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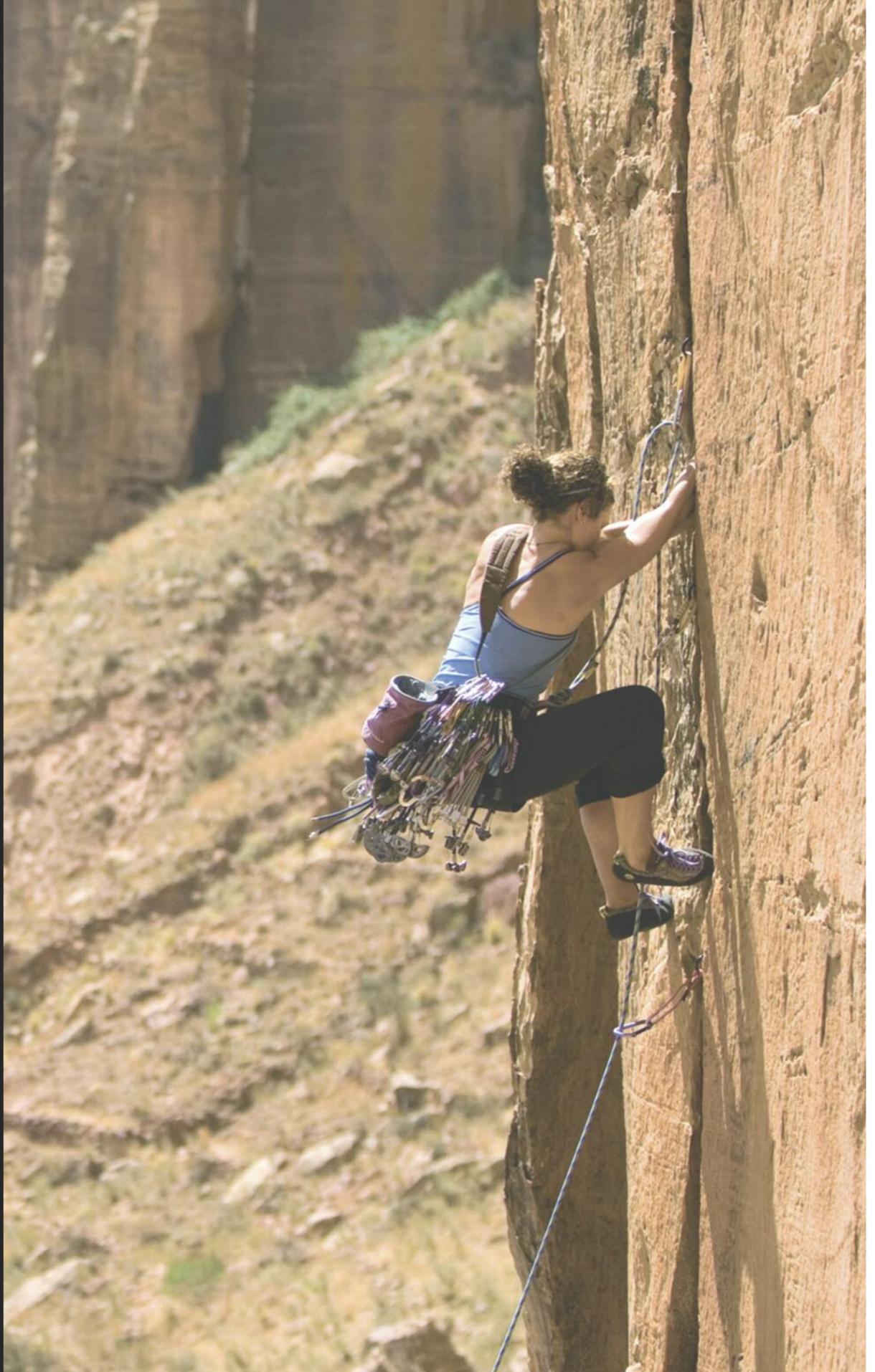
Summer 2008 • Vol. 23 • No.3

Leader

For Alumni of the National Outdoor Leadership School

The High Side of The Horn of Africa *The Expedition Behind Vertical Ethiopia*

BY MAJKA BURHARDT, NOLS GRAD • ARTICLE ON PAGE 10



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THE LEADER IN WILDERNESS EDUCATION

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The Leader is a newsletter for alumni of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), a nonprofit school focusing on wilderness skills, leadership, and environmental ethics. Published three times a year, each issue is mailed to approximately 50,000 NOLS alumni and an additional 10,000 prospective students. NOLS graduates living in the U.S. receive a free subscription to *The Leader* for life.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



We are one of the best employers in the country because we have the best employees in the country.

Summer at NOLS carries with it a unique and dynamic energy. Students are arriving from around the world, filled with anticipation, wonder, enthusiasm, and a measure of apprehension. Significant early season snow levels in the Wind River Mountains have probably caused many students arriving at NOLS Rocky Mountain to wonder what is in store for them as they stare at the snow covered peaks enroute from the airport.

As early summer shifts toward the start of July, the mix of energy at NOLS becomes even more eclectic as these new students mingle with students returning from the mountains, exuding enthusiasm, confidence, and spunk. While educational programs at NOLS are now offered year-round, the summer season is still the busiest and will always hold a special spot in my heart.

Offering quality educational programs in remote wilderness areas around the world demands a complex web of logistics, curriculum, and equipment. Essential to making it all happen is a phenomenal and dedicated group of staff, volunteers, interns, and support people.

Long before our students arrive for a course, they have often first heard about NOLS from you, our dedicated alumni. I can't thank you enough for spreading the word about the NOLS mission. Not only is your word of mouth work very efficient, but it also paints an accurate picture of what arriving students can expect on their courses. Our summer, which is fully enrolled, was well on its way to full in March, thanks to the effort of all of you. We are also pleased to see significant growth this summer of second and third generation NOLS students.

A second key group for implementing successful summer seasons are the many interns that work around the school. In this issue you will find a feature titled "A Day in the Life of a NOLS Intern" by Jared Pangretic.

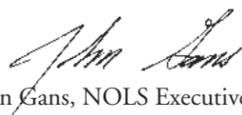
Jared is one of many interns who has dedicated energy and spirit to our mission and students while learning more about outdoor education and NOLS. Interns serve our mission in marketing, admissions, alumni, and public policy and at our bases around the world. Many of them have gone on to staff positions around the school.

As I write this address, I am preparing for our summer Board of Trustees meeting at NOLS Pacific Northwest. Our 18-member Board volunteers considerable time, energy, and ideas to further the NOLS mission. After six years on the board, this will be the last meeting for Joe Allen, Greg Avis, and Carolyn Rohlen. All three have spent considerable time in the wilderness with NOLS and all of them also have children that are NOLS graduates. We thank them for their committed volunteer service and look forward to their ongoing role in the NOLS family.

The final key ingredient in pulling off our summer is our dedicated staff. While many of our staff work year-round at NOLS, the summer brings an added infusion of staff that help us meet demands during our peak season. Some of these staff are classroom educators during the remainder of the year, others work in the ski industry, and others may be students themselves during the remainder of the year. The return of old friends added to our core staff always brings a reunion spirit to the summer season. Research continues to show that our faculty and staff are the most powerful factor influencing the phenomenal outcomes of a NOLS education. Our curriculum, wilderness classrooms, and fellow students are also influential factors, but nothing comes close to the influence of our staff.

You will notice a sidebar in this *Leader* on NOLS being selected by *Outside* magazine as one of the best employers in the country. While we are pleased with this recognition, we also recognize that it is a bit of a chicken/egg situation. Namely, we are one of the best employers in the country because we have the best employees in the country.

Thanks to our staff, volunteers, and interns we are ready and enthused for the summer. I wish you a great season filled with outdoor adventures.


John Gans, NOLS Executive Director

WHO'S THIS?



Recognize these two instructors? The first 10 people to figure it out will receive a free NOLS t-shirt. Call the Alumni Office at (800) 332-4280.

Last issue's answer to "Who's This?" is Lynne Wolfe. Lynne started instructing with NOLS in 1985 and has worked over 320 weeks in the field.

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BY MEREDITH HAAS, NOLS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

While Kenya has a reputation for stability amidst its turbulent neighbors—Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda, who have endured years of civil unrest—it recently grabbed the world’s attention after the presidential elections on December 27, 2007, when charges of vote rigging led to a sudden rise in violence. More than 1,000 Kenyans were killed and hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes. In light of this political turmoil and regional unrest, many NOLS East Africa alumni have asked about the NOLS community still connected with that area.

Elizabeth Goodwin, NOLS grad and spouse of former NOLS East Africa director Fred Roberts, said that she was in Kenya for the worst of it. She and Roberts purchased the NOLS facility after it closed in 2003 and now run it as an experiential education center known as Batian’s View. “Most of Central province and the Mt. Kenya region were relatively calm, but what was happening throughout Kenya greatly concerned us and impacted all of Kenya,” she said.

Much of the most recent violence took place in the Rift Valley and some parts of Coast province and Nairobi. “Some of the worst violence did occur in former NOLS operating areas,” said Peter Kafuna, who had instructed for NOLS and now teaches at Batian’s View. “The worst affected was Nakuru, a town that courses used to pass through on our way to and from Lake Nakuru National Park. Narok was also another town badly affected, which used to be our stopping point before heading out to Maasai Mara or Loita hills.”

Charles Ojaji, a NOLS instructor from Kenya who now resides in Wyoming and works at the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, said that no one was expecting such an uprising. “It caught everyone by surprise, even the people involved,” he said. “They didn’t think it’d go that far.”

What had started as a political dispute quickly turned into violence along ethnic lines. “The violence was among conflicting tribes over power and land,” said James “KG” Kagambi, a Kenyan native and NOLS instructor, explaining that Kenya has over a dozen tribes and that elections can dictate which tribes are benefited.

Ethnic clashes stirred between supporters of the Orange Democratic Movement, who are mainly Luo,

Luyah, and other smaller tribes, and supporters of the ruling Party of National Unity, who are mainly Kikuyu. “For much of Kenya’s history, many felt that the Kikuyu benefited more politically and economically than other groups,” said Roberts.

International pressure for resolution resulted in a power sharing agreement that both parties signed in February 2008. The formulation of a new coalition government is hoped to help ease tribal disputes. Goodwin says it has already calmed many of the problems and that people are hopeful.

While Kenya has a reputation for stability amidst its turbulent neighbors...it recently grabbed the world’s attention after the presidential elections on December 27, 2007, when charges of vote rigging led to a sudden rise in violence. More than 1,000 Kenyans were killed and hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes.

“I believe this coalition is going to hold for a while,” said Kafuna, adding that the challenge that lies ahead is returning displaced people to their homes. “Homes were completely destroyed during the violence and in some areas neighbors are still showing open hostility. This is one issue that will really test the stability of the coalition government.”

Another focus in rebuilding this region is on the tourism industry, which accounts for 15 percent of the Kenyan economy. The economic impacts on tourism as a result of the recent violence were substantial—revenues dropped 54 percent in the first quarter of 2008, according to *Reuters*. Though a decline in tourism has greatly

impacted the region, especially for those who work for local outfitters, KG says that tourism security is good and shouldn’t deter potential visitors.

Lastly, Kafuna indicates that Batian’s View saw a decline in student numbers. “We were not directly affected here at Batian’s View, except for the loss of business since most of our programs involve school groups,” he said. “The school calendar was completely disrupted and so we had a lot of cancellations. We have certainly gone through a very traumatic period in the history of our nation.”

“Everybody is trying to tolerate adversity,” says Ojaji. “It’s one of those things you take away from a NOLS course and it stays with you.”

While NOLS no longer operates in Africa, many alumni and staff have a profound connection with this amazing land. “The course, the people, my instructors, and the wilderness changed my life,” said NOLS Executive Director John Gans, reflecting on his experience as a semester student in Kenya in 1979.

