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Cliff Diving to dive or not to dive?



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Four Deserts SAHARA RACE

by Clare Morin

At the end of the fourth stage of the Sahara Race 2014, Ian Rosenberger sits in the Cybertent and finishes his blog. The 32-year-old has been contemplating the next day's infamous Long March, an 86.3-kilometer fifth stage through the desert. He signs off with the words, "Here's to what's possible."

The 32-year-old from Pittsburgh is here in Jordan to compete in the six-stage, 250-kilometer self-supported footrace organized by the 4 Deserts Race Series. The series spans the Sahara Race (Jordan,) Gobi March (China,) Atacama Crossing (Chile) and The Last Desert (Antarctica.) For the past eight years The Sahara Race has been held in Egypt, but this year it has moved to Jordan—offering 191 competitors a rare opportunity to race through four desert regions and finish in the ancient city of Petra.

It is Rosenberger's first attempt at a 4 Deserts race, and he's here as part of the two-man Team Tassy, named after the charity he founded in the Port-au-Prince area of Haiti. So far, they have raised \$50,000 and Rosenberger says it's thinking about the families who will benefit from the funding that is powering him forwards.



photos by www.4deserts.com / Wouter Kingma

"We look at races like this as a microphone," says the American as we catch up with him for an interview in The Hidden Canyon campsite in the Wadi Rum desert. He set up the charity after visiting Haiti after the devastating earthquake of 2010.

"I met a kid named Tassy who was dying of a tumour. Some friends and I raised money for him to go to the States and have an operation. After the operation, we took him back to Haiti and we decided to stick with him until the poor don't need us anymore."

Rosenberger also set up Thread LLC, an ingenious business that "turns trash into money" by way of converting bottles from Haiti into raw materials and fabric. Social responsibility is literally woven into the heart of this business, which includes a center in Port-au-Prince that places people into jobs. Despite only being 32, Rosenberger is becoming an award-winning social entrepreneur and has spoken about Thread and Team Tassy for TEDx and One Young World; he even got on the reality show Survivor Palau in 2005.

Then last year his friend, Christopher Murrer, a 30-year-old lawyer living in Washington D.C., called and said he wanted to embark on the Sahara Race as a means to generate funds for the charity. So I said, "If I come with you do you think we can raise more money?"

Named by TIME magazine as one of the world's top ten endurance race series, 4 Deserts races challenge people to go beyond the very limits of their physical and mental endurance. Competitors have to carry all of their food and supplies during the seven days, and are only given water and a place to sleep in a tent every night along the way.



By Day Three, Rosenberger is in awe of the local Bedouin life that the race offers a glimpse into. "The scenery is still incredible," he blogs. "We're out of the Wadi Rum desert now, and today passed through a two mile salt flat with, wait for it, a camel racing track. I was about five minutes behind a guy who actually watched a camel being born, which is just absurd, because all this time Chris and I were convinced that they were all Audio-Animatronic robots. They're everywhere. Baby camels are obscenely cute, even if I only had a few seconds to catch a glimpse."

He writes that he is also coming to realize how important the human connections are that form on these races. "It's incredible how our spirits rise and fall together," he writes. "It really is one of the best parts of the experience. After each day, we cross the finish line we all collapse into our side of the tent and talk through the day together. The tents are all Bedouin style and sleep maybe 25 folks, separated into groups of eight each, so we get some time together."

But by Day Five, the time has arrived for the highly anticipated 86.3-kilometer stage, The Long March on the Turkish Road. By this point, competitors have already done the equivalent of four back-to-back marathons. The day's route would feature a deep canyon "straight out of Indiana Jones," then climbing up 2,100 feet to the ridge, the old Turkish Road that would lead them to Petra.

By the time he had completed the arduous stage, nearly 18 hours later, the American's blog has become electric. He has pushed through one of the biggest challenges of his life and has come out the other side. "This is my first long race, but it won't be my last



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(sorry Mom)," he informs his captive audience back home. "I can see, despite the ridiculous pain and dirt and emotions, why [these races] are so addicting."

"In addition to the incredible people you meet from all over the globe who have done too many amazing things to count (this race has an Olympian, North and South Pole reachers, and Everest marathoners), it's the 56-mile days that stretch your body and your spirit in a way unlike anything else I have ever done.

"It's touching a limit that reminds you that we can push ourselves further than we ever thought possible, and that absolutely nothing is impossible together. It's reaching the top of a mountain after a two-hour climb with new friends utterly exhausted with another seven hours to go, looking west across the holy land as the sun sets in the desert, imagining home and Haiti thousands of miles after that and feeling that, despite the distance, you've never felt closer to both."

"When I train in Haiti, everybody always yells after me: 'Who are you running from?' Until tonight and this week and your incredible comments, vibes, and donations, I've never had an answer. But when I get back to Port-au-Prince to put the hard earned dollars of every one of our donors to work, now I know what I'll say: I'm not running from anybody. I'm running to you."



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To Dive or Not to Dive?

by Craig Punfield

Standing on the edge of a 28-meter high platform, you've done all you can. The weeks of training are complete. It all comes down to this moment as you look down towards the sheet of glass that is the ocean. The battle between your mind and your body begins. Flinging yourself off a platform the equivalent height of two double decker buses on top of each other into the watery depths of the world's sea at 95 kilometers an hour is not normal for a human being. You have to remember the routine that is the one that will hopefully bring you glory ahead of the other competitors. Get your landing a couple of inches wrong and you could get knocked out, cough up blood and break bones. Get it a few more inches off the mark and that dive could be the last thing you ever do. Welcome to the exhilarating world of cliff diving.

While the divers plummet into the ocean, the sport's popularity is on the rise. The event has become televised, and with seven different stops around the world the global interest is forever growing. From the bitterly cold and daunting Denmark, to a castle in Italy, a plank rooftop in the USA, a retired slate quarry in Wales, and the breath-taking limestone monoliths of Thailand – it's safe to say the event has plenty of variety and captures the imagination.

photo by Romina Amato/ Red Bull Cliff Diving

Similar to the 10-meter platform diving event, the divers perform routines as they hurtle towards the sea's surface and get a mark out of 10 from judges. Last season had fourteen competitors with the divers finishing in the top eight automatically qualifying for next year's event.

This high octane sport is one that is greeted with fear by many. Official tourism boards of famous cliff diving locations do not promote the activity. It may have only recently been thrust into the public eye courtesy of television coverage, but the activity has strong historical roots. Cliff diving is an act that can be traced as far back as the 1770's, where the last King of Maui had his warriors launch themselves off cliffs to prove their bravery and loyalty. And there's not many other effective ways of testing a man's steel. Scientific studies have revealed that a failed dive from 28 meters is the same as hitting concrete at 13 meters, this comes as no surprise when you consider the effects that it has on your body. Hurtling towards the ocean at 60 miles per hour to then stop completely in a matter of milliseconds as you smash into the water makes you question what kind of human being would want to put themselves through such an experience.

Two men who can answer that question are the former European Cliff Diving champion Blake Aldridge and Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series competitor David Coultari. When asked what makes someone want to do what some regard as the most extreme sport out there, it was soon clear to see the passion the two hold for cliff diving.

"It's the rush you get from doing it. Every time you go to an event the platform is longer, thinner, wider or a different height." Blake explained. "The visuals around you before you jump are always different. It's always raw, new, frightening, you never get used to it. It's not like the more you do it the easier it gets. It does get easier but it's still you playing with your life and if you get it wrong then you're not going to walk away from it. And that mentally switches you on. This pushes every boundary and every level that you have in your body."

"It's everything that normal diving isn't, it's just so different," he added.

David agreed, and explained what made him want to become a cliff diver. "My dad likes to tell everyone I do it because I was dropped on my head too many times as a child, but really it is pure love for the sport of diving. This discipline has been the biggest passion of my life and lets me travel the world competing in some of the most beautiful places on the planet."

Blake is a former diving Olympian, competing at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing in the 10-meter Synchronised event. He finished eighth and after the disappointment fancied something new and exciting. It could mean only one thing.

"I wanted something more dangerous and scary. So the natural thing to do was to go higher. I had friends who started to cliff dive after normal diving, so I contacted them and they got hold of the organisers. In 2011, I was invited to France as a wildcard. That was the first taste of diving at 28-and-a-half meters."

Blake certainly got the danger and fear factor that he was looking for, with a huge range of emotions surging through his body as he stares down a 28-meter drop.

"There is absolute fear, excitement, adrenaline, there's so many different energies going through your body when you're about to jump. It's not like anything else l've ever done."

But what are the biggest differences between 10-meter platform diving and cliff diving? Blake revealed the one big change between the two disciplines.

"The main difference is that we don't go head first because we can't take the impact on our neck and shoulders like you can on your feet. So I have had to adapt everything I do to now landing feet first which



photo by Dean Treml/ Red Bull Cliff Diving

was different because I've spent the last twenty-five years diving head first. Now I have to do an extra half somersault or twist to get round to my feet, so that's taken quite a long time to get used to."

Even someone as experienced as Aldridge, who has been diving since the age of five, can get affected by the mammoth drops that these athletes encounter, as he recalled.

"I remember my first cliff diving competition. I walked to the end, looked down and I turned round and walked back and I said 'I'm not doing this.' The organisers had paid for me to be there, the other divers were there too, but I just walked away from the edge." His tone of voice now changes from one of joyous recollection of why he cliff dives, to a serious retelling of that day in France.

"I spoke to my friend and cliff diving world champion at the time Gary Hunt, who reassured me and said 'Blake you're one of the most experienced divers I have ever met, you will be fine. You just have to do that initial leap of faith. Once you have done it a couple of times you will get it.' And he was right. I took the advice and I did it."

Blake won the battle with his mind that time round, but that doesn't mean his duel with the demons has stopped.

