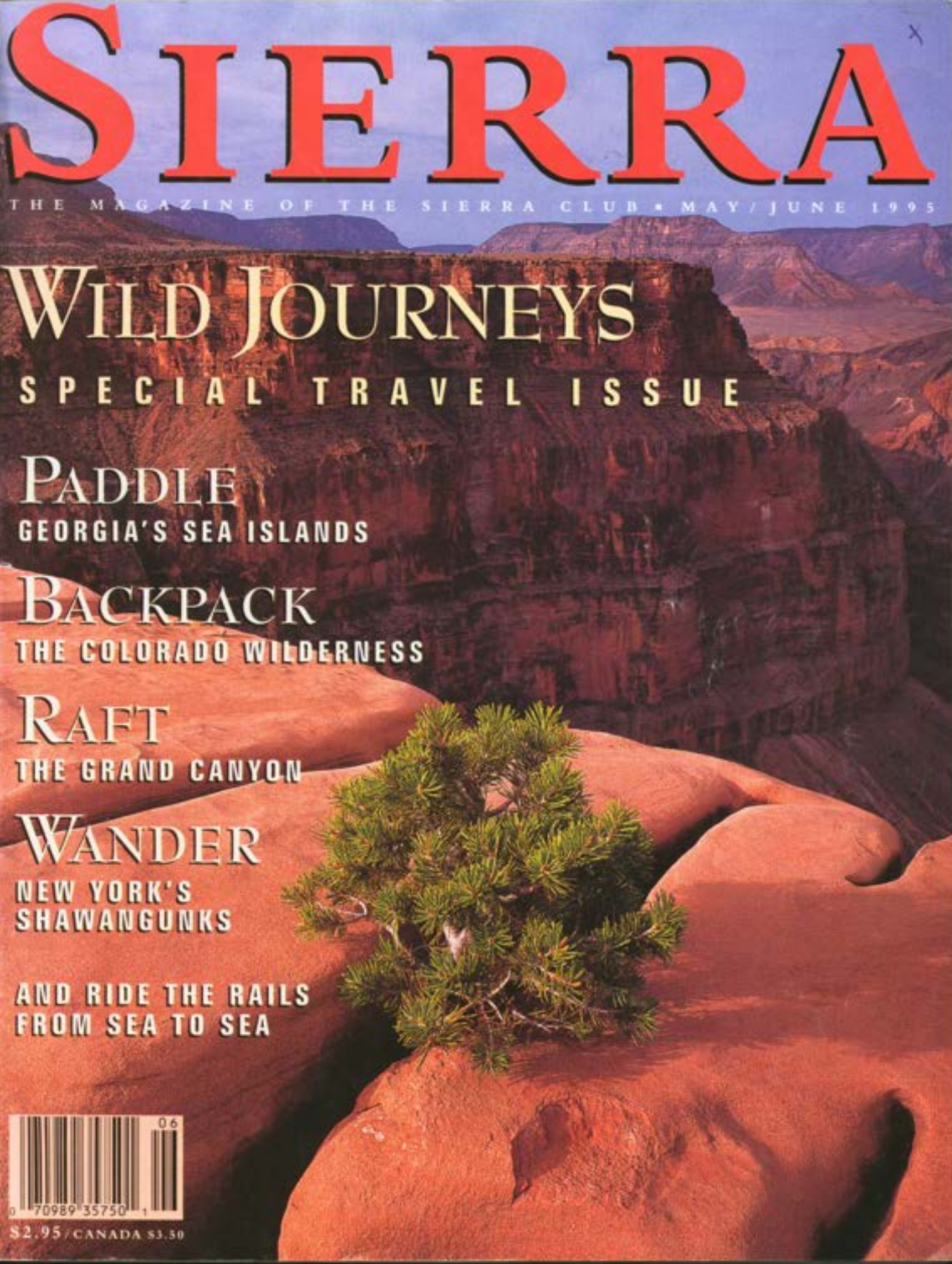
SIERRA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SIERRA CLUB • MAY/JUNE 1995



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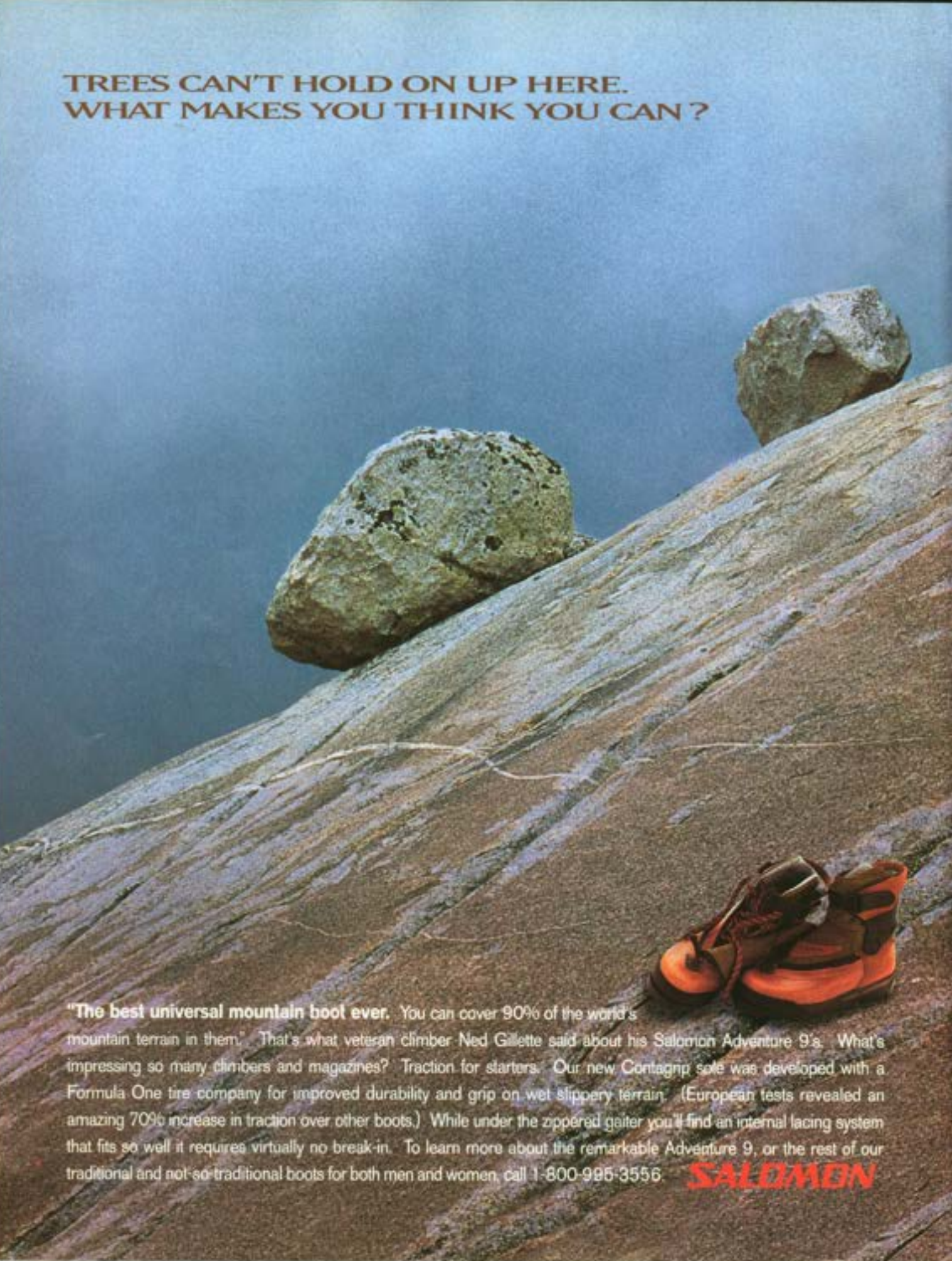

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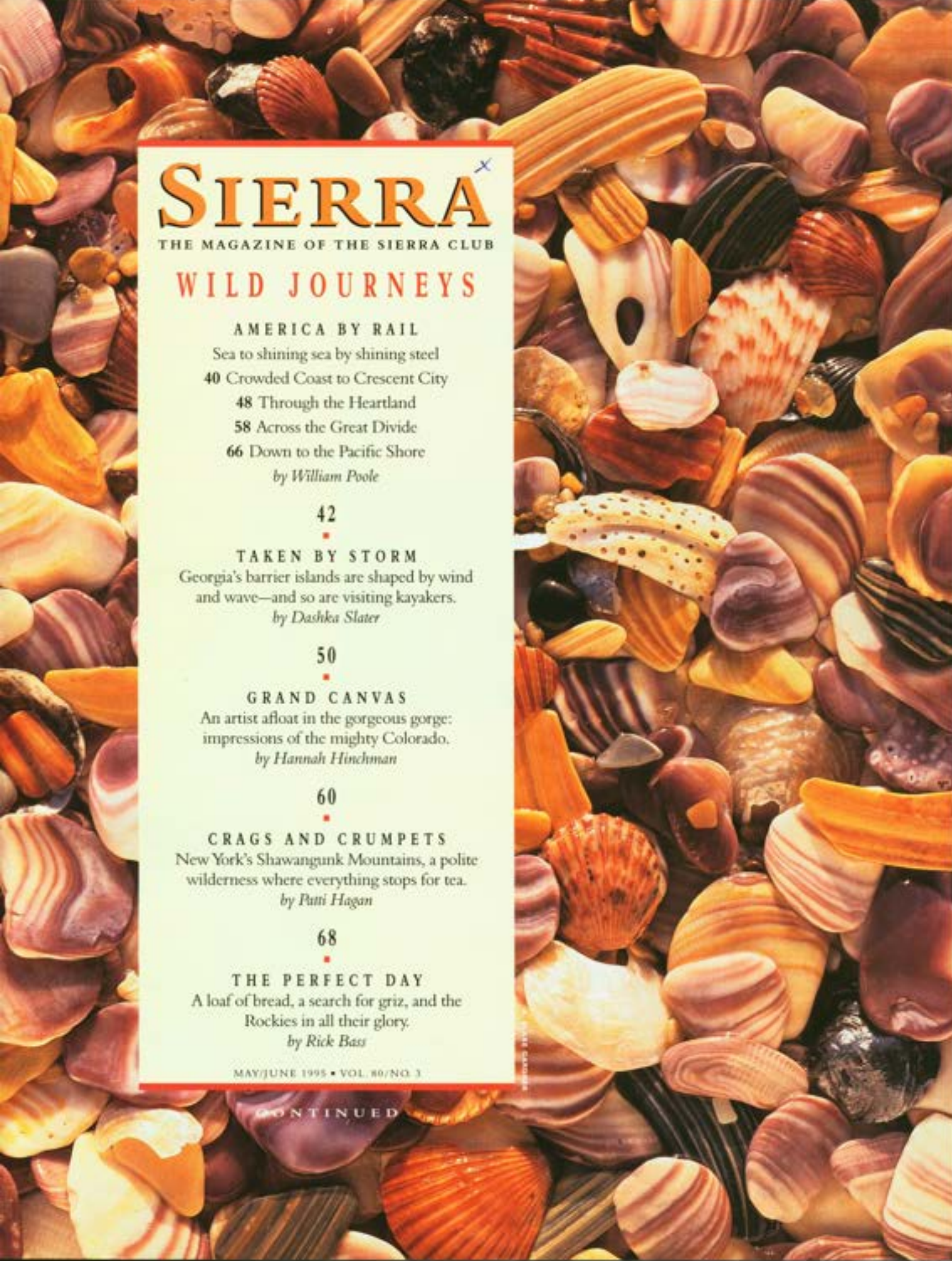

SIERRA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SIERRA CLUB

WILD JOURNEYS

MAY/JUNE 1995 • VOL. 80/NO. 3

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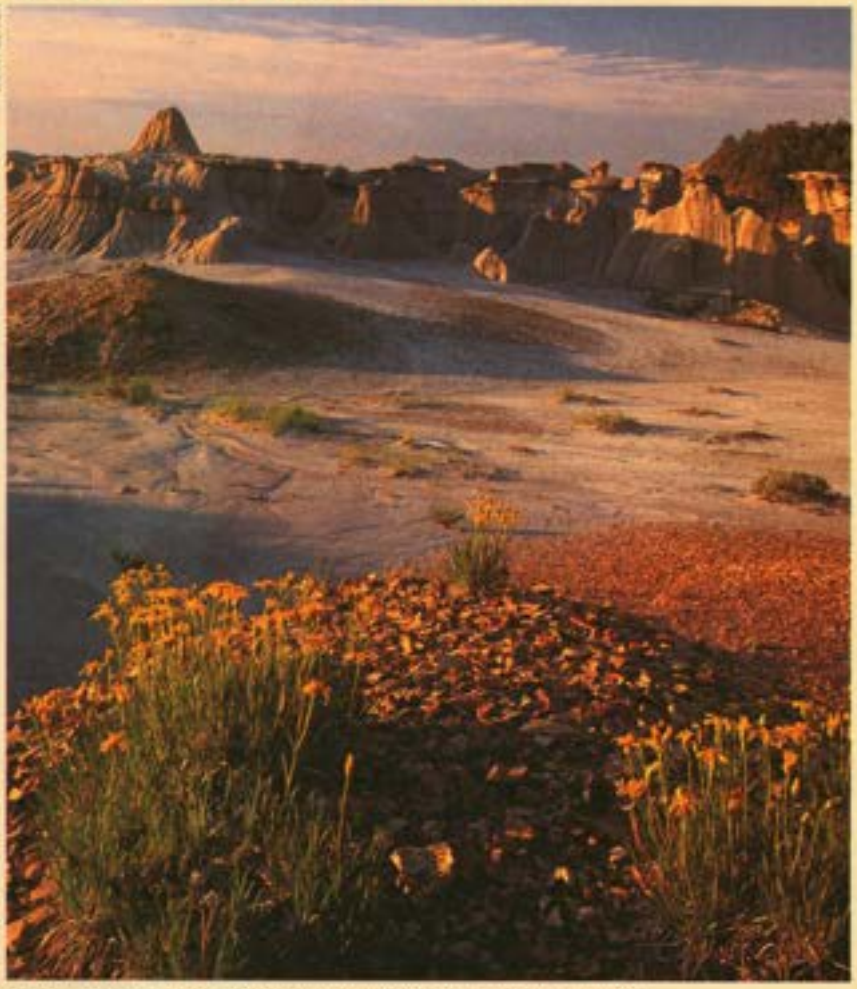
SIERRA



Goldenweed in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota, page 90.

COVER

Sandstone cliffs along the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

Photo by Carr Clifton

Politicians say the darndest things, page 24.