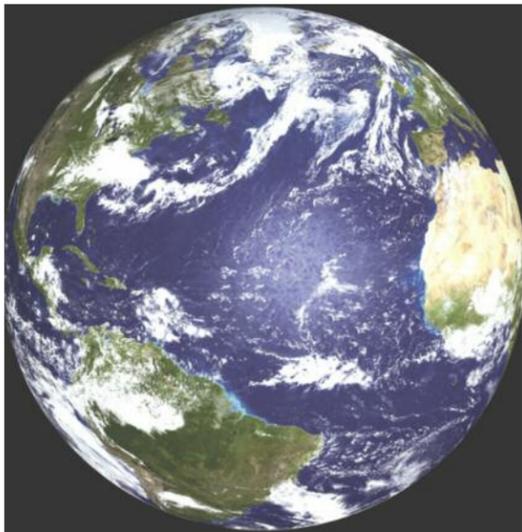
NOLS East Africa was founded in 1974 and based in Naru Moru, near Mt. Kenya and north of Nairobi. NOLS operated in Kenya for 29 years, giving students a rare glimpse into the wild lands of Africa with a unique cultural experience. In 2003, the NOLS Board of Trustees decided that the region’s political and social future was too uncertain to continue to enroll students and NOLS East Africa closed.

This decision affected many members of the NOLS community that dedicated years to the NOLS mission and program in Kenya. “I have developed friendships spanning decades and grown immeasurably from contacts with Kenyan staff and alumni. The people and place have touched me deeply and were of significant influence as we made this decision,” said Gans.

Many NOLS East Africa staff members have continued working in the wilderness education field, both in Kenya and in the United States. Many work at Batian’s View while others continue to work for NOLS.

For more information about the recent violence in Kenya and how to help, visit www.kenyaredcross.org.

ISSUE ROOM



The Changing Faces of NOLS Classrooms: Effects of Climate Change

BY AARON BANNON, NOLS WILDERNESS ADVOCACY COORDINATOR

Though there's still much that can be done to alleviate the most catastrophic effects of climate change, it is now well known that some changes are inevitable. This will undoubtedly have a noticeable effect on NOLS courses around the globe. Each branch will face unique challenges in coping with the localized effects of a warming planet. What can NOLS anticipate at its various branches in the years to come?

NOLS Rocky Mountain & Teton Valley

NOLS students in the mountains of Wyoming and Idaho can expect to witness rapidly melting glaciers and reduced snow cover. Hotter summers will lead to more frequent forest fires and an increased vulnerability in trees susceptible to sap-sucking insects such as pine beetles. River courses in Utah and Idaho may notice a shorter, earlier peak season, as warmer temperatures produce earlier runoff.

NOLS Pacific Northwest

Over the 20th century, the climate in the Pacific Northwest has been trending toward warmer, wetter seasons. A noticeably warmer climate will likely lead to a substantial dieback in Northwest forests, and an increase in fire frequency and size. As we near the end of the 21st century, the Columbia Basin snowpack on March 1 could look like the June 1 snowpack does today.

NOLS Patagonia

From coastal Chile to the Andes to the Amazon, NOLS Patagonia could see a wide spectrum of rapidly changing conditions. Warmer temperatures in South America will be accompanied with glacial retreat and decreased snowfall. Climate change will likely augment manmade changes in Andean valleys and South American steppes, leading to habitat fragmentation and a loss of biodiversity. In the Amazon, up to 40% of the existing forest could react dramatically to an even modest reduction in rainfall. As a result, the entire ecosystem could change very rapidly to another state.

NOLS Alaska & Yukon

In polar and sub-polar regions, the effects of climate change will be pronounced. Already, per decade, there has been a five- to six-day increase in the duration of snow-free days for over thirty years as the permafrost melts and releases methane gas, which has 20 times the warming influence of carbon dioxide. Additionally, reduced snowcover and glacial retreat is likely to lead to a drying of ponds and wetlands in the polar regions, affecting various migrating species.

NOLS Southwest

The Sonoran Desert has the highest relative productivity of all North American deserts, and many perennial plants in the area are susceptible to modest changes. Predicted droughts, interrupted by sharp increases in precipitation delivered through high-intensity storms, will stress and kill many native plant species. This will open the door to exotic plant invasions, which will be predisposed to fire.

NOLS Mexico

The coastal ecology that is the pride of Baja California will likely see noticeable changes over the coming decades. Sea level rise could have negative impacts on the coast, affecting storm cycles, leading to the salinization of groundwater, and negatively impacting biodiversity. By the year 2050, scientists predict a loss of 8% to 26% of mammal species, 5% to 8% of bird species, and 7% to 19% of butterfly species in Mexico.

NOLS Australia & New Zealand

In the Land of Oz, climate change impacts include an increase in the number of days of extreme heat, causing heat stress on flora and fauna. Extreme rainfall events are anticipated which will lead to increased flooding. Warming seas will cause coral reefs to die off at an increasing rate. In the mountains of New Zealand, scientists anticipate a loss of plant and animal species, an increase of shrubs at the expense of herb fields, glacial retreat, and a loss of snow cover.

NOLS India

Glacial retreat has been witnessed across the Himalayan regions of India. On average, glaciers in India have lost 23 percent of their volume over the past 37 years, according to an eight-year-old study. A dangerous side effect of glacial retreat is the formation of glacial lakes, and the increased possibility of a glacial lake outburst flood, which can have devastating impacts downstream, resulting in human casualties, destruction of infrastructure, and the devastation of fields and forests.

It is easy to become overwhelmed by the drastic predictions associated with climate change. Some climate change, however, is good—such as the political climate. As concerned citizens around the world become more aware of the impacts energy consumption is having on the environment, they are demanding that elected leaders take steps to develop renewable energy sources and limit greenhouse gas emissions. NOLS students and instructors are in a unique position to track and report on the most noticeable changes in the backcountry areas they frequent. Bringing attention to these trends can help reinforce the positions of those working for a more sustainable future and a cooler planet.

**Sources include the International Panel on Climate Change and studies by Travis Huxman and Samjwal Bajarcharya.*

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE



BY JEN LAMB, NOLS PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

The results of our schoolwide sustainability audit are in! Pure Strategies, the consulting firm that performed the assessment (www.purestrategies.com), visited Lander in late February to present their results and recommendations to help NOLS reduce its environmental footprint around the globe.

CARBON EMISSIONS

A significant component of NOLS' environmental footprint is directly related to our use of fossil fuels and the resulting carbon emissions. About 50 percent of this is attributable to ground transportation, 30 percent is associated with electricity use, and the balance is related to our use of natural gas, propane, white gas, and heating oil.

Geographically, our emissions break down as follows: 30% are generated by NOLS Rocky Mountain, which makes sense when you consider that roughly 35 percent of our student days occur at that branch; 20% are generated by Lander Headquarters; 11% by Alaska; 8% by the Pacific Northwest; 6% each by Mexico, Patagonia, the Teton Valley and the Southwest; 3% by the Yukon; and 2% each by Australia and New Zealand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pure Strategies' recommendations range from making energy efficiency improvements (including a number of steps to help define our goals around energy), to setting a climate protection goal, to establishing a forest stewardship policy (to guide paper procurement), to cleaning up mailing lists, to establishing internal policies that will guide the procurement of cleaning products, electronics, and gear (among other things), to expanding recycling, to increasing our use of locally grown and organic foods. Phew!

While the breadth of the recommendations is significant, there are some interesting things to note.

- Refining our use of energy or paper can have significant impacts.
- Many recommendations require little or no capital expense. This means that we can make significant progress without a significant impact on budget.
- Many of the recommendations also entail setting internal policies or guidelines for smarter purchasing decisions and operating procedures.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

With Pure Strategies' recommendations in hand and a good sense of where our biggest opportunities for improvement lie, we will now set priorities. Where will we start? What initiatives are already in the works that we can support and encourage? What priorities will need future budget planning? We will answer these questions and more over time. If you have specific questions, please send an email or phone me: jen_lamb@nols.edu or (307) 335-2262.

WILDERNESS QUIZ

Fiord Land National Park is in what country?

- A) Finland B) New Zealand
C) Norway D) New Guinea (Answer on page 12)

Hanging Out To Dry:

BY LAUREN WETHERBEE, NOLS ALUMNI INTERN

It's amazing how much controversy something as simple as a clothesline can generate. What used to be the norm—hanging clothes to dry outside—has become a hotly contested issue in many communities in the United States, and NOLS grad Alexander Lee is right in the middle of it. As founder and executive director of Project Laundry List, Alex has turned a lifelong passion for conservation and public service into a remarkable grassroots “Right to Dry” advocacy group.

The group got its start in 1995 at Middlebury College, where Alex was an undergrad. Inspired by a talk given by Dr. Helen Caldicott—in which she noted, “If we all did things like hang out our clothes, we could shut down the nuclear industry,”—Alex and some friends thought, “Let’s do something.” They began hanging messages on clotheslines to protest Hydro-Quebec’s construction of hydroelectric dams in the James Bay region in Quebec, and Project Laundry List was born.

The Project Laundry List mission is to “use words, images, and advocacy to educate people about how simple lifestyle modifications, including air-drying one’s clothes, reduce our dependence on environmentally and culturally costly energy sources.” They promote clothesline art and writings, participate in fairs, give presentations, and publish a newsletter called *Hanging Out*. They began National Hanging Out Day, which occurs every April 19, and joined forces with the national Community Association Institute to advocate for everyone’s right



“The **PROBLEM** is that in a lot of **NEIGHBORHOODS**, community associations see **HANGING LAUNDRY** as a flag of **POVERTY**, and they have **BANNED** it in public.”

Saving Energy With Your Laundry

Project Laundry List founder and NOLS grad Alexander Lee took his cause to the halls of power and asked presidential candidates and their spouses to hang their clothes to dry.



to dry their laundry outside and to challenge one million Americans to pledge to use clotheslines.

According to Alex, more than 150,000 communities and homeowners' associations in the United States have restrictions or bans on clotheslines. These restrictions are based on aesthetics and the idea that property values will be negatively impacted by laundry drying outside. "The problem is that in a lot of neighborhoods, community associations see hanging laundry as a flag of poverty, and they have banned it in public," Alex said. In (most) other parts of the world, however, hanging laundry is the norm. For example, according to Alex, only 4 percent of Italians own clothes dryers, compared to 81 percent of people here in the United States. "Since 1945, we have subscribed to a GE-perpetrated myth that these [appliances] would free us from the drudgery of housework. In fact...instead of providing leisure time, they've led to a more frenetic pace." He promotes hanging laundry on a clothesline as a way to not only reduce en-

ergy consumption (and bills) but as a way to reconnect with nature and practice living minimally, if only in a small way.

This idea of minimalism and connecting directly with the natural world, which Alex says is "thematic to my life work," is something that he felt very strongly on his NOLS course. Although he had a good deal of outdoor experience before going on his Brooks Range Wilderness River course in 1992, he had never experienced anything quite like the beauty of the range and the experience of eating muktuk (whale meat). "I feel really privileged to have gone to a place that not many people will see," he said about his time spent in Alaska with NOLS.

His interest in environmental science began back in eighth grade when he created "the greenhouse effect in a Coke bottle" for a science class. Since then, Alex has graduated from Middlebury College, with a degree in Environmental Studies, and Vermont Law School, winning public service awards at each institution. But it was time spent traveling in Ontario, Northern Quebec, and Alaska that sparked his passion for conservation. "I want to preserve Alaska because I've seen it," he says. Through Project Laundry List he continues to advocate for the protection of rivers in northern Quebec from hydroelectric dams.

Ever since a mention in the style section of the *New York Times* in April 2007, press for Project

Laundry List has been showing up everywhere. The nonprofit was featured in the 2007 Thanksgiving issue of *TIME* magazine, and Alex was the featured activist in *Sierra Magazine's* September/October 2007 issue. The Newsroom section of www.laundrylist.org has grown exponentially in the last year as publications from *The Christian Science Monitor* to *The Wall Street Journal* have picked up the story of the "Right to Dry" advocacy group.

