments, writing for documentary television shows, have been much more dependable than mine. Sometimes I worry I won't be able to bring home my half of the bacon.

When we finish, Tomé pedals me back to the pickup, which is about to leave for the Malawi border. It takes four men to push-start it. Sitting on top of the cab in the brutal sun, speeding backward into Malawi, I count 21 other people in the truck bed.

~

Across the border, the countryside becomes greener almost immediately. The Malawian immigration officer welcomes me in English like an old friend. "The health officer will be back in a moment to check your yellow fever card," he says with a smile. Malawi has a reputation as being the friendliest country in Africa. It's also one of the poorest on the planet. Two out of every five people here live on less than a dollar a day. Offering some form of public transport, whether bike, car or bus, is a reliable moneymaker, so it doesn't surprise me to see a peloton of Heros for hire waiting at the border.

Hero, the India-based company that makes them, is the largest bicycle manufacturer in the world. It cranks out 18,500 machines every day and sells over 5 million a year. Half of them seem to end up in sub-Saharan Africa, where they're one of the main modes of transportation. Their owners often rely on ingenuity in place of replacement parts. Already I've seen broken plastic seats replaced with hand-carved wooden ones and a roadside repairman hammering out a bent rim with a rock.

I pick a bike with a padded passenger seat that's nowhere near as comfortable as it looks. The rider points out his big footrests, coils of green rebar the size of hockey pucks, which are a definite selling point. He ties my pack to the handlebars with a length of inner tube, and we weave down a dirt track in the direction of Chiromo, the next stop on Grogan's journey.

In all, it takes three different bikes to cover the next 15 miles. The first rider lasts about 20 minutes before he pulls over, gasping.

"So tired, so tired," he says. Sweat is streaming from under his knit hat. He unties my pack and drops it on the ground. "No more." He rides off, leaving me standing along the road in the merciless sun.

I shoulder my bag and start walking. Other pedestrians stare, but I'm getting used to that. Outside of the occasional Peace Corps volunteer and name-tagged Mormon missionaries, white people simply don't walk here. I smile back and nod, as if rambling down this unnamed dirt road in the Malawian hinterlands is just another day's commute.

Soon another rider pedals up, and I climb aboard gratefully. To use the footrests, I have to bend my knees like a jockey, and the positions starts to make my legs ache. But straightening them out to either side makes it harder to balance. A drop of sweat on the rider's left earlobe glints in the sunlight. He's definitely earning his fare.

A sudden snap of metal comes from the rear wheel—a broken spoke—and once again I'm on foot, just like Grogan, who may have walked this exact route. Since leaving the city of Beira on the Indian Ocean coast, I've covered in three days what took Grogan and Sharp nine months.

I do my best to maintain a Zen state of mind as I walk down the road, looking for another Hero. One sure way to put things into perspective is to think of what my predecessor survived on his journey. Among myriad near disasters, he and Sharp narrowly avoided being massacred by the locals in Rwanda, and in the eastern Congo, Grogan and a handful of men had to flee from cannibals for two days straight. Over 3,500 miles into the expedition, at Fort Gerry in the British protectorate of Uganda, some of the 130 porters they had hired got drunk one night. A group of them attacked Grogan with spears, forcing him to shoot his revolver at the ringleader's feet to back them off. And all of that was before they came to the Sudan, where the remnants of the party had to literally drag themselves across a waterless wasteland while on the knife-edge of death.

A leg cramp and some incipient sunburn suddenly don't seem so bad. The third bike is the charm, and two hours after leaving the border the rider drops me off in Chiromo. My forearms are an angry red and my legs feel a few inches longer, but I've made one more stride in Grogan's footsteps. Only 3,000 more miles to go.

~

Uganda's Fort Portal, the modern incarnation of Fort Gerry, is a rough, hilly city at the base of the Rwenzori Mountains. It's taken a month to get here from Chiromo (even though I decided to bypass the parts of Grogan's route that ventured into the eastern Congo), during which time I visited the mountain gorillas in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park and was



barfed on by a toddler on a night bus in Tanzania. Through it all, Laura's weekly cards have kept my spirits up.

I'm not surprised to discover Heros in use in Fort Portal. I've grown used to the daily sight of these bicycles and often marvel at their ability to sport huge loads. The most impressive yet has been seven banana stalks balanced on one metal frame in Burundi. But here I pass a man with what looks like an entire dining room set tied to his rear rack. The sight inspires me, and after checking into a hotel and dropping my bag off there, I set out to rent a bike of my own to visit a cluster of crater lakes Grogan wrote about seeing nearby.