DEPARTMENTS

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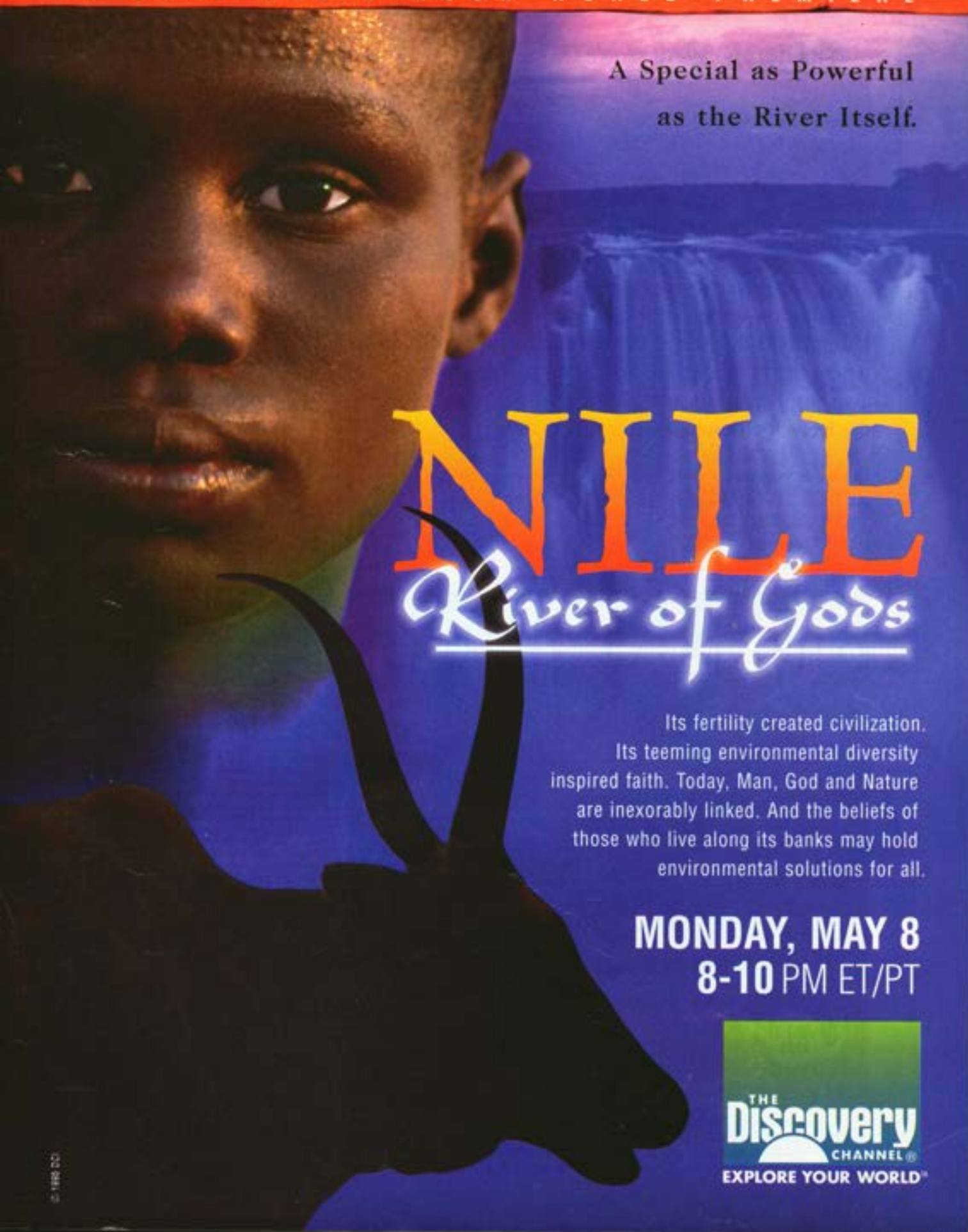

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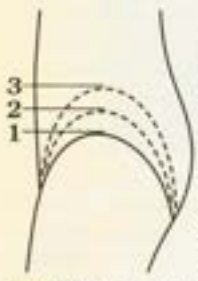

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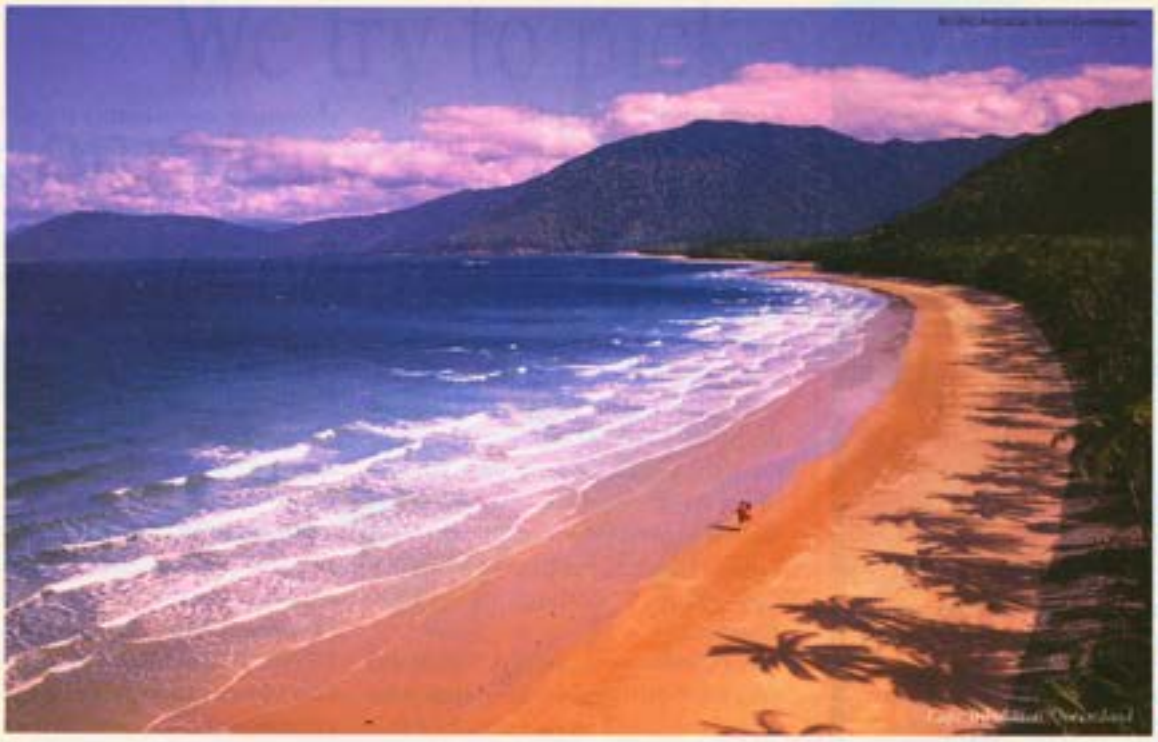

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LETTERS

NAPTIME'S OVER

May Rick Bass' "Thunder and Lightning" (January/February) get a Pulitzer nomination for being as fine a piece of journalism as I've seen in a long time. I, too, have read for benefits and watched my eco-chic audience's enchantment when I read about raft flips, relationship flips, civil-disobedience arrests, and the poignant glory of the web in which we live. I've seen the light die from their eyes when I began to read names and addresses, when I moved down off the stage to hand out flyers, petitions, and letters that required nothing more than signatures.

For three years I camped, hiked, and ran rivers with a group of friends who would swear to you that they love this Colorado Plateau. I saw their efforts for the place consist of the investment of thousands of dollars in hip gear, hours of drunken conversation around campfires, with endless toasts to John Muir and Ed Abbey and The River, culminating, inevitably in the declaration that our earth is nothing but a "rock spinning in space and, hey, ol' Ma Earth will take back her own." I've met hundreds of these people, the charming-second-home-in-the-glorious-West audiences and the bozos who think it's activism to run their mouths. Imagine what one day a month of real environmental activism by each of them could yield.

I was once taught that you cannot shame people into taking responsibility. I no longer believe that. What we are *not* doing is a shame.

Thanks, Rick, for scholarship, guts, rage, and craft. Thanks for thundering an alarm. I have contacted the Yaak Valley protectors. I will continue to work here in my own backyard. For me, yet again, the nap is over.

Mary Sojourner
Flagstaff, Arizona

Three cheers for Rick Bass' beautiful, passionate essay on the Rockies ecosystem and whether it will remain. Surely if these precious "islands" are not allowed to have some connection to their larger contexts, they will not remain healthy. For some, wilderness seems a waste, or only a stage for development. But if we lose true wildness in nature, then undoubtedly we will lose some link to what is whole and natural within ourselves.

Gregory Futch
Austin, Texas

THE PRICE OF SILENCE?

Bruce Hamilton ended his excellent editorial "Clout: Use It or Lose It" ("Sierra Club Bulletin," January/February) with "All it takes for the Wise Use Movement to prevail is for enough citizens to sit out environmental battles, and leave Congress and the statehouses to the pollution peddlers." Another way I have heard it summed up: "The only way evil can succeed is for good people to do nothing."

Tine Thevenin
Bloomington, Minnesota

Editor's note: *To do something now, fill out the Environmental Bill of Rights petition between pages 80 and 81. For additional ideas on how to stop the War on the Environment, read "Standing Up for the Planet," page 79.*

WHY GERMANY LEADS

Curtis Moore's article ("Green Revolution in the Making," January/February) is an excellent attempt to address several issues simultaneously. Unfortunately, though, he stops short of drawing the obvious conclusion that the failure is, at root, not that of government or business, but of the environmental community for failing to create the level of public awareness that is found in competing countries, especially Germany. Let us not smugly say that the fault rests with others, when we have not done our own job of public education well enough.

Barney Freiberg-Dale
Newton, Massachusetts

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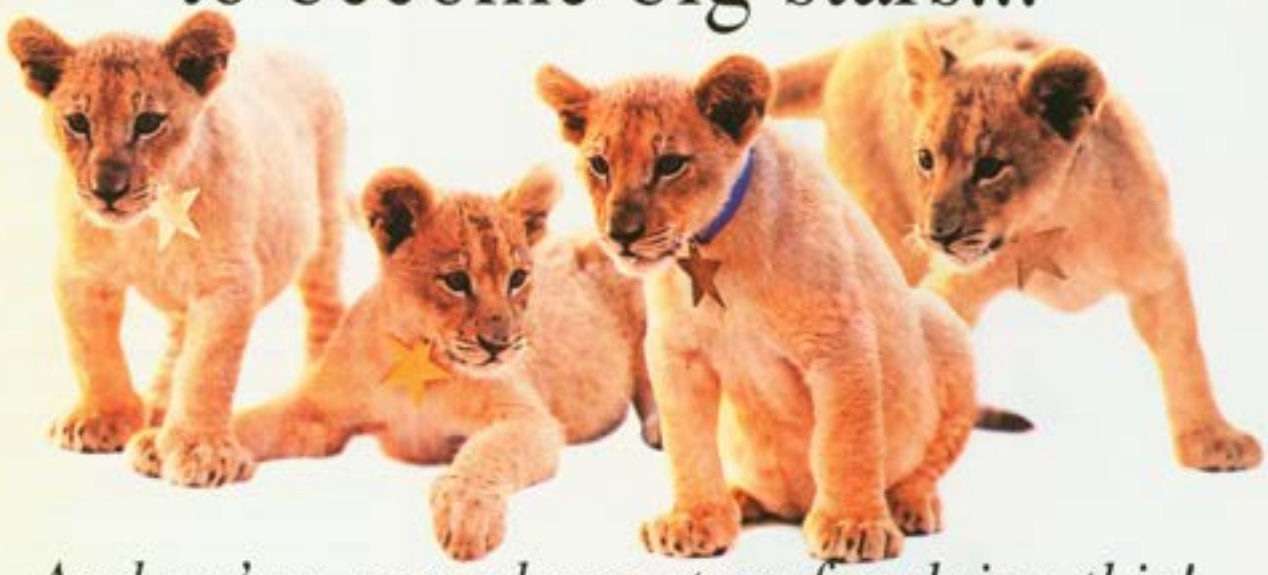

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LETTERS

Your comparison of the United States and Germany in regard to the use of technology and regulation to help control and clean up industrial pollution is both unfair and unrealistic. The tax and regulatory burden on German industry is so high that German companies are unable to compete outside of their own country, which is a partially closed, subsidized market. German companies that do compete outside of Germany do so by setting up operations in the market country, free of German government regulation.

Stephen D. Zeller
Alpharetta, Georgia

Curtis Moore replies: *Mr. Zeller and I must know two different nations called Germany. The one I described is the world's largest exporter, surpassing both the United States and Japan. It exports mostly domestically manufactured goods—unlike the United States, which deals heavily in commodities like raw logs, soybeans, and coal, as well as weapons of war.*

Most importantly, German products—ranging from light bulbs and turbines to autos and trains—are superior to rival goods because they comply with German regulations that require state-of-the-art pollution control and, therefore, efficiency.

CORRECTION

The Owyhee Canyonlands lawsuit that was mentioned in "Sierra Club Bulletin" (January/February) was filed by the Land and Water Fund, not by the Sierra Club, as stated in the article. The plaintiffs were the Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Wildlife Federation, Idaho Wildlife Council Region 3, Idaho Rivers United, The Wilderness Society, Committee for Idaho's High Desert, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, and concerned individuals.

✍ Sierra *welcomes letters from readers in response to recently published articles. Letters may be edited due to limitations of space or in the interests of clarity. Write to us at 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109; Fax (415) 776-4868; E-mail address: sierra.letters@sierraclub.org*

Arrivals and Departures

Travel is an eternally inviting prospect—a chance to dust off backpacks, shake up routines, and reawaken a sense of adventure. Many of us at *Sierra* first developed a love of nature through the back door (or is it the front door?) of wanderlust.

For good reason, almost every page of the first issues of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* more than a hundred years ago contained tales of journeys. "Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of the pine trees," Sierra Club founder John Muir proclaimed. "Their sermons on the mountains go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish."

The five travel pieces assembled in this issue by Senior Editor Reed McManus (a hiker, skier, kayaker, and outings leader himself) demonstrate that good travel writing can help lay the groundwork for good conservation. It also makes delightful reading.

MORE THAN ARMCHAIR TRAVEL HAS been occupying us recently at *Sierra*, however—some of us are moving on. As a result of last fall's overall staff reduction at the Sierra Club (see "Our Finances and Our Future" by Club President J. Robert Cox in the November/December 1994 "Sierra Club Bulletin"), three longtime *Sierra* editors elected to resign. Associate Editor Mark Mardon, who ably handled "Clubways" and "In Print," strode off to Yosemite to write a book entitled *Into the Wilderness*. Deputy Editor Annie Stine, who edited "Afield" and kept us well organized and literarily *au courant*, is now preparing *This Close to Home*, a collection of essays for Sierra Club Books (many of which first appeared in *Sierra*'s "Whereabouts" column). Amiable and articulate Editor-in-Chief Jonathan King, who skillfully helped us grow from house organ to nationally recognized magazine, is now pursuing his own writing projects. Two months after their departure, a sadness still lingers around the office: part of our family is gone.

Yet with the end of that era has come a new beginning. I am now the editor-in-chief, with 25 years of bylines, deadlines, and occupational wrinkles—and a long, happy association with the Sierra Club. In the early 1970s I scrambled up rocks with the Angeles Chapter and got my first taste of advocacy chairing Colorado's Roaring Fork Group. Over the years, I've edited *Climbing* and *High Country News* and written for *Defenders*, *Audubon*, and *National Wildlife*. For the past ten years I've been an editor here at *Sierra*.

In January the magazine's new/old team (all of us are Sierra Club veterans) met to chart the future. We're planning myth-busting coverage of the War on the Environment now raging in Washington, D.C., and many state legislatures. We've scheduled a special issue on the Wild Planet and another on Endangered Species. We'll expand our coverage of personal issues, such as food and health, while continuing to offer the fine photography, political analysis, and outdoor adventure that have always been our trademark. We also hope to become a more interactive magazine—one that offers a variety of links to our editors, the Sierra Club, and government officials.

Our charge is nothing less than to deliver the urgent and important message of the most powerful grassroots environmental group in the world, using all the wit, eloquence, wisdom, and hard, cold facts we can muster. We are humbled by the magnitude of that challenge, but eager for the opportunity to open new doors for our readers.

—Joan Hamilton

Carl Pope

Bringing in the Sheaves

Harvest time comes early this year for rural America. The seeds were sown last fall by Agribusiness, Inc., and now American farmers are set to reap a bitter crop.

Ag Alert is the weekly newsletter of the California Farm Bureau Federation. Its pages, like those of many other farm publications, have beaten home a simple message for the past decade: the federal government is a threat to farmers' way of life. Lavish ads for the latest pesticide formulations are interspersed with lurid, trumped-up horror stories about arrogant environmental regulators. Editorials demand that Congress dismantle environmental rules, return power to the states, and get off farmers' backs.

Now, with the new congressional majority busy fulfilling this wish list, the giant corporate farms, multinational food conglomerates, and chemical companies are gloating. For agribusiness, federal farm programs (apart from the welcome subsidies) are annoyances that tend to put rural people first, not global markets. In *Ag Alert*, Dean Kleckner, head of the American Farm Bureau Federation, welcomes the "tidal wave of change in D.C.," including cost/benefit analysis of environmental regulations, payoffs to property owners for complying with federal regulations, and curbs on the federal government's ability to set environmental standards for all Americans.

Not all of rural America has signed on to the Farm Bureau's anti-government, anti-environmental crusade. Farmers are a diverse and independent bunch. Many are committed environmentalists; some are members of the Sierra Club. Farm groups like the National Farmers Organization and Prairie Fire explicitly reject the Farm Bureau's approach.

And with good reason, given that the quality of rural life has been greatly improved by the vilified federal government. Even Farm Bureau newsletters rely on a federally supported rural mail delivery system financed largely by city dwellers. Rural reading lamps are powered by electrical co-ops built by low-interest federal loans, which also finance the telephone lines Farm Bureau supporters use to harangue their neighbors about the evils of big government. Many western farmers owe their livelihoods to heavily subsidized Bureau of Reclamation water projects, and ranchers run their cattle at below-market (and below-cost) rates on public land. In wetter parts of the country, the dams, dikes, and flood relief programs that help farms survive come, largely, courtesy of Washington, D.C., and new crop varieties and farming techniques are developed through federally supported research at land-grant colleges and by the USDA. Finally, farmers turn to federal farm subsidies to increase the price they get for their crops.

They have sown the wind
and they shall reap
the whirlwind.

■

Historically, farmers have voted their interests based on where the parties and candidates stood on these farm issues. As late as 1986, hard times and hostile Reagan administration farm policies yielded stunning defeats for Republican congressional candidates in the Farm Belt. Last November, however, rural voters were convinced to vote not on the basis of farm policy, but on environmental policy; in many districts, they provided the crucial edge for the Republican electoral sweep.

Now the budget-cutting Congress they elected takes up the $50-billion Farm Bill. Thus far, the Farm Bureau has been slow to admit that the interests of its members and those of the new order in Washington may not always coincide. Even as he trumpeted deficit reduction, for example, Kleckner still imagined a 1995 Farm Bill that "increases net farm income" and spares farm programs—a naive hope at best for a Congress fixated on slashing the budget.

But family farmers stand to lose more than their subsidies. Farmers suffer more than most people from environmental degradation, yet rural environmental standards are already far weaker than those protecting cities. Drinking water in the countryside is far more likely to be contaminated; pesticide poisoning is a serious problem, causing certain types of cancers to soar; industrial facilities have far less stringent air-pollution controls; and hazardous-waste dumps are increasingly being sloughed off on rural communities, particularly those with large minority populations.