When asked what NOLS grads can do, Alex provided a few simple ideas:

- Wash your clothes in cold water, or at least turn down the temperature on your hot water heater.
- Buy green detergents.
- Use a laundromat—they're often more environmentally-friendly than home washers because laundromat owners have a financial interest in seeking out the most efficient appliances.
- Outside of the realm of laundry, Alex encourages everyone to actively advocate for conservation. "People who enjoy the outdoors need to be loud voices."

For more information, or to see how you can help, visit their website: www.laundrylist.org.



Q & A



NOLS Annual Fund Manager Lindsay Nohl tops out on a climb at Southwest's Cochise Stronghold.

Five Years at NOLS and Counting

Q&A with Lindsay Nohl, NOLS Annual Fund Manager

BY DANIEL DUNNE, NOLS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING LOGISTICS ASSISTANT

Q Lindsay, you've been with NOLS for five years. What about your first NOLS experience, a 2002 Fall Semester in the Rockies, made you want to stay and work for the school?

A My semester had a huge impact on me because it was vastly different from anything else I had ever done and it inspired me to dive into something totally new afterwards. It really felt like home in the wilderness and I knew a week into the course that NOLS was where I wanted to be. Once my semester ended, I was determined to get a job with the school in any way possible and within four days I had applied for an internship in the NOLS Alumni office. Three weeks later, I had packed up my house in Virginia and moved all my stuff out to Lander. It was really one of those times where everything just clicked and fell right into place.

Q There's a great article in this issue of *The Leader* about interning for NOLS. How was your internship a good start to your NOLS career and do you think it prepared you for the other positions you've had with the school?

A My internship was instrumental in helping me find a long-term career at NOLS. It gave me an opportunity to meet other staff members and become part of the NOLS community in Lander. Furthermore, I learned some about the school as a larger organization. This really got me intrigued to find out more about how all the behind the scenes steps fit together into making the running of a NOLS course successful. The internship gave me more motivation to be a part of NOLS both as a field instructor and as an intown staff

member. I would recommend a NOLS internship to anyone who is interested in coming and working for the school in the future.

Q You have moved around and done quite a bit in your few years with NOLS, what accomplishment are you most proud of?

A Two things come to mind. First, I am proud of the path I have taken and the experiences I have had at the school in the span of five short years. Student, intern, rations manager, instructor, outfitting manager, operations coordinator, assistant branch director, annual fund manager....it has been a fascinating journey. I am also very proud of being a field instructor for NOLS. The true spirit of the school is in the being out there learning, teaching, and living in the wilderness. Having real life experiences and connecting with students and co-instructors is absolutely amazing. I love the feeling of coming back from a course and feeling like I had an impact and got students excited to go and do something great with their lives after their NOLS experience has ended.

Q What are you looking forward to most about your new position as manager of the NOLS Annual Fund?

A I am looking forward to interacting with alumni and parents, hearing how NOLS has really impacted their lives or their children's lives. I am also excited about getting the opportunity to say thank you to all of our very generous NOLS donors who choose to give back and support the school.

Q What are some initiatives you will be heading up on behalf of the Annual Fund?

A I will be focused on trying to increase our donor retention rate and the amount of gifts being made online through the NOLS website. Getting more people to give online is a more sustainable practice; it's easy to do and uses less paper. Hopefully, it will someday become our most prevalent way of giving. One of my other goals is to increase the number of NOLS staff that give to the fund. I'd like to get staff (and all NOLS graduates, really) to understand what the Annual Fund is, what programs it supports, and how any participation really helps the cause. It's not really about giving thousands of dollars; it is about participating in some-

thing you believe in and supporting the school in any way possible.

Q What do you anticipate to be the biggest challenge in your new position?

A From spending over five years in seven jobs, I feel like I know the school, its organizational management, and its initiatives pretty well. I think the challenge for me is that I am new to fundraising. I have a huge task of learning fundraising concepts and techniques and what makes the most sense for this organization. However, that is why the job intrigued me so much in the first place. Learning more about how the school runs and partaking in new ways to help the school keeps me excited and motivated.

Q NOLS was just voted one of *Outside's* Best Places to Work. What do you find most rewarding about working for NOLS?

A It is very exciting that NOLS has received recognition as being a stellar place to work. It is completely true. I don't think there has been one day in my five years working for NOLS that I have woken up and dreaded going to work. The most rewarding aspect of working at NOLS is I get to work in a place I believe in. I know that what I am doing is having an impact and plays a part in a student having an amazing experience in the wilderness. Also, I go to work every day and interact with people I consider friends, not just co-workers. The community of people that makes up and surrounds NOLS is really remarkable. It is second to none.

MEDICINE QUIZ

Answer (question on page 4): B

Alcohol is a poor choice for hydration and doesn't improve sweating. It does impair your judgment, which is your most powerful tool for staying healthy in the wilderness.

Hydration and resting during the heat of the day are common sense precautions. Less well known is the advice to give yourself time, up to 10 days in some cases, to fully acclimatize to exercising in the heat.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Wind River Pack Goats

Unique, 24-year-old guiding business for sale. Permits on Shoshone National Forest, Wyoming BLM, and Escalante Grand Staircase National Monument in southcentral Utah. Ideally suited for family backcountry adventures. North America's first goat supported outfitting business. Van, trailers, animals, gear, client list, and ongoing PR including articles in *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Big Sky Journal*, *Angler's Report*, and *Washington Post*.

Contact Charlie Wilson, owner, cwilson@goatpacking.com



ALUMNI PROFILE

One Year in One Trashcan

A NOLSie's Commitment to the Environment

BY MEREDITH HAAS, NOLS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

The phrase “leave only footprints,” has taken on quite a new meaning these days as the topics of climate change, pollution, and energy and resource management have become the main course of conversation in the 21st century. And it's no wonder with soaring gas and food prices and diminishing resource supplies that people worldwide are becoming more aware of the impacts their footprints are actually having. So what can one man do about it? Use only one trashcan for the entire year. At least that's what Jeff Louden, a NOLS instructor and former Lutheran pastor in Park City, Utah, did.

Jeff set a goal last year to use only one 55-gallon trashcan for the year. “I want a world that's livable and beautiful, and if I don't reduce my footprint, not strictly carbon, then how can it be?” said Jeff. “We're at a tipping point with the fuel and food crisis. We have to change.”

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the average American produces 4.4 pounds of household garbage a day—that's a 1,600 pound footprint at the end of the year! Jeff and his 10-year-old daughter, Emma, successfully made it through the year with their allotted 55-gallon trashcan, which holds approximately 459 pounds of trash. To reach their goal, Jeff and Emma sorted through the trash daily, which he says only takes a couple of minutes, in hopes of improving and producing less waste in the future.

Part of their daily ritual included sorting plastic bottles by number and recycling or composting nearly everything. There are some mixed products such as toothpaste tubes, Styrofoam, and some construction materials he says simply just can't be recycled. Everything they sort is taken to Recycle Utah, a nonprofit recycling organization in Park City. Having been the former president of the organization, he swears they can recycle just about anything from all glass types (brown, green, clear, etc.) and some construction materials to electronic wastes.

Jeff says it's not hard and that he takes extra care about what he purchases at the store so that not only is he using less, but he's also recycling less and saving energy. In order to further reduce paper and plastic waste, he carries canvas bags to tote his groceries home from the market.

“I want my daughter to inherit a world that is beautiful and enjoy the same experiences I have,” he said. “If I don't walk the talk then how can I expect her to? It wasn't that hard, you just have to make a commitment. I look at how much I use and pay attention to plastics. I look for food that's in season with minimal packaging and won't buy anything packaged in Styrofoam. I'll also read online instead of buying a newspaper,” he said.

Every year Americans throw away 25 billion Styrofoam cups—enough to circle the earth 436 times! And every year we make enough plastic film to shrink-wrap Texas. In a lifetime, the average American will throw away 600 times his or her adult weight in garbage! With so much extra weight to lose, it's a wonder we bother carrying it at all.

To shed those extra pounds, Jeff has not only limited his waste production, but has committed himself to giving one thing away every day, “even if it's a bad attitude,” he said jokingly. “People can do this, they just have to minimize the amount they consume. And I have plenty of things to improve on because I love outdoor gear.”

His philosophy for using less and traveling lighter, he says, resonates with the NOLS lifestyle. Jeff has been a NOLS instructor for the last 10 years and loves the simplicity of living in the backcountry. “It's a privilege to sleep on the ground for 30 days during a course, and some people think I'm crazy for that,” he said.

“NOLS is great because you can live simply, a practice that I think can carry over from the backcountry.

We had an old mantra

of ‘let the mountains do their magic.’”

As the energy and food crisis rises, Jeff hopes that more people will do their own part in preserving the world for the next generation. “We have to start looking at long-term impacts and goals. It's one small step at a time to become more hopeful,” he said. “We have to be more open... You can't demonize the other side; you have to be in a conversation.”

For more information and to find a recycling center nearest you, please visit the following links:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:
www.epa.gov/msw/reduce.htm

Recycle Utah: www.recycleutah.org



NOLS Instructor Jeff Louden

In a lifetime, the average American

will throw away 600 times his

or her adult weight in garbage!





Gabe Rogel



Gabe Rogel



The His

The Exped

I scissor my hand up and down in the crack, clearing loose grains of sand from the inside edge. The purchase gets better and I commit to the hold and begin cleaning the inside of the next. Midway through my next excavation, the edge of the crack outside my foot fractures. The horizontal runnel I'd been on one move before was little better. I adjust my stance, willing myself to be lighter. This is climbing in Ethiopia, a minute-by-minute guessing game of what to trust in the environment, and how to trust yourself acting in that environment.

A seemingly unlikely climbing destination, Ethiopia is better known for drought, famine, poverty, and war. It's also known as the birthplace and ruling grounds of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Queen of Sheba, and the ancient Kingdom of Axum. Its physical landscape stretches from the fourth highest peak in Africa, the 4,543-meter Ras Dashen, to one of the lowest points on Earth at the Danakil Depression, some 22 meters below sea level, to the headwaters of the Blue Nile. All of these elements make Ethiopia one of the largest wild areas in Africa. And with a vast expanse of 200-meter-tall sandstone towers in the north part of the country, Ethiopia holds some of the most intriguing climbing potential in an area least known for the sport.

High Side of The Horn of Africa:

Vertical Ethiopia

BY MAJKA BURHARDT, NOLS GRAD

I first came to Ethiopia in October 2006 to write about a rare coffee bean, Geisha, that was thought to be from the Horn of Africa but had never been found there. A relative of this coffee bean, grown in Panama, now garners more than \$100 a pound on the market. While the expedition I had joined to cover the story didn't find Geisha, I found Ethiopia.

In gathering further background information on the country, I contacted British climber Pat Littlejohn, who had been there before. Following our discussions, he sent me eight photos of striking sandstone towers in the northern province of Tigray. When I told Ethiopian friends of my plans to climb and showed them photos of the north, of shocks of sanguine stone piercing an azure sky, I was met with blank stares. This is not the Himalayas, Patagonia, or the poles. Exploration has occurred in Ethiopia, but not at the level of its potential due to politics and safety—government sanctions, war, and persistent international restrictions, to name a few. The result is a country twice the size of France that is just now being understood for its full geographical diversity, which is how I put it to potential partners when I was assembling my team. I would then go on to explain recent kidnappings, religious violence, and wrap up the conversation with my assuring them that despite all of this I felt safer in Ethiopia than I did in most places in the United States. I'd end with the following tidbit that sealed the deal: "Where else in the world are you going to find unclimbed sandstone spires anymore?"

By March 2007, I had a team assembled. Kristie Arend, Helen Dudley, Caroline George, and photographer Gabe Rogel. Guided by overly digitized versions of the images Littlejohn had sent me, we headed off to a handful of rock faces outside of Hawzien, a small town in the Tigray province. Our main objective was the Gheralta, the last in a series of sandstone upthrusts covering much of Tigray. The largest of these is three kilometers long and 450 meters tall. The rock folds over itself and turns sharp and smooth corners to form buttresses and isolated towers with pinnacles and faces repeating in every direction. Once we saw Gheralta up close I knew it could take a lifetime to explore these faces. Eager to start climbing, we picked our way through terraces to the base from the road within an hour. Twenty meters of climbing later, we were duly humbled.