I find a shop that rents Heros (\$5 for an afternoon) and pick the least-battered-looking one. The pedals are bent and almost impossible to turn, and the handlebars put my wrists down by my knees. Riding it is like putting a child's bicycle in its highest gear, sticking a sack of cement on the back and cruising down a forest service road. Pedaling over the bumpy track out of town gives me a new respect for the men I've hired to carry me.

Soon I'm reduced to coasting and pushing, a source of considerable entertainment to the ever-observing local children, who laugh and point and shout "Mzungu!"

I'm close to collapse when I finally reach the sign that marks the turnoff for the lakes. The sky is bruised with impending rain, and the air feels saturated already. The lakes look like giant thumbprints amid the undulating green hills, with the steep, almost unnaturally straight wall of the Rwenzoris as a backdrop.

Grogan had passed this way in late August 1899 with a heavy mind. All but 30 of the porters had demanded to go home, and even worse, Sharp had decided to return to England to attend to his businesses. The sudden changes left Grogan shaken and depressed. Now everything was up to him: route-finding, discipline, defense. It was still over 2,000 miles to Cairo, and the most difficult part of the journey lay ahead, in the Sudan. On the positive side, he was now the sole boss of a lean, road-tested crew. The smaller group would be able to travel

even faster now. Without the security of a large group, they would have to.

Along the footpath that curves from lake to lake, I meet a young man in a red T-shirt named Edward. He's 24, studying public administration at the new Mountains of the Moon University in town.

"Are you married?" he asks without preamble. It's always one of the first questions I get in Africa, right after "Where are you from?"

I tell him soon, less than six weeks from now. "How about you?" He shakes his head and smiles.

"Oh, no, women are too expensive. When you get a girlfriend in Uganda, she expects you to buy her everything—clothes, shoes, jewelry. And good things, too, not local things."

He describes the process of getting engaged, acting out the parts in different voices like a one-man play.

"Everyone sits down; out come some women

put a handkerchief in her pocket."

Halfway back to town, the chain falls off my Hero just as the sky opens up. It's a laughably minor problem compared with what Grogan faced, but it's hard to keep perspective when you're standing in the pouring rain with grease-black hands and a de-chained single-speed, up to your ankles in mud.

My thoughts wander to Laura. Is she home in bed right now, happy and warm, or is she riding a bike in the rain, too? We do live in Portland, after all. As I try to wrestle the rusty chain back onto the cogs, wondering for the hundredth time what the hell I'm doing here, the question suddenly becomes a little clearer. I didn't travel halfway around the world because of some convoluted customs or a demanding potential stepfather-in-law. I'm here, I'm starting to realize, to prove to *myself* that getting married is the right thing to do—maybe, in some perverse way, to find out how much Laura

It's a laughably minor problem compared with what Grogan faced, but it's hard to keep perspective when you're standing in the pouring rain with grease-black hands and a de-chained single-speed, up to your ankles in mud.

from the girl's family. But not the one you are interested in. They are dressed up in suits; they sit down on mats in front. 'Is the one you want here?' they say. 'No.' But then the women say, 'We did not come here to model; you must give us some money.' So you have to pay them each from your pocket, maybe 5,000 shillings—three dollars—"and then some more women come out, but again, the one you want to marry is not among them, and you have to pay them to go away again."