Also poisoned has been the common ground between rural Americans and urban environmentalists. An opportunity to heal that rift is coming with the debate over the Farm Bill, when both groups can unite to support programs that will improve economic prospects for small farmers, preserve wildlife and wetlands, reduce health threats in rural communities, and improve water quality. Farmers may be correct in identifying Washington, D.C., as a threatening place—but the threat is from those who would pit one group of Americans against another on the issue of a clean and whole environment. ■

CARL POPE *is the executive director of the Sierra Club.*

M-M-M-MOCHA

Remember your first time camping? How you packed lotsa stuff you didn't need but still forgot a dry pair of socks. Yet somehow once you'd ditched your pack and pitched your tent you noticed that WOW– the sky had quadrupled! And getting there, you realized, had been the really hard part.

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Michael Castleman

Clean Air Up There

This was supposed to be the decade when airline passengers could finally breathe easily. Smoking was banned on virtually all U.S. domestic flights in 1990, and by this summer all U.S. carriers are expected to prohibit smoking on international flights.

But a funny thing happened as the air began to clear. The nation's flight attendants and many frequent flyers discovered that they continued to develop headaches, nausea, light-headedness, and other discomforts they once blamed on second-hand smoke. These symptoms were especially prevalent on long flights aboard the nation's newer aircraft. The Association of Flight Attendants soon singled out fresh air—or, more precisely, the lack of it—on the latest generation of aircraft.

Older-model airliners such as the McDonnell Douglas DC-9 and the Boeing 727 and 747 provide passengers with 100 percent fresh air every three minutes. On its way to the passenger compartment, this air is heated by the engines, and must be cooled before it enters the cabin. The airlines maintain that this air-conditioning (and the diversion of air from the engines' turbines) costs them $60,000 per plane every year. To reduce expenses, the newest commercial aircraft mix 50 percent fresh air with 50 percent recirculated air, and send it through the cabin once every seven minutes.

Flight attendants and frequent-flyer groups contend that air recirculation goes against the wisdom of leading medical authorities. They cite a 1986 report by the National Research Council recommending 100 percent fresh air for aircraft passengers and crew. Today's aircraft ventilation systems, flight attendants say, violate federal safety guidelines and make people ill.

The airlines insist that they are in compliance with government rules. Last spring, the Air Transport Association, an airline-industry trade group, released the results of a study showing that air quality inside commercial aircraft exceeds standards set by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration. According to the report, aircraft carbon dioxide levels topped out at 1,395 parts per million (ppm), well below the OSHA safety limit of 5,000 ppm.

But officials with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health point out that while the OSHA standard for carbon dioxide is, indeed, 5,000 ppm, that's for healthy adults in *workplaces*. In facilities that serve the general public (which includes people of all ages, some well and some not) the legal limit is 1,000 ppm. Some newer

Air travel can leave you breathless.

■ ■ ■

planes—such as the McDonnell Douglas MD-80 and the Boeing 757 and 767—don't meet the CO_2 standard and have higher levels of particulates, bacteria, fungi, and volatile organic compounds (fumes) than the older aircraft.

High CO_2 levels aren't dangerous in themselves; most people merely feel them as "stuffiness." But they can cause serious problems for those with respiratory or immune-system problems.

The transmission of disease, however, is a hazard of air recirculation that could affect all passengers. Several influenza outbreaks have been traced to aircraft, and there's strong anecdotal evidence that airplane ventilation systems spread colds and other illnesses. Last year Congress authorized the Federal Aviation Administration to do a definitive study, but none has commenced. Meanwhile, the colds caught in flight pale next to the disease health officials now worry might be spread on airplanes—tuberculosis.

In 1992 an Alaska Airlines passenger on a flight from Guadalajara, Mexico, to San Francisco fell ill and was later diagnosed with TB. Tests showed that two other passengers were also infected. It's not clear that the infections occurred on the plane, but such cases cause concern. With tuberculosis rates rising, the last thing we need is an increased likelihood of transmission. Switching to 100 percent fresh air would not eliminate the risk of infection, but it would minimize it.

According to the industry report, current fresh air supplies vary from less than 7 cubic feet per minute per passenger for those sardine-canned into economy class to 50 cubic feet per minute for those in first class. While the cockpit crew has the ability to curtail the amount of passenger ventilation in order to conserve still more fuel, its own ventilation system keeps it fresh as a daisy.

Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) plans to introduce a bill in Congress this year that would set minimum standards for airplane cabin air. Don't hold your breath until it becomes law; in the meantime, you can avoid newer-generation aircraft like the Boeing 757,

fly on uncrowded flights, and ask cabin staff to increase the ventilation.

You've got even more to worry about on international flights. In an effort to thwart hitchhiking insects, 18 countries require airlines to spray passenger compartments with insecticide before landing: Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Congo, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, India, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, New Caledonia, Nicaragua, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago, and Yemen. Airlines landing in these countries use a product called Black Knight Roach Killer, whose label includes a familiar warning: "Avoid breathing vapors. Avoid contact with skin and eyes." In a macabre contradiction, the label goes on to instruct personnel to spray while the crew and passengers are on board, the doors sealed, and the ventilation system off. (Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Panama, and Fiji require spraying of planes, but allow it when the plane is empty.) Unwilling victims have complained that the insecticide causes headaches, nausea, fatigue, immune suppression, memory loss, and even seizures.

Last year, U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña said the sprayings' risks to human health outweigh any possible benefit, and asked more than two dozen countries to end their spraying requirements entirely. Seven did, but none of the above. In January Peña proposed that airlines and travel agents be required to notify passengers if the country they are traveling to requires spraying while passengers are on board.

The United States can't force other countries to halt this pesticide use, and the issue isn't considered important enough to threaten commercial agreements. But many of the offenders rely on the tourist dollar. If your favorite destination is on this list, contact its national tourist board and say you'll head elsewhere unless airplane spraying stops. If enough people raise a stink, we might just get some clean air along with our complimentary beverages. ▪

MICHAEL CASTLEMAN *is a Bay Area writer on health and the environment.*

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Christine Colasurdo

Return to Harmony

When I hiked the Harmony Trail in the summer of 1991, I heard nothing. No birdsong, no wind in the trees, no leaf-crunching of deer, not even the scurry of a chipmunk. That was 11 years after the eruption of Mount St. Helens. Harmony Creek was a welcome ribbon of green in the gray, blast-scoured landscape. Young willows and alders had begun reclaiming the creek's moist pockets in the ridge, and bright orange salmonberries and pink monkeyflowers fought for attention under the hot August sun. The land was coming back.

But when I listened for the mattress-spring caw of a hungry jay, all I heard was the soft rush of the creek tumbling into the expanse of Spirit Lake, its surface several square miles larger than before the eruption and half-smothered with floating logs. My memory brought back a noise the land no longer created. It was the ghost sound of Harmony Falls, which once roared 100 feet down a steep cliff into the lake.

In May 1980, Spirit Lake—known for swallowing swimmers whose corpses never resurfaced—devoured Harmony Falls entire. Bloated by mudflows, the lake rose 200 feet. It consumed the old wood lodge where I had lived and worked. Its river otters, migrating salmon, and mergansers were gone. In their place was an ear-ringing silence.

I sat down on the log-choked shore. On my left, the cracked hulk of the volcano sprawled across the southern horizon. In front of me, the entire east arm of Spirit Lake was a solid mass of dead trees. All that remained of the lake's old-growth forest was this colossal raft. When the volcano's north face collapsed and slammed into the lake's south shore, it caused a giant wave that crested 500 feet up the forested basin. When the water washed back down, it took the trees and topsoil with it.

By 1991, the raft had begun to sink, log by log. Some trees sank upright, pulled by the weight of their root wad. These standing skeletons formed an underwater forest, their silent shapes still towering against the rock wall where Harmony Falls once fell.

Three years later, I hike the Harmony Trail again, now at the heart of the 110,000-acre Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. With each visit, I realize that Spirit Lake has taught me the subversive meaning of wilderness: that which is beyond human control. Like a snake, the mountain sheds its skin every 200 years. It's a trickster landscape where things up and vanish.

A September storm hugs the ridge today. It is terrible weather, and no other visitors have braved the rain. As I zip up my parka, I contemplate the crunch of pumice under

Catching up with nature on Mount St. Helens.

■ ■ ■

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my boots, often the only sound I can hear while hiking through the blast zone.

As the trail descends and the rain lets up, I'm surprised to see Pacific silver firs punching dark-green triangles out of the eroded valley below. Some are already 20 feet tall. As I run my hand along a rain-dampened snag, a chipmunk races past. Then another, so fast I spy only the swaying twig it leaves behind. Bleeding heart, vanilla leaf, bunchberry, beadlily, trefoil foamflower, trillium: I am bombarded with life. Three years ago I was preoccupied with the loss of Harmony Falls; now I can't take everything in. A raven squawks upridge while a hawk catches the high currents and spirals out of sight. As I reach the shore, I discover that the storm has dispersed the log raft, and a white-pumice beach now descends into the lake's clear water. I step over huckleberry-studded coyote scat to reach the water's edge.

The sun breaks out of the southwest sky. A long, high tone wafts from the opposite bank: is it an elk whistle or the wind? Now, nothing. I stare out over the lake. Suddenly the great silence of 230 square miles of disappeared forest claims the place again. This time, though, I inhale the stillness in deep draughts, and ready myself for the ghostly crash of the vanished falls.

But the silence cracks in an arc and a splash; an old sound rears up, and my jaw drops open. It's not a wave, not a rolling log, not some windy hallucination, but a trout in Spirit Lake. A trout in a lake that actually simmered for days after the eruption, that scientists said could not support fish. A silver semicircle dancing at Harmony Creek's outlet, where salmon once spawned. I stand motionless, my mind racing to catch up with the land. Then I laugh out loud. *Tricked again.* ■

CHRISTINE COLASURDO *is writing a book about the recovery of life on Mount St. Helens. She lives in San Francisco.*

► For more information, contact Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, 42218 N.E. Yale Bridge Rd., Amboy, WA 98601; (360) 750-3900.

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Stump Speeches

Like a sleeper wave tossing dead fish far up on the shore, last November's electoral tsunami deposited a spectacular collection of stinkers in high places throughout the halls of Capitol Hill and America's statehouses. These are legislators for whom a zero rating from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is a badge of honor; who use the word "environmentalist" where once they would have used "communist"; who blatantly, even proudly, side with the polluters and exploiters in seeking to turn back the environmental gains of not only the last 25 years but the last century.

Sounds like hyperbole? Consider, then, newly elected Representative Barbara Cubin (R-Wyo.), who believes that there is no legal basis for national forests and national parks. "The federal government doesn't have a right to own any lands," she insists, "except for post offices and armed forces bases."

BY PAUL RAUBER

Or there's Cubin's fellow frosh Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho), whose idea of an endangered species is "the white Anglo-Saxon male." As for the truly endangered chinook salmon, she asks how she can take their plight seriously "when you can go and buy a can of salmon off the shelf in Albertsons?"

Many of the new legislators (as well as veterans suddenly thrust into positions of power) are at great pains to clarify their anti-environmentalist *bona fides*. "I hope people don't expect an environmentalist outlook from me," cautions John Nichols (R-N.C.), the new chair of the North Carolina House Committee on Health and Environment, "because I don't have one." (Also in North Carolina, State Representative Rex Baker (R) accused the Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources of having a "hidden agenda" to educate children about the environment.)

The hands-down winner, however, of the Least-Likely-to-Be-Mistaken-for-a-Tree-Hugger Award is Don Young (R-Alaska), the new chair of the House Resources Committee. (It used to be the House *Natural* Resources Committee, but the new leadership found the emphasis on nature offensive.) Young (LCV rating 0) replaced George Miller (D-Calif., LCV rating 92); he promises to use his reign as chair "to show people who environmentalists are, the peo-

For the new kids in power, it's payback time.

■ ■ ■

ple who drive around in their limousines and live in their big mansions and say 'I'm an environmentalist' and how elitist they really are." How elitist is that? They're "the most despicable group of individuals I've ever been around . . . the self-centered bunch, the waffle-stomping, Harvard-graduating, intellectual bunch of idiots that don't understand that they're leading this country into environmental disaster."

Young's own leadership approach was nicely summed up recently by William Condit, his head staff person on the House Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee: "Basically," explained Condit, "whatever Kennecott Mining Company wants is what Don Young wants." Young also complains that elitist environmentalists want to create a new national park every time they see a tree "in a Safeway parking lot." What does Young see in a tree? "I see paper to blow your nose."

Among the federal laws Young is itching to rewrite is the Endangered Species Act, which may come up for reauthorization this year. Young voted for the original ESA in 1973, but now says that he didn't realize it would be used to protect, well, *all* species. "We had envisioned trying to protect, you know, pigeons and things like that," he told the Bureau of National Affairs' *Daily Report for Executives*. "We never thought about mussels and ferns and flowers and all these subspecies of squirrels and birds." Young's colleague, freshman Representative Sonny "I Got You, Babe" Bono (R-Calif.), has a straightforward solution to the troublesome endangered subspecies problem: "Give them all a designated area and then blow it up."

Elevated at the same time as Young was his *paisano* Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska), who is now chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Murkowski is blaming environmentalists (rather than a long series of dry holes) for the fact that oil companies are now turning to Colombia rather than Alaska. "They'd rather take their chances with drug lords and

PRIORITIES

guerrillas in Colombia," he told the Alaska State Legislature, "than with the Alaska Department of Revenue and the Sierra Club."

As the *Washington Post* recently warned, "No idea is too radical to warrant consideration by the new Republican management." Here, for example, is Representative James Hansen (R-Utah): "I honestly feel that one of the most prudent things we could do is to pass legislation that turns [over] the BLM lands to the states." Representative Charlie Taylor (R-N.C.) wants to make America "the lumber bin of the world." House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-Texas) has introduced a bill to repeal provisions of the Clean Air Act that reduce toxic and carcinogenic emissions. And Senator Bob Smith (R-N.H.) and Representative Mike Oxley (R-Ohio) propose to remove polluters' liability for toxic dumps created before 1980, when they presumably didn't know any better.

For ideological guidance and public-real-estate-disposal advice, the new management is turning to Capitol Hill's corporate-financed right-wing think tanks. In January the Appropriations Subcommittee of the House Interior Committee received with approval recommendations from Scott Hodge of the Heritage Foundation to halt funding for the Bureau of Land Management and to abolish the National Biological Survey and even the venerable U.S. Geological Survey.

"What this strategy would mean for land and resource management programs," Hodge testified, "is consolidating the four major agencies—the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service into a single natural-resources agency. Congress should then begin a five-to-seven-year effort to give most of the land controlled by this agency back to the states." Under the Heritage proposal, the federal government would keep only the "crown jewels" of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and

the Grand Canyon, turning the rest over to state legislatures to do with as they see fit.

The idea of "devolution," of returning authority over environmental matters to the states, is a cornerstone of the new thinking in Washington. While most citizens believed the matter to have been rather decisively settled six score and ten years ago, many members of Congress, governors, and legislators—particularly in the western states—are ready to fight the battle again. "In 1865 we fought a war against too much states' rights," says Ray Baum, Republican majority leader in the Oregon House. "But the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. Now we're in the middle of a quiet revolution in which the states are taking back their role from the feds." Thus Utah Governor Mike Leavitt (R) has called for a "Conference of the States" to draft petitions demanding "restoration" of their rights, and the Arizona Senate has created a panel to "battle the federal government on states' rights."

The Wyoming state legislature tried to reassert its "rights" vis-à-vis the Interior Department by offering a $500 bounty on wolves that stray from Yellowstone National Park (a bill vetoed by Governor Jim Geringer [R]), and also proposed that the state's taxpayers pay legal fees for anyone charged with violating the Endangered Species Act by killing a wolf. Other statehouses are twisting the tail of environmental protection with equal vigor. In Arkansas, the Pollution Control and Ecology Commission has *lowered* wastewater treatment standards for three Tyson Foods chicken-processing plants lest the company consider "shutting down or moving the plants to other states with more favorable water-quality standards." In Arizona, the House Committee on the Environment has voted to allow the manufacture and use of ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the state.

The Legislative Chutzpah Award, however, goes to Representative Billy Tauzin (D-La.) for his pointed amendment to H.R.9, the "takings" bill that

PRIORITIES

The Polluter's Bill of Rights

Pity the poor polluter. Faced with the public's stubborn support for environmental protection, the pollution lobby finds itself living a lie, forced to obfuscate, to equivocate, to cloak its true nature in a shroud of weasel words. Despite the rising political fortunes of the Earth-abuse Movement, many of its leaders continue to deny their true aspirations. Instead, they blather (in, for example, the Contract With America) about "takings," "cost-benefit analysis," and other high-sounding esoterica.

What do these people really want? They want it all, and they're tired of pretending they don't. We're tired of it too. So, for all our sakes, we give you the Agenda That Dare Not Speak Its Name—The Polluter's Bill of Rights.

ARTICLE I

DIBS ON EVERYTHING.