As he admitted that his brain is often his biggest enemy.

"You don't know if you're going to be alright and you think with my experience I should be fine, but then you're faced with all that fear, worry and a visual of standing up that high and looking down and you know what could go wrong. Then your brain starts doubting itself and all of these negative thoughts come into your head. You have to battle them away to be in the right mind-set to jump off. It's a total mental battle. You have to grapple with your mind to jump off the platform, let alone figuring out how many somersaults you have to do."

All of this makes you forget the physical challenge that goes into such a sport, but Blake is quick to remind me of what else he faces as he plummets back down to earth in nothing but a pair of Speedos.

"There's also the physical battle of hitting the water at 95 kilometers an hour and taking that massive impact all the way through your body, you get that a little bit wrong and you're in trouble. Even when you get it right it hurts so when you get it wrong you can imagine how much pain it causes."

He went on to speak of the beating that the body goes through while doing the extreme sport, even when he creates a perfect dive.

"After about ten to twelve dives you're absolutely wrecked, your body is absolutely beaten because you are hitting the water at 95 kilometers an hour and you're stopping as soon as you hit the water in a matter of milliseconds, it is so quick."

photo by Romina Amato/ Red Bull Cliff Diving

But despite all the pain and potential dangers that go hand in hand with cliff diving, Blake has a simple message for those who are critical of the sport and feel it shouldn't be allowed to happen.

"That's their opinion," he insisted. "I don't think it's too dangerous. Anything is dangerous, if you walk across the road at the wrong time, it's the same as anything you do. Jumping out of a plane is dangerous but it's alright if you pull your parachute at the right time. Diving off the platform is fine as long as you get it right. For us it's a risk, but it's a calculated risk. We are all professionals, we have all done it for years and years, we know where we are and what we are doing. Very rarely do we have an accident."

It may come as a surprise to find that Aldridge has actually suffered less injuries diving off cliffs than he did whilst jumping off 10 meter platforms in a diving center.

"I haven't had anything dangerous or bad happen. I have seen people break ribs, tear their spleens and knock themselves out. I have torn my groin and abductus hitting the water and I have been coughing up blood from landing short and taking a hit on my ribs but I have never knocked myself out or seriously hurt myself. I haven't suffered as many injuries in cliff diving compared to Olympic diving because with the normal board you can become complacent and become distracted. But with the cliff diving you can't let that happen because if that lapse of concentration happens and it goes wrong then you are probably going to be taken off to hospital with broken bones or maybe even death, you have to be completely switched on the whole time."

Blake explained the lack of facilities available to him to prepare for events and practice his routines.

"There is nowhere for me to go and train in England where we can go higher than 10 meters. But this is what makes it so exciting, you get to a location and that's when you do the whole dive."

American born Coultari faces the same problems trying to find appropriate facilities to train with but has hopes for a solution.

"Unfortunately there are not any official cliff diving training facilities, but with the sport progressing each year I am certain official training centers will be created in the near future."

Blake offered fascinating insight into his diving preparation.

"We break everything down. The start of the dive and the end, but you can't train the middle because that happens when you're jumping off the 28-meter platform and once you're 10 meters down that's when the middle of the dive is. So when you're learning a new dive you are always jumping into the unknown. It's so difficult to learn a new dive from that height because of the danger, fear and worry of getting it wrong," Blake continued. "You are relying on your mind and body to know you're coming out at the right place and that you know where you are and you're not going to freak out."

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Coultari also stressed the importance of mentally preparing. "The most important preparation is getting in the right state of mind. The mental side of cliff diving is the most important characteristic. There are thousands of physically talented platform divers that have the technical skills to perform complex cliff dives, but it's the mental side that separates the few of us who can execute these dives safely from the rest."

With Red Bull now taking over the cliff diving reins and the sport become increasingly recognised around the world, how far do the diving duo reckon the sport can go?

"Cliff Diving has progressed so much in the last decade. The Fédération Internationale de Natation (the governing body for diving) is considering adding cliff diving to the Olympic Games. With the sport getting bigger and better each year, there's no limit to how big it could become," insisted David.

Blake shared the positivity for the sport's rise, and still has unfinished business to attend to at the Olympics.

"Red Bull has only had the event for a few years and the media and marketing machine behind them is phenomenal. With them on board they can push it, it's already on TV. It is exciting times and hopefully I can go to the Olympics again but doing a totally different sport." AW

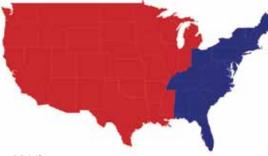
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REBIRTH OF THE

CROSSBOW

by Troy Farrar

When asked about the history of crossbows, most people will envision medieval knights wielding a crossbow in battle. The origins of crossbows go back much farther with writings indicating that crossbows existed as early as 305 B.C. The crossbows militaries used continued to grow through the Roman Empire and crossbows were a common weapon for many European armies, surpassing hand bows for many reasons. Even though the longbow could achieve comparable accuracy and had a faster shooting rate, crossbows delivered more kinetic energy and could be used effectively after a week of training. The same accuracy on a long bow could take years of training. The crossbow was used by both infantry and mounted troops until the 1520's, when the crossbow was mostly replaced by firearms. The conquistadores used crossbows as well for hunting when firearms or gunpowder were unavailable because of economic hardships or isolation.

Skip forward almost 500 years and modern crossbow use in the United States was mostly limited to target shooting until recently. Lee Zimmerman of the North American Crossbow Federation explains the reasons behind the rebirth of the crossbow in America:

"In the past ten years crossbow hunting grew from being illegal in forty-three states to being legal in all or part of thirty states. With hundreds of thousands of hunters picking up a crossbow for the first time, crossbow hunting is the fastest growing segment in the hunting industry. The reasons for this growth are simple; crossbows are just plain fun and they have a short learning curve. Shooters can expect the same performance as today's high tech vertical bows with much less practice. Crossbows allow young bow hunters earlier access to the woods and keep older bow hunters in the woods longer. These factors contributed to the rebirth of the crossbow in the U.S., and we expect to see the number of crossbow users continue to grow over the next decade."

We knew the crossbow was fun and easy to shoot and had previously used crossbows for target shooting. We were especially excited at the new possibilities due to changes in the law and the ability to now hunt with a crossbow, so let the adventures begin!

Here are some of the products you should consider as you embark down this new trail of crossbow shooting.



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RIVER RAFTING

TEN POINT TITAN EXTREME CROSSBOW

The Ten Point Titan Extreme Crossbow is a great all-around crossbow that offers a ton of features at an exceptional value. The Titan Extreme features a light-weight stock, smooth power touch trigger, 180-pound limbs and tunable yokes equipped with XR wheels, allowing the crossbow to shoot arrows up to 311 fps. The dry fire inhibitor is a great safety precaution, preventing the havoc an accidental dry fire can wreak on a crossbow. We strongly recommend adding the ACU Draw 50, which tucks away neatly in the butt stock using powerful magnets and makes cocking a snap for users of any age. All Titan Extreme Crossbows come with a detachable three arrow quiver, three aluminum arrows, and 3x Pro View optics. We had a lot of fun testing the Titan Extreme and found the Crossbow to be well built, easy to use and accurate. Made in the USA, the Ten Point Titan Extreme Crossbow is the perfect crossbow for a beginner or experienced crossbow user and will provide years of reliable service.

CARBON EXPRESS INTERCEPT AXON

The Carbon Express Intercept Axon leaps into the future with a totally customizable platform. The AR inspired crossbow features a six-position tactical stock, SilenTech rubber-like coating that reduces noise and vibration, and a Picatinny rail system that will accommodate most AR accessories, making the customization possibilities endless. The folding fore grip is adjustable, along with the

finger grip, which also folds away for storage. The light-weight Intercept Axon features a machined trigger with an anti-dry-fire system, carbon infused limbs, tunable strings and cables, and CNC machined risers with alloy cam sets that produce a scorching 360 fps. The Intercept Axon measures 17 inches when un-cocked and a paltry 13.5 inches when cocked making it

measures 17 inches when un-cocked and a paltry 13.5 inches when cocked, making it Express Intercept Axon comes with a rope cocker, a detachable three arrow quiver, three Maxima Blue Streak bolts and a 4x32 red and green illuminated scope. The sleek, black Carbon Express Intercept Axon is a tactical weapon with reusable ammunition. The Intercept Axon is easy to operate, very accurate, and at 360 fps we felt like we were Thor throwing lightning bolts down the range. The endless customization possibilities will make the Carbon Express Intercept Axon a huge hit, and we cannot wait to see all of the different combinations users assemble. The Carbon Express Intercept Axon looks great, works great, and ushers in a new era in crossbow customization.

PRIMOS TRIGGER STICK TALL MONO POD

The Primos Trigger Stick Tall Mono Pod is a light-weight, simple to use, multi-function monopod. The Trigger Stick works great as a walking stick, and with a simple one-handed squeeze of the trigger you can adjust the height. Adjustable from 33-65 inches and locable with the flip of a switch, the Trigger Stick can be used while sitting, standing or kneeling. The Primos Trigger Stick comes equipped with a 360 degree rotating V yoke crossbow or gun rest which is removable for use with cameras or spotting scopes. The Primos Trigger Stick Tall Mono Pod is perfect for stabilizing your shot and extending your range, as well as numerous other functions.

G5 T3 BROADHEAD

The G5 T3 is a 100% stainless steel broadhead which promises to be stronger, more durable and provide deeper penetration. Throw away those old O-rings, the replaceable Spyder Clip Retention System was easy to use and worked just as promised, providing reliable blade deployment. And speaking of blades, the T3 blades give you a 1.5 inch cutting diameter and are easy to replace, they even include a set of practice blades. We found the G5 T3 to be a durable and reliable broadhead that packed a real punch.