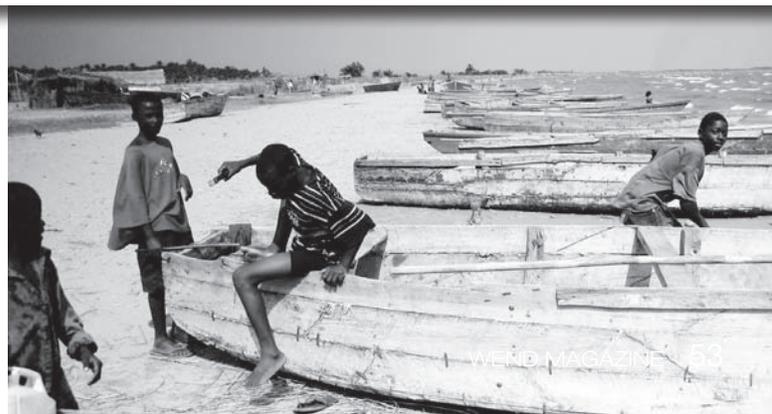
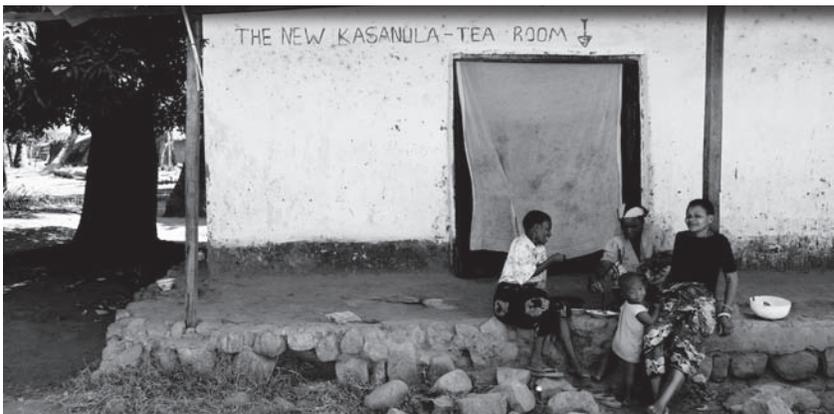
I'm not sure who's enjoying the performance more, him or me.

"Then you say, 'Where are the others?' 'Oh, so-and-so, she's in Fort Portal. That other one went away; you will have to pay for transport to bring them.' Maybe 50,000 shillings now, depending on how much money you have. Then the one you want is finally there, and you go up and put the necklace over her head, and

really means to me by leaving her so far behind.

A man comes over, and without a word he squats by my side and helps pop the chain into place. My Hero is mobile again. Relatively speaking. I battle the bike the rest of the way back to Fort Portal with new energy. Like Grogan, I will push as far as I can across Africa and go home to marry the woman I love. But as I pedal through the rain, I'm not thinking about the end of the journey. I'm thinking about my bag on the bed of my drab hotel room, and the next red envelope from Laura that's waiting inside. **W**

Julian Smith is the author of Crossing the Heart of Africa: An Odyssey of Love and Adventure (Harper Perennial), from which this article is adapted. Find more information at juliansmith.com.



SK

HERE COMES THE SUN?
SURVIVAL KIT
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Danube Looptworks Nehru Shirt Dress, KEEN Winthrop Boots

Gwen ExOfficio Chica Cool Hoodie, Kavu Helen of Soy Skirt

Ramin I/O Bio Signature Track Jacket, KEEN Denver Canvas Shoes

Lobo Ruff Wear Cloud Chaser Soft Shell Jacket, Ruff Wear Highlands Bed, Ruff Wear Bivy Bowl



Opposite, Lower Left

Gwen ExOfficio Irresistible ¼ Zip Sweater, The North Face Paramount Moraine Shorts, Timberland Earthkeepers Vintera Chukka Boots

Danube Looptworks Ningxia Cowl Neck Sweatshirt, Kavu Swingsway Skirt

On Grass Marmot Urban Hauler Pack, Kulae Bamboo Yoga Mats, Kulae Cork Yoga Block, Chaco Locavore Ecotread Flips

Opposite, Middle Left

Lobo & Lola

Ruff Wear Palisades Pack, Patagonia Rain Shadow Jacket

On Grass MSR Mutha Hubba Tent Rain Fly, Therm-a-Rest NeoAir Sleeping Pad, Therm-a-Rest NeoAir Trekker Sleeping Pad, MSR Alpine Teapot, MSR Flex 4 System, Sea to Summit Trek TK III Sleeping Bag, Sea to Summit Delta Bowl, Sea to Summit Delta Plate, Seal Line Black Canyon Dry Bags, Chaco Locavore Ecotread Flips



Patrick Columbia Peak 2 Peak Jacket, Teva Gnarkosi Shoes

Gwen Outdoor Research Reflexa Jacket, Looptworks Martajam Skirt, Teva Montecito Boots