Congress shall make no law restricting our access to natural resources, or holding us accountable for any long-term damage we inflict upon the planet or its inhabitants for the sake of short-term profits. Earth: it's our golden goose, and we'll cook it if we want to.

ARTICLE II

AMERICA: ABUSE IT OR LOSE IT.

Congress shall do whatever it takes to ensure the fullest possible exploitation of the nation's assets in the shortest possible time. To wit: if it grows, cut it; if it flows, dam it; if it's underground, extract it; if it's swampy, fill it; if it moves, kill it. (If you think you can stop us, forget it.)

ARTICLE III

POLLUTION PAYS.

America owes us a living—and a damn good one at that. Wherefore, Congress shall make no law abridging our right to act irresponsibly unless it rewards us with taxpayer dollars in an amount determined by standard accounting practices (i.e., our own).

ARTICLE IV

NO WILDS, NO WILDLIFE? NO PROBLEM.

Congress shall not hinder the conversion of wild places to commercially viable real estate, nor shall it act to protect those species that have shown, by their proximity to extinction, an un-American aversion to shopping malls and interstate highways. National parks and other public lands shall be sold at auction, all proceeds going to polluters forced to behave responsibly (see Article III).

ARTICLE V

RISK ASSESSMENT: WE DO THE ASSESSING, YOU TAKE THE RISK.

Congress shall keep its nose out of industry's business, no matter how bad it smells. Citizens shall take personal responsibility for their own health problems and stop whining about toxics and hazardous waste. If people don't like chemicals in their vegetables, let 'em eat meat.

ARTICLE VI

COWS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PEOPLE.

Congress shall make no law abridging the rights of privately owned livestock to chew up publicly owned land at government-subsidized rates. Poor people may not deserve federal handouts, but hooved animals do.

ARTICLE VII

THE 1872 MINING LAW: COULDN'T HAVE SAID IT BETTER OURSELVES.

Why *shouldn't* the mining industry continue to grab vast, publicly owned gold and silver deposits for chump change? We claim it, you *reclaim* it. Ulysses S. Grant wanted it that way. 'Nuff said.

ARTICLE VIII

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU. HOWEVER . . .

As the meek, under a higher authority, shall inherit the earth, Congress shall make no law respecting the right of the arrogant to consume as much of the planet's resources as possible before the meek get their shot.

ARTICLES IX AND X

FOR US TO KNOW, AND YOU TO FIND OUT.

Our lawyers are working on 'em. We'll keep you posted. Meanwhile, a word to the wise: if you like nature, hang on to those old Sierra Club calendars. As for the real thing, well . . . our lawyers are working on it.

—B. J. Bergman

came before the House in March, narrowing it to reward landowners who refrained from killing endangered species or destroying wetlands. The bill passed the House and, as of press time, was making its way through the Senate.

How far will the Fifth Amendment revisionists go? A new direction for the "takings" crowd was suggested by Marshall Kuykendall of the property-rights group "Take Back Texas," who suggested to the *Colorado Daily* that maybe the government ought to have reimbursed slaveowners: "When Lincoln freed the slaves," Kuykendall noted, "he did not pay for them."

Nearly as loopy is Oregon's proposed "Future Ecotake" Bill, which would require the state to compensate any landowner who did just about anything in the way of "protecting, providing for, or preserving any aesthetic resource," including "scenic areas, natural areas, open space, wildlife areas, wetlands, wilderness areas, outdoor recreation areas, and sites of historical, archaeological or cultural significance." It would, in effect, eliminate any further environmental protection in the state.

Have we hit bottom yet? Arguing in favor of a radioactive-waste dump, South Carolina state legislator Larry Koon thinks we have. "I'm not averse to Chem-Nuclear being a corporate citizen of South Carolina," he says. "I don't know how much more damage to South Carolina Chem-Nuclear can do that they already haven't done."

Sadly, the same cannot be said of the damage the anti-environmentalist Kings of the Hill can do to the nation. But we don't need to wait for the worst before we step in to stop them.

► To fight back against the War on the Environment, Sierra Club members are seeking to gather a million signatures to a petition in support of an Environmental Bill of Rights. (For details on the campaign, see "Sierra Club Bulletin," page 79.) A copy of the petition for you to sign and circulate can be found between pages 80 and 81.

Sagebrush Snafu

"I'm sorry—the cow ate my homework."

Imagine the consternation at the United States Forest Service. For years, the agency has pretended that grazing is a "benign" activity, not subject to the environmental review requirements of NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act. This meant that the agency could routinely issue ten-year grazing permits with no official notice at all of grazing's serious environmental effects. Following challenges by the National Wildlife Federation and California Trout, however, the courts have now ruled that the law means what it says: that the environmental consequences of federal projects must be investigated.

"We caught 'em with their pants down," crows Cal-Trout's Brett Matzke. "The Justice Department asked us

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and care for ... "

Margaret Mead,
March 21, 1977

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what we wanted. We said, 'We want the Forest Service to do its job.'"

The problem is that the job is very late and very, very big. Almost half of the nearly 10,000 grazing permits the Forest Service administers on 87 million acres of national forest will expire by the end of the year. To comply with the law, the environmental impact of each and every permit needs to be assessed—a process that, given the volume of permits, could well take several years. Technically, of course, no permit, no grazing. If the Forest Service can't find a solution, the 3 percent of the nation's livestock producers who enjoy bargain-basement pasturage on public lands might suddenly have to find private grazing lands and pay grazing fees set by the market rather than by arcane federal fee formulas.

The dawning realization that it must comply with the law of the land has caused a crisis in the Forest Service. "The situation is really grim," said a Forest Service employee who asked not to be named. "Either we don't issue the permits and there's no grazing, or we issue the permits and break the law. There's no way we can do all the environmental work to legally issue these permits."

Since NEPA has been the law of the land since 1969, this is hardly a surprise homework assignment for the agency. "NEPA documentation does take time," former Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson warned five years ago. "There will be less delay from appeals and lawsuits if we prepare adequate, timely NEPA documentation for grazing permits." While current chief Jack Ward Thomas agrees that NEPA and related laws have to be complied with, he is unwilling to brave the wrath of the ranchers: "The option of not issuing new grazing permits to replace those expiring is not an acceptable solution," he told his regional foresters.

In many cases, however, an honest environmental appraisal would compel the Forest Service to do just that. "If they do environmental impact statements, they're going to reveal incredi-

ble damage," says Sierra Club grazing activist Rose Strickland. Grazing can lead to desertification, eradication of native and endangered species, and the destruction of delicate riverine systems. Cattle can "chisel and trample" streambanks, widening channels, increasing erosion, warming waters and contaminating them with fecal matter. Grazing is, in fact, the number one cause of degradation to fisheries in the West. Ultimately, overgrazing anywhere in a watershed can damage water quality. "If you don't have adequate protection in the uplands," says Matzke, "it's going to end up in the basin. After all, everything runs downhill."

While many environmentalists would be happy with a halt to all national-forest grazing, others would be satisfied if the Forest Service would issue temporary grazing permits and require immediate correction of severe environmental damage while it did thorough and proper environmental reviews. The Forest Service, however, seems intent on pulling the bureaucratic equivalent of an all-nighter and resolving the issue this year. An agency team chartered to find a way out of the predicament "emphasize[d] meeting the bare legal requirements in the short term," and recommended boilerplate language that could be applied to five different scenarios without extensive field research. "They just want to press a button on the word processor instead of really looking and seeing what's happening," says National Wildlife Federation attorney Tom Lustig.

As inadequate as this approach may be, even worse ones loom. Having managed to outmuscle Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on the issue of grazing reform (in fact, grazing fees actually *dropped* 19 percent this year), the National Cattlemen's Association and the American Farm Bureau Federation are going all out to fight it on this new front. They and their allies may try to convince the Forest Service to declare grazing as "categorically excluded" from NEPA analysis—or Congress might do so itself. "For the last six months," says Lustig, "the Forest Service has been looking heavenward saying 'Oh my God, we are in deep doo-doo, we need some miracle.' The question now is whether this new Congress is that miracle." *—Paul Rauber*

►Citizen pressure can help force the Forest Service to do its job. Contact your local forest supervisor or district ranger and ask to be notified as grazing permits expire, so that you can help identify issues to analyze in the environmental assessment. (An indispensable guide is **How Not to Be Cowed: An Owner's Manual to Livestock Grazing on the Public Lands,** *available for $3 from Sierra Club Grazing Subcommittee Chair Rose Strickland, P.O. Box 8409, Reno, NV 89507; 702-329-6118.) You can then review and comment on the draft environmental assessment, and join others in appealing the decision if you don't like it. A citizen's handbook on the issue is being prepared by the Land and Water Fund in Boulder, Colorado; call (303) 444-1188 for information.*

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4) How many times have you taken a cruise? ( )Never ( )1 ( )2-3 ( )4+
5) How many times have you visited Hawaii? ( )Never ( )1 ( )2-3 ( )4+

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1995 SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

OPEN TRIPS

PHOTOGRAPH: JENNY HAGEN/ALPINE IMAGES

Grab your sketchpad! Put film in your camera! Pull the year-old trail mix out of your backpack and air out your sleeping bag! We may not be able to make you draw as well as Hannah Hinchman, and we certainly can't muster up an exhilarating hurricane for your sea kayaking adventure, but we can provide great outdoor experiences for everyone from toddlers to trekkers. Here's a partial list of trips that might still have room for you. For more information or a trip application form, refer to the 1995 Outings Catalog published in the January/February issue of *Sierra*. If you need a copy of the catalog or want to see a detailed trip description, send in the coupon on page 38 or give us a call at (415) 923-5630. Remember, trip availability changes daily, so start making your plans now.

TRIP #	TRIP NAME	TRIP DATES	LEADER	PRICE
Activist Trips				
95101	Arctic Wildlife Refuge Backpack: The Land and the Issues, Alaska	June 12-24	Bill Gomez	$1495
95102	Among the Ancients: Preservation of the Giant Sequoia, Sierra	June 24-July 1	Cal French	$285
95103	British Columbia's Rainforests and Fjords	Aug. 19-27	Bill Evans	$1275
95104	Chesapeake Bay: The Nation's Seafood Basket in Trouble, Maryland	Sept. 10-15	Vivian and Otto Spielbichler	$575
95105	Saving the Pacific Northwest, Washington & Oregon	Sept. 17-24	John Albrecht	$325
95106	Unprotected Wilderness Sampler, Southern Utah	Oct. 7-14	Vicky Hoover	$345
Alaska Trips (The cost of on-trip charter transportation is included in the trip fee for Alaska trips.)				
95108	Glacier Bay Sea Kayak, Glacier Bay Park and Preserve	June 10-22	Jack McCarron	$1895
95109	Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) Backpack, North Slope	June 12-23	Drew McCalley	$2095
95112	Midnight Sun Backpack & Leisure Exploration, ANWR	June 22-July 1	Wilbur Mills	$1995
95116	St. Elias Trail Relocation, Kluane Park Yukon Territory	July 22-29	Judith Harper	$325
95117	Franklin Mountains to the Arctic Coast Backpack and Raft	July 22-Aug. 5	Ken Dawdy	$2095
95119	Chitistone Canyon Backpack, Wrangell-St. Elias Park	July 25-Aug. 4	Gary Aguiar	$1950
95120	Mountain Biking the Alaskan Wilderness	July 27-Aug. 9	Donna Poggi	$1295
95121	Gates of the Arctic/Noatak Canoe Exploration	July 28-Aug. 9	Chet Dunbar	$2995
95122	Special Needs Sea Kayaking, Kenai Fjords Park	July 29-Aug. 4	Gregg Williams	$1195
95123	Spell of the North Backpack, Ivvavik, Northern Yukon	July 30-Aug. 12	Sigrid Miles	$1750
95126	Talkeetna Whitewater Rafting Talkeetna Mountains	Aug. 7-12	Jon Kangas	$1595
Backpack Trips (Difficulty rating: L=Light, M=Moderate, S=Strenuous.)				
95129	Exploring the Gila Wilderness Area, New Mexico (S)	May 14-20	Alix Foster	$580
95130	Tehipite Valley, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (M)	June 3-11	Lou Argyres	$370
95133	Kern Peak, Golden Trout Wilderness, Sierra (L)	June 17-25	Mac Downing	$425

Be sure to read the Reservation and Cancellation Policy on pages 122-123 of the 1995 Outings Catalog before applying for a trip!

TRIP #	TRIP NAME	TRIP DATES	LEADER	PRICE
95138	On the Rim, LeConte Divide, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (L-M)	June 29-July 8	Diane Cook	$405
95139	Round Valley Sampler, Tahoe Forest, Sierra (L)	July 4-8	Bob Maynard	$205
95140	Twenty-Something Sierra Sampler, Hoover Wilderness, Yosemite (M)	July 5-8	Tony Rango	$235
95143	Granite Park, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (M)	July 9-18	John Pandolfo	$435
95144	Treasures of a King, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (S)	July 10-17	Letty & Cal French	$340
95145	Bishop to Taboose, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (M-S)	July 14-22	Lasta Tomasevich	$410
95146	The Pacific Crest, John Muir Wildreness, Sierra (M)	July 15-22	Mark Taylor	$310
95150	West Elk Wilderness, Colorado (M-S)	July 16-22	Gene Goldberg	$400
95152	Teen Backpack, Emigrant Basin Wilderness, Sierra (M)	July 17-24	Patrick Colgan	$340
95153	Dusy of a Trip, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (S)	July 20-29	Stuart Simon	$460
95154	Enchanted Gorge Centennial, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (S)	July 20-30	Matt Hahne	$425
95157	Wilderness Retreat, Sierra, Sequoia National Park (M)	July 23-29	Frank Moe	$330
95159	San Juan Mountains, Weminuche Wilderness, Colorado (M)	July 23-30	Lee A. Kintzel	$565
95160	Lillian Lake Loop Sampler, Ansel Adams Wilderness, Sierra (L-M)	July 24-28	Sy Gelman	$225
95162	Blackcap Caper, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (L-M)	July 24-Aug. 2	Patty Biasca	$480
95163	The Essential Muir, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (M-S)	July 27-Aug. 3	Scott Kingham	$390
95165	Tunemah Trail to Tehipite, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (M-S)	July 28-Aug. 6	Vicky Hoover	$385
95169	Fish Creek and Silver Divide, Inyo National Forest (L-M)	July 31-Aug. 7	Jim Gilbreath	$390
95174	Baxter Park Ponds and Peaks, Maine (M)	Aug. 6-12	Ken Limmer	$550
95175	Continental Divide, Zirkel Wilderness, Colorado (M-S)	Aug. 6-12	Joanie Hoffmann	$415
95178	Across the Monarch Divide, Kings Canyon Park, Sierra (M-S)	Aug. 6-13	Frances & David Reneau	$315
95179	Mammoth & Postpile Leisure Loop, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (L)	Aug. 6-13	Monava C. Athan	$425
95181	Cresting the Range of Light, East to West, Kings Canyon, Sierra (M)	Aug. 10-19	Tom Hilton-Gray	$465
95185	Bench Valley, Blackcap Mountain Tour, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (M)	Aug. 12-19	Sy Gelman	$425
95186	The White Cloud Peaks, Sawtooth Recreation Area, Idaho (M)	Aug. 12-19	Lee Sayers	$545
95187	Mono Recesses Peakbag Odyssey, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (M)	Aug. 12-20	Terry Flood	$430
95189	In the Heart of the Siskiyous: Kalmiopsis Wilderness, Oregon (M-S)	Aug. 13-19	Keith Moon	$460
95192	High Indian Lakes, John Muir Wilderness, Sierra (M)	Aug. 16-23	Bill Engs	$370
95193	Waterfalls & Wildflowers of the Continental Divide, Colorado (M)	Aug. 19-25	Suzanne Swedo	$490
95195	Walk on the Appalachian Trail, Saddleback Range, Maine (M-S)	Aug. 20-26	Roy Silverfarb	$420
95198	Matterhorn Canyon, Yosemite National Park, Sierra (M-S)	Aug. 27-Sept. 2	Joe Uzarski	$300
95200	Mountain Goat Byways, Goat Rocks Wilderness, Washington (M)	Sept. 4-10	Nadine Sanders	$405
95202	Redwoods to the Sea, Mendocino Coast, California (M)	Sept. 10-17	Marleen Fouché	$370
95203	Olympic Park's Northeast Corner, Washington (M-S)	Sept. 10-16	Craig F. Miller	$365
95204	Fall Color, Lake Superior Pictured Rocks, Michigan (L-M)	Sept. 17-23	Susan LaVigne	$360
95205	Autumn in Yosemite National Park, Sierra (L-M)	Sept. 17-24	Don Lackowski	$440
95206	Black Forest Trail, Tiadaghton Forest, Pennsylvania & Virginia (L)	Sept. 24-30	Jeff Knoop	$350
95266	Big Island Coast Backpack, Hawaii (M)	Oct. 10-14	George Winsley	$965
95207	Canyons, Caves, and Cabins, Buffalo River, Arkansas (M)	Oct. 8-14	Joan & John Molenaar	$365
95266	Big Island Coast Backpack (M)	Oct. 3-14	George Winsley	$965
95267	Mauna Loa Backpack, Hawaii (S)	Oct. 16-22	George Winsley	$710
95268	Haleakala Backpack, Maui, Hawaii (S)	Oct. 24-Nov. 1	George Winsley	$965

Base Camp Trips

95211	Four Seasons in Six Days, White River Forest, Colorado	June 4-10	Ed Davenport	$405
95212	Leadership Training, Cataloochee, Great Smoky Mountains Park , NC	June 11-17	Helene Baumann	$395
95213	Bryce Canyon and More, Central Utah	June 17-24	Emily Strauss	$520
95218	Canada's Alps, Mt. Assiniboine Park, British Columbia	Aug. 27-Sept. 1	Carolyn Castleman	$1120
95219	North Oregon Coast Adventure for Gays, Lesbians, & Friends	Sept. 10-15	S. Griffiths/J. Jackson	$515
95220	Stehekin Valley, North Cascasdes, Washington	Sept. 10-16	Julie Laws	$850

TRIP #	TRIP NAME	TRIP DATES	LEADER	CHILD	ADULT
95221	Exploring Glacier Peak Wilderness, Washington	Sept. 10-17	Alix Foster		$840
95222	Great Smoky Mountains Park, Tennessee & North Carolina	Sept. 24-30	Ray Abercrombie		$420
95224	Eastern Canyons of Tennessee	Oct. 15-21	Lee Thomas		$410

Clair Tappaan Lodge Trips (The Lodge is located in Tahoe National Forest in the Sierra.)