RAGE CROSSBOW X BROADHEAD

The Rage Crossbow X Broadhead promises increased penetration and because they are specifically designed for a crossbow these bolts are durable enough to handle the extra force. The Shock Collar blade retention system allow these broadheads to fly like field tips and using a rear deploying slip cam design the Crossbow X release the razor sharp stainless steel blades at just the right time. The Rage Crossbow X produces massive blood trails as a result of the 2 inch cutting diameter. The Rage Crossbow X Broadheads come with a practice head and are a great choice for the crossbow hunter.

CARBON EXPRESS MAXIMA BLUE STREAK CROSSBOLTS

The Carbon Express Maxima Blue Streak Crossbolts are tough, featuring a BuffTuff exterior that provides strength and consistency over multiple use. Inspected for straightness down to .0025 inch, these 380 grain crossbolts are

fast and accurate. The Dual Spine Weight Forward technology provides a straighter flight for increased down-range accuracy. The Carbon Express Maxima Blue Streak Crossbolts are accurate as we were able to shoot 3-inch groups from 30 yards all day long. What we really noticed was that the Maxima Blue Streaks packed a real punch, driving deep into the target which should translate into more passthrough shots.





TEN POINT PRO ELITE CARBON ARROW

The Ten Point Pro Elite Carbon arrows are accurate, durable and reliable. Featuring advanced carbon fiber construction, the Pro Elite Carbon arrows are laserinspected for straightness to within .003 inches and handsorted for precise weight. We were impressed with the accuracy as we were able to consistently shoot groups within a 3-inch circle from 30 yards. Ten Point Pro Elite Carbon Arrows are 425 grains and come equipped with 68 grain brass inserts and neon yellow Omni-Nocks.

HURRICANE CROSSBOW CROSSBOLT STOP

Hurricane

Crossbolt Stop

The Hurricane Crossbow Crossbolt Stop is a well-made mini target with multiple functions. The high visibility orange shooting "eyes" give this little target great visibility at long ranges or against just about any background. The sewnwebbing handle and heavy duty construction ensure a long life of service. Stop loosing arrows, at 12x12 inches, the Hurricane Crossbow Crossbolt Stop is a perfect portable de-cocking target. The Hurricane Crossbow Crossbolt Stop is a highly recommended accessory for all crossbow hunters.

YELLOW JACKET CROSSBOW F/P TARGET

The Yellow Jacket Crossbow F/P Target was designed specifically for crossbow field point practice. This 100% weatherproof target features a multi-layered density design, which ensures durability and longevity over the life of the target. The Internal Frame System (IFS) technology maintains the integrity and shape of the target through heavy use. Additional features such as the sturdy design, a sewn-webbing handle, and easy arrow removal make the Yellow Jacket Crossbow F/P Target a no-brainer.

KRYPTEK VIDAR VEST

POWAJACKE

The Kryptek Vidar Vest is the perfect addition to your outwear collection. The Vidar is great as a layering piece or as a stand-alone vest for core warmth on those cool days. Packed full of technical features, the Vidar Vest features two zippered hand warmer pockets, a zippered chest pocket, and a fleece-lined interior. The water resistant stretch fabric is super comfortable and the camouflage pattern is unique. The Vidar will be a great addition to any outdoorsman's wardrobe and will probably work its way into your everyday life use.



KRYPTEK VALHALLA PANT

The Kryptek Valhalla Pant is the next phase in the hunting outwear evolution. Light-weight, breathable, and durable, the Vallhalla is perfect for early season, high exertion, and warm weather hunts. The eight pockets, including two zippered pockets, provide ample storage for whatever you need to take along on your excursion. The quick drying stretch fabric and articulated knees make these pants ultra-comfortable. Grab yourself a pair of Kryptek Valhallas and step into the future of comfort, function, and durability.





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BOHNING SIEGE BOLT LITE CROSSBOW BACKPACK

The Bohning Siege Bolt Lite Crossbow Backpack is the perfect minimalist backpack for the crossbow user. Sturdy and light-weight, it features adjustable chest straps that allow for a comfortable fit and two zippered pockets which provide abundant storage space. The center channel, adjustable stock holder, and adjustable velcro strap will accommodate any size crossbow with ease. The Bolt Lite is equipped with a quick release buckle allowing access to the crossbow quickly, silently, and without removing the backpack. We found the Bohning Siege Bolt Lite Crossbow Backpack securely held our crossbow even while mountain biking, and is a fantastic way to transport your crossbow on all your excursions.

PARKER RED HOT CROSSBOW CASE

The Parker Red Hot Crossbow Case combines style with function to produce a great crossbow case. The tough and durable padded nylon case will protect your crossbow and optics from those unwanted bumps and dings that can wreak havoc on a hunt. Great features such as the external quiver pouch and the 330 degree zipper make loading and unloading a snap. The Parker Red Hot Crossbow Case is the last case you will ever need.







ELUSIVE WILDLIFE TECHNOLOGIES XLR 100

The Elusive Wildlife Technologies XLR 100 is a high quality, high powered bow-mounted light. The dual-mode LED XLR 100 will blast 200 Lumen's of green, 180 Lumen's of red, and 350 Lumen's of white light, allowing you to see your prey within a 15-yard-wide x 35-yard-long path. The XLR 100 will run for 2-4 hours on one of the two included rechargeable batteries, giving you a total of 4-8 hours of high powered light. The XLR 100 will also run on two CR123A Lithium batteries or three AAA batteries if you forget to recharge your batteries. The XLR 100 comes with a standard tail cap push button on/off and a remote tactical on/ off switch, a wall charger, a 12-volt car adapter, and two 10-year 18650 rechargeable Lithium Ion batteries. If you are serious about bow hunting at dusk, dawn or even midnight, the XLR 100 is a well-designed, must-have piece of equipment.





White Water Boogie Boarding added to the 2014 USARA Adventure Race National Championship

White Water Boogie Boarding has been added as one of the disciplines in the 2014 USARA Adventure Race National Championship. Troy Farrar, President of the USARA commented, "Deep Creek Lake is home to the Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI,) which has the premier man-made white water course in the United States. How could we host the USARA National Championship at Deep Creek Lake and not take advantage of this amazing challenge?" Each competitor will be required to complete one lap on the white water course in relay style, passing the boogie board off to their teammate when they are done. Competitors who are not comfortable completing the course may have a teammate complete their lap or choose to do a trail run instead. The White Water Boogie Boarding is going to make for an exciting challenge and will probably be one of the most memorable segments of this year's race.

News











2014 USARA Adventure Race National Championship

The USARA is excited to announce that the 2014 USARA Adventure Race National Championship will be held at Deep Creek Lake, Maryland, on October 3-4, 2014. The beautiful and challenging terrain of western Maryland will offer the backdrop for an unforgettable weekend of racing.

The 2014 USARA Nationals is also the event to attend as a family member or fan, as this will be the most spectator-friendly course we have ever had the privilege of producing. Spectators will be able to easily view the competitors trail running, mountain biking, river boarding and canoeing in the first few hours of the event without traveling more than five minutes from the Wisp Resort. Spectators can also choose from an almost endless list of great local activities to enjoy while in the area. Mark your calendars now and do not miss the chance to witness this epic adventure.

USARANationals.com

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SMART LIGHTS

Our lights all have a "brain" with hundreds of lines of code. Standard features include *regulated output*, innovative thermal management solutions, fuel gauge, thermal rollback protections, and advanced firmware enhancements.

<u>BUY WITH CONFIDENCE</u>

Headlamp

We test all our lights to the FL-1 Standard setup by NEMA/ANSI. Everything from lumen output, impact resistance to water resistance is verified. Consumers can be confident that they get what they pay for.



The Solite

The Solite proves that not all headlamps are created equal. Capturing the spirit of innovation and industrial design; the Solite effectively functions as a headlamp, a flashlight, a lantern, a bike light, and even a helmet light. At a mere 112 grams with up to 40 hours run time, the Solite offers more performance and features than any light on the market: regulated output, battery status indicator, Micro-USB rechargeable - this is the go-to light for your next adventure.

Bike Light



Powder for the People

ISLAND LAKE CATSKIING, FERNIE BC.

by Jack Viney

photo by Mark Gallup



When it comes to powder skiing, the Canadian Rockies is one destination on most skiers' hit list. Fernie, a small town located in the southeastern part of British Columbia is surrounded by these majestic mountains and famous for powder snow.

Island Lake Lodge is located just outside of Fernie, tucked up in the remote bowls of the Lizard Range which overlooks the town and provides epic skiing for the powder hounds among us.

With twenty-six years in the business, it is no surprise that Island Lake sets the precedent for deep powder catskiing in North America. Starting as a small, single cat business in Fernie's backcountry has now developed into a word-class package – legendary skiing, fine dining and the best mountain lodge accommodation you will find.

Skiing at Island Lake offers guests 7,000 private acres of alpine bowls, gladded trees and untracked bowls. With an average snowfall of forty feet each year and a huge variety of terrain, you will not be disappointed with a trip to Island Lake.

The famous photos of Scott Schmidt and Craig Kelly are imprinted in my memory from a young age as we used to flick though magazines in ski lodges on family winter ski trips.

The allure of big mountains and quality snow resulted in a relocation to Fernie. Since then, I have always looked



up the valley in the direction of Island Lake, wishing that one day I could experience the legend for myself.

Eventually, my skiing dreams were coming true!

The days prior to my Island Lake trip couldn't have worked out better. With a storm hitting the southeastern corner of B.C., dumping the fluffy powder Fernie is famous for, everything was aligning like it was a dream.

As we were going through the morning avalanche safety briefing and beacon training, the clouds parted, lighting up the big peaks that overlook the lodge. Everyone was buzzing, picturing what the day was going to bring.

What unfolded was something that every skier dreams of. Deep and bottomless powder snow combined with the best gladded tree skiing you can imagine.