Rick Looptworks Lepas Flannel Shirt, ExOfficio Storm Logic Vest



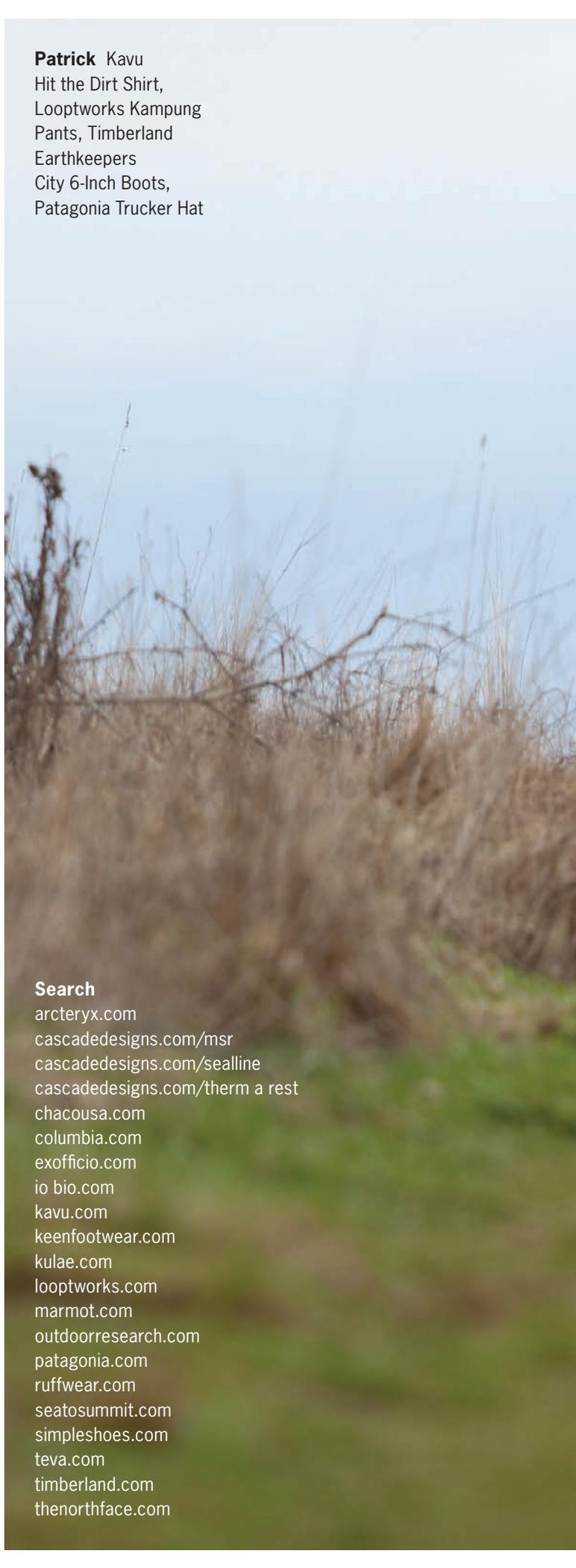
Patrick I/O Bio Contact 1 Glory Zip, Patagonia Three Trees Shirt, Patagonia Back Step Shorts, Simple Take On Shoes (this page), Simple Tuba II Herringbone Shoes (opposite page)

Gwen I/O Bio Contact 1 Glory Zip, Patagonia Super Cali Shorts, Teva Gnarkosi Shoes, Marmot Urban Hauler Pack





Patrick Kavu
Hit the Dirt Shirt,
Looptworks Kampung
Pants, Timberland
Earthkeepers
City 6-Inch Boots,
Patagonia Trucker Hat



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Gwen Columbia Turn 'N Go Soft Shell Jacket, Kavu Me Soy Pretty Dress

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Ramin Looptworks Perai Hoodie, Columbia Town Creek Shorts

Danube I/O Bio Signature Pocket Hoodie, ExOfficio Gallivant Shorts, KEEN Winthrop Boots



Arctic Instincts

by Helen Thayer

How ignoring the warnings of my dog during an expedition to the North Pole almost cost both of us our lives

At 50 years old, I set out with my dog Charlie on an otherwise solo, unsupported expedition to the magnetic North Pole. Dragging my supplies on a sled behind me, I skied through the vast white emptiness with confidence, Charlie following faithfully behind. A lifetime of adventure had honed my ability to navigate in extreme conditions, and I

was confident I'd get us to our destination safely. But 300 miles into the journey, as Charlie and I were sliding down a sloped ice plate toward the frozen waters beneath, I realized that my instincts were not as keen as I'd thought.