95226	Art Hiking and High Living, Tahoe Forest, Sierra	June 11-17	Helen & Jim Maas		$460
95227	High Sierra Serenity: 6 Hikes & 12 Steps, Tahoe Forest	June 18-24	Barbara & Tim Poole		$395
95228	Sierra Strolls, Tahoe Forest, Sierra	July 16-22	Kay Hornsey		$550
95230	Mountain Medley, Tahoe Forest, Sierra	July 30-Aug. 5	Mary Jane McKown		$455
95262	Just for Grandparents & Grandkids, Tahoe Forest, Sierra	Aug. 27-Sept. 1	Helen & Jim Maas	$215	$315
95232	Nature Writing Workshop, Tahoe Forest, Sierra	Sept. 10-15	Susan Heitman		$395

Bicycle Trips

95275	Cataract Canyon Raft & Mountain Bike Adventure, Utah	June 3-9	Marie Cecchini		$1095
95233	The Wright Wisconsin Tour	June 17-24	Alice Honeywell		$400
95264	Bicycling the Big Island, North, Hawaii	July 1-8	Jill McIntire		$660
95265	Bicycling the Big Island, South, Hawaii	July 8-15	Jill McIntire		$705
95120	Mountain Biking the Alaskan Wilderness	July 27-Aug. 9	Donna Poggi		$1295
95235	Mountain Biking in New York's Adirondack Forest	July 30-Aug. 4	John Borel		$440
95236	Down East by Bicycle, Maine	Aug. 27-Sept. 3	Robert Anderson		$465
95237	Summer's End on the Eastern Shore, Maryland	Sept. 17-25	Frank J. Traficante		$375

Burro Trips (Burro trips are in the Sierra.)

95238	Cottonwood Lakes Basin Family Trip, Inyo Forest, Sierra	July 16-23	Ted Bradfield	$400	$595
95239	Miter Basin, Family Trip, Sequoia Park, Sierra	July 23-30	Don White	$400	$595
95241	Rocky Basin Lakes, Golden Trout Wilderness, Sierra	Aug. 6-13	Rich Hamstra		$625

Canoe/Kayak Trips

96108	Glacier Bay Sea Kayak, Glacier Bay Park and Preserve, Alaska	June 10-22	Jack McCarron		$1895
95292	Allagash Wilderness Waterway Restoration, Maine	June 17-25	Doug Palmer		$370
95314	Algonquin Park Canoe Area Ontario, Canada	July 20-30	Irwin Rosman /Sally Daly		$320
96121	Gates of the Arctic/Noatak Canoe Exploration, Alaska	July 28-Aug. 9	Chet Dunbar		$2995
95122	Special Needs Sea Kayaking, Kenai Fjords Park, Alaska	July 29-Aug. 4	Gregg Williams		$1195
95245	Isle Royale Park by Canoe, Lake Superior, Michigan	Sept. 3-9	Larry Ten Pas		$510

Family Trips

95247	Gem of the Grand Canyon Adventure Havasupai, Arizona	June 4-10	Bob Flores	$395	$595
95248	Colonial Maryland	June 15-19	Ernie Bauer	$210	$310
95069	Kauai Family Adventure, Hawaii	June 24-July 1	Bob Smith/Wayne Martin	$525	$785
95249	Redrock Country & Sacred Mountain, Coconino Forest, Arizona	June 24-July 1	Jim Murphy	$300	$450
95251	Arizona Trail Service Trip, Coconino Forest, Arizona	June 25-July 1	Terry Esch	$130	$195
95238	Cottonwood Lakes Basin Burro Trip, Inyo Forest, Sierra	July 16-July 23	Ted Bradfield	$400	$595
95253	Purple Lake and Cascade Canyon John Muir Wilderness, Sierra	July 22-29	Becky Hawk Lynch	$420	$625
95239	Miter Basin, Burro Trip, Sequoia, Sierra	July 23-30	Don White	$400	$595
95257	Skyline to the Sea, Santa Cruz Mountains and Coast, California	July 31-Aug. 6	S. George/P. Lemos	$330	$490
95262	Just for Grandparents & Grandchildren, Tahoe Forest, Sierra	Aug. 27-Sept. 1	Jim & Helen Maas	$215	$315

Hawaii Trips (Airfare to Hawaii is not included in trip fee.)

95069	Kauai Family Adventure	June 24-July 1	Bob Smith/Wayne Martin	$525	$785
95264	Bicycling the Big Island North	July 1-8	Jill McIntire		$660
95265	Bicycling the Big Island South	July 8-15	Jill McIntire		$705
95266	Big Island Coast Backpack (M)	Oct. 3-14	George Winsley		$965
95267	Mauna Loa Backpack (S)	Oct. 16-22	George Winsley		$710
95268	Haleakala Backpack, Maui (S)	Oct. 24-Nov. 1	George Winsley		$955

Highlight Trips

95270	Wild Wonderland, Grand Teton Park, WY	July 15-22	Modesto Piazza/Diana Bunting		$1025
95271	Harriet Lake Basin, Yosemite Park and Ansel Adams Wilderness	Aug. 1-9	Bert E. Gibbs		$1100
95273	Discovery Tour, Steens Mountain, Oregon	Sept. 10-16	Irene Vlach		$530

International Trips (International trips are tier-priced based on the number of participants. Prices do not include airfare.)

TRIP #	TRIP NAME	TRIP DATES	LEADER	LOW TIER	HIGH TIER
AFRICA					
95720	Kenya/Tanzania Safari Sampler: Portrait of East Africa	June 24-July 8	Carolyn Castleman	$4040	$4330
ASIA					
95735	Mongolia Service Trip	June 17-July 1	Patrick Colgan	$2270	$2490
95740	Sagarmatha Service Trek, Nepal	June 21-July 11	David Horsley	$2025	$2250
95750	Trekking the Altai Mountains, Kazakhstan	Aug. 20-Sept. 7	Cahit Kitaplioglu	$3095	$3410
95755	The Knot of Asia, Pakistan and China	Sept. 16-Oct. 10	Dennis Schmitt	$3700	$4040
95758	Lamjung Holiday Trek, Nepal	Dec. 15-28	David Horsley	$1490	$1685
96500	Annapurna Discovery and Service Trek, Nepal	March 4-20, 1996	John Bird	$1845	$1880
EUROPE					
95770	Discover the Baltics: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia	May 20-June 2	Ruth Dyche	$2885	$3195
95785	The Dordogne, France: History, Prehistory, Culture and Ecology	June 18-28	Vivian Spielbichler	$2240	$2530
95800	Dolomites Peaks to Glaciers, Italy	Sept. 4-16	Wayne Woodruff	$2205	$2495
95805	Lightly in the Luberon, Provence, France	Sept. 26-Oct. 4	Lynne Simpson	$2165	$2445
95810	Greece: Mediterranean Sailing and Island Hiking	Oct. 14 -27	Carolyn Castleman	$3300	$3590
LATIN AMERICA					
95845	Paradise Found: Galápagos Islands, Ecuador	July 8-15	Gregg Williams	$2980	$3270
95850	Paradise Found: Galápagos Islands, Ecuador	Dec. 16-23	Margie Tomenko	$2960	$3270
95855	Holidays in Belize	Dec. 20-28	Tim Wernette	$2390	$2665
95860	Sea of Cortes Kayaking, Baja California, Mexico	Dec. 23-29	Harry Neal	$1395	$1550
95862	River Rafting and Rainforest Adventure, Costa Rica	Dec. 23-31	Mary O'Connor	$2200	$2490
RUSSIA					
95870	Lake Baikal Service Trip, Southern Siberia, Russia	July 4-21	Bud Bollock	$2195	$2415
95875	Vodlozersky Park Service Trip, Karelia Russia	Aug. 4-18	Cheryl Draves-Ladyzhets	$1975	$2190
95880	To the Shores of Baikal, Southern Siberia	Aug. 15-Sept. 6	Bob Madsen	$3010	$3300

Raft/Sail Trips

95073	Yampa River, Raft, Dinosaur Monument, Utah	May 22-26	Mary O'Connor		$650
95074	Sailing the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia	May 26-June 2	Margie Tomenko		$1795
95275	Cataract Canyon Raft & Mountain Bike Adventure, Utah	June 3-9	Marie Cecchini		$1095
95276	Westwater Whitewater Wilderness Weekend, Utah	June 3-4	Bruce Macpherson		$395
95279	Green River Leisure Trip, Desolation Canyon Historic Area, Utah	July 10-14	Ron Pennington		$720
95280	Cataract/Canyonlands/Colorado River, Canyonlands Park, Utah	July 16-21	Paul Middleton		$850
95281	Rogue River Rafting Adventure, Oregon	July 24-27	Jon Kangas		$600
95126	Talkeetna Whitewater Rafting Talkeetna Mountains, Alaska	Aug. 7-12	Jon Kangas		$1595
95283	Clayoquot Sound Sailing, British Columbia	Sept. 21-25	Ruth Dyche		$1350
95862	River Rafting & Rainforest Adventure, Costa Rica	Dec. 23-31	Mary O'Connor	$2205	$2495

Service Trips

				CHILD	ADULT
95286	Capitol Reef and the Waterpocket Fold, Utah	June 4-10	Susan Estes		$240
95288	Blue Range Trail Project, Apache Forest, Arizona	June 10-17	Pamela Meyer		$240
95290	Fishin'-n- Fencin': Bryce Canyon through the Back Door, Utah	June 11-17	Susan Estes		$240
95292	Allagash Wilderness Waterway Restoration, Maine	June 17-25	Doug Palmer/Janet Evans		$370
95293	Beautiful Bryce, Bryce Canyon Park, Utah	June 18-24	Susan Estes		$240
95294	Chaco Canyon, Chaco Culture Historical Park, New Mexico	June 24-July 1	Karen Greif		$240
95251	Arizona Trail Service Trip, Coconino Forest	June 25-July 1	Terry Esch	$130	$195
95296	Pigeon Lake Wilderness, Adirondack Forest Preserve, New York	July 2-8	Richard Grayson		$215
95298	Women's Trip, Marble Mountain Wilderness, Klamath Forest, California	July 6-16	Elaine Stebler		$275
95301	Ukonom Lake, Marble Mountain Wilderness, California	July 8-18	Dan Frankel		$225
95303	Dark Divide, Mt. St. Helens, Washington	July 10-20	Mark & Karen Clement		$275
95305	Parker Meadow, Trinity Alps, California	July 11-21	Richard Garner		$275
95306	Wind Rivers West, Pinedale, Wyoming	July 12-21	Pam Meyer		$275
95307	Moonshine Trail, Pike Forest, Colorado	July 12-22	Jan Ketelle		$275
95309	Pleasant Lake, Marvel Mountain Wilderness, California	July 16 -26	Anneliese Suter		$275
95310	Ypsilon Trail Reconstruction, Rocky Mountain Park, Colorado	July 18-27	Bruce & Carmen Johnson		$275

TRIP #	TRIP NAME	TRIP DATES	LEADER	PRICE
95311	Seven Devils Mountains, Hells Canyon Wilderness, Idaho	July 18-28	Christi Raunig	$275
95313	Bilk Creek Basin, Lizard Head Wilderness, Colorado	July 19-29	Michel Tharp	$275
95314	Algonquin Park Canoe Area, Ontario	July 20-30	Irwin Rosman / Sally Daly	$320
95315	Colorado Trail, Lost Creek, Colorado	July 20-30	Lynda Matusek	$275
95116	St. Elias Trail Relocation, Kluane Park Yukon Territory	July 22-29	Judith Harper	$325
95318	Grizzly Lake, White River Forest, Aspen, Colorado	July 25-Aug. 4	Donna Norman	$275
95319	Cloud Peak, Bighorn Forest, Wyoming	July 26-Aug. 5	Bart Hobson	$275
95320	Sangre de Cristo, Rio Grande Forest, Colorado	July 29-Aug. 5	John Fitch	$225
95321	Wind River Range, Popo Agie Wilderness, Wyoming	July 31-Aug. 10	Frank Leslie	$275
95323	Cabinet Mountains Trail Restoration, Panhandle Forest, Idaho	Aug. 5-15	Peter Littman	$275
95325	Northwest Mountain-Forest Experience, West Cascades, Oregon	Aug. 6-13	Jean Ridone	$275
95326	Snowmass Lake, Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, Colorado	Aug. 6-16	Kathryn Hannay	$275
95327	Forbidden Plateau, Strathcona Park, British Columbia	Aug. 8-18	Sally Goldes	$325
95328	20-Something Trip to Emerald Park, Lake Chelan, Washington	Aug. 8-18	John Pandolfo	$275
95329	Restoration Project in Yosemite Park, Sierra	Aug. 9-20	C.E. Vollum	$275
95330	Beginners' Trip, Mt. Zirkel Wilderness, Colorado	Aug. 11-20	Richard Weinapple	$275
95332	Greenland Gap Preserve, Grant County, West Virginia	Aug. 13-19	Lynn Lafferty	$180
95333	Stillwater Trail Maintenance, Adirondacks, New York	Aug. 13-19	Mike Kernahan	$220
95334	Round Pass, Mt. Rainier Park, Washington	Aug. 14-24	Lois Grunwald	$275
95335	Crater Lake Trail Construction, Oregon	Aug. 19-27	John Albrecht	$275
95336	Conundrum Hot Springs, Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness, Colorado	Aug. 19-29	Doug Pilcher	$275
95337	High Uintas Wilderness, Wasatch and Ashley Forests, Utah	Aug. 20-27	Mary Grisco	$225
95338	Deer Creek Pass, Teton Wilderness, Wyoming	Aug. 22-Sept. 1	John Anderson	$275
95341	Upper Lena Lake Revegetation Trip, Olympic Park, Washington	Sept. 5-14	Jeff Wasserman	$275
95342	Chiricahua Wilderness, Coronado Forest, Arizona	Sept. 9-16	Les Askins	$225
95344	Sand Canyon Trail and Archaeology, San Juan Resource Area, Colorado	Sept. 10-16	Susan Estes	$240
95345	North Rim, Grand Canyon, Arizona	Sept. 11-21	Tim Wernette	$275
95346	Ancient Walls, Hovenweep Monument, Utah & Colorado	Sept. 17-23	Theresa Titone	$240
95347	Baxter Park Autumn Trail Maintenance, Maine	Sept. 17-23	Richard Gritman	$270
95349	Arches Homecoming I, Arches Park, Utah	Sept. 24-30	Susan Estes	$240
95350	Bridges of the Spirits, Natural Bridges Monument, Utah	Sept. 24-30	Linda Thibodeaux	$240
95351	Canyons of the Escalante, Utah	Sept. 24-30	Cathy Underwood	$240
95352	Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Appalachian Mountains, Pennsylvania	Sept. 24-30	Betty M. Couts	$220
95353	Arches Homecoming II, Arches Park, Utah	Oct. 1-7	Sandra M. Wilson	$240
95354	Sedona Trail Relocation, Munds Mountain Wilderness, Arizona	Oct. 7-14	Sandy Unger	$240
95355	Arches Homecoming III, Arches Park, Utah	Oct. 8-14	Mike Kobar	$240
95356	Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge, Georgia	Oct. 15-21	Marty Joyce	$185
95357	Ozark Autumn, Buffalo River, Arkansas	Oct. 15-21	Bill Sheppard	$260
95359	Santa Rosa Island, Channel Islands Park, California	Oct. 20-27	Janie Grussing	$325
95360	Arizona Trail, Tonto Forest, Arizona	Oct. 28-Nov. 4	Wil Passow	$185
95361	High Water Trail #20, Mazatzal Wilderness, Tonto Forest, Arizona	Oct. 28-Nov. 4	Jim Vaaler	$240
95362	Tidal Zone to Sand Dunes, Munyon Is. Wetlands Restoration, Florida	Nov. 4-11	Otto & Vivian Spielbichler	$185

For More Details About Sierra Club Outings

These outings are described briefly in the 72-page 1995 Outings Catalog, which appeared in the January/February issue of *Sierra*. Each outing is also described in detail in an individual trip brochure. Trips vary in size, cost, and required physical stamina and experience. To avoid signing up for a trip that isn't right for you, we highly recommend reading the detailed brochure. Order brochures by mailing in this coupon. The first five brochures are free. Please enclose 50 cents apiece for extras. You can also order brochures by phone at (415)923-5630 (24-hour voice mail), or by e-mail at **national.outings@sierraclub.org**

Name _____

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☐ I do not have the Jan./Feb. *Sierra*. Please send a 1995 Outings Catalog. A check for $3 is enclosed to cover postage and handling.