There was no shortage of high fives and big smiles.

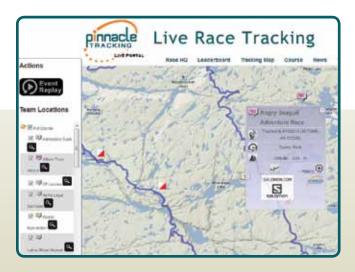
A feature of the program at Island Lake is their summer glading program. Being privately owned land, something that is rare with backcountry operations, a full glading program operates in the summer months to maximize the tree skiing experience.

Standing at the top of a long and untracked forest of old growth timber mid-morning, Corie, our expert guide for the day encouraged us to pick a line and let it rip! Every time we unloaded from the cat and inspected our next



Pinnacle Tracking, a Maine based company that was born from the needs of Adventure Racers, is pleased to be the Official Tracking System of the USARA.





Founded by longtime adventure racer and Untamed Adventure Race Director, Grant Killian and professional guide and adventure company owner Russell Walters, Pinnacle Tracking supplies handheld inReach^M satellite trackers, manufactured by U.S. based DeLorme, along with airtime and integrated mapping capabilities for a variety of races and events ranging from 1 - 10 days duration.

Utilizing the Iridium satellite network, the lightweight DeLorme inReach[™] tracking devices provide 100% global coverage and will automatically transmit regular GPS location reports to a **web based event portal**. The portal enables race organizers, supporters and friends to closely follow each team's location accurately on a map from anywhere in the world.

In addition to their sophisticated GPS tracking and location capabilities, the inReach[™] devices provide the added security of **24 / 7 SOS** alerts and two-way satellite messaging to racers, enabling teams to communicate in real-time with organizers and emergency personnel without having to carry bulky and expensive satellite phones.

The tracking devices can be programmed to transmit their location at intervals ranging from 1-minute to 8-hour intervals and are delivered to event organizers fully programmed, ready to use.

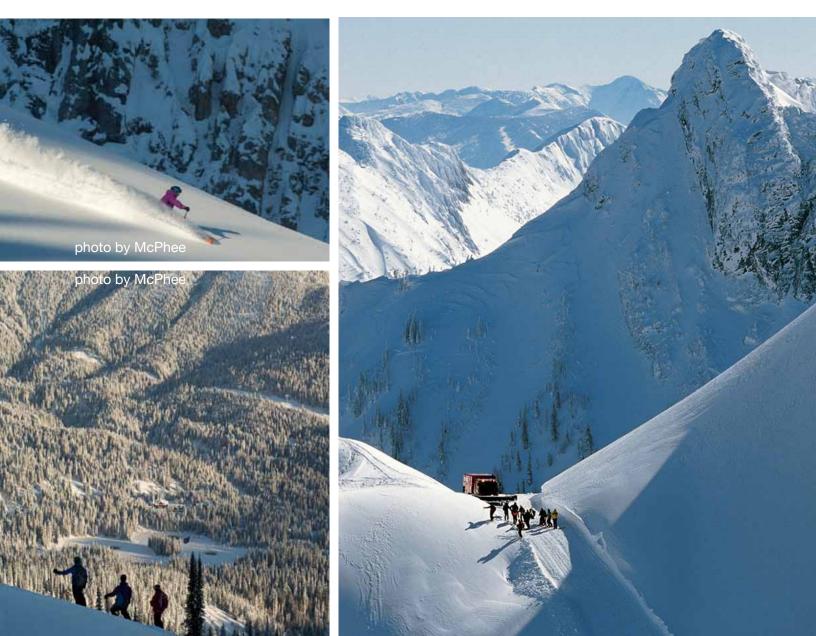
Already **proven** at Canada's Wilderness Traverse, Untamed New England, the SCI Maine Mountain Challenge and used at the 2013 Adventure Racing World Championships in Costa Rica, let us send you a quote to support your next "off the grid" event.

PINNACKING

For more details see www.PinnacleTracking.com call us at (877) 486-8263 or find us on Facebook at Pinnacle Tracking. line there was more amazing terrain. It was reassuring to see the ex-Canadian Ski Team athlete we had in our group having the time of her life – I wasn't the only one who couldn't believe how good this place is.

At some point later in the day as we regrouped at the bottom of a high alpine pitch I shook the neck of my jacket to rid the snow that had just collected after multiple face shots, turn after turn. Living in Fernie, one gets accustomed to skiing powder. In fact, some locals will only ski when there is fresh snow on the ground, a powder snob of sorts. Something that comes with this type of skiing is learning to ski from feeling, not being able to see your knees, let along your skis can be an odd feeling at first. If you are like me and most of my Australian skiing friends coming from a background of carve turns and groomed runs, a powder day is an experience like no other.

Having said that, I thought I had seen my fair share of untracked, deep powder skiing over the seasons, and at Fernie Alpine Resort and the surrounding backcountry, but the lines we skied at Island Lake were like nothing I had ever experienced. A steep and deep run ends with a cat ride back to the next untracked zone so you can do it all again! What isn't there to like about this kind of skiing?





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The day ended with a final run to the middle of Geisha bowl, just below the lodge. Here the cat driver met us with a case of locally brewed Fernie Brewing Company beer and instantly we reflected on what just unfolded.

It is not just the world-class skiing that makes Island Lake such an amazing experience – a stay here turns a good ski trip into a trip of a lifetime.

Arriving at The Bear Lodge for après ski refreshments and a roaring open fire, everything they do at Island Lake is done right!

While we enjoyed a beer and discussed the day, it was obvious this was more than just a ski trip. A family from Utah told me they have been planning this trip for years and that today was the best day of their lives!

The day wasn't complete until we were seated in The Tamarack Lodge enjoying the fine dining provided by the Island Lake chefs and enjoying a bottle of wine from their 3,000 bottle cellar.

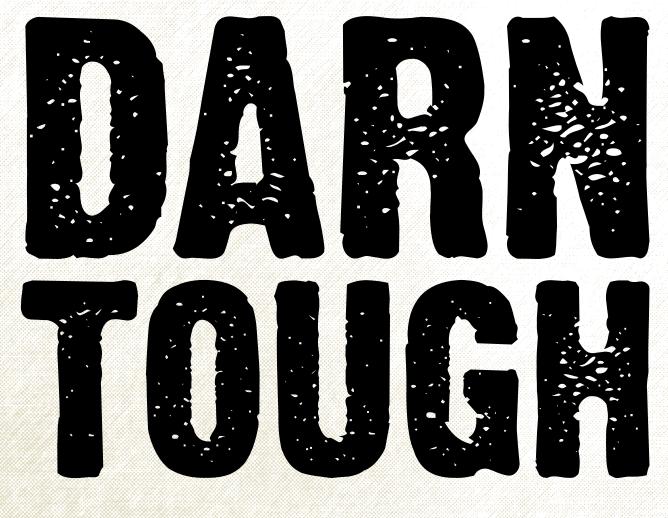
This was a ski trip of a lifetime. Not only will a person ski amazing snow in the best terrain, they can relax in the most picturesque backcountry lodges and unwind from those daily stresses.

The experience would not be the same without the experienced Island Lake guides and staff, making sure this is a ski trip one will never forget.





photo by McPhee



(ENOUGH SAID)



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Salomon Skin Pro 10 + 3

The Salomon Skin Pro 10+3 Hydration Backpack is a form-fitting running pack which includes a 50 ounce hydration reservoir. The adjustable shoulder straps



configured to your body for a snug fit. Salomon uses stretchy fabric to help the pack conform to your body, creating and eliminating excessive bounce. main compartment roomy enough for a jacket and a meal, and there multiple

pockets on the front

and sides for stashing other essentials. The breathable mesh back helps wick away moisture and keeps you cool on those hot days. A complete package, the Salomon Skin Pro 10+3 Hydration Backpack will get you down the trail without all the bounce.

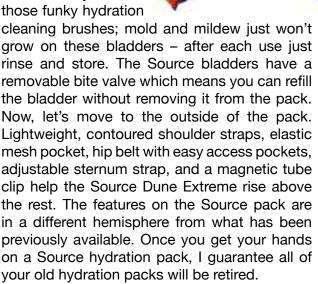
Lowepro Flipside Sport 10L AW

The Lowepro Flipside Sport 10L AW is a lightweight, technical camera pack with an integrated 1-liter hydration sleeve. The camera compartment is accessed through a body side opening which provides added security for your equipment. The roomy camera compartment will fit a DSLR with a 70 – 200 mm lens as well as 1-2 extra lenses. The Lowepro Flipside Sport features a built-in storm flap that protects the contents from water or dust, padded shoulder straps, a back, exterior tripod attachment, and a small exterior pocket. Super durable, super functional, super comfortable, the Lowepro Flipside Sport 10L AW is a super camera pack that is ready for your next adventure.

Source Dune Extreme

The Source Dune Extreme is the next generation in hydration packs. Let's

start with the amazing Source 50 ounce bladder Source svstem. All bladders feature Glass Like film technology, Grunge technology, and triple layer taste and odor-free film which prevents the bladder from holding odors or smells and also prevents mold growth. Throw away all of those funky hydration







Summer 2014

Dr.Cool

Dr. Cool has reinvented the ace bandage and ice bag by combining ice and compression into a reusable flexible wrap for recovery on the go. No more bulky and leaky ice bags; just wet the Dr. Cool wrap and freeze it until you are ready to wrap. The Coolcore fabric keeps the wrap cool, making the wrap much more convenient to use than the old method. Dr. Cool even makes an insulated carrying bag to keep the wrap cold. Dr. Cool wraps can also be used dry to give support as a compression wrap. Available in 7 cool colors and 3 different sizes, Dr. Cool has the right wrap for any body part. Easy, convenient, and functional, expect to see Dr. Cool rule the cold wrap world in the near future. If you are not using Dr. Cool, you are in danger of being called Dr. Fool.