Sandstone is not known for its solidity. Sandstone in Ethiopia even less so. Perfect cracks became fissures on a suspended panel; gear bit into the rock and left an impression when removed. Not having expected things to be easy is one thing, realizing just how hard they might be is another. It quickly became clear that when rock climbing in Ethiopia, following is definitely the desired position. Freed of such worries as wondering if the anchor you are being belayed on is strong enough or how much rock you are knocking off below, the climbing is sublime. You can dance over edges and flirt with jamming and laybacking. You can be in Ethiopia. If you are leading, sometimes all you want is to be somewhere else.

Northern Ethiopia is resplendent with vertical terrain and vistas. Locals often climb third, fourth, and, in some cases, even easy fifth class terrain to simply get to church—attending services still held in ancient sanctuaries hewn from the rock 1,000 years ago. We went to visit the most vertically famous of these, Abuna Yemata, and used sandstone foot and hand holds worn into the soft rock and polished from centuries of use. While no one in the region is climbing beyond this, the very fact that these churches exist created an understanding of our desires as climbers to explore these faces. Everywhere we went we had local

support and interest, which meant that everywhere we went, we were with other people.

We climbed on escarpments in plain view of a town that was made into a town by forced relocation of people into a centralized area in the name of safety. Off in the distance lay Hawzien, the village where we stayed and the site of one of the bloodiest massacres of the Derg, a communistic regime that controlled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991. Hawzien is the area's center and on its market day, a Wednesday, in 1988, when people from the surrounding towns and villages came to trade wares, a low flying plane dropped a napalm bomb and killed 2,500 people. There is a monument to the dead in the middle of Hawzien, placed just so that traffic circles around it; each day, on the way to and from climbing, we rounded this memorial.

Locals often climb third, fourth, and, in some cases, even easy fifth class terrain to simply get to church...

In Tigray, terraces extend in every direction as a result of a food-for-work program that targets preservation of the fragile landscape. We were climbing in the very region of Ethiopia that was flashed across every television screen and radio in the 1980s for the famine that killed more than one million people and affected six million more.

To scout out climbing lines we hiked over and through these endless terraces to get close to walls and peer inside cracks and chimneys for a way up. The rock undulates deep orange and red with ochre bands up high. It quickly became clear that we wanted nothing to do with the ochre bands and the horizontal striations they signified in the rock. Even from the ground, this porous upper band, more than a hundred meters above us, looked like a bad idea. But the rock underneath is ever mysterious with potential. We spent countless hours scurrying up and down terraces to get to these faces, taking binoculars to the sandstone cracks and estimating the size and safety of various objectives. We were not there to climb to one specific summit, but rather to see how much we could find to climb.

Our first tower was a five-pitch experience of short sections of perfection followed by long scary choices on questionable rock. Gheralta does not give itself easily to a climber, but then again, that was what we were there for. Deep in the middle of the Nebelet Towers, we climbed 150 meters to the rounded mushroom summit of orange sand and reveled, briefly, in our success before realizing that our only way down was to down-lead. We did this for one pitch and then found gulleys to take us the rest of the way. We drove back to Hawzien that night while the sunset silhouetted acacia trees against the deepening sky.

Driving away from that first ascent, I wondered both if I was up for another Ethiopian climb and how that climb mattered in the face of other similar exploits in the world. I'm 31. I did not grow up in the golden era of rock climbing and cut my teeth on first ascents waiting to be plucked around the world, but I have always wanted to be that type of adventurer. Ethiopia represented that chance to me, and it did so in a new way that I did not fully understand until now, a year later.

When I was young, I believed adventure had to be removed from daily reality. I grew up paddling the waters of Northern Minnesota, Canada, and the Arctic. Nothing would upset me more than to have an interruption in this perceived sanctuary—be it a plane, a cabin, a trace of anything human but me. I wanted purity in exploration. Now, what I want most is the integration of the

extreme and the everyday. I would rather go towards the world than escape from it, which is good because in Ethiopia there is little option of anything else. When you're adventuring in Ethiopia, this is what you are in the midst of:

- Half of the country's population earns less than a dollar a day and the country is one of the top ten recipients of foreign aid money in the world. The country is awash in contrast. In Mekele, the capital of the Tigray region where we were climbing, new glass buildings stand regal and complete with signs advertising office space and Internet access. Next door, another building is in mid-construction—the scaffolding is branches bound together with twine leaning lazily against concrete walls with edges bubbling over wooden frames.
- Ethiopia is the only country in Africa to have maintained

independence against the era of European colonialism. Italy occupied the country in the 1940s in retaliation for a vendetta Mussolini had as a result of an Ethiopian victory against his country in the late 1800s. The United Nations helped Ethiopia drive the Italians out, but not before several roads were built and the country got hooked on pasta. As a result, everywhere you go, even in the small villages we climbed out of in the north, spaghetti is readily available.

- Rated one of Frommer's top 12 adventure destinations last year, Ethiopia has ten national parks with another dozen in the making. The country has emerged from a dark veil of war into a world of opportunity with its natural resources. Is the country safe? It depends on whom you ask. Caught in the middle of a global war on terror, Ethiopia is 60 percent Christian and 40 percent Muslim. The two faiths have largely lived in harmony up until this point. Ethiopia has a contentious border with Eritrea to the north and recently invaded Somalia to its east. An aid darling of the United States, Europe, and Israel, Ethiopia's stability is seen as crucial for East Africa's stability. It houses American military and intelligence installations a mere 400 kilometers from Saudi Arabia.

And this is where we were climbing. This is where sport and life and history and culture all converged in an elusive search for summits. We established several beautiful lines; many that I would go back and climb again, many others that I would never want to again attempt. What drove us was the knowledge that we were only seeing part of what there was to see in the area. The sheer density of rock, the consistency of the formations layering out after each other far into the horizon, the sight of another massif just around the corner—all of this created both an urgency and a peace during our trip. There was no way we were going to fully explore the potential of these cliffs, but the mere taste provided inspiration for more.

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Majka Burhardt (pictured at left) is a Boulder, Colorado-based writer, climber, and certified guide and a NOLS Wind River Wilderness grad from 1992. She is currently on a speaking tour with her book, Vertical Ethiopia: Climbing Toward Possibility in the Horn of Africa. See our review of it on page 12 and find a copy at www.verticaethiopia.com.

Gabe Rogel is a "wannabe cowboy, former mountain guide, ardent skier, and photographer" who is based in Driggs, Idaho. More of his spectacular photography can be found at www.rogelphoto.com.

BOOK REVIEW



Vertical Ethiopia: Climbing Toward Possibility in the Horn of Africa

Written by Majka Burhardt
©Shama Books, ISBN 978-99944-0-032-4, \$37.99

REVIEW BY LAUREN WETHERBEE,
NOLS ALUMNI INTERN

NOLS grad Majka Burhardt's new book, *Vertical Ethiopia: Climbing Toward Possibility in the Horn of Africa*, is a striking portrait of her time spent in Ethiopia, seeking out first ascents in a country in which few have spent much time climbing. Majka's first trip to Ethiopia was as a journalist where she was swept away by the country's stunning rock faces. Inspired by the landscape and by British climbers Pat Littlejohn and Steve Sustad, who only two years before became the first climbers to ascend a tower in Ethiopia, Majka returned to Ethiopia with three other women and long-time friend and photographer, Gabe Rogel. That expedition, which Majka writes about in the cover story of this issue of *The Leader*, culminated in the creation of *Vertical Ethiopia*.

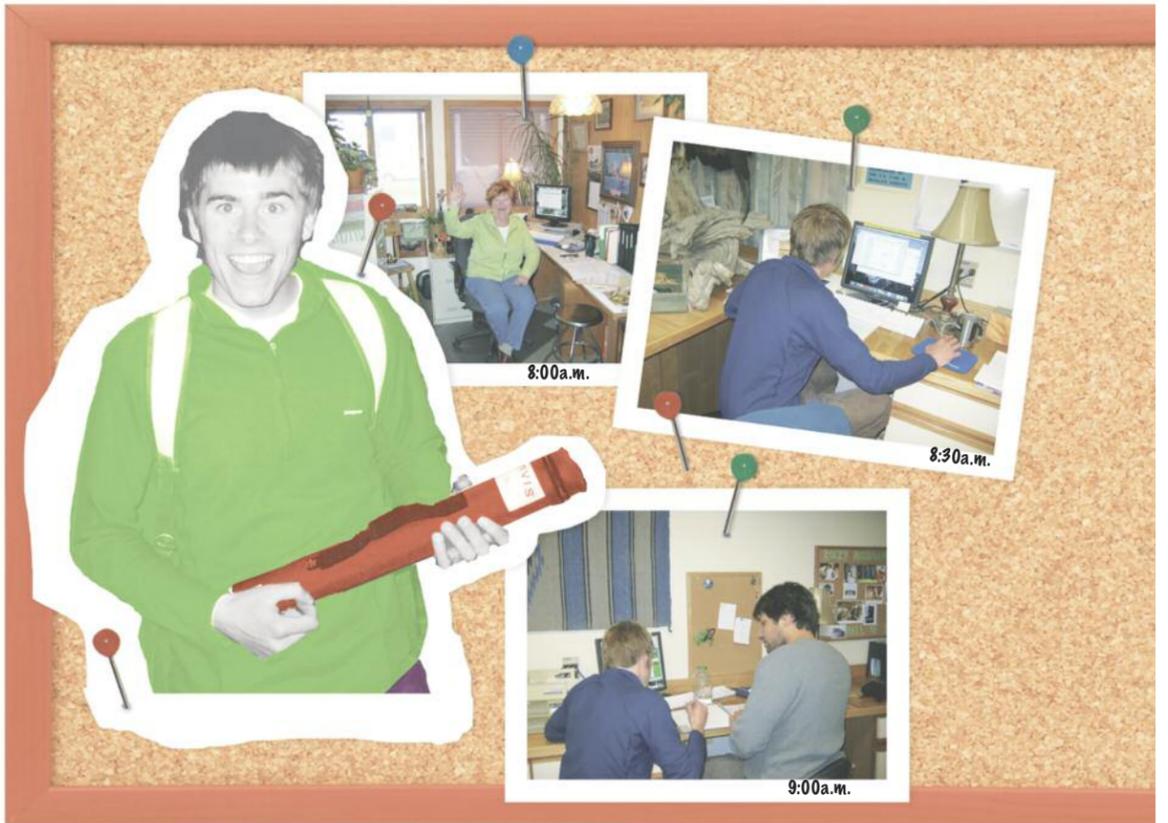
With a foreword by Paul B. Henze, author of multiple books on Ethiopia's history and his time spent living and traveling there; and historical, geographical, and cultural background provided by Majka, *Vertical Ethiopia* is more than just a climbing narrative. Anecdotes about interactions with incredulous taxi drivers, dexterous local children with their own systems for climbing, and even a priest who officiates at a church high up a rock face are interspersed with stunning photographs of climbing, landscapes, and daily life.

Through these vignettes of the people of Ethiopia, you can feel the warmth and humanity of a place that few ever visit and most know little about; a country that Majka describes previously imagining as consisting of "dry and desolate landscapes, [and] fragile and bony legs... a country of constant war and oppression." Both visually enticing and informative, in many ways the book relates as much a cultural experience as it does a climbing one. For Majka, climbing is her way of connecting and experiencing: "Living, however temporarily, in the vertical is the most intimate and powerful way I can know and understand a foreign land."

Vertical Ethiopia is available on Majka's website, www.majkaburhardt.com, or on Amazon.com.

WILDERNESS QUIZ

Answer (to question on page 5): **B, New Zealand**
Established in 1952, Fiord Land National Park is situated on the South Island of New Zealand. With an area of 4,834 square miles, the park is comprised of fiords connected to the Tasman Sea and bordered by the mountains of the Darran Range. Some of the country's finest treks (the Routburn, Kepler, and Milford tracks) are located in the park. The fiords are home to Bottlenose and Dusky dolphins, Common and Hector's dolphins occur outside of the fiords. Humpback, Southern Right, and Sperm whales have also been sighted.