☐ Please send me the following trip brochures. (Order by trip number. The first five are free; extras cost 50 cents each.)

#_____ #_____ #_____ #_____

#_____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: $_____

Do not mail cash. Make checks payable to Sierra Club.

Clip coupon and mail to: **Sierra Club Outing Department,** 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 **#2**

CLAUDIO RUBINO

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GRAND PRIZE: Minolta Maxxum 600si camera, with 35-70mm zoom lens
EIGHT FIRST PRIZES: Bausch & Lomb Legacy 8x24 compact binoculars
EIGHT SECOND PRIZES: Special-edition Buck knives
ALL WINNERS WILL RECEIVE: A Polartec Windbloc all-weather anorak

Sierra magazine invites all photographers, amateur and professional alike, to enter our 16th annual photo contest. The winning images will appear in our November/December 1995 issue.

PRIZES: In addition to a Grand Prize, first and second prizes will be awarded for color and black and white entries in each category, unless the judges fail to identify qualifying images.

ELIGIBILITY: Sierra Club staff, their immediate families, and suppliers to *Sierra* magazine (including photographers whose work we have published since 1990) are not eligible. Photos must be taken and owned by the entrant, and may be submitted in any or all of the listed categories. The $5 entry fee covers 16 images, no more than 16 images may be submitted overall. Color prints or color negatives from print film will not be considered. For black and white photos, please send prints; black and white negatives will not be considered. Previously published work, photos pending publication, or photos that have won other contests are not eligible. Void where prohibited.

HOW TO ENTER: All entries must be accompanied by the official *Sierra* Photo Contest submission form. To receive the forms, send $5 (this also serves as your nonrefundable entry fee) to *Sierra* Photo Contest, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109. No entry will be considered unless it is accompanied by a submission form (photocopies of the form are not acceptable). Absolutely no refunds. *No phone calls, please.*

DEADLINE: All submissions must be postmarked by August 1, 1995. *Sierra*'s responsibility for loss or damage to any material shall not exceed the amount payable to the magazine under any insurance carried to cover its liability for such loss or damage. We are not responsible for material lost or damaged in the mail.

BAUSCH & LOMB

BUCK KNIVES

POLARTEC

Crowded Coast to Crescent City

by William Poole

THERE COMES A TIME NEAR THE beginning of any journey when you know you are on your way. It may come as the jet hurtles off the runway, or when you slip from city traffic onto the interstate. If you are traveling by train, it may come—as it recently did for me—when the conductor demands "tickets, please, tickets," and you give him a pile of them and he tears off the top one and hands them back with an appreciative "Well, you're going to do some traveling, I guess."

Yes, I was going to do some traveling. Four trains, twenty-five states, six days, four nights, five thousand miles through four time zones. From Boston down the coastal underbelly of New England, through the eastern urbanopolis and the Deep South to New Orleans; then an overnight dash to Chicago, a lope across the prairies, the plains, two mountain ranges, and a desert to my San Francisco home. Too brief a journey to court the heart of America (and who knows if the nation has a single heart or spiritual center these days?) but a chance to trace my fingers across her splendid, if intermittently sullied, face.

I wanted to stretch out, leave the driving to the engineer and watch the country go by—to get off the land-gobbling highways and out of my fuel-guzzling vehicle for a while (trains use about half as much energy per passenger as either airplanes or automobiles). Ah, train travel, I thought: not only relaxing, but environmentally virtuous, too.


Near Lynchburg, Virginia

"Providence. Providence, Rhode Island. Providence next stop," the conductor called. Native country for me, a Massachusetts boy from Rhode Island stock, traveling on the November edge of fall. We dashed through russet marshes thick with bursting cattails, and scrubby forests of maple, birch, and pine. Meeting the water at Long Island Sound, we slid past embayments of feathery pampas grass and orderly little towns overseen by white church steeples, with houses perched on stilts by the water's edge. Night herons hunched to their breakfast in trackside mudflats. Here and there, a blazing sumac clung stubbornly to the season, its leaves whirligigging in the wind. "New Haven, New Haven next."

At New York City, I boarded a sleeping car on Amtrak's *Crescent* and handed a new conductor the next ticket from my stack. This daily train is named for New Orleans, the "Crescent City," its final destination. An official route guide had been left on my seat, and I traced our progress as we rolled south through the industrial lesions of northern New Jersey and into a landscape dominated by big rivers and big cities. We soared above the

Schuylkill, the Delaware, the Susquehanna, and rumbled through Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore—past thriving business districts and bustling city centers, past gold-domed statehouses, white-columned museums, richly landscaped parks, all surveyed from an elevated track. But we also crept through the blighted butt-ends of these towns, mile after hopeless mile of decrepit housing and the burned-out shells of vanished industries.

"Too bad this train runs through Virginia and the Carolinas at night," said Mike, the sleeping-car attendant, on learning that I was less interested in where I was going than in what I would see along the way. We were out of Washington by now, the Capitol dome and federal office maze fading to a twinkle in the dusk. A Virginian himself, Mike was biased on the question of southern landscapes, but otherwise seemed a trustworthy source. He was worried about Amtrak's federal funding, decreased over the last two years. "Trains are so much fun," he said. "Sure they're slower than planes, but so what, they're so relaxing. You go to Europe, they've got trains that run 200 miles an hour. With all our technology, why can't we do that here?"

I was glad enough to see the Carolinas by night. From the darkened sleeper compartment my focus shifted from landscape to humanscape, to illuminated snapshots along the tracks. A child at a lighted window. A tired-looking man in a battered pickup washed by the pulsating glow of a railway crossing-light. Lovers caught arm in arm in a tavern doorway. Images only, mine to complete, wondering what had happened before and what would happen next and what it might be like to be those Americans five days before election day, 1994. At Charlottesville, a stadium was ablaze with lights for a high-school football game. At Greensboro, a few cars crawled through prosperous neighborhoods at one o'clock in the morning.

At breakfast in the dining car I was seated with Rod, a retiree from California, whose stack of Amtrak tickets rivaled my own. He had come east to Chicago on the *Southwest Chief* and then to Washington, D.C., on the *Cardinal*. Along portions of their routes, each train carried a guide to interpret the landscape: a Navajo aboard the *Chief* across Arizona and New Mexico, and an amateur historian through the Shenandoah Valley along the *Cardinal*'s route. Here was Amtrak playing to its strengths, I suggested. Even the fastest long-distance train will never outrun an airplane, but try pointing out historic buildings from 30,000 feet.

Moving southwest, the *Crescent* had pushed back the fall. Trees the color of pumpkins and lemons blurred to fiery tunnels beside the track. The towers of Atlanta were buried in mist when I got out to pace the platform during an early morning stop. In steely weather we sliced off the northwest corner of Georgia, then rounded the tail of the Appalachians, past farmstead clearings and rusty logging scars amid forests of oak and maple or matchstick pine. Everywhere the landscape was knitted together with kudzu, an Asian vine that smothers fields, engulfs buildings, and turns trees into trellises for its pancake leaves. At an army supply depot outside Anniston, Alabama, a rank of tanks trained its guns ominously on the track. A few miles beyond, a billboard advised me to "Send Them a Message: Vote Republican."

More than 24 hours after leaving Washington, the *Crescent* entered Mississippi and intensified its southerly heading, as if seeking the Gulf. Soon we were cutting through boggy country and across logy, south-flowing rivers, cotton fields and cattle pastures crowding the track. In the villages tiny houses with huge lawns, as if to welcome whatever breezes might come along. The air was gooey on the platform at Meridian, Mississippi. Through Hattiesburg then, and Picayune; and in the dark beyond Slidell, Louisiana, the train slipped out onto a six-mile-long trestle in an almost silent glide above Lake Pontchartrain. "N'Awlins, N'Awlins, next stop."

Next Stop: New Orleans page 48

Taken

TROPICAL STORM GORDON GOT HIS NAME THE DAY BEFORE I flew to Georgia. I wasn't able to attend the christening, but I watched his progress on the Weather Channel from my sofa in California. The weatherman said there were small-craft warnings all the way from Savannah to the Florida Keys. This was not good news. I was going on a Sierra Club sea-kayaking outing off the Georgia coast, and even though I hadn't logged many hours in kayaks, I was pretty sure they qualified as small craft.

By the time my plane set down in Savannah, Gordon was growing stronger—and so were my doubts. On the flight I had pictured myself paddling through howling squalls and mountainous waves, and tried desperately to remember the rescue techniques I had been taught in my one and only kayaking class.

> To really get to know a barrier island, be sure to visit when nature is in full fury.

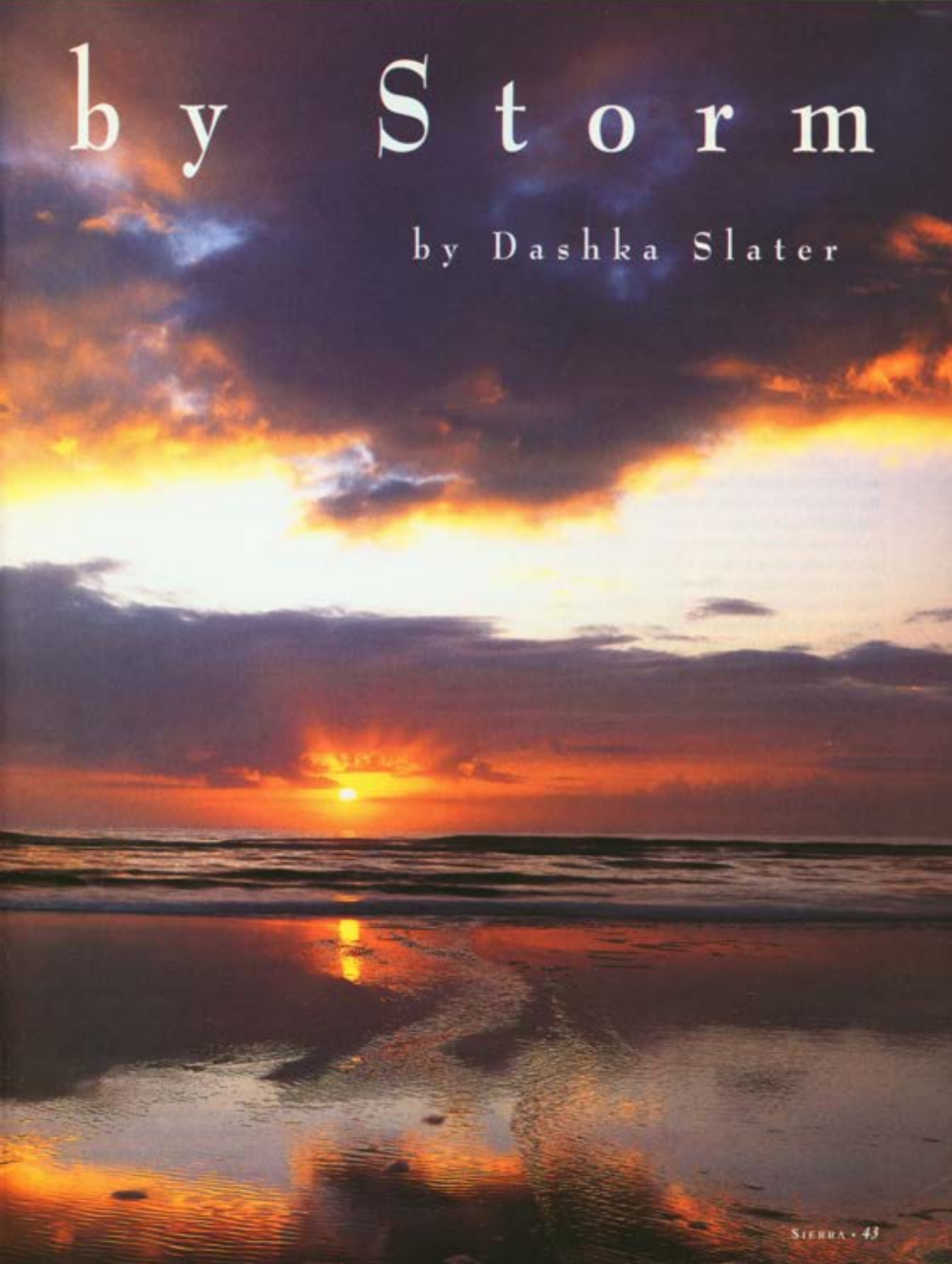
Still, everything looked fine as we got ready to put in at Tybee Island, a mass of beachfront houses, cheap motels, and seafood diners connected to Savannah by a causeway. The air was warm and moist, and the sky was veiled with a thin layer of pearl gray that seemed about to burn off any minute. Our first day's destination was the northern end of Little Tybee Island (which, despite its name, is actually bigger than Tybee). More a complex of islands than a single land mass, Little Tybee is a green expanse of tidal marsh, populated by mink and sea otter and a vast array of birds. Scattered between the marshes are sand dunes and scrubby forests that become islands themselves at high tide, separated by creeks and channels and the spiky tops of the marsh grasses. We planned to spend the next five days kayaking in and around Little Tybee, moving progressively farther from civilization.

As we paddled out into Savannah Channel, bottlenose dolphins frolicked coyly around the boats, their black fins and tails blinking in and out of the waves. I yelped with pleasure at the sight of them. Fifteen minutes from the launch point I was soaking wet and the wind had whipped my hair into knots; nevertheless, I was feeling rapturous about nature, weather, and the Great Outdoors.

We hit Jack's Cut just as the tide began to turn, threatening to swamp our boats with insistent waves. A narrow

by Storm

by Dashka Slater



inlet that snakes through the marshes of Little Tybee, the cut is only passable at high tide. Even at full spate it provided a substantial navigational challenge to those of us who were just getting the hang of steering a kayak. Jutting up from the water were "oyster rakes," sharp stalagmites of shells that can shear off the bottom of a boat. It seemed that whenever I swerved to avoid an oyster rake I ended up careening toward the opposite bank, causing a chain of kayak collisions to the rear as my tripmates paddled furiously to avoid me.

The cut opened into a wide expanse of water, and the green of the marshes was broken by a smooth mound of white beach. We pulled the boats up onto the shore and finished unloading them as the sun sank low over the horizon, spattering the sky with orange daubs as if from the hand of an unsubtle painter. A moment later the moon flared over the lip of the beach and we began looking for places to set up our tents.

> The islands are imperceptibly somersaulting along the continent's edge.

The search for the perfect homestead can transform any group camping adventure into the Oklahoma Land Rush, but our trip leaders had cautioned us against trampling the vegetation because the sinewy railroad vines and feathery sea oats are all that hold the dunes together. This warning made the usual claim-staking a bit more decorous. Rather than stampeding through the dunes, we trotted along on tiptoe, hopping daintily over plant and shrub like ballerinas afraid of soiling their toe shoes.

The bad news came when we sat down for dinner. While the rest of us had been hunting for the perfect sleeping spot, our leaders had been listening to the weather radio. Tropical Storm Gordon was headed our way. By tomorrow night, our campsite would be under water.

There was just one other teeny problem. To get to higher ground we had to go back through Jack's Cut, and to go through Jack's Cut we needed a high tide. The next high tide was scheduled for the ungodly hour of 5 a.m., and if we wanted to be on dry land when the storm arrived, we had better be there to catch it.

Gordon hit a few hours later. He seemed to come all at once, in a rush of sound. I woke to a cacophony—the roar of the wind and the crashing surf punctuated by the twin percussions of the drumming rain and my rattling tent fly. As I lay awake trying to remember how securely I had staked my tent, I could hear the waves creeping up the shore, clapping against the sand as if applauding their own audacity.

At 5 a.m., I heard the soft drawl of Steve Braden, our kayak instructor.

"Y'all awake?"

I was, but I didn't want to be. It was still dark out, and the rain was coming down in sheets. I knew I had to pack up my tent—if only I could figure out how to do it without getting out of my sleeping bag. Eventually I hoisted myself into a sitting position, only to be completely stymied by the question of clothes. Some sensible part of me knew that anything I wore in a kayak in a storm would be instantly soaked by saltwater and rain, but my skin recoiled at the thought of slipping into yesterday's sopping shorts and T-shirt. Succumbing to temptation, I put on every stitch of warm, fleecy clothing I had, and set out through the downpour.