I'd bought Charlie in Resolute Bay, an Inuit village close to the starting point of my journey. An 8-year-old, 100-pound black Canadian Eskimo husky-Arctic wolf mix, he'd led the harsh life of an independent Arctic dog, completely unused to human affection. He was trained as a sled dog, but his main duty was to chase

polar bears out of the village. The threat of these predators would be constant during my push for the North Pole, making Charlie the perfect companion. Together, we crossed the miles with Charlie watching for bears while I navigated us across the ice.

Skiing off the coast of King Christian Island, Charlie and I were faced with crossing a jumble of thin plates of sea ice, many of which were buckled and broken. The fragile plates were only inches thick, offering little protection from the frozen Arctic Ocean upon which they floated. As I stepped gingerly onto the first plate, Charlie jerked back on his lead, not wanting to cross. But the route looked safe enough to me, so I tugged back, urging him onto the ice. Reluctantly, he followed.

As I led Charlie onward, the ice became increasingly unstable with each slippery step. Groans filled the air as the plates around us grated into one another. I stopped to remove my skis, hoping my boots would provide better traction. But after a few feet I slipped, ending up facedown. The jolt of my fall caused one end of our wobbly ice platform to dip into the water and the other to rise into the air. I scrambled to the slowly elevating side of the deadly seesaw, my gloved fingers curling over the top in a desperate attempt to avoid sliding down into the gaping, water-filled chasm. I looked over to see Charlie wildly scrambling with his front paws, trying to stop his own backward slide toward the lower end of the ice that had now dipped far into the water. With a last-ditch shove from me, Charlie clawed his way over the top and jumped forward to a nearby flat plate.

Without Charlie's weight as a counterbalance, the ice, already at a 30-degree angle, tilted up even more. The back end of my 6-foot sled dipped into the black water, its weight testing my finger strength, threatening to drag me down. I could have released the sled from its harness, but then I would have lost all my supplies and equipment, which would have been equally as disastrous as plunging into the sea. Adrenaline surged through my body. I pulled the combined weight of my body and sled upward until I could hook my chin over the edge of the ice and, using my neck muscles as an anchor, threw first one and then the other hand forward so that both elbows were hooked over the edge. As I moved my weight higher on the tilted ice, the top edge slowly dropped down to almost level, overlapping the next plate, where Charlie stood barking as if to urge me on. On all fours, I scrambled to safety and sat on the ice, exhausted. Charlie leaned against me, licking my face.

Charlie had not wanted to follow me across the dangerous ice. He had even jerked his head away when I pulled his lead. Alone in that icy wilderness, I could have killed us both just because I had refused to consider his reluctance to step onto the fragile ice as a serious warning. Charlie was an intelligent fellow with an uncanny judgment of the sea ice and its dangers. The Arctic was his home. I should have paid attention to his judgment instead of forging ahead thinking that I alone knew best. I was glad that he couldn't tell me his thoughts at the time.

After completing our Arctic journey, Charlie returned with me to Snohomish, Washington, where I helped him adapt to a world of grass, trees, flowers and rain. He has since accompanied me on several more expeditions (including a 600-mile trek across the Canadian Arctic), during which I've learned to interpret and "listen" to his instincts as often as to my own. I suppose you really can teach an old dog new tricks. **W**



Reintroduced

by Pyar Anderson
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SKETCHBOOK





A TASTE OF ADVENTURE



SEE

Finding Farley

Leanne Allison

Leanne Allison and Karsten Heuer may well be Canadian author Farley Mowat's biggest fans. Having already documented their Mowat-inspired journey with an Arctic caribou herd in the award-winning film *Being Caribou*, they set off again in *Finding Farley* to discover the people and places behind celebrated books like *Born Naked* and *People of the Deer*. In this compelling documentary, Allison and Heuer, along with their 2-year-old son, Zev, and dog, Willow, embark on a 3,100-mile trip—paddling, portaging and sailing from the prairies to the Maritimes. Along the way, they face long-standing doubts regarding Mowat's work. "We can't help but wonder if we're looking for stories that don't exist," says Heuer. Skepticism aside, their voyage also brings them to hellish extremes, with physical and emotional exhaustion and swarms of hungry bugs adding to the difficulty of their journey. But the family is ultimately won over by the northern landscape. Encountering a great-horned owl, black bears, caribou, moose, wolves and a polar bear, among other wildlife, they become enchanted with what Mowat describes in his books as "a place without walls ... an open unfettered world." Winner of both the Grand Prize and People's Choice awards at the Banff Mountain Film Festival, *Finding Farley* does not disappoint. —SDE