A Day in the Life of a NOLS Intern
Making a Lifestyle Choice

BY JARED PANGRETIC, NOLS ROCKY MOUNTAIN INTERN & BAJA SEA KAYAKING GRAD

As I approached my college graduation five months ago, I began to mull over an old adage I finally could not escape. I've heard it said, "You graduate from college, get a job, plug yourself into society." Although those are logical steps, I felt there were a few crucial factors missing: having fun and believing in the work you do.

Tackling the fun factor first, I applied for a NOLS course and searched to see what employment opportunities might be available with NOLS after my course. I discovered their internship program online and without hesitation I applied for the NOLS Rocky Mountain (RM) internship in Wyoming. With graduation, a NOLS Baja Sea Kayaking course, and an internship coming up, the next few months promised to hold some of the greatest adventures of my life.

After my sea kayaking course, I was thrilled to bring my new skills I learned in the field, such as leadership and expedition behavior, to the internship. I was ready to work hard, challenge myself, and learn even more.

My journey began in Michigan and when I arrived in Lander, Wyoming, perched just northeast of the Wind River Mountains, I immediately knew why this was the town where NOLS was founded. With two days before work started, questions began swirling

through my head: What to expect? Who were my coworkers? What would the work atmosphere be like? When do I get to go climbing?

Monday, my first day of work, was extremely exciting and everyone was very welcoming. My co-intern, Sandy Bandhu, and I took a tour of the Rocky Mountain base and the NOLS International Headquarters building down the street. Within a few weeks we had settled into our workspace and dynamic schedules. Even though there was so much going on around the branch, it was always easy to find small distractions and interesting people to talk to. I soon found out that there was no such thing as a typical day for a NOLS intern, but to give a bit of a snapshot of what it's like, read on:

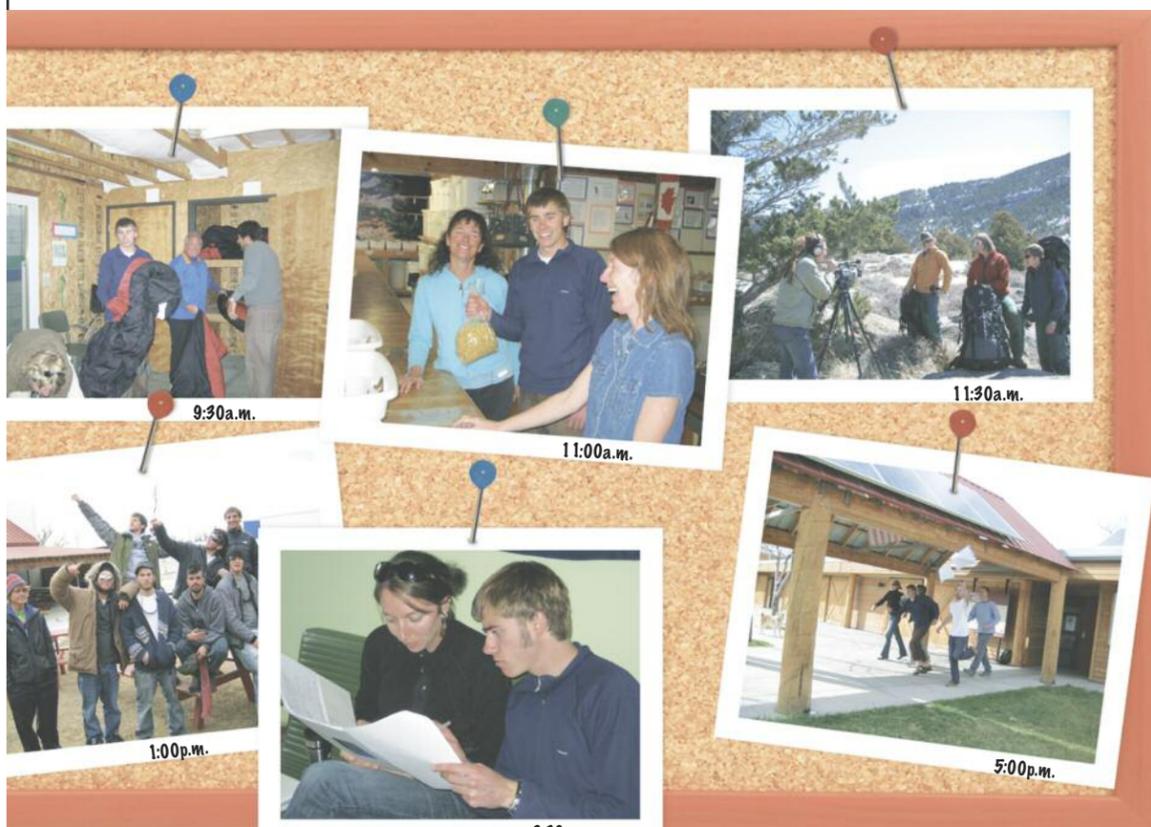
It's April, and at 7:30 a.m. my alarm wakes me up to a bluebird sky and smiling sun at NOLS' Noble Hotel where I'm staying along with other interns and students and staff from courses coming and going. I grab breakfast from the dining hall before taking my two-block walk to NOLS Rocky Mountain.

I'm welcomed at the office by office manager Glenda Brannan's bright smile and a pot of brewing coffee. As I'm checking email and glancing at my

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Meeting Maker calendar to see what the day holds, special projects manager and intern supervisor Lara McCluskey offers a warm good morning with her bike helmet still safely secured. Nearby, assistant director Kevin Bergstrom, program supervisor manager Chris Brauneis, and branch director Gary Cukjati share a laugh to start the day.

By 9 a.m., Sandy and I discuss the day's events and check in with one another on ongoing projects, all while being entertained by Sydney, one of the many dogs hanging out in the office. At 9:30 a.m. I have to interview a few students returning from the field for a new blog post I'm writing and discuss layout with Sandy. I get sidetracked by the Issue Room team: Emily Shoutis-Frank, outfitting coordinator, and Kevin McGowan, outfitting manager, as they set up for their annual yard sale of miscellaneous gear. I take this opportunity to rent a crashpad and fly-fishing rod for the weekend, for FREE! You gotta love the perks of being an intern!

At 11 a.m. I'm back at my desk to finish re-sizing pictures and uploading the blog post to the RM's site. Feeling a little hungry, I head to the Gulch to get some dehydrated fruit and garlic mix from the wonderful rations ladies, Claudia Pearson and Jane Lynn. With the employee discount it is an affordable snack. Before lunch, NOLS' video production engineer, Virginia Moore, pops in from NOLS Headquarters to work a script for the new Issue Room video, recruit cast members and go over shot layouts, lighting, and dialogue before breaking for lunch at noon.

After lunch, I continue to work on website updates and snap some pictures of instructors and students

who are coming and going preparing for the field, and later work on prep work with Virginia in the Issue Room for the next day's film shoot. We meet with Lara later in the afternoon to finalize the script and bounce around some last minute ideas. Everything is ready to go! Our discussion moves to what we have planned after work.

The day starts to wind down by 4:30 p.m., which means that a rally of people will be heading to Sinks Canyon for some climbing and hiking. As the clock strikes 5, I don't take a second to think as I bolt out the door like a marathon runner!

It is truly a fantastic opportunity working in a position for NOLS that is challenging and rewarding. Every day holds a variety of different tasks and NOLS offers a fantastic atmosphere where it's easy to mix your passion for the outdoors with interesting work. My internship has taught me tolerance for adversity and uncertainty, problem solving, project management, team building, and leadership skills. Whether your field is in video production, marketing, journalism, or outdoor education in general, there is a fit for you at one of the NOLS locations or departments. In some instances, internship positions can even lead to full-time employment.

As this article went to press, Jared became the newest member of the NOLS Bus crew, touring the country to recruit NOLS students and teach about alternative energy. Come find your place in the NOLS community! Available positions can be found online at www.nols.edu/alumni/employment.



NOLS Among the Best Places to Work!

BY JARED PANGRETIC, NOLS ROCKY MOUNTAIN INTERN

The consensus is in! In the May 2008 issue of *Outside* magazine, NOLS was ranked number 10 as a "Best Places to Work" mid-size company, defined as having between 50 and 249 employees. NOLS was one of only two nonprofits and the only educational organization on the list.

In July 2007, *Outside* teamed up with the Outdoor Industry Association and Best Companies Group to begin its first-ever nationwide search for the best places to work. The program was designed to recognize and honor employers that create a work and outdoor life balance and an environmentally friendly business process. The finalists were determined by evaluating workplace policies, philosophy, conducting extensive surveys, and employee satisfaction questionnaires. The survey and questionnaire topics included benefits, compensation, job satisfaction, environmental initiatives, and various other components that measure a well-rounded workplace.

In addition to NOLS making the list, it was great to see some of our partners and clients there with us, such as Patagonia and Google.

Although I am new to the organization, it is very evident to me that NOLS is a special place to work. With the school's backbone being outdoor education skills, leadership, and excellence in environmental stewardship, it provides a highly attractive atmosphere for fun, challenge, and learning. In the Q&A section of this issue, Lindsay Nohl, who has held various positions at NOLS over the past five years, states, "I don't think there has been one day in my five years working for NOLS that I have woken up and dreaded going to work. The most rewarding aspect of working at NOLS is I get to work at a place I believe in [and] I know that what I am doing is having an impact on student experience."

Come and see for yourself! Internship opportunities, instructor courses, and job openings are all posted at www.nols.edu.

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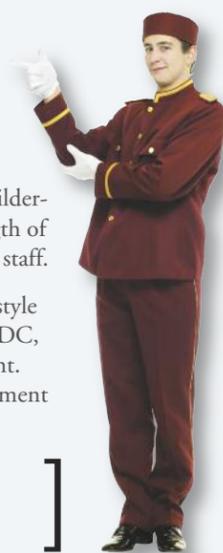
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BECAUSE EVEN HONED WILDERNESS TRAVELERS DESERVE A NICE HOTEL ROOM NOW AND THEN.



RECIPE BOX

Fresh Trout WIZNUT*Submitted by Mike Poutiatine (SSR '81)***INGREDIENTS**

2 cups cooked brown rice
 1 cup diced mixed veggies (re-hydrated ok)
 ½ cup reconstituted potato flakes
 ¼ cup thunder flakes (onion flakes re-hydrated)
 ¼ cup milk (powdered is fine)
 ¼ cup butter
 Spice to taste
 ~1 lb. cheddar cheese, sliced thin
 2 Cutthroat Trout—10-12" each, preferably swimming 20 minutes before cooking

PREPARATION

- 1) Grease a large fry pan with a thin layer of butter.
- 2) Fry the trout in the pan with spice of choice until meat comes off the bones.
- 3) Collect small dead twigs—enough to sustain a small fire on top of the pan for at least 30 minutes.
- 4) Remove fish from pan and de-bone.
- 5) Mix all ingredients EXCEPT THE TROUT AND CHEESE, in a cook pot.
- 6) Line the bottom and sides of the fry pan with one layer of cheese (should stick to the remaining butter and trout bits left from cooking the fish).
- 7) Add ½ the rice mix in a layer over the cheese.
- 8) Add the trout in a layer over the rice mix.
- 9) Add the remaining rice mix over the trout.
- 10) Finish with the remaining cheese on top.
- 11) Seal it tight with the fry pan lid.

COOKING

Set the stove on a low, low simmer. Construct a small twig fire on top of the pan lid. Rotate the pan and keep the twig fire burning for 20-60 minutes until the WizNut is golden brown and bubbling.

RECIPE TEST BY WILLY CUNNINGHAM, NOLS ALUMNI PLANNING COORDINATOR

Originally created by instructor John Whisnant in the '60s, the WizNut can take many forms, but the key, original element is inclusion of a layer of fried cheese on the bottom of the pan. While admittedly fat-heavy by today's dietary standards, the original WizNut delighted decades of calorie hungry NOLS students with its crunchy, crispy layer of fried goodness.

I substituted a single rainbow trout for the suggested native Cutthroat. I felt good about this substitution because I used a 3-weight rod and pinched-barb March Hare fly to catch this wily, non-native fish.