Life Straw

Weighing in at 2 ounces and a length of only 9 inches long, the LifeStraw is the smallest and lightest water filter on the planet. The LifeStraw is a microbiological water purifier which removes suspended particles in muddy water, and viruses, bacteria and protozoa (parasites) down to .02 microns. Capable of purifying 1000 liters, that is 3-4 liters for almost a year, the LifeStraw is as simple to use as drinking through a straw. Just stick the LifeStraw into the water source or a bottle of water and drink clean purified water. Perfect for hiking, camping, and foreign travels.

Life Straw Go

The LifeStraw GO has the same great technology as the LifeStraw with an incorporated sports bottle. Just fill the bottle from a water source, such as a creek or lake, and drink – it does not get any simpler or faster than that! The LifeStraw GO has a carabiner to attach the bottle to your backpack or gear loops for handy

ίn.

access. Perfect for traveling, camping, or just getting rid of that nasty taste in your city water, the LifeStraw GO is the must have filtration bottle.

When you purchase any LifeStraw filter, Eartheasy donates LifeStraw Community institutional water purifiers to schools in Africa. The LifeStraw Community purifiers are specifically designed to deliver clean, safe water



to school children bv removing waterborne pathogens dirt and commonly found in source water. Eartheasy's qoal is to provide clean water to 500 schools in Kenya in 2014.



Ecōths Tallac

The Ecōths Tallac is a 100% organic cotton masterpiece. Creative touches such as contrasting stitching and black pearl snaps make this shirt handsome and distinctive. Goodlooking enough for a night on the town and casual enough for a day at the beach, the Ecōths Tallac is a versatile and stylish shirt.



Mountain Khakis Granite Creek Wind Shirt The Mountain Khakis Granite Creek Wind Shirt is a stylish two-use piece. Great as a long-sleeve shirt or keep it in your truck as a lightweight jacket when those cool

days creep in unexpectedly. The mesh-lined Mountain Khakis Granite Creek Wind Shirt has stylish pewter snaps, a square split tail hem, and is 100% wind-proof, water resistant, and provides UVA-UVB 50+ protection. The Mountain Khakis Granite Creek Wind Shirt will keep you protected and keep you looking great. www.mountainkhakis.com

Ryan Michael Prescott

The Prescott by Ryan Michael is a stylish and versatile shirt that may even earn you a few whistles from the ladies. The silk and cotton blend make for a comfortable feel. Clean lines, contrasting thread, and nickel snaps are all features that make the Prescott a distinctive and stunning shirt. Available in 5 colors, the hardest decision is which color to pick. The Prescott will quickly make its way to the front of your rotation as your go-to shirt for that special occasion.





North Face Apex Bionic Jacket

The North Face Apex Bionic Jacket is a standard piece of equipment that should be in everyone's closet. Comfortable stretch fleece make the Apex the perfect jacket for adventurous endeavors such as snow shoeing, hiking or even star gazing. Key features of this windproof midweight jacket are dual hand pockets, a single chest pocket, adjustable velcro cuffs, and a hem draw cord for those really cold days. Virtually weather proof, the Apex Bionic Jacket looks just as good in town as it does on that back country trail. The Apex Bionic Jacket will become old faithful way before you have owned it long enough to call it old faithful.

Maui Jim Middles

The Maui Jim Middles are appropriately named for a surf break about 500 yards into the ocean in Hanalei Bay. The Middles are the perfect glasses for that can't-sit-still active lifestyle, even on those days when the



most active thing you do is lay on the beach and daydream. Featuring polycarbonate lenses and a lightweight grilamid frame with adjustable non-slip nose pads, the Middles will take everything you can dish out and more. Slip into a pair of Middles and feel confident you have the right glasses to stand up to all of your adventurous demands, without sacrificing style. Middles frames are available in 3 colors and will become your adventure go-to eyewear.

Maui Jim Switchbacks

The Maui Jim Switchbacks are packed full of useful features, making them a great choice for a varying list of activities. The Switchbacks allow you to change lenses for differing

conditions with the simple push of a button. Just push the button, pull down on the single lens shield, pop in the new lens shield, and you are ready to go. The non-slip temples and nose pads keep the Switchbacks in place no matter how sweaty and bouncy your activity. The PolarizedPlus2 technology removes 99% of glare, reducing eye fatigue and making everything crisp and clear. The Switchbacks are equipped with scratch and impact resistant lenses with UV protection that filters out 100% of the sun's harmful UV rays. The Switchbacks come with 2 lenses, and additional lenses can be purchased. The Switchbacks are a versatile pair of lightweight glasses that perform perfectly in the changing conditi

pair of lightweight glasses that perform perfectly in the changing conditions of an active lifestyle.

Baladeo Laguiole

When I opened the box I was not sure if I should put the Baladeo Laguiole in a showcase or actually use it as this knife is a beautiful piece of functional art. This knife takes you back to a simpler time and makes you dream of lazy days in the French countryside. The hand-made Laguiole has a 3 7/8inch flat, ground blade and weighs in at 3.5 ounces, giving you a very durable and aesthetically beautiful tool for everyday tasks. As the Laguiole ages, it is refined into the perfect heirloom for that young adventurer in your tribe. Looking for a simple, beautiful and durable knife that will turn heads every time you take it out of your pocket? Get yourself the Baladeo Laguiole.

Nano Striker XL

The Nano Stryker XL is a beautifully-made anodized aluminum fire starter that should be a part of your standard gear on any outing. Features include a large handle that makes the Nano Striker XL easy to grip, even on the coldest days. The replaceable ferrocerium rod works when wet, and delivers over 3000 fire-starting strikes of 5500° F heat. The ultra-sharp tungsten carbide striking tool is one of the most effective I have ever seen, providing a massive shower of sparks to your tinder pile. After using the Nano Striker XL, the rod stores in the waterproof chamber until the next use. The Nano Stryker XL is a must have if you are prone to wander past your driveway.

Ecōths Keizer

10

dst 15 km

SUUNTO

5 bpm

The Ecōths Keizer is an organic cotton short with a canvas feel. The heavy duty, 5-pocket shorts feature contrasting stitching and a 10-inch inseam. Available in 4 colors, Ecōths Keizer shorts combines style and function in a durable, anytime anywhere short.

As part of their GOOD SAM program, Ecōths will be supporting regional food banks around the country. For every Ecōths garment purchased in the

Suunto Ambit2 S

The Suunto Ambit2 S features customizable multisport data and tracking. Water resistant to 50 meters the Ambit2 S will measure heart rate, pace, distance, and track your route. Using track back the Ambit2 S will even provide your route back home. A simple push of a button switches you from running to swimming to cycling. There are unlimited customization possibilities such as cycling wattage and swimming interval times. The Suunto Ambit2 S also features a 3D compass. Packed full of features and fully customizable the Ambit2 S has all of your training needs covered.

Vasque Ultra SST

The Vasque Ultra SST starts the new era in trail running shoes. Featuring Shape Shifter technology, the Ultra SST conforms to both your foot and the terrain, making it a comfortable, cushioned light-weight trail runner. The Boa lace free-closure system ensures you will never have to worry about untied laces, and makes adjusting the tension as easy as the turn of a dial. A great looking and great feeling shoe, the Vasque Ultra SST has set a new mark for trail runners. United States, three meals will be provided vto someone in need

through their regional food





Skins MX Calf Tights

The Skins MX Calf Tights are comfortable calf tights that will actually boost your performance. How in the world can they boost your performance? Well let me explain, the engineered gradient compression accelerates blood flow and enhances

oxygen delivery to you muscles which will increase your power, speed, and stamina. The memory MX fabric reduces muscle vibration which means reduced muscle soreness. The MX Calf tight also provides achilles enhanced support, reducing the risk of injury. The Skins MX Calf Tights are well built and provide UPF 50+ sun protection, so they may actually take better care of you than vour mother.



Summer 2014

ENO Slackwire

The ENO Slackwire is an easy-to-set-up, high quality slackline that is perfect for the campsite, park, or backyard. The Slackwire has heavy duty 2-inch wide webbing that will span 50 feet between anchors, and comes with a carrying case. Set up is a cinch due to the loops at the end of the webbing. Just find a couple of trees, ratchet the Slackwire tight, and get your slack on! Slacklining is a fun and challenging activity that will improve your balance and increase your core strength. Get yourself an ENO Slackwire and start slacking off!





Kuat Bottle Lock The Kuat Bottle Lock is ingenious. It looks like a regular water bottle out of the box, but looks can be deceiving. Hidden inside the water bottle look-alike case is a 5-foot long cable lock. Simple to pull out and lock, they even included a little compartment at the bottom of the bottle for carrying the key or other necessities. The bottle lock fits right into your bottle cage and is great for those urban outings where you need to lock up your rig.



FC Power Trekk

The FC Power Trekk gives you the ability to create instant power anywhere, and all you need is water. Just pop in a puck, add water, and you have enough juice for a couple of phone charges using fuel cell technology. The pucks are single use and inexpensive. The entire unit is very light weight, simple and durable. The FC Power Trekk will give you the ability to charge any electronic anywhere, and is a must-have item for the traveler who likes to wander off the beaten path.

Gibbons Slack Rack

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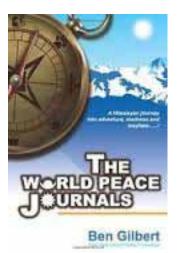
The Gibbon Slackrack is an awesome portable solution for setting up your slackline indoors. Gibbons did not cut any corners on the Slackrack, as this is one heavyduty, yet stylish metal rack that even comes with a slackline. The Slackrack is nice and sturdy, making it perfect for rainy days, gyms, schools, kid rooms, or even the office. If you are looking to spend more time on the slackline, the Gibbons Slack Rack is the answer – plus it looks so cool.