National Film Board of Canada; \$24.95, necessaryjourneys.ca/findingfarley/



SEE

Life Cycles

Ryan Gibb and Derek Frankowski

Press pause at any point while watching *Life Cycles* and you'll capture an amazing still shot. That's because the entire film is exceedingly, frighteningly beautiful. Shot in super HD and co-created by renowned mountain-biking photographer Derek Frankowski, *Life Cycles* showcases a montage of carefully calculated, perfectly lit moving images of mountain bikers weaving, turning and flipping amid cornfields, mud and green fauna in near-constant motion. While the riders pedal, a subdued narration covers subjects such as the flow riders feel when

on a bicycle and thinking of nothing else, and the bonded connection we all make with our bicycles—one we remember even after our chariots have rusted over or broken to pieces. *Life Cycles* holds up to the buzz that's surrounded it—and renders claims that it's a "different" adventure sports film entirely true. It first and foremost honors the bike, and shows off what some incredible human beings can do on it in an artistic, thoughtful and utterly stunning way. —SE

Stance Films; \$35.48, lifecyclesfilm.com

EAT

Mountain Mutt's Sweet Potato Pie Entrée

Peak Waggers

With Peak Waggers, trail food has finally gone to the dogs. Seeking to free packs from bulky, heavy and (if it gets wet) mushy dog food, owner Gayle Brooks—who lives in Nederland, Colorado, with her five Bernese mountain dogs—has developed a line of drool-worthy dehydrated meals just for canines.

With a range of entrée options packed tightly into compact and extremely light, non-perishable portions, Peak Waggers offers dog-owning outdoor enthusiasts a way to give their pooches the calories the animals need, with the taste and variety they love, to hit the trail and keep up. Peak Waggers entrées are made using human-grade ingredients with no added sodium or preservatives and have names such as "Chicken Pawmesan" and "Dog-Gone Cottage Pie." Our tester—an upset-stomach-prone golden retriever on a strict dog-food-only diet—tried out "Mountain Mutt's Sweet Potato Pie" with ... solid results. And because it's made up of chicken, sweet potato, veggies, bulgur wheat and oats, we felt good about feeding it to him. Peak Waggers entrée packages come with two vacuum-sealed meals—and each happily fills the belly of a 60-to-100-pound dog. —SE

\$8.95 per package, peakwaggers.com

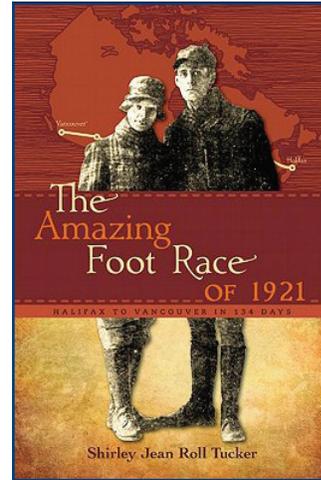
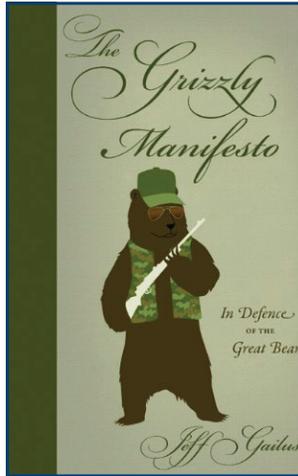


READ

The Grizzly Manifesto: In Defense of the Great Bear

Jeff Gailus

Jeff Gailus, author of *The Grizzly Manifesto: In Defense of the Great Bear*, has spent years researching and observing bears in their natural habitat throughout the United States and Canada. And it's his personal devotion to the grizzly bear—coupled with his journalistic approach to the problem of this animal's struggle for survival—that leads to a fact-packed firsthand account of the mismanagement and misunderstandings that have led to what Gailus calls “the greatest mass extinction since the dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago.” As Gailus puts it, “... it makes no sense to keep destroying the ecosystems upon which we depend,” pressing that the grizzly bear is an integral part of “the very fabric of life on Earth.” Ultimately, Gailus writes *The Grizzly Manifesto* so it may serve as a platform to educate the human race about grizzlies: from simple information such as how to act safely while in their territory to educating us on their significant and incredible resilience. Through this, Gailus hopes we will stop ignoring the crisis of the grizzlies—and make a change in our understanding and treatment of the Great Bear. —SE
Rocky Mountain Books, ISBN: 978-1897522837; \$14.95