Once we were on the water, being drenched to the skin seemed perfectly normal. Everything else in the landscape was wet, and there was no point in setting ourselves apart. I paddled alongside the marsh, listening to the *greet-greet-greet* of a clapper rail and wallowing in my discomfort. Carl Paulsen, the trip naturalist, had told me that clapper rails lay their eggs in featherweight nests that float when the tide floods the marshes. I pictured a sodden bird perched precariously on a damp, bobbing nest and felt a pang of kinship.

A puddle of rainwater had gathered on my spray skirt and was slowly dripping into my lap and trickling down my thighs. My hands, after 24 hours of repeated soakings, were terrifying to behold. Thick coils of puckered white skin padded my fingertips, which were gloved by a fine coating of sand. The sand had also mysteriously found its way into my mouth, scalp, and the corners of my eyes. I felt as if I were being slowly transformed into a sand dune.

Carl and Steve wanted to keep us close to home until the storm passed, so we set up camp on Buck's Hammock, not far from where we'd set out. When I looked across the channel I could see the snug little houses of Tybee Island. It felt a

bit like camping in my parents' backyard, except that no one was bringing me any hot chocolate.

There was something about getting waterlogged in full view of people with roofs and hot water that made me self-conscious. I kept imagining some elderly Tybee Islander standing at the window of his warm living room and gazing at us through binoculars. "Honey," he'd be saying, "looks like there's some damn fools drenching themselves out on Buck's Hammock. Do you think they've lost their minds?"

"Don't worry dear," his wife would answer. "They're eco-tourists. They like that kind of thing."

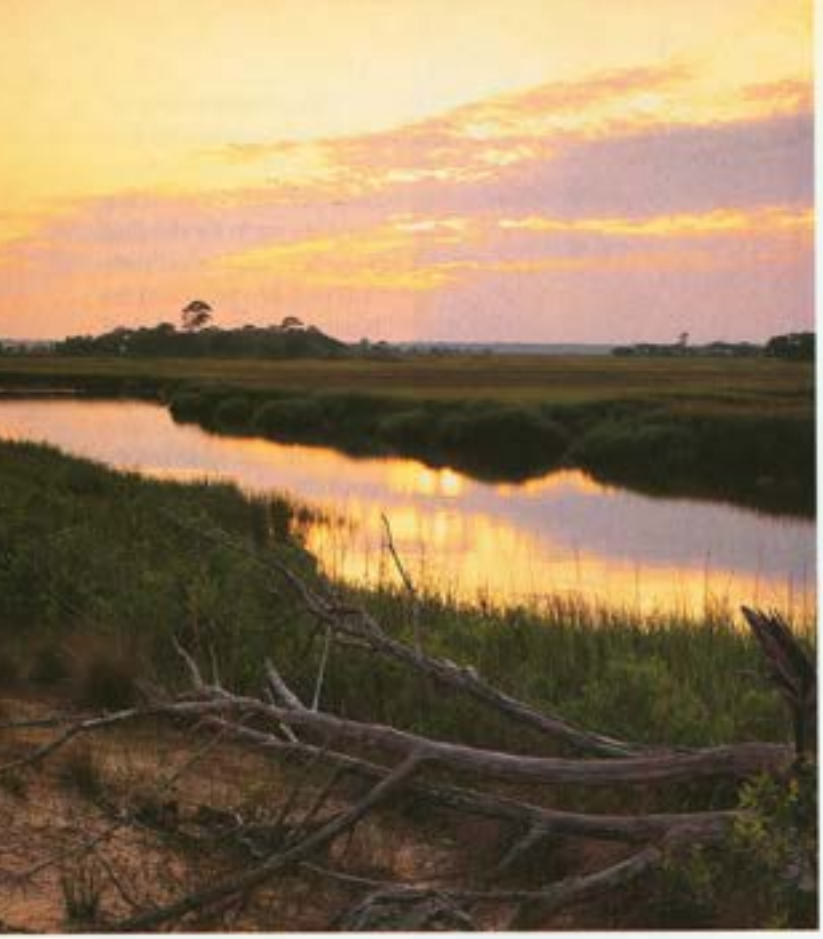
We finally got around to eating breakfast sometime after noon, following which most of us retreated into our tents to recuperate. A few, however, went for a walk along the beach with Carl, who promised that stormy weather was, in fact, ideal for learning about the geology of barrier islands.

"These islands are incredibly dynamic and fluid systems," he told us as we hunched against the wind. I could vouch for the fluid part, at least; the rain was still pelting down and the beach was racked with surf. All along the shore, we could see the contorted silhouettes of driftwood trees that were embedded in the sand. Wisps and swirls of sand skittered down the beach like a flock of ghostly sandpipers. If you were inclined to look on the bright side of things (I admit I wasn't), you could say we were seeing the island in its most characteristic mood.

Barrier islands first formed some 13,000 years ago, when the world was coated with glaciers and the eastern edge of the North American continent extended some 50 miles farther into the ocean. As the glaciers began to melt, the sea rushed over the continental shelf and onto the coastal plain, pushing forests, mud, and sand ahead of it. The wind, moving parallel to the land's edge, began arranging the sand in long ridges. Storms cut inlets through the ridges, and the sea flooded past them, turning them into islands. Then the ocean, still rising, began pushing the islands over the drowned coastal plain, closer and closer to shore.

Even now, the islands won't stay put. As winter storms and hurricanes strip sand from the islands' ocean side, the tides deposit sand and silt from the continental rivers on the landward side, moving the islands gently west. At the same time, the prevailing northeasterly wind peels sand from each island's northern

TOP: JAMES PARKINSEY; BOTTOM: ROSE HEILPRIN



their own landscape. The trees we had taken for driftwood, Carl explained, were the bleached and gnarled remains of a forest of live oaks and palmettos much like the one directly behind us. As the island shifted, the old forest had been uprooted and then buried in sand.

Carl tapped his sneaker against a thick wedge of clay that lay on top of the beach. "This is a piece of old marsh," he told us. "The sand dunes rolled over it and it was covered for maybe ten years, and then became exposed again." He bent down to run his fingers along its sleek, brown surface. "This is beautiful to me," he said. "It's a perfect example of how dynamic this place is."

Once you become aware of the vagrant nature of these islands, it's hard to understand why anybody would build a town on one. But people do. There are nearly 300 barrier islands along the Atlantic Coast and most have been blanketed with resorts and vacation homes by those who believe that a beach is best admired from the front porch. Still, the islands refuse to honor the concept of private property, and eventually roll right out from under the houses and roads. Property lines stay fixed, but the beach moves, sometimes bestowing an extra 500 feet of beachfront property, sometimes disappearing altogether and dumping a house into the sea.

head and lays it down at its southern tail. In effect, the islands are rolling over themselves, imperceptibly somersaulting along the continent's edge.

As they move, barrier islands alternately erase and remake

The practice of building castles in the sand is encouraged by the federal flood insurance program, which bails out coastal residents whose homes are destroyed by sea or storm. "It's basically a subsidy for developing a fragile ecosystem,"

SIERRA CLUB SAVING THE WILD PLANET

Barrier Islands of the Georgia Bight

To Explore and Enjoy

While they can't guarantee heavy-weather satori, local outfitters run numerous trips every year to the Georgia Sea Islands, including excursions to view sea turtles and trips to explore Cumberland Island, the largest of Georgia's barrier islands and a national seashore since 1972. Names and addresses of outfitters can be found in the guidebooks listed below.

Adventuring Along the Southeast Coast: The Sierra Club Travel Guide to the Low Country, Beaches, and Barrier Islands of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia by Jim Bowen (Sierra Club Books, 1993) is a thorough guide to the barrier islands in the Georgia Bight (that crescent of coast stretching from Cape Hatteras to Cape Canaveral), with information on history, flora and fauna, parks, travel, lodging, and more. A companion volume in the series, *Adventuring in Florida* by Allen de Hart (Sierra Club Books, 1991) also contains a section on the Georgia Sea Islands, complete with map and travel information. The guidebooks are $15 each, paper; order from the Sierra Club Store by phone, (800) 935-1056, or mail order, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109.

To Protect

Most of the islands off the Georgia coast are still reachable only by boat, which has helped keep development at bay and visitor pressure minimal. Nevertheless, developers are always on the lookout for unprotected chunks of coastal real estate.

Working with other local conservationists, members of the Sierra Club were recently able to fend off attempts by organizers of the 1996 Olympics (to be held in Atlanta) to convert a research station on Skidaway Island into the "Olympic Sailing Venue." Already partially protected as a wildlife refuge, Skidaway contains three characteristic Atlantic Coast ecosystems—salt marsh, freshwater pond, and maritime forest—as well as nesting grounds for the endangered wood stork.

Second-home and resort development also threatens African-American Gullah communities on the coastal islands, especially in South Carolina. The unique culture of these isolated settlements is at risk, as well as their natural surroundings.

If you'd like to learn more about this region and become part of the effort to preserve it, contact the Georgia Chapter at 1447 Peachtree St., N.E., Suite 305, Atlanta, GA 30309-3034; (404) 607-1262.

Carl told us. After Hurricane Hugo tore through South Carolina in 1989, 90 percent of the people who lost their homes rebuilt them on the same lots.

The ultimate effect of building houses on barrier islands is to take a natural process and make it into a disaster. If no one is living on the beach when a storm hits, no one is killed by flying debris and no one loses their house to flooding. It is only by insisting on stability in an environment where change is a constant that we put ourselves in danger.

This was what the South Carolina Coastal Council had in mind in 1988 when it told developer David Lucas that he couldn't build on the two beachfront lots he had acquired on a barrier island called Isle of Palms. Lucas' lots had been entirely or partly underwater for much of the past 40 years, but when the Coastal Council wouldn't let him develop his lots, he argued that he deserved compensation. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and South Carolina ended up having to buy the lots from Lucas at a cost of $425,000 each. The state then sold the lots for development—but ordered that nothing be done to protect the new homes from the sea's stubborn march.

Georgia is the one state that has left its barrier islands pretty well alone. Only three of its dozen barrier islands have been developed; the others are still wildlands of beach and dunes and marsh, where giant sea turtles come to lay their eggs and the occasional alligator stumbles through brackish swamp. This happy state of affairs is due more to luck than to planning, though. In the 19th century, these sea islands were a fashionable vacation spot for the families of northern industrialists like the Carnegies and southern planters like the Reynoldses, each of which owned its own island. In the past few decades, the descendants of these families have passed their islands over to the state or federal park services.

Little Tybee's past was not so patrician; it was the property of the Kerr-McGee Corporation, which had originally intended to mine the marshes for phosphates. The mining plan was foiled when the Georgia legislature passed the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970, at which point the company began making plans for residential development. But in 1990, Kerr-McGee agreed to donate Little Tybee to the Nature Conservancy, on the condition that it be sold to the state of Georgia and the proceeds used to preserve a piece of tallgrass prairie in Kerr-McGee's home state of Oklahoma. An anonymous donor gave the state of Georgia two-thirds of the $1.5 million asking price, and the state ponied up the rest.

Continued on page 86

TOP: ROBB HELFRICK BOTTOM: HELEN LONGEST-SLAUGHTER

Through the Heartland

by William Poole

THE ORIGINAL *CITY OF NEW ORLEANS* was a day train. But now the *City* leaves mid-afternoon for a nighttime sprint to Chicago, and by train time the terminal is filled with tired-looking vacationers from the Midwest, sated on New Orleans and anxious to get some rest.

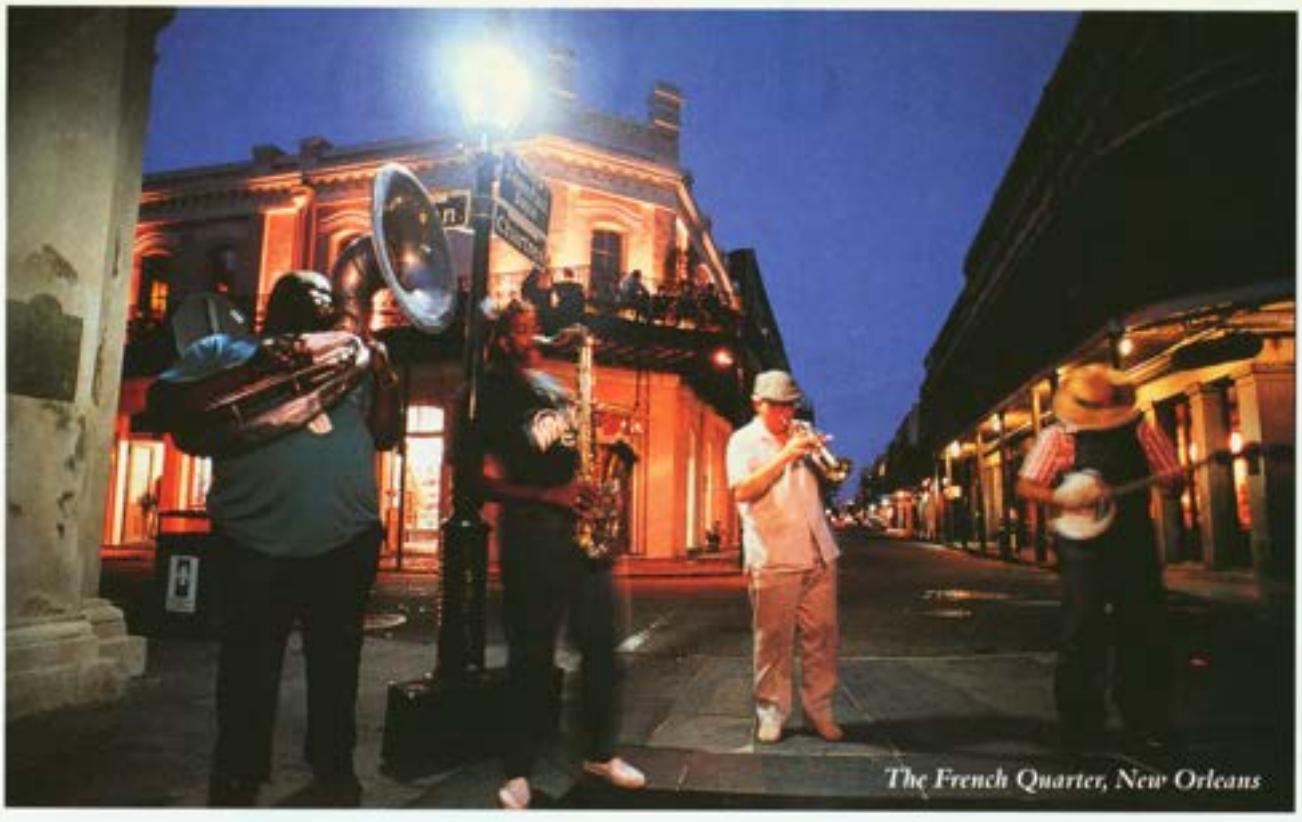
I had not entirely expected to like the Crescent City, which I worried might have become a Disneyesque parody of itself. But the sheer exuberance of the place, and a startling spell of tonic weather, left me smiling in the streets. Out on Saint Charles Avenue—which I quickly learned to pronounce "Saint Chawles"—I rode the trolley past the colonnaded mansions of the Garden District, and stretched my cramped legs beneath the arthritic, moss-draped oaks of Audubon Park. I strolled the centuries-old streets of the French Quarter—at once museum, fraternity party and sleazy tourist trap—where I quickly learned to order *beignets*, fluffy little pillow donuts sprinkled with sugar.

Laissez les bon temps rouler read the banner above the stage at Michaul's, a Cajun restaurant and music house I happened on one night. Eventually, I came to wonder if this civic motto might not extend in part from New Orleans' place in the world—surrounded by lakes, rivers, and swamps and requiring miles of levees and enormous pumps to maintain a dominant fraction of land over water. North of the city, I took a boat tour up whisper-still bayous and sloughs, all green and yellow, with moss-dangling cypress and gum trees, their trunks bloated at the waterline, and the water itself glazed improbably green with a film of duckweed like emerald confetti. Why not let the good times roll, I thought, when the river is always at the doorstep and even the dead must be secured above ground in concrete crypts to keep their casketed bodies from bobbing up and away on the next subterranean tide?

Even aboard the train out of town a certain *joie de vivre* prevailed in the person of Cammy, the chief of service, who announced over the PA that she was our "funny-faced friend" and, by way of advertisement, launched into song: "Nothing could be finer than dinner in our diner." By contrast, the sleeper attendant was an entirely calm and courtly New Orleans native named Cat, who, when I mentioned at a station stop that my compartment suffered from a dirty window, leaped to the platform with a handful of paper towels to clear the view.

Outside this window now, more swamps, dotted with white and yellow flowers, as Lake Pontchartrain appeared once more on the right. Egrets and ibis stood wet to the knees along the tracks, while little shrimp boats nestled dockside in the placid lake, which seemed as big as an ocean here, 50 miles from its tentative outlet in the Gulf. In the accumulating dusk we crawled through euphonious towns—Ponchatoula, Tangipahoa—their main streets abustle with end-of-the-day homegoing. Camelias bloomed near Independence, but I saw no magnolias in Magnolia, because by then it was dark. At McComb, Mississippi, it was announced apologetically that we were running behind schedule, but would be up to speed real soon. "Take your time," I wanted to shout. "The more we dally tonight, the more we will see in daylight tomorrow." I could never remember wishing for a plane or bus to be late.