To cut back on the fat, I deleted the butter as there was ample grease with the cheese.

Technique-wise, I used a stone the same height as the stove to offset the burner flame and aid in rotating the pan while baking.

The Outcome

Our staff thought this beautiful and aromatic dish was very good and could be supplemented with a variety of extra spices (salt, pepper, garlic powder, etc.) to personalize taste. As one delighted taste-tester said, "I'd eat it in the frontcountry!"

Got a great backcountry recipe? Send it to leader@nols.edu along with your name, NOLS course, and where the recipe was created. If your recipe is chosen, you'll get a copy of the *NOLS Cookery*!

"The WIZNUT appeared in 1966 as a miracle answer to our desperate pleas for cheesy crunch."

—FORMER INSTRUCTOR JOHN WHISNANT (INVENTOR OF THE ORIGINAL WIZNUT)



Step 5: Mix all ingredients (except the trout and cheese!) in a cook pot.
 Step 6: Line the fry pan with a layer of cheese.



Step 7: Layer cheese, rice mix, and trout, filling the fry pan and finishing with cheese on top.



Recipe Box recipe tester Willy Cunningham cooks his WizNut on a low simmer combined with a twiggy fire. Cook until the WizNut is golden and bubbling.

GEAR ROOM

Get Dehydrated: Making Your Food Last

BY LAUREN WETHERBEE, NOLS ALUMNI INTERN

With the summer growing season in full swing, you might be wondering what to do with all the produce piling up in your kitchen. We got an email from NOLS alum Josh Goodman looking for more information on food dehydrators. To get the inside scoop, we talked to Jaret Slipp, NOLS Yukon director and dehydrating guru, and Claudia Pearson, fearless RM rations manager. With their input and some good old-fashioned research, we've got answers to Josh's questions.



I've been considering purchasing a food dehydrator. Do these things really work?

Definitely. They blow warm air over food, slowly drying it out. The same idea can be achieved in an oven or even in a solar food dehydrator. Remember that dehydrating is not a speedy activity—what takes several minutes to re-hydrate might take several hours to dehydrate, so patience (and a good timer) is essential.

Does it make more sense just to buy dehydrated food and jerky and avoid the trouble?

Claudia stresses that it really depends on what and how much you want to dehydrate. Some easily found dried items (like apricots or cranberries) may be worth the extra cost to avoid time spent making them yourself. But if you've got the time and the interest, dehydrating at home is a great, inexpensive way to make your own backcountry snacks.

Got any tips on what to look for when purchasing a dehydrator?

Both Jaret and Claudia agree that the number of trays is key. For personal use, Jaret says that 5-6 trays are sufficient and he recommends you check out Nesco, Ronco, and Excalibur brands (all available online). Feeling adventurous? Search for a solar food dehydrator on www.appropedia.org—Chris' Solar Food Dehydrator page has tons of great info on making your own solar dehydrator.

Go forth, dehydrate, and enjoy the abundance of your summer garden all year and in the backcountry.

Got a great new piece of gear that you'd like to tell other NOLS alumni about? Write to leader@nols.edu and share your gear thoughts, questions and opinions. If it ends up in print, we'll hook you up with a spiffy NOLS t-shirt or hat.

FIELD NOTES

Relief Medic Program: Backcountry Medicine Helping Rural Communities

BY LAUREN WETHERBEE, NOLS ALUMNI INTERN

WMI instructor Justin Padgett didn't go to Ecuador with the intention of starting a rural medical care program. In the course of his travels, though, he realized the need for such a program in many rural communities that have little, if any, medical care. In 2005, working with the government and CEMO-PLAF (*Centro Médico de Orientación y Planificación Familiar*), an Ecuadorian nongovernment organization, Justin, who taught the country's first WFR course in 2001 and founded Landmark Learning, WMI's largest affiliate, organized the first trip of what would become the Relief Medic Program.

The Relief Medic Program provides medical care in remote Ecuadorian villages, some above 12,000 feet in the Andes and some located along the Rio Nabo and accessible only by dugout canoe.

To work with the program, participants must have a Wilderness First Responder certification or higher and a willingness to help. The 14-day program begins with four days of training in which participants learn skills

specific to what they will see working in rural communities in a developing country. Alejandro Lazzati, a WMI instructor who has been involved with the program since its inception, says that most of what they do is basic health with the occasional "wild and weird cases."

While serving the local communities, participants will gain clinical experiences in wilderness medicine. "I really believe that it's a great opportunity for people to apply their wilderness medicine training to real life situations. It's a great combination of emergency medicine and adventure travel," says Justin. "It's the perfect way to put WMI training to use in a real and meaningful way."

"I really believe that it's a great opportunity for people to apply their wilderness medicine training to real life situations. It's a great combination of emergency medicine and adventure travel."



Participants in Landmark Learning's Relief Medic Program provide medical care in remote Ecuadorian villages. Landmark Learning is a partner of the Wilderness Medical Institute of NOLS.

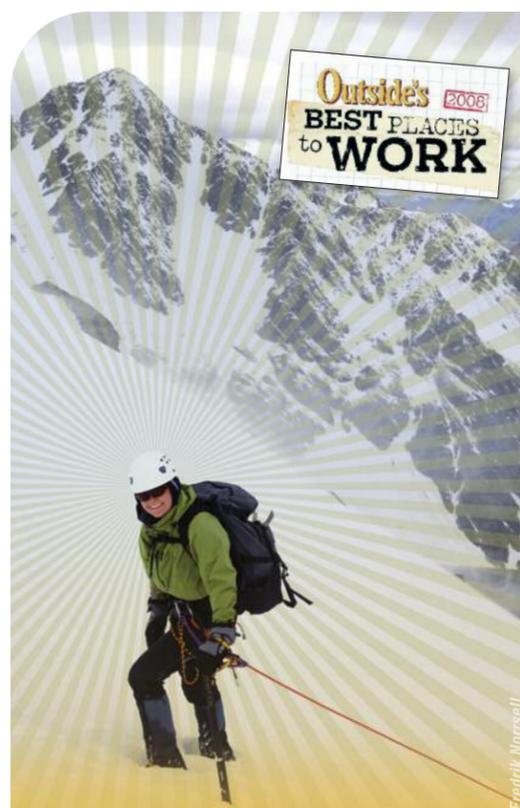
This year's trip includes WMI grads and WMI instructor Fiona McColley, who is being trained to lead future programs. Her participation in the Relief Medic trip two years ago introduced Fiona to WMI. She

took her WMI instructor course in 2007 and has been teaching courses through Landmark Learning since. "It's awesome to be able to see my students in real-life situations; to see how much their skills improve," she said.

WMI grad Craig Samples is also participating in an upcoming trip. Certified as

an EMT after his 2005 retirement, Craig took WMI's Wilderness Upgrade for Medical Professionals to be prepared to provide medical care in primitive conditions, but he discovered that finding a way to practice his new skills was difficult. Craig hopes that this trip will allow him to build on his WMI training. "[It will] not only teach me new techniques, but also give me a chance to put them, and my previous training, into practice," he said.

For more information on the Relief Medic Program and WMI courses available through Landmark Learning, check out <http://landmarklearning.org>.



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GRADS FROM THE '70s

Beatrice Van Horne, MG 06/01/70, SIC 05/19/71
After five years as the wildlife research program leader for the U.S. Forest Service, Beatrice is now the Ecosystem Program Coordinator for the U.S. Geological Survey. She is married to John Wiens and has two daughters, ages 17 and 22, both NOLS grads.

Jeff Biddy, FSR1 09/01/74, GTC 12/27/75

Jeff lives and works in the Tacoma, Wash., area as a registered nurse in the Emergency Department. He likes to enjoy all the PNW has to offer: skiing in the winter, camping and hiking in the summer.

GRADS FROM THE '80s

David Devore, AKW 07/15/86

David sells handheld GPS and topographic mapping software. He and his wife just returned from a two-week sea kayaking expedition in the Exumas. This summer, he will compete in the 635-mile Newport to Bermuda sailing race aboard the J44, *Honahlee*.

GRADS FROM THE '90s

Kathleen White, AKW1 06/22/91

New resident of northern Vermont looking to explore the state and neighboring Adirondack peaks. Give her a shout if you're out there hiking: kwhite1@babson.edu.

Jon Rempe, SIC 08/05/93

Jon has been working at YMCA Camp Minikani in Wisconsin for the past six years and is now the Senior Program Director. He met his wife at Minikani and on April 10 they had a baby boy.

Betsy Dalbeck, WSA 07/10/95, BRH1 07/24/95

Betsy is introducing her nature-loving 8-year-old son, Benji, to NOLS through the Salmon River Family Rafting trip this summer. She attended the Boston area

reunion this spring and is nearing the ten-year mark since founding her consulting firm, Fresh Tracks, Inc., which combines her change management experience with wilderness leadership skills!

Wachuka Gitahi, NOEP 08/98

JAMBO! to all the alumni of NOLS-NOEP, Kenya of the class of '98. Wachuka is still residing in Kenya and can be reached via email: wagitahi@yahoo.com.

Katherine Esther Steuart, FSB 09/27/98 and David Eugene Overton PWS 06/10/96, BCS2 10/18/03

Katherine and David were married in Montego Bay, Jamaica in April 2007. Although they went on different NOLS courses, they shared many of the same instructors—Jon Kempsey and Shari Kearney. They have very fond memories of their NOLS experiences, particularly sailing Drascombs through the Sea of Cortez. The couple resides in Tacoma and are expecting their first child soon.

Gabriela Eiris, WMT 07/22/99

Gabriela is a biologist studying the ecology of the Giant White-tailed Rat, a native species of North Queensland, Australia. She spends quite a bit of time trapping rats in the rainforest and savanna woodlands.

GRADS FROM THE '00s

Kathryn Altier, SAKR 06/07/02

Kathryn has married, had a beautiful baby girl, and is working as a stay-at-home mamma. Her married name is Atkinson, and she and her husband live in Canton, NY. Her e-mail is kathrynatkinson84@yahoo.com.

Lauren Sayre, ADO1 06/23/98, FSW 09/12/03, HBP1 05/04/05

Lauren graduated college a year and a half ago and then traveled Europe. Last winter she was a snowboard bum at Mammoth. She's in Costa Rica traveling for five weeks and then headed to Canada to lead whitewater canoe trips for the sixth summer in a row.

Deborah Capozzi, BRE 07/08/04

Debbie will compete on the US Sailing Team at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. She and her teammates, Sally Barkow and Carrie Howe, are currently ranked second in the world in the Yngling class. For more information, updates on their progress, and sponsorship opportunities, visit their website at www.team7sailing.com

Aislinn Doyle, BSC1 01/06/06

Aislinn will graduate in June with a masters in education from Harvard. After graduation she'll volunteer for

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two years in the Dominican Republic, where she will be working with youth in the arts.

Brittany Kurtz, ISS 06/10/06

Brittany graduated in December from Green Mountain College in Vermont and is planning to join the Peace Corps.

Abdul Samad Khan, OECW 06/18/07

During a recent leadership development program, "Leadership Adventures," for one of his corporate clients in Pakistan, Abdul introduced the concept of LNT. For this purpose, seven volunteers were invited and each was assigned one LNT principal. Their responsibility was to ensure compliance of their respective LNT principal throughout the program in the Himalayas.

MARRIAGES

Lalasa Jacks, WNH 06/26/03

Lalasa and Somendra Singh were married in New Delhi, India on January 9, 2008. A reception was held in Wisconsin in March. The new couple will live in London, England.

Rachel Drayer, ICS 04/02/05, and Josh McNary, NCM 07/19/00, SIC 05/02/02, both current NOLS Rocky Mountain employees

Rachel and Josh were married April 12 in Taos, NM in a small wedding of family and close friends. Their officiant was John Abel, Rachel's mentor on the climbing section of her IC, as well as a co-instructor and good friend of both.

Leonidas (Polk) Deters, SSW 01/21/93, RIC 04/29/98, former instructor

Polk married Sarah Ashworth on April 19 in Asheville, North Carolina.