READ

The Amazing Foot Race of 1921

Shirley Jean Roll Tucker

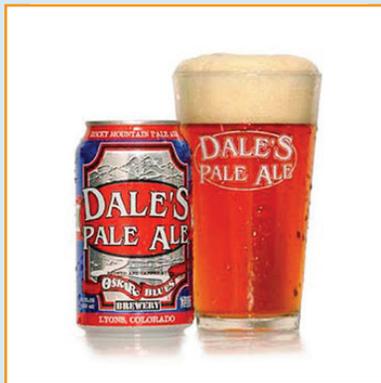
On January 17, 1921, when Canadians Charles Burkman and Sid Carr set off on what they hoped would be a record-breaking seven-month journey from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Vancouver, British Columbia, they were not yet aware that they were racing. Inspired by exclusive coverage of the expedition in the *Halifax Herald*, father-and-son team John and Clifford Behan of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, began following in Burkman and Carr's footsteps only a week later, expecting to cover the entire distance in just six months. And a week after that, right around the time that Carr abandoned the adventure, leaving Burkman to travel alone, husband and wife Frank and Jenny Dill joined the race. What began as a leisurely walking tour between two friends was now a three-way competition. Piecing the story together from the original *Herald* microfilm, Canadian author Shirley Jean Roll Tucker takes on what she considers “a true Canadian adventure” in her latest book, *The Amazing Foot Race of 1921*. Complete with excerpts from the *Herald* and over 50 images, Tucker's book feels like a historical document as much as it does an adventure story. Also telling the tale of a post-war Canada, battling inflation and skyrocketing unemployment, *The Amazing Foot Race of 1921* is a must-read. —SDE
Heritage House Publishing, ISBN: 978-1926936055; \$19.95

DRINK

Dale's Pale Ale

Oskar Blues Brewery

Have an aversion to canned beer? Well, get over it. Today's cans protect beer from oxidation and light far better than bottles do. And, more important, with the craft-brew world beginning to adopt cans, it means better beer in the backcountry for us all. Oskar Blues Brewery, in Lyons, Colorado, is one of the pioneers of the craft-beer-in-a-can



movement. And Dale's Pale Ale, brewed by Oskar Blues, is a big beer by any pale ale standards, evident immediately in its amber-colored pour and hearty aroma. Dale's combines European malts with four varieties of American hops, making for a well-balanced, hefty pale ale that has a sweet and malty body and a citrus hoppyness that lingers all the way through to its mildly bitter finish (65 on the International Bittering Units scale for those of you who are counting). These flavors—combined with an alcohol-by-volume content of 6.5 percent—mean Dale's drinks more like an IPA than a pale ale. Dale's is strong on flavor but also very drinkable—a great beer to reach for at the end of a hike. If you pour this beer into your water bottle, you will forget that it ever came from a can. —RH

Oskar Blues Brewery; \$10.99/six-pack, oskarblues.com



Lizard Range, Fernie, British Columbia,
featuring *Wend* reader Jennifer Coulter, ski patroller with Canadian Avalanche Rescue Dog Association, and her dog Farley.
Submit a photo of your outdoor sanctuary at wendmag.com/greenery/sanctuary-submission for the opportunity to win green outdoor gear.
We choose a new winner every Sunday. If your shot is compelling enough to make us believers, we'll feature it on this page.

WE CHANGED FOOTWEAR FOREVER. AGAIN.



1937



TODAY



Over 70 years ago, our founder, Vitale Bramani invented the first rubber sole ever used on mountaineering boots. It was an invention that changed outdoor sports forever. To this day, most of the best footwear brands in the world use Vibram soles.

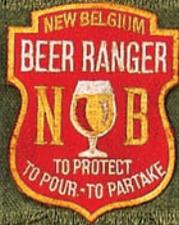
Today, we find ourselves the leaders of an exciting new movement in running and fitness, as our Vibram FiveFingers have become the catalyst of the natural footwear revolution. We don't know what the future will hold, but we're pretty confident that whatever it's wearing on its feet will have a Vibram logo.

Vibram.com



Tested where it matters.

RANGER IPA



NOW AVAILABLE
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RANGER IPA IS BREWED BY NEW BELGIUM BREWING FORT COLLINS CO.



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