Summer 2014

Outside Inside Backpack Dome 2 in 1 Ladderball / Cornhole The Outside Inside Dome 2-in-1 Ladderball / Cornhole game gives you 2 great games in 1 really small package. The mini-dome tent assembles in about 1 minute and has a ladder ball game on 1 side and cornhole game on the other side. The game comes with everything you need for an afternoon of fun, and packs down into a really small carrying bag when you are finished. The Outside Inside Dome 2-in-1 Ladderball / Cornhole game is great for tailgating, back yard barbeques, or camping trips, and is built to last for years of fun.

The World Peace Journal by Ben Gilbert

World The Peace Journal is a true story Nepalese about а trekking Agency in the late 1990s. This entertaining first-hand story shares details of corruption, geography, history, and adventure in the Himalayas. You will feel the writer's anguish and share in his triumphs as you tag along on his adventures in Nepal.



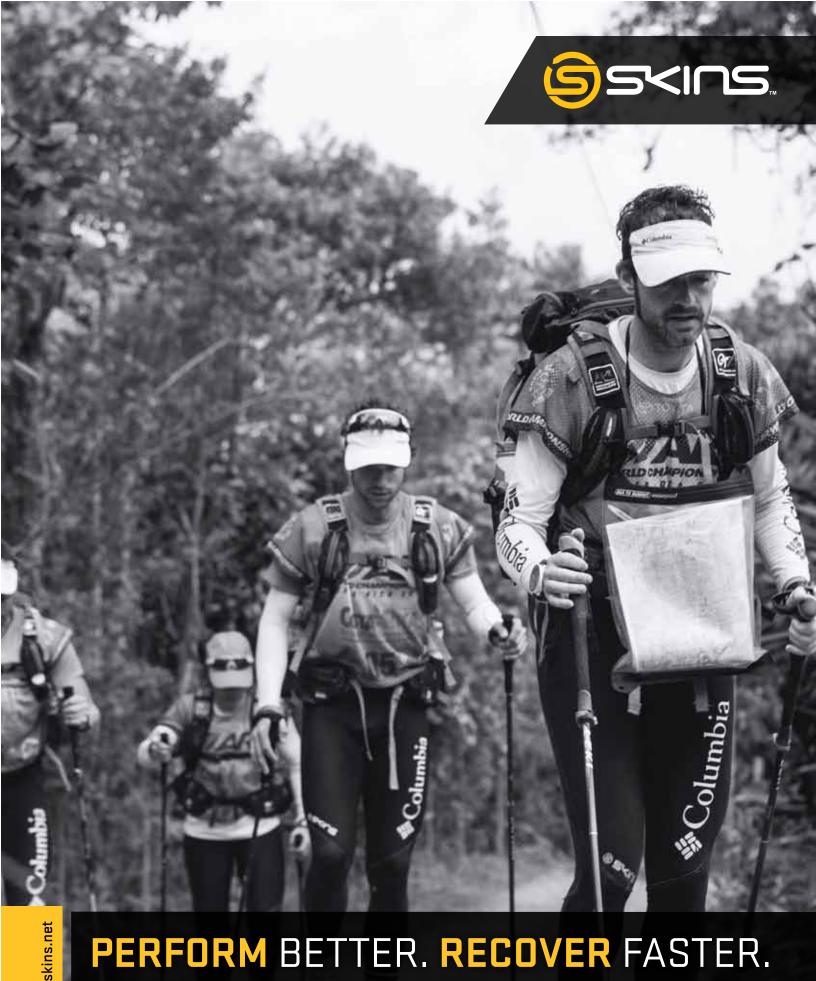
Big Agnes Air Core

The Big Agnes Air Core sleeping pad is light and compact, presenting a great value for summer and cool weather camping. Made from durable nylon, this tough pad will pack down to the size of a water bottle. The Air Core features I-beam construction that eliminates cold spots, and combined with the internal polyurethane coating eases inflation and deflation. The Air Core has a R value of 1, includes a stuff sack, and fits in the pad sleeve of many Big Agnes sleeping bags, making it the perfect pad for your next warm weather adventure.



Thermarest Neo Air XLITE

The Thermarest Neo Air XLite is an ultra light, ultra compact, ultra awesome 3-season air mattress. The first thing I noticed out of the box is how light the Neo Air XLite is – only 8 ounces. Are you kidding me! When we tested the Neo Air XLite, we found the 2.5-inch mattress did not sacrifice comfort or stability for weight, and the Neo Air XLite has a 3.2 R-Value, providing plenty of warmth for 3-season camping. The Neo Air XLite packs down so small that it is virtually invisible, making this the perfect mattress for back country hiking, alpine trips, or even a weekend back-packing trip.



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Vidaraid Adventure Team

Home for Graduation Day

by Carolyn P.C. Martin

He clutched rocks the size of footballs against his chest as he stumbled up the incline and dropped his burden at the edge of the culvert. Then he knelt in the dirt, ducked his head and shoved the rocks six feet along the washboard of the galvanized metal, adding to the half-finished barrier he had built as protection from intruders.

The culvert would be his private room for the night. No running water or electricity, but it beat setting up the tent. Proud of his ingenuity, he wondered if any other homeless man had ever slept in a metal culvert out in the wilds of southern Wyoming, under Interstate 80.

He hated the word homeless! The adjective slipped into his thinking somehow, and he resolved to delete it from his vocabulary. He returned to the task at hand but he couldn't stop thinking about his situation. Since the divorce, he spent most of his time searching – for work, shelter, food – sometimes for a kind word; now for rocks, and yes, for a home. "It's no use," he told himself. Home, like hunger, was indelibly printed in his mind. It connected him to the far-away young daughter whose graduation day was circled on his mental calendar.

Dried prairie grass dotted the landscape, frequently covering the rocks he sought. When he pushed the grass aside, he saw something that brought him up short: a paw print distinctly outlined in the dirt. He squatted and touched it. Fresh! It made him uneasy and he glanced over his shoulder. Couldn't be a dog – He'd recognize a dog paw print; besides, it's too far from civilization. Could it be a cougar? Nah, cougars live in the mountains. Squinting at the grove of aspen trees in the distance, he wondered how far a cougar would roam.

He concluded, with a nagging fear, that it was a gray wolf, the wild animal despised by ranchers whose livestock the predators relished. He wished it was a coyote. Equally frightening, the basic difference was size. He knew that paw prints, like fingerprints, were unique and wished he'd been more observant. Fear of the unknown goaded him and he resumed his exploration. He must secure his "room" in the culvert before nightfall.

He peered at the sky. Yes, he had timed it right. Soon it would be dark, and unless the moon was bright, riding his

bike would be impossible. That old bike, sometimes held together with string and duct tape, had pulled him through many an onslaught of rain, heat, and wind storm; but like a car without lights it was useless at night. Clouds swirled above his head and a late March chill permeated the air.

Content in the knowledge that at least he'd be warm, he unpacked his sleeping bag. As he spread it out on the sandy, corrugated metal, he absentmindedly picked up several small pebbles and bones and tossed them outside. Curious, he wondered how the bones got there, but then a more disturbing question crossed his mind. In his eagerness to build the barrier, had he overlooked the possibility of a flash flood roaring through his "bedroom" during the night? He concentrated on piling the remaining rocks around the barrier. If he had to choose, he'd rather be wet than eaten alive. To himself he muttered, daring any animal, domestic or wild, to enter his inner sanctum. Still, knowing that risks were the downfall of the foolhardy, he dragged his bike up against the culvert opening, leaning it against the foot of the sleeping bag. Barriers at both head and foot - just in case.

He was accustomed to sleeping in his clothes, so he climbed into the bag, observing with a mild epithet that the corrugated metal was as soft as a slab of concrete. Squirming about to find a comfortable position, he pulled his stocking cap down over his ears and quickly fell asleep, oblivious to the noisy semi racing along ten feet above his head.

Towards morning, when the stars had disappeared, a four-legged creature inspected the intruder's hideout. Waking abruptly, the man sensed, rather than saw, the foreboding presence. Past experience with wild animals had taught him to have a weapon close at hand, be quietly observant, and take action only when common sense



or dire straits dictated. One night, in South Carolina, after pitching his tent in a small forest, he was awakened by a boisterous trespasser that scratched and clawed in a fruitless effort to see what was inside the tent. Finally hollering at the top of his voice, he scared the animal away. Next morning, he surmised, with some chagrin, that it was probably just a 'coon, but it was a harrowing experience nevertheless.

In the culvert he was at a disadvantage with only a hint of moonlight filtering through the opening at his feet. Movement behind the barrier startled him into action and he grabbed his hunting knife. That six-inch blade was his only weapon, and as it settled securely into his sweaty palm he thought of the bones he had carelessly tossed away. Had he inadvertently bunked in the predators' runway? Was he sleeping on their picnic grounds? Could that wolf have smelled the half eaten ham sandwich he still had in his pocket? He acknowledged, with a wry grin, that his jacket undoubtedly reeked of campfire smoke and meat drippings. Not too surprising, since napkins were not part of his carryon luggage.

He knew that as a rule, coyotes on the prowl don't attack people. But if they are hungry and see small, unguarded animals or children, well, it has been known to happen. A wolf, on the other hand, has no scruples. Large or small, it had a distinct advantage over him, lying down, cooped up in a small space, unable to move. He'd never heard of a wolf killing a person. But was the wolf ravenous enough to attack him, a grown man?

Was the animal angry because his runway had been closed up? Before he had time to digest that idea, a low growl seeped through the barrier. Rising on his elbows, he tried to peer through an opening between the rocks. Seeing nothing, he tried another. Two thin greenish slits stared back at him. He cursed softly. There, not 15-20 inches from his face, was the treacherous, flesh-eating predator feared by all.