Epsie Nolan, WSW 07/11/04

Epsie and Miller Coleman were married May 3, 2008 in Atlanta, GA.

Sarah Annarella, FSR2 09/09/93, ICS 04/13/99, and Steven Brutger, JSPM2 01/25/01, AKIC 05/13/02, both current NOLS employees

Steven and Sarah were married on May 31, 2008 in Moran, WY. Nate Furman (AKIC 5/13/02) officiated.

NEW ADDITIONS

Bradley Martin, RICU 04/26/00 and Kristen Martin

Bradley and Kristen Martin are now proud parents of twins. Braeden Rane Martin and Kaia Rose Martin were both born on their brother Bradley's birthday in April (a very unique birthday present for him). Mom and twins are home and doing great! Brother Bradley now has a new understanding of EB.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Randolph Britt, II, WSB1 04/08/00

Randy passed away on Tuesday, April 8, 2008. Randy loved the outdoors. A man of many interests, he loved to ski, kayak, bike, sail, fish, hunt, and backpack. He also enjoyed playing basketball, cooking, reading, traveling, meteorology, and spending time with family and friends. Services were held near Randy's farm in California.

James Karpinos, AKW 06/13/02

James, 22, a student at UNC Asheville, was killed April 26, 2008 in a hiking accident. He was an employee in the UNC-Asheville Outdoor Program where he was active as a trip leader and staff trainer. Their caving program owes so much to James for his passion and competence. Services were held on Saturday, May 3, 2008 in Chapel Hill.

Garrett Maguire, AAU1 03/11/07

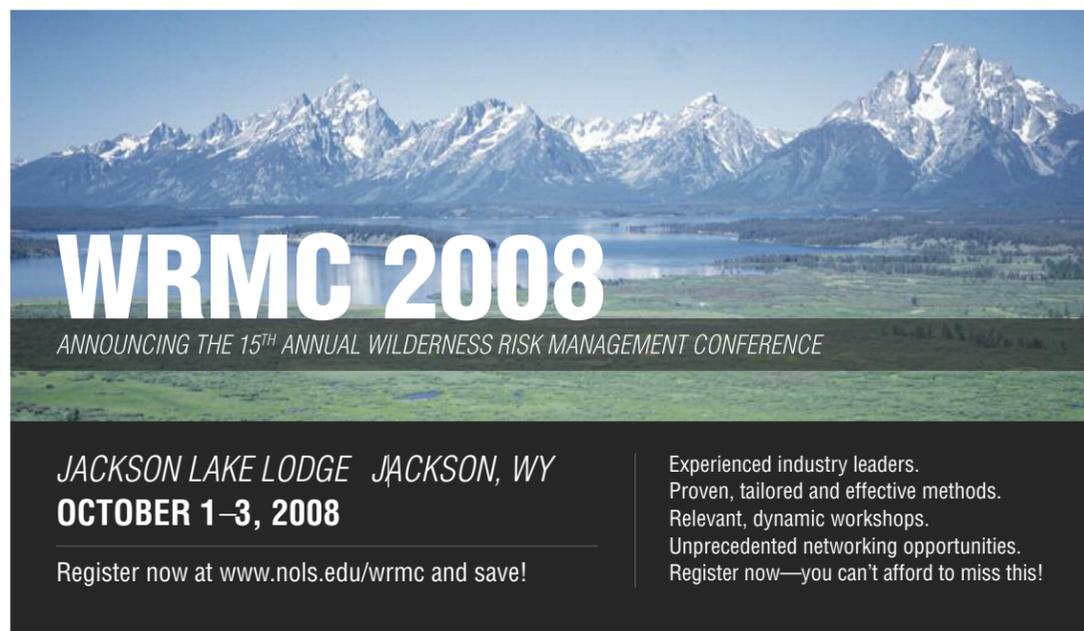
Garrett, 21, died Sunday, April 27, 2008 in Ashburnham, MA. He was an avid sportsman, hunting and fishing the waters and woods from New England to Alaska. Services were held on Saturday, May 3, 2008 in Gardner, MA.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NOLS ALASKA FOR 25 SUCCESSFUL YEARS ON THE FARM!

Dedicated in the summer of 1983, the NOLS Alaska farm has seen more than 10,300 grads and 650 instructors come through its doors, making it our second largest branch. Although NOLS first ran courses in Alaska in 1971, it was 12 years before the farm came along, creating a permanent base for NOLS operations in Alaska.

Funded by NOLS' first capital campaign, the farm is set on 40 beautiful acres in the historic Matanuska Valley outside Palmer. From this idyllic (and central) location, which boasts breathtaking views of the Talkeetna and Chugach mountains, students set off on backpacking, mountaineering, and sea kayaking courses, exploring the wilds of this vast land.

While the overwhelming natural beauty of Alaska makes a course there unforgettable, Don Ford, director of the branch since 1989, is quick to attribute much of NOLS Alaska's success to hardworking staff, instructors, and their state of the art facility. It is, after all, the whole package that has allowed NOLS Alaska to become an integral and permanent part of the local community as they welcome new students in ever greater numbers season after season. Thanks NOLS Alaska! And here's to the next 25!



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Support Expedition 2013 With a Gift to the NOLS Annual Fund

You know that a successful expedition takes the commitment and investment of all of its members. Well, with the release of our new strategic plan, the NOLS family is embarking on a new expedition—and we'd love for you to come along!

Aptly named Expedition 2013, the strategic plan is essentially a map for NOLS' route over the next five years. It reflects both where we've been and where we hope to go. Check it out for yourself at www.nols.edu/strategic_plan to see which goals resonate for you. Maybe it's our renewed commitment to protecting the school's wilderness classrooms or our dedication to making the NOLS experience possible for more students than ever before—whatever it is that excites you about our shared journey, surf over to www.nols.edu/donate to back up your excitement with a gift (of any size!) to the NOLS Annual Fund.

Did you know Annual Fund gifts help make scholarships possible for deserving students? And they help to combat significant threats facing our pristine classrooms. Whether you're fresh off your course or recalling it fondly from many years out, these are surely goals you can appreciate.

So step up and become an active member of Expedition 2013 with a gift to the NOLS Annual Fund today!

ALUMNI HAPPENINGS**TRIPS**

A month may be too much to ask from the boss, so the NOLS Alumni office offers shorter backcountry trips that are specifically designed for our alumni. We encourage our grads to bring family and friends along on these week-long expeditions to reconnect with the school and introduce others to their NOLS experience. These trips have the same top-quality instructors, but the atmosphere is a little more relaxed. And while these aren't guided trips, we do cater a bit more to the desires and maturity levels of our participants. Customized trips are also available. Call us to design your dream adventure: 1-800-710-NOLS ext. 2274.

Watch the NOLS alumni website, www.nols.edu/alumni/trips, for updated schedules and application information.



Rich Brame



Josh Beckner



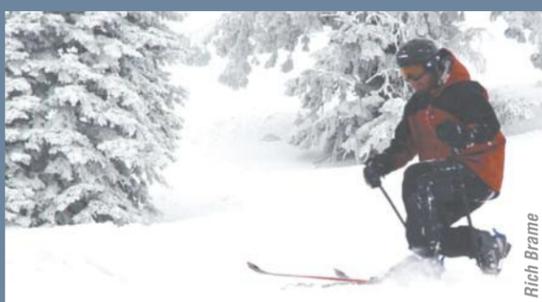
NOLS Alumni Activities



Rich Brame



Rich Brame



Rich Brame

Gannett Peak Climb (Alumni only)

Dates: July 28–August 7, 2008 | Cost: \$2,200

Hidden deep in the Wind River Range, above jumbled moraine and glacial ice, Gannett Peak is Wyoming's highest peak. Reaching this remote 13,804-foot summit requires an approach of several days, followed by the climb itself. You'll travel on snow and ice, cross Dinwoody Glacier and work up the rock to the summit. This expedition is a perfect opportunity to put your NOLS camping and travel skills back to work and it's a great chance to polish your mountaineering techniques. Horses will pack in the climbing gear and much of your food. Bring your camera—the vista from the "Top of Wyoming" is beyond compare.

Wind River Service Trip

Dates: August 4–10, 2008 | Cost: \$800

NOLS connects people to the land in some of the most amazing wild places on the globe. This trip is a chance to give back to our wildlands—we'll spend a good piece of this seven-day trip doing service work in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains. We'll build trails and rehab campsites all the while enjoying the camaraderie of other grads. We'll also work in some free time to get re-acquainted with the Winds, or a fly rod, or even a non-technical peak. Bring your work gloves and a camera.

This trip is a collaboration between the Student Conservation Association, U.S. Forest Service, and NOLS.

Hiking Italy's Dolomites

Dates: September 12–19, 2008 | Cost: \$2,475

We're offering a new hut-to-hut (*rifugio*) hiking trip in Italy's Dolomite region of the Alps. Enjoy stunning scenery, comfortable hut lodging, regional cuisine and a fantastic cultural experience.

Maine Sea Kayaking

Dates: September 21–27, 2008 | Cost: \$1,200

We're planning a seven-day alumni paddling trip among Maine's marvelous coastal islands. Here's your chance to learn or polish your sea kayaking skills on Maine's picture-perfect coast. It may be only 267 miles from Boston, but it's worlds apart.

Telemark & Avalanche Training in the Tetons

Dates: February 22–27, 2009 | Cost: \$1,175

Do you want to learn to telemark ski, improve your tele turns, ramp up your snowboard skills, or gain avalanche awareness? Well, here's your chance to spend 6 days at NOLS Teton Valley enjoying a mix of lift-assisted skiing and some of the best winter backcountry terrain in the United States!

The Tetons in winter are home to some of the finest powder and most gorgeous mountain scenery that exists. You'll be introduced to winter travel techniques while practicing your turns at the Grand Targhee ski area and learning avalanche skills and touring in the Tetons. Education and recreation—it's the perfect combination.

It's not too soon to plan your 2009 winter getaway! Consider sailing with NOLS along the coast of Baja Mexico (2/28–3/7) or climbing at Cochise Stronghold in Arizona (2/28–3/5). Keep an eye on www.nols.edu/alumni for details!

REUNIONS

We organize reunions for grads, friends, families, and prospective students to mix, mingle, and network. Join us for inspiring adventure presentations by NOLS grads, great snacks, raffles, and good ol' NOLS camaraderie. We're teeing up fall reunions in Memphis; New York City; Burlington, Vermont; Portland, Oregon; Philadelphia; St. Louis; Minneapolis; Chicago; and Jackson, Wyoming. See www.nols.edu/alumni/reunions for more information and to RSVP.



Brian Fabel

BRANCH NOTES

NOLS TETON VALLEY

- About sixty 14- and 15-year-old Adventure Course students will participate in a University of Utah research project this summer on transference of expedition behavior into the frontcountry.
- We planted six new trees on our branch property this year. The ongoing generosity of a grad family is underwriting our growing “forest.”
- We’re constructing our version of a ramada—a shaded outdoor space—for use as a classroom, eating space, and packing area.

NOLS YUKON



Traditional Inuit Village

- Besides full catalog courses in Canada’s North, we’re partnering with Yukon College here in Whitehorse to offer a special leadership and outdoor skills course to Japan’s Waseda University. Also, we’re in the planning stages of a risk management training with Arctic College on Baffin Island.
- We’re offering a canoe-based Instructor Course in the Yukon again this summer.
- The Donner Foundation and other alumni donations are generously funding eleven Yukon and First Nations students this year.
- Our Baffin Island Canoe/Backpacking course will spend a weeklong cultural section in the Inuit community of Kimmirut.

NOLS SOUTHWEST

- NOLS Southwest is bringing more lightweight gear into our inventory and program—semester independent student group expeditions are heading out with packs less than 40 pounds.
- As part of the NOLS sustainability initiative, we’re increasing composting and recycling. We’re also using low-flow water fixtures and solar batch water heaters. A proposal for full solar operations is also in the works.