Amtrak recently converted the *City of New Orleans* from 40-year-old "Heritage" cars, which dominate its eastern runs, to two-story "Superliner" cars, which not only hold more passengers, but seem to roll like boats on a gentle sea. My Superliner sleeper seemed particularly lively that night



The French Quarter, New Orleans

as we rocketed north through Mississippi and into Tennessee (true to the conductor's promise to make up lost time). I awoke briefly to glimpse the Mississippi River at Memphis, but missed in sleep and darkness that intangible moment where the southward tug of the country is diluted and finally lost in the prairies of Illinois.

Dawn arrived as a velvety ribbon bisecting two regions of gray—the lighter of the sky, the darker of the land, punctured here and there by the breakfast lamps of early-rising farmers. We rolled through Mattoon, the university community of Champaign-Urbana, the farm town of Rantoul—and between them undulating, unshaven country: cornstubble by the acre, the square mile, the county, for all I could tell. Then, after Kankakee, it was "Homewood, Illinois, Homewood, next stop," and true to its name the Chicago suburb did seem both prosperously domestic and well supplied with trees.

Leaving Chicago

Here, as elsewhere along my route, Amtrak's rail roughly paralleled a major highway, but was totally free of the huckstering homogeneity of many such roads—no Biggie Burgers or Taco Sheds or Sleep 'n' Save Motels, no billboards entreating that we stop, stop, stop to shop, shop, shop. For this reason, the regions of America seemed to me more themselves from their rail corridors than from many highways, less devolved into what writer James Howard Kunstler has called "the geography of nowhere."

Having gloriously sampled both a verdant summer and a blaze of fall, I thought Chicago might contribute a blustery bit of winter to my trip. But the Windy City on election day was becalmed, if overcast, as I checked my luggage and headed out for a walk. If New Orleans' exuberance had seemed all song and celebration, downtown Chicago seemed to shout commerce, and to be not so much built upon the prairie as thrust up through it in a hearty hosanna of concrete and steel. From the 110th-floor observation deck of the Sears Tower, the nation's tallest building, I studied the network of railroad tracks feeding the city center.

At one time Chicago boasted six downtown passenger terminals; it is still the passenger train nexus of the United States. Departure monitors in Union Station list more than 250 communities served by Amtrak (a number soon to decline with the recent cutbacks), along with the next scheduled departure for each stop. Each afternoon, the terminal is crowded with travelers waiting to board the *Southwest Chief*, the *Empire Builder*, the *Texas Eagle*, the *Desert Wind*, the *Pioneer* and the *California Zephyr*.

The *Zephyr*, that was my train, and in an effort not to be late, I was two hours early back to the terminal to meet it.

Next Stop: The Rockies page 58

Grand Canvas

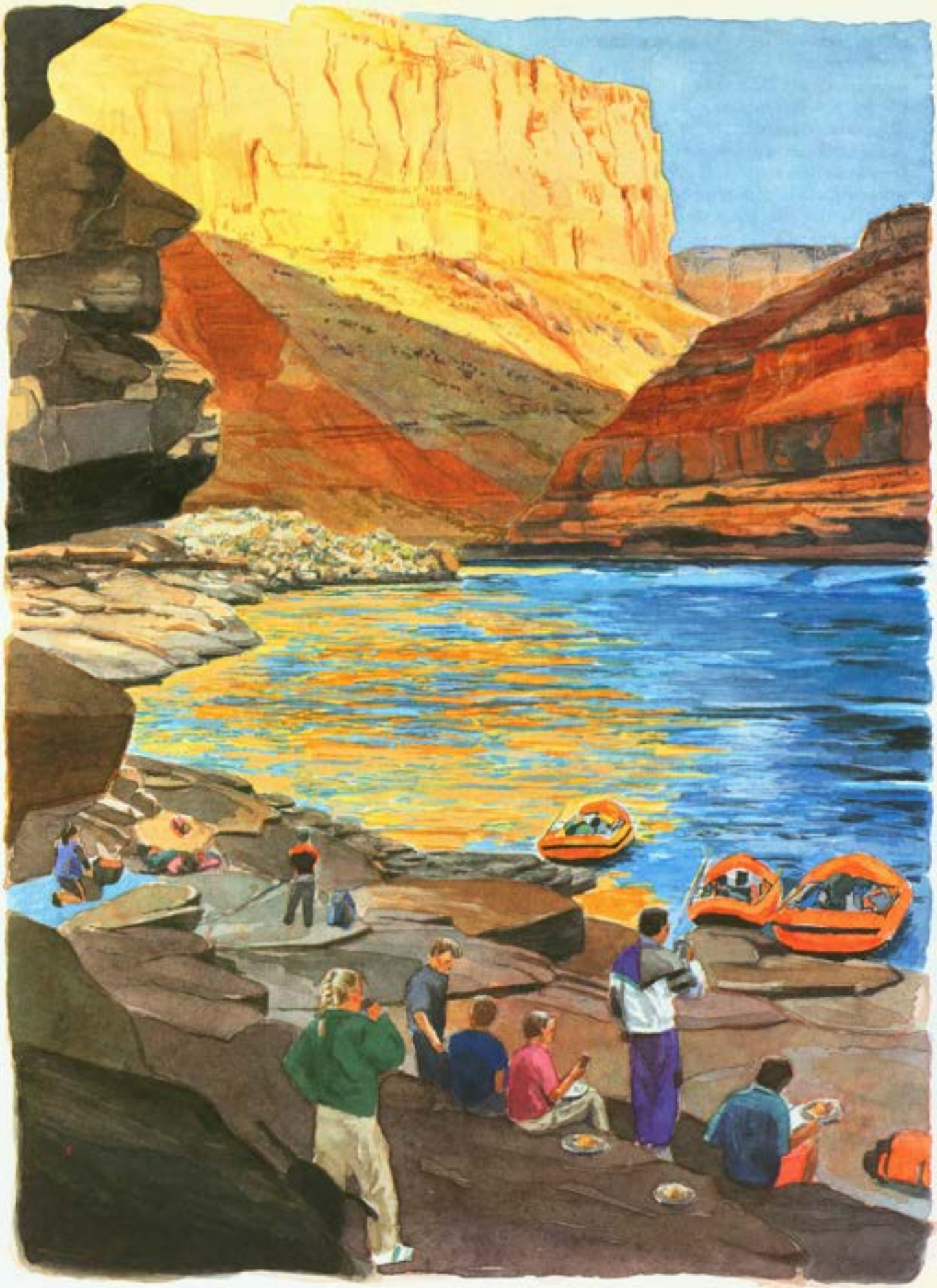
WE ASSEMBLE IN THE HOT-TUB ROOM of a forlorn Flagstaff motel and fumble with our black rubber gear bags. Outfitter Geoff Gourley discusses these bags with a certain gravity. There seems to be a mystery associated with them. For most of us on this Sierra Club rafting trip, the real mystery is how we'll fit all our gear into these tiny sacks, but trip coordinator Victor Motike, who just celebrated his 80th birthday, is unconcerned. He has made this journey through the Grand Canyon 14 times. He has a peculiar glint in his eye, and the grin of the initiated.

Right now we are somewhat apprehensive strangers, so we take refuge in basic dinner conversation at Flagstaff's one Indian restaurant. A conventional profile of this group would be "mature, highly educated, successful urban professionals." Most are couples, but three have come alone. The solitary members especially seem to regard this journey as a private life-quest, a turning point. Eating our curries and tandooris, we are simply individuals from different parts of the country, with lives that can be described coherently over dinner.

Five rafts, 225 miles, and one artist floating down the Colorado; 14 days of river time distilled into morning, noon, and night.

On the morning of our departure the group mixture changes radically. We add four Germans, three of whom will be making the journey in kayaks. One of the Germans must be close to seven feet tall, a graceful, silver-haired designer of Audi interiors. Only one seems to speak much English, but they have brought along a high-energy, holiday atmo-

by Hannah Hinchman



sphere. Two solitary kayakers join the entourage: Steve from Pittsburgh, who gravitates to the party group, and keen-eyed Andy, the reserved fell-runner from Scotland. Finally we add a kayaking couple—Hugo, a diminutive Argentinian vintner, and his fireball sweetheart, Maria.

The mountain of equipment looming on the beach at Lees Ferry looks unmanageable. It all seems to be too much—the whole trip will be consumed by schlepping and sorting the gear. The five rafts groan with the rafters' boxes of white wine, stacked on top of the kayakers' ballast of beer.

In only a few days familiarity has replaced apprehension. We have become bodies: shivering, blue-lipped bodies, serene sun-sprawled bodies. I know people's arms and knees, how they toss the black bags up the boat-unloading line, how they hunker down by the fire to eat, the patterns of sunburn on necks and noses. I know each person's step from far down the beach. I know them by their voices in the darkness of camp, and by the kinds of campsites they choose. I know which ones take the path to the "throne" early in the morning, and the ones who wait until last call. Myra says that the sounds of early morning are zips and coughs; you can tell by the vigor of the zip whether someone has slept well or not.

Down in the kitchen, Jim Toney, the cowboy boatman, flattens aluminum cans between two rocks. It's the perfect Neanderthal chore before coffee. The morning's pile of beer cans indicates how late the fire burned the previous night. I join the primitive smashing circle, finding chimp-like pleasure in reducing cans to microdisks in one blow.

There's Erich brushing his teeth, Michael shaving, Myra spreading her tent fly on the nearest tamarisk (all the trees and rocks are festooned with wet gear), Geoff with a reference book from his traveling library, Harold gazing in abstraction at the boulders by the water, Clarann braiding her hair, Maria's sexy Argentine chuckle. Here comes Andy the Scot, "that shandy drinkin' ballerina" as he's known to the boatmen for wearing his kayak's spray skirt while on the beach, ready to take over at the can-smashing station.

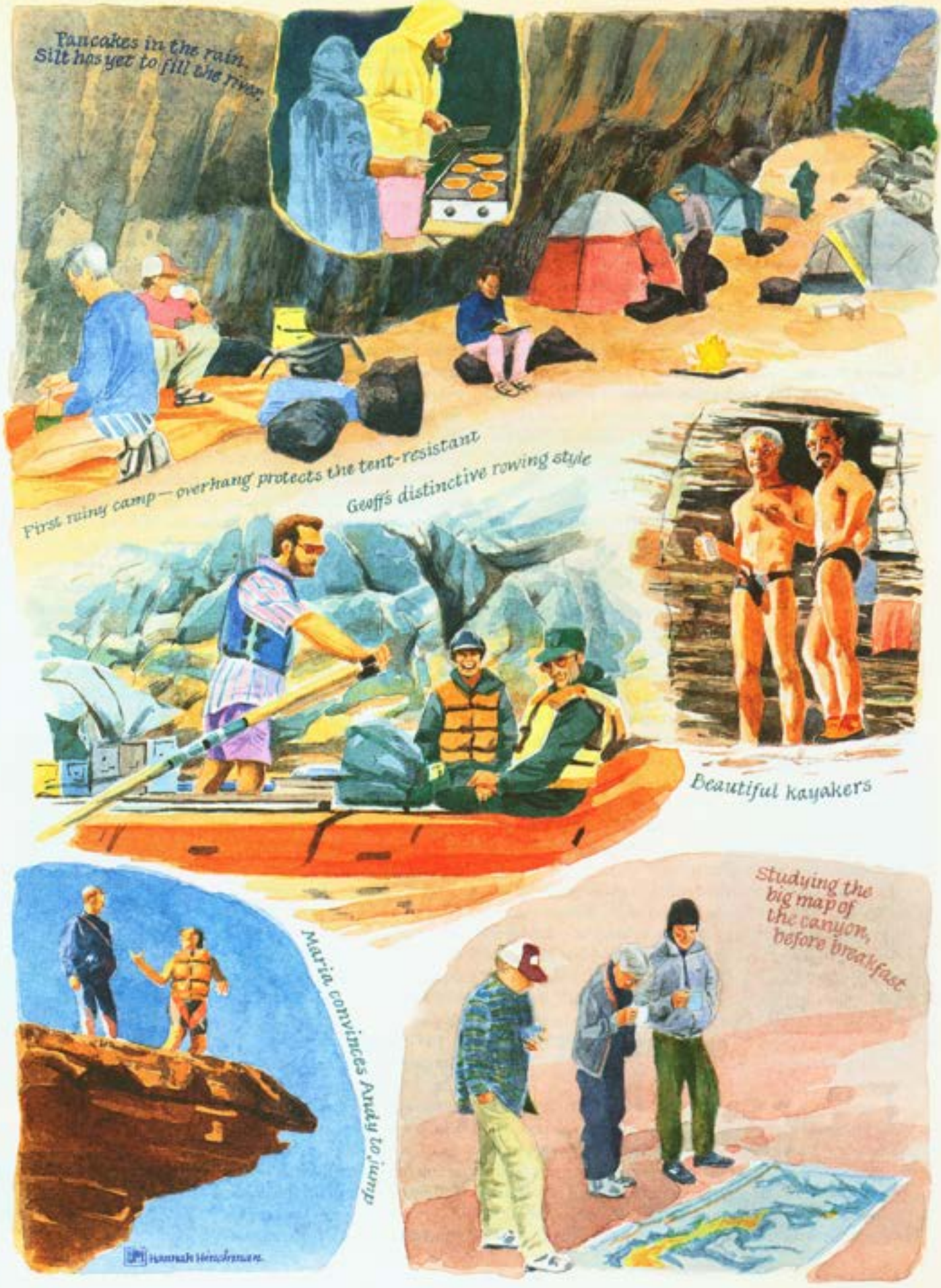
It's the Americans who are growing strange whiskers, who seem glad to be wallowing in mud and sand. Their hair stands on end all day, in the same spikes it had when they got up. My own has become a substance that bears no relation to hair as I know it, far beyond the reach of a brush, after having been "washed" in the river of silt. The Americans' long underwear is damp and baggy, and their rain gear doesn't fit. By contrast, the Germans shave every morning, bathe every night, and walk around in the tiniest of nylon briefs when they are out of their wetsuits, a lovely sight indeed. The boatmen represent a third style: baggy shorts and sandals even when it's 40 degrees. Only grudgingly do they put on foul-weather jackets before we enter rapids.

Our tribe is intact this morning, if a little creaky, shaking the sand out of our collective ears and hair. It's no wonder we feel a strange sense of rightness about all this—it's the way humans have traveled and known each other for many thousands of years. This is my band, the only people I have ever known, except for some strangers in a dim past. In the voices, gestures, and figures, absorbed by canyon space and river noise, I can see the outline of a different kind of human presence.

Some of us struggle to condense a campsite into tiny bags, others are efficient in their stuffing, but all wind up on the beach for the great flurry of loading the rafts. Then we are away, and within a moment the furor is erased completely by river consciousness.

In flat water, Sue's oar strokes seem effortless and slow, and we immerse ourselves in our individual reveries. Ravens pass overhead, on the way to the campsite we've just vacated, and a great blue heron stands on the shoreline, its "slate-colored expanse of wing, a tempered blue as of sky and dark water commingled," as Thoreau said.

We know there are rapids ahead, but this is the time to marvel at the lilac-and-teal layers in the Bright Angel Shale, or to study the way travertine from long-vanished hot springs laid a mineral shell on the walls. We stretch out on the rafts. Geoff reads a passage from a book about the exploration of the Colorado River. We get to know every nuance of morning.


Pancakes in the rain.
Silt has yet to fill the river
First rainy camp — overhang protects the tent-resistant
Geoff's distinctive rowing style
Beautiful kayakers
Studying the big map of the canyon, before breakfast
Maria convinces Andy to jump
Hannah Hindman

It's in flat water where the boatmen find "reading" the current most challenging. Though almost invisible from river level, there is only one channel of continuous movement, and many eddies and doldrums to slow your progress. On the surface, you see vortex streets, whorls of water related in form to the way smoke moves, mushrooms grow, and weather systems develop. You also see areas of upwelling, domes of water one or 50 yards across, caused by some underwater obstruction too small to create a wave. You see actual boundaries between areas of water moving at different speeds, called eddy fences.

All this becomes much more apparent after a rain, and after we pass the mouth of the Little Colorado, which converts the river to full opacity with its load of pottery-colored silt. Surface patterns are easier to see without the distraction of transparent water. The river carries so much earth that each splash-drop on my glasses dries to a dot of chalky pigment.

IN THE RAIN, YOU NOT ONLY FIND THE TYPICAL WHORLS and upwellings, but the whole river surface is screened with a symmetrical pattern of concentric raindrop circles, expanding rings that seem to stay in place while the water moves by under them. In a downpour, hard pellets create bubbles on the surface, as well as ripple rings. Each bubble is the size of a walnut and stays intact for about five seconds.

I'm wet and cold, hunched down in the front of the raft looking out the smallest aperture in my slicker hood. But this water-pattern reverie takes precedence over the discomfort. Now there are bubbles, rings, and the river's own movement, all superimposed on its surface. Rings overlap each other without interference, the whorls don't disrupt the rings, and the current heads downstream without disturbing either of them. When a raindrop penetrates the surface, it takes a bead of air with it, which appears briefly underwater as