In retrospect, he wondered why he wasn't more cautious. He built the barrier for protection, so he should have gone back to sleep, confident that it was adequate. Instead, he tried to get out of the sleeping bag, caught his boot on the lining and crashed into the rocks. The gaping hole was just big enough for the animal's head to come charging through.

He felt its hot breath; saw the fangs! Instinctively dropping the knife, he grabbed the loose rock. With all his might, he slammed it viciously against the wolf's snout, not once but twice – hard enough to turn the animal around yelping and heading back out the culvert. There was blood splattered on his hand and a small trickle ran over his wrist, dripping onto his sleeping bag. His breath came in great gasps as he put the rock down and rested his forehead on its cold, uneven surface. The battle wasn't heroic; it was over almost before it began, but he knew he had been close to death. Momentarily, an uncontrollable trembling erased all sense of victory.

Finally roused by an icy chill, he replaced the loose rock and managed to maneuver his body back inside the sleeping bag. After a fitful sleep, he woke in the morning to a stillness silently clamoring for his attention. The lower ten inches of the sleeping bag were covered with snow! In awe, he peered through the spokes of his bike, silhouetted against a strange world. For miles, in every direction, there was nothing but snow.

He crawled out of his shelter to answer the call of nature, glad he'd kept his boots on. Also that it had stopped snowing. The snowfall wasn't heavy. Small tufts of prairie grass popped up here and there.

Then he saw them! Paw prints! Circling precisely, back and forth in front of his bicycle, the wolf, ever cunning, had scoped out the front entry prior to racing around to the back door!

Of course! Now he understood. The wolf was used to coming and going through the culvert. Angered by the barrier, the animal fought back in the only way he understood. Grateful beyond measure, he knew he owed his

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protection, maybe even his life, to the last minute placement of his faithful old bike. Ingenuity, the faculty so treasured by mankind, had guided and protected him again.

He scooped up some snow to wash the blood off his hand and stretched to remove the kinks in his legs. As he looked off in the distance he imagined he saw the stark, mute outline of a windmill on the farm he had passed a day or two before. Was it also his imagination or did a tantalizing whiff of bacon and eggs float across his nostrils? With a sigh of nostalgia, he put that long gone pleasure out of his mind, wondering if riding his bike would be possible. Well, his boots were thick and warm and he could walk and push, if necessary. He had done it before.

He smiled in retrospect as he recalled the day in Alabama when he was forced to push his bike. Snow was not the culprit; it was hot as blazes. The chain on his bike kept slipping off the bent sprocket, the result of a minor accident. Soon after meandering up a lonely dirt road not much wider than a cow path, he came to an old, country church. A small cross attached to the roof lent an air of respectability, but the forlorn little building so in need of repair, appeared to be abandoned. Since he couldn't ride further until he fixed the bike and night was coming on, he decided to set up his tent. He wanted to ask permission, but seeing no one, he pushed his bike to the rear and found green pastures, trees, and a tiny brook – a perfect campground.

He awoke early next morning. Bird songs echoed back and forth across the valley, and as he opened his eyes he spied a grey bird on the very top of a nearby tree. He surmised it was the fabled mockingbird since it sang beautiful melodies almost continuously for thirty minutes, jumping straight up from its perch several times in an exuberant explosion of joy.

As if reminding him that it was Sunday, the bird flew off towards the little church, so he decided to attend services, if there were any. Wishing he could shower and shave, he did the best he could at the brook, washing his hands and face with more care than usual. Oh, what he wouldn't give for some shampoo! Then he recalled the advice he got from another biker. In the absence of shampoo, sprinkle some talcum powder on your hair, comb it through, and you've got a dry shampoo. He tried, but his hair was ornery and unreceptive, so he shoved the comb into a pocket, and covered his head with his old baseball cap

Suddenly aware of human voices, he leaned his bike against the side of the church and walked around to the front door. A little, old, white-haired lady wearing a flowered hat nearly as big as she was reached the door just before him. He opened the door

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for her, removed his cap, and took a seat in the rear. He was the only white person in the congregation! Unacquainted with rural Alabama, he had inadvertently wandered into a black community. Baptist to the core, the church members were filled to overflowing with love for the Bible. The preacher rejoiced in the Word of God, and the hymns, sung without benefit of piano, raised the rafters in praise and jubilation.

He was touched by their kindness when they invited him to share their potluck meal – a meal he at first refused, unless they could give him some work to pay for it. They laughed and high-fived, and even rolled on the ground as they said they had no work themselves, so how could they give him any? Somewhat embarrassed by their generosity when they had so little, he threw out a question. Did anyone have a used bike sprocket he could buy? Miraculously, one of the elderly men supplied it. Dipping into his billfold, he emptied it to help pay for the meal and sprocket. Then they sat around chatting and laughing like old friends, watching as he fixed the bike. When he rose to leave, he shook hands with each member of the little congregation and rode away with a lump in his throat. He knew he had been treated with undeserving love by folks who maybe were worse off than he was.

His reverie ended as he mused over the thousands of miles he had traveled since he left Alabama. He folded up the sleeping bag and shoved it into the snow-dusted bundle on the back of his bike. Tarp-covered and cumbersome, it held all his worldly goods: extra clothes, some books, a sorry-looking pup tent, tools for fixing his bike and some food. He shivered as he remembered that he hadn't eaten since yesterday morning. He had schooled himself to go without food for twenty-four hours when necessary, as it frequently was, so after eating the mutilated ham sandwich, he poked around in the bag for the apple he knew was there. When he found it, squashed under the tool kit, it was partially frozen and nearly inedible. Glad to purge his stomach of hunger pangs, he ate it, core and all.

Obstinate and crotchety, the bike acted almost human as he pushed it, slipping and sliding, up the incline next to the culvert. A low whistle of relief seeped out of his dry lips as he observed wolf tracks and a few drops of blood. He mouthed a silent thanks for his protection as he reached the highway. At least he thought it was the highway. No vehicle had passed that way since the snowfall, and except for occasional signposts, it was just one vast expanse of white.

If he were lucky, the driver of a pick-up truck would come along and offer to take him and his bike to the nearest village where he could get some hot food. His money was running low and he needed to find a job. Independence had perks, but life wasn't easy on the road; his bike broke down, tires gave out, rain dampened all enthusiasm, and mankind weren't always kind. He was accustomed to making the best of things, and he rarely thought about himself. When he did, he saw himself as a decent, honest guy, just down on his luck. Why, then, did his bike and tarp-covered pack frighten or disgust people, instantly reducing his already low self-respect?

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Too proud to panhandle, he always offered to work to pay for a meal. One afternoon, as he strained to keep the bike upright, due to a topheavy pack, a high-priced sports car in a hurry passed him. Coughing from the dust and debris the car stirred up, he saw to his surprise that the driver had stopped the car and was backing up. Even more surprising, a well-dressed young woman walked back to him, daintily stepping around stones and weeds in her high heels. She carried a sack and broke into his astonishment with, "Here's lunch for you." "I can pay you," he blurted out. She shook her head, smiled, and hurried back to her car, leaving behind the memory of feminine elegance and a subtle hint of expensive perfume. Her gift of delicious cookies didn't last long, but he savored every crumb.

Another day, the driver of a decrepit, old, pick-up truck leaned out of the window and shoved some bills into his hand as he waited at a stoplight. The light turned green and the driver, whose scruffy appearance belied his generosity, shot off in such a hurry that the biker's thanks evaporated in the wind. These displays of kindness were rare, but they lifted his spirits and he glided on wings of gratitude for days.

The biggest problem was finding a place to sleep. More than once he set up tent in a field only to have a law officer, in the dead of night, pull over and reprimand him. "Hey, Buddy, don't you know this is private property? You are trespassing, so move along." How could he be so thoughtless as to set up a tent in a private field? He learned the hard way the danger of arguing with an officer. Disgruntled and angry, he fought the injustice of it and ended up in jail. Confiscating his driver's license, which was about to expire, they released him the next day without returning it to him. Eager to put distance between himself and the hated jail, he neglected to ask for the license. When he remembered, many miles later, he chose to ignore it, a choice he later regretted. Expired or not, a driver's license was still an important means of identification. From then on, he kept his mouth shut, quietly packed up and moved on.

One night, as a tenderfoot wanderer, before he discovered the necessity of owning a bike, a beautiful full moon encouraged him to continue his trek. Entering a public restroom in a roadside park around 2 a.m., he wearily laid his backpack on the cold floor, leaned against it to rest and fell asleep, undisturbed until daybreak.

Although he never slept in a restroom again, his fear of walking the streets in San Francisco led to an all-night nap in a bus depot. This decision led, indirectly, to his first and last attempt to ride the rails. Leaving the bus depot at dawn, he came upon a railroad yard. Spying a freight train with an open boxcar, he scrambled aboard, and none too soon. As though waiting for him, the train took off immediately with a jerk. Incredibly noisy, the lurching and squeaking and constant motion convinced him that the life of a hobo was not for him. Twenty miles outside the city, the train stopped. Like a kid after a dental appointment, he couldn't get out of that door fast enough!

He veered off along a country road and came upon a man changing a flat tire. When he offered his assistance, he was rewarded by a ride into the next town where he bought a used bike for ten dollars. However, becoming a confirmed bicyclist took time. The initial enchantment lost some of its luster until he learned how to balance his unwieldy backpack. To his surprise, his leg muscles grew stronger and his arms, which had always been thin, developed. Riding the bike daily was like having two pair of legs. Inevitably the bike wore out, so he bought another, always used and reasonable. Ready for anything, his bikes fit into his lifestyle and he went through six or seven during his travels. Like old friends, he relied on them completely.