NOLS ROCKY MOUNTAIN

- Our first Scandinavian sea kayaking course started in June.
- We’ve expanded the Noble Hotel store—snacks, toiletries, and NOLS apparel are available for purchase.
- We’re experimenting with solar satellite phone chargers for the field.
- Our new, grant-funded solar set up is getting an interpretive update in the form of an interactive display of daily, weekly, and yearly solar electricity generation.
- Thanks to the efforts of the Deuter company, we’re using two new lightweight backpacks this summer. Both roomy models weigh less than five pounds empty.
- Our food room, the Gulch, recently received a facelift in the form of a wall-sized mural of Wyoming’s Cirque of the Towers. This beautiful painting by artist Jon Cox includes four hidden pictures—no one has found all four yet.

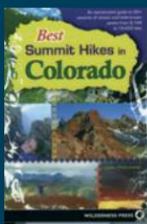
BOOK REVIEW

Guidebooks by NOLS Grads: Seeking Some of the Best Hiking and Paddling Across the Nation

BY MEREDITH HAAS, NOLS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

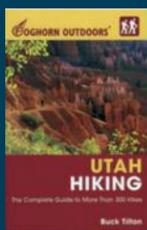
Here we’ve highlighted several guidebooks from NOLS graduates who have ventured across the country to share their knowledge on some of the best places to hike and paddle in the nation. From Utah and Colorado to the Grand Canyon and Florida Keys, readers will discover where to go, whether it’s for a short day trip or extended backcountry expedition, and will benefit from the detailed descriptions and tips provided by folks who share the NOLS enthusiasm and respect for outdoor adventure.

Best Summit Hikes in Colorado – James Dziejynski, *Wind River Mountaineering ‘98*



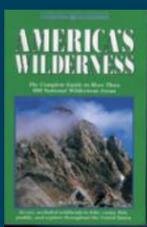
A guide to more than 50 ascents of classic and little-known peaks from 8,144 to 14,433 feet, *Summit Hikes* highlights some of the best routes the Colorado Rocky Mountains has to offer. Learn to find sights like fossilized seashells more than two miles above sea level with detailed topographic maps, GPS waypoints, and elevation profiles. Difficulty and class ratings, optional routes for further exploration, and fascinating trivia and history are included right along with hiking essentials and ethics, such as the classic Leave No Trace principles. *Published by Wilderness Press, © 2007, 9x6, 339pp, \$17.95.*

Utah Hiking: A Complete Guide to More Than 300 Hikes – Buck Tilton, *WMI Co-founder and Instructor*



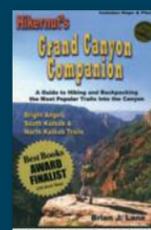
Whether you’re in search of kid-friendly trails, day hikes, or week-long backcountry treks, you’ll find what you’re looking for in Buck Tilton’s *Utah Hiking* guide, which provides information on more than 300 hikes from Zion to Bryce, through the Uinta Mountains. Trail descriptions include difficulty ratings, scenic beauty, and best hikes, in addition to planning details such as roundtrip distance and hiking time, best seasons, park fees, and contact information for each hike. This book offers reliable information on each location and activity, while emphasizing low-impact enjoyment for anyone wishing to venture into some of Utah’s most breathtaking places. *Published by Avalon Travel Publishing, © 2005, 8.5x5.5, 228pp, \$16.95.*

America’s Wilderness: The Complete Guide to More Than 600 National Wilderness Areas – Buck Tilton



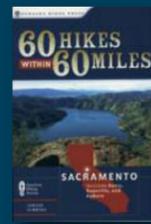
Highlighting more than 600 National Wilderness Areas across the country, *America’s Wilderness* provides information on when to go, how to get there, what permits and maps you’ll need, who to contact for more details, and other essential tidbits including where to backpack, bird-watch, camp, canoe, fish, hike, horsepack, kayak, observe wildlife, photograph the best natural scenery, raft in white-water rapids, and rock climb, as well as guidelines on how to explore the Great Outdoors without leaving a trace. *Published by Foghorn Press, © 1996, 8.5x5.5, 591pp, \$19.95.*

Hikernut’s Grand Canyon Companion: A Guide to Hiking and Backpacking the Most Popular Trails Into the Canyon – Brian J. Lane, *Wilderness First Aid ‘99*



As a National Best Books Awards finalist in 2007 and chosen by the Benjamin Franklin Awards in 2008, *Hikernut’s Grand Canyon Companion* is written especially for the first-time hiker or backpacker wanting to explore the Grand Canyon. It includes information on what equipment to bring, permit requirements and how to apply, rules and restrictions, trail descriptions, and other tips geared toward the most popular, easily accessible, and maintained trails into the Canyon. Full-colored maps and over 50 photos, along with detailed trail descriptions with length, time, and difficulty are also included. *Published by A Sense of Nature, © 2007, 8.5x5.5, 90pp, \$9.95*

60 Hikes Within 60 Miles: Sacramento – Jordan Summers, *Outdoor Educator Course ‘90 & Wilderness First Aid ‘07*



For anyone within the Sacramento area who has limited time and wants to find good hiking within an hour’s drive of this great city, Jordan Summers, a local hiking enthusiast, offers the best day hikes from the Foothills, Mother Lode, and Delta regions. Quick and easy assessments of each trail are provided along with information pertaining to facilities, trail traffic, best times to go, scenic views, and trail history, in addition to driving distances and directions to trailheads, GPS-based trail maps, and elevation profiles. *Published by Menasha Ridge Press, © 2008, 9x6, 324pp, \$17.95*

Florida Keys Paddling Atlas – Bill Burnham, *Yukon Outdoor Educator Backpacking ‘03*, and *Mary Burnham*



This detailed color atlas of the Florida Keys is specifically for paddlers and other small craft water enthusiasts. Custom-made charts highlight paddle-friendly marinas, hidden waterways, bird-watching sites, as well as fishing and surf spots. Accompanying field notes provide route-finding information, including distances and suggested routes, paddling highlights, cautions, natural history, flora and fauna, and points of interest to guide water travelers on their own excursions and adventures. An extensive appendix includes information on kayak launches, outfitters, guides, and rentals. *Published by Globe Pequot Press, © 2007, 11x8.5, 128pp, \$34.95*

BELAY OFF

Two years ago we featured a story by NOLS grad Tobey Ritz who, 28 years after his first NOLS course, revisited an old dream: to become a NOLS instructor. After a recommended Outdoor Educator course to refresh his field experience, Tobey applied for his NOLS Instructor Course (IC) and was accepted in the summer of 2006. Serendipitously, as Tobey embarked on his first course as an instructor last summer, his 17-year-old son, Ethan, was about to experience NOLS for the first time as well—at the same age Tobey was when he took his first course so many years ago. Here is...the rest of Tobey's story:

Coming Full Circle: Passing on the Gift of Wilderness

BY TOBEY RITZ, NOLS INSTRUCTOR

I never would have guessed I'd be teaching my first NOLS course while my son, Ethan, was having a first NOLS experience of his own. My brother Andy and I drove Ethan to the airport on a Saturday morning. He was quiet, sleeping on and off. I wondered what he was thinking. We walked with him as far as we could to security and gave him a quick hug goodbye. After passing through, just before he was completely out of sight, he turned slightly back, waved, and disappeared from view. I had tucked a letter with some last minute words of wisdom in his pack, but don't know, to this day, if he read it. I hoped he would have the same life changing experience as I had at 17, developing a love for wilderness that won't ever fade.

I exposed my three children to nature through hiking, camping, and fishing vacations in the Catskills, Maine, and Vermont, much like my father did with me. Coming from the crowded Northeast, I am sure Ethan will be awed by the wide-open spaces he will see in Alaska and know he will be challenged. When he was 9, we climbed Mt. Mansfield in Vermont. It's hard for me to believe the small boy who stopped to look at frogs in a pond with wonder is now a teenager rapidly becoming his own man. Time goes by so unbelievably fast, melting away like those accelerated fast forward scenes in nature documentaries of how a flower grows and opens.

Later that week, I shifted back to fulfilling my own dream, teaching my first NOLS course. Excited, a little anxious, but confident in my abilities, I expected to learn a lot. Going through my gear, my thoughts bounced back and forth between my preparations and wondering about Ethan. What was he feeling, seeing, and thinking now?

Days later, I arrive in Salmon, Idaho, for my course, the backpacking section of a combined backpacking/

rafting course. I help students go through their gear, discussing what to bring and leave behind. The students, all around my son's age, remind me of him. As a parent, I know how much I'm counting on my son's instructors to guide him safely through the decisions he will have to make. I'm holding myself to that same high standard of helping my students prepare on their first day, trying hard to get to know each student and make connections so I can understand what each needs to help them grow in ways I hope Ethan is growing.

Halfway through the course, camped at Everson Lake in the Lemhis, we are getting re-rationed and have some down time. Walking around the edge of the lake, I take in a small waterfall cascading from the rocky scree ledges above, patches of snow, and a sea of mountain bluebell flowers. The turquoise water of the lake and the surrounding steep cliffs with their narrow jagged peaks fill me with awe and reverence for the fragile beauty of our planet. My thoughts turn to Ethan, halfway through his own expedition.

On the hardest day of my course, our route takes us twelve miles, much of it off trail, over three passes, with steep, rugged scree, deadfall, and much elevation gain and loss. It's late afternoon, the students in my group are beginning to tire mentally and physically. I talk with them about challenge and adversity, how part of any NOLS course is pushing through your comfort zone and strengthening your mind by passing through that place and learning how to stay positive, holding together even when you feel exhausted. After a break we turn and look at our route. It is a long way, a rugged and deep tree-lined valley. No one really feels like pushing on the last few miles, but we do, the students determined to make it to the planned campsite. We take off our packs in relief

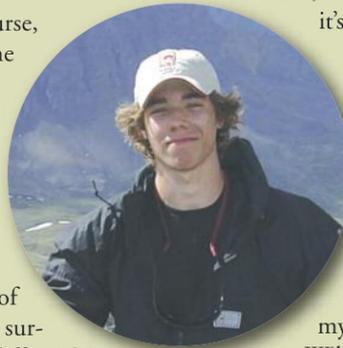
at the end of the day. This group of tired students has just learned one of the most valuable lessons of the course—that they are capable of going beyond what they had thought was possible. It's also one of the most transferable, one they can apply in all areas of their lives going forward whenever the going is tough. I've also just experienced what had driven me to become a NOLS instructor, to have a small part in teaching such a lesson. As always, my thoughts are never far from Ethan, knowing he will have this same kind of hard challenging day in Alaska, maybe even harder.

The last day is a transition day for the students to the rafting section on the Salmon River. Wishing I could go, I wave goodbye as the vans pull away. The sun is bright, hot, and warms me through to my soul. Maybe it's a deep feeling of accomplishment mixed in that warms me too. Thinking of my father, my son, and my students, I realize how we are just temporary forms that our passions and dreams pass through from one generation to the next. It's sweet, sad, and beautiful all at the same time. Beginnings and endings. My thoughts turn to my wife and kids—to Michelle, who supports me in my adventuring, to Claire (Little Bear), and to Willy. Looking at the moon that night over Salmon, I think of Ethan in a wild Alaska looking at it too and wish him well.

Finally, after I'd returned home we got THE CALL, one every parent anxiously awaits when they have not spoken to a son or daughter for thirty days. Ethan sounded excited, tired, and happy all at the same time. He asked if pizza always tasted so good after weeks in the field. He told us of friends he had made and wanted to stay one more day. Yes, he said, it was awesome and hard and for 16 days straight they had constant rain and cold, but still it was a great experience. His rain pants and snow creek jacket were the best things ever out there (I love mine too). He had been cold and sometimes wet; he had seen beautiful wide open country, caribou, and a grizzly bear. Reading his evaluation later, I was happy and proud. It started with "Ethan excelled in this course..."

Just a few days ago, looking at a picture of the San Gabriel Mountains near Claremont, California, where he is going to college this fall, he said, "You know, I'm addicted to this stuff now." Everything I had hoped for him to receive from his NOLS course, he did. The same gifts I had received 32 years ago.

Photos below: NOLS instructor Tobey Ritz (top) and his son Ethan (bottom) shared firsts on NOLS courses last summer.



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