After leaving the culvert, riding the bike through the snow was precarious, so he pushed it until the sun's warmth left patches of pavement uncovered. A small settlement, hidden behind the grove of aspens, appeared on his left so he knocked on the door of a squat little farmhouse close to the road. The door opened and an elderly man in overalls introduced himself with, "I be John and who be you?" He held a mug of hot soup in his outstretched hand and immediately made the weary traveler feel welcome. His new employer's approach was pathetically eager; there was a mountain of work waiting, and a drifter knocking on his door looking for a job was a gift from heaven.

"This here is a sheep farm!" said Farmer John, not wasting time. "I raise 'em from birth. Those I intend to use as



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grazers or to sell for pets havta be castrated or they be downright unmanageable, even dangerous. The procedure is simple, but impossible to do alone, so you came along at just the right time."

Like it or not, he developed an up-close and personal relationship with a number of precocious rams, all under six months of age. He struggled to hold the strong, writhing, back legs still while the do-it-yourself farmer performed the operation with an all-in-one tool. The job sickened him; he considered running. But remembering the farmer's kindness and especially the mug of hot soup, he averted his head, closed his eyes and hung on.

Although it was sometimes tedious, working for John was like washing his dad's car when he was a kid. No pressure, just given the tools with simple instructions and left alone. A true recycler, before it became popular, the farmer had piles of old lumber with rusty nails that needed to be extracted. The job was nasty, often requiring pliers or hammer to straighten the nails before they could be removed. Snakes and other obnoxious critters unwillingly abandoned their warm havens under the boards. He learned the value of the old adage, "look before you leap," when he stepped over several boards and nearly landed on a huge snake slithering sluggishly out from under the pile. Then there were ditches to be dug so pipes could be laid. Odd jobs had been stacked up for months. Both the farmer and his wife eagerly took advantage of the new hired help. Enjoying the variety, he finished each task with a sense of accomplishment. He cut slats to repair a chicken coop, then wrapped the coop with chicken wire to keep small predators at bay. A clothesline post, slouching north, regained upright status when he filled the hole with gravel. Two broken windowpanes in a storeroom, stuffed for months with crumpled paper, were measured and replaced.

The farmer's wife, energetic and motherly, loved to cook, and the "hired man's" bottomless-pit stomach, long used to deprivation, fared well. He bunked in a trailer by himself on the back lot. Once he went to church with them. The pianist was out, so he played the hymns as best he could with one finger. His employers were good people. He ate at their table and was pleasantly rewarded by their kindness. One of his more enjoyable experiences on the road, he could have stayed forever. It almost seemed like home, but his goal, to attend his daughter's graduation was ever on his mind.

With a pocketful of money he had earned, and unable to face the prospect of riding his bike another thousand miles to his destination, he found a bus station.

Not ready to part with his bike, he took it apart and packed it in a box which fit in the compartment under the bus. For the next thousand miles he and his bike rode in style. At least they both rested while he viewed the monotonous landscape and thought about his future. He thought about the culvert under the Interstate, the wolf, his close brush with disaster and wondered if anyone would believe him.

He also thought about the jobs he had been doing; digging ditches, pounding out rusty nails, picking up trash.

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As the bus gathered momentum, he glanced out the window. Hunched over the handlebars of a decrepit old bike, complete with a huge bundle tied to the back, was a drifter, just like him. Going in the opposite direction, he stared off into the distance, concentrating on his navigation. The bus rider's eyes grew moist as he whispered, "Good



luck and Godspeed my friend."

He leaned back in the seat. He closed his eyes. He imagined he was sitting in the auditorium. The music of Pomp and Circumstance rose majestically; the march of the graduates began. Smiling to himself, he thought of his daughter. Past experiences faded away, and in spite of the rumbling and noise of the bus, he drifted off into sleep. He was going home. AW

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photo by Husky Power Dogsledding

Parents and kids alike can immerse themselves in local activities such as the Discovery Center at the Deep Creek Lake State Park. Kids will delight in the hands-on displays and programs with local naturalists such as critter walks and aviary encounters! For a closer look at local culture, visit an Amish farm where you can take a carriage ride, milk a cow or feed a baby calf. Cowboys and girls can take advantage of our local stables for a trail ride by horseback. In the fall, families love exploring the local corn maze filled with twists and turns as you try to find your way through the tall stalks of corn. Kids who seek adrenaline will love our area go-karts, batting cages and bumper cars. There are many opportunities to discover something new - you've heard of dog sledding - well what about dog carting? Yes, that's right! Meet the dogs, learn about this unique sport and experience a sled on wheels.

With seven state parks and forests, hiking and exploring become second nature. Miles of tree-lined trails, the pitter patter of local wildlife and amazing natural beauty surround you. View the state's highest freefalling waterfall, Muddy Creek Falls, or swim on the shores of the Deep Creek Lake State Park. Water babies can take a group kayak excursion



on the quiet waters on the Savage River Reservoir or learn to fish on a family fishing tour on Deep Creek Lake. Take the kids to the Adventure Sports Center International where they will love the experience of learning river rafting on a beautiful man-made course. The rapids can be controlled from Class I all the way to Class IV, so beginners and experts alike love this course. The 2014 Canoe Slalom World Championship will be held on the course this September, so take the opportunity to raft where the pros do! Then, head out to our area rivers and paddle the rapids on the Youghiogheny River on a rafting adventure that even the kids can participate in!

Your Deep Creek Experience is not complete until you zip through the trees on a high-flying canopy tour or sail down Marsh Mountain on a self-controlled mountain coaster ride. Kids can pan for "gold" and build skills while trying the challenge course. If more water is what you crave, test your balance and skill waterskiing or wake boarding. Feel the wind in your hair as you bound the wakes on a wave runner or Jet Ski. Looking for a break? Kick back on a relaxing pontoon boat ride and cruise the shores of the lake, cozy up on a lounge chair on a deck or enjoy a spa day complete with massages, manicures and facials.

Slow down a bit and visit our quaint, small towns. Take a step back in time and peruse local museums including a restored train station and transportation museum. Tour a historic home and watch as local artisans practice their craft. Speaking of art, don't miss our local glassblowing factory – take a tour, watch and learn about the process and then browse the showroom afterwards. Practice your swing on one of our `many golf courses, built into the gorgeous landscape of our region. Kids will love our mini-golf courses too! Take home memories of your trip with a visit to our local shops featuring locally made products, clothing, antiques, crafts, books and much more!





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All of this adventure and shopping and relaxing just make us hungry! Well, don't worry – with a multitude of restaurants, cafes and bars, your bellies will be just as happy. Whether you're looking for a hearty breakfast, light lunch or delicious dinner, we have a cuisine to fit your palate and budget. From lake front dining to small town café's, our region has a wide variety to choose from including hand tossed pizzas, burgers, steaks, coffees, seafood and more. End your meal with a sweet treat at one of our local ice cream locations for a tasty bite that the kids will love!

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Traveling in the World of Emotion

by Jeremy Parris

Traveling is a journey through and through. When a trip is conceived it sparks a dream. A dream that leads to adventure, full of hope, fear, adventure, doubt, and many other emotions. A trip that slowly starts to fill your existence. You pursue ideas, and get bogged down in research to some far away land your heading to. Trying to get a preemptive taste of what it may be like, looking at pictures of local scenery and already falling in love.

Adventure is that gal who grabs you and throws you over her shoulder and takes you somewhere you never expected to go. And you better believe she won't let you down until she's ready to.

Once she does though, you immediately miss her warm embrace. What it felt like to be held by such grizzled experienced gentle arms. You never feel as high or alive as when she'd lift you above the clouds, into the interior of her lovers world, Dream.

Dream, a fickle fellow. Although he sticks with you more than Adventure does, he still remains elusive at times, and hard to summon up when you will 'em. He'll fill you with hopes and promises, an opiate of a powerful persuasion, until all your lines begin to blur and grow fuzzy with Excitement, his devious brother. Then before you know it, you're out of the clouds and Dream has passed you by. Only a distant memory that fades with each setting of the sun. And with that darkness comes Fear.

Fear, a misunderstood lord. For his peasants, Insecurity, Doubt, and Anxiety, often get confused for their king. Yet Fear rules with a guiding fist. He reveals your walls so you can press up against, and topple them down. Granted he may not be as forgiving as Dream, but it's just because of his calloused reputation. Yet Fear still lusts after his lost lover Hope.

Hope, the gentle caretaker. With one look she banishes Fear's peasants, a single touch capable of re-imbuing the soul with her radiant light, and with a single breath she breathes life into those who are lost. She'll make you impervious to life's vices and poisons. A shield against the daggers of the dark. A faithful companion as long as you have Belief.

Belief, a lonesome trickster. Capable of leading even the most sincere astray with false Hopes of success. Yet if Belief can be worked with, rather than leaned on for support, then true progress can be gained. For Belief needs a partner, and hates being relied upon elusively. Belief's trick being he's powerless alone, but with action even Dream is not out of his reach. Yet he's hardly capable of the guidance that is offered by Love.

Love, the builder of the mosaic. Always working in the background and alongside her fellow emotions. Capable of crumbling empires or trumping the most stout Fear, Doubt, or Insecurity. Love is capable of all. She'll brush you off when you fall, and then show you how to deal with any situation with grace and finesse. She'll show you the best side of all her emotions, and yourself, giving you the strength needed to carry on toward whatever ends you have in sight, be it traveling to a foreign, far away land or finishing out the day.

When you travel, your closest companion is yourself. Your journey starts the second you dream up the idea that will one day manifest into a reality. All the emotional bumps and turns from conception to completion are just as much a part of your journey as the monuments you'll see and the people you'll meet along the way. Be sure going into whatever journey that you may embark on that you're ready to travel with your emotions. For they can elevate your trip into something that you never expected, or kill it in the dirt before you take your first step to get there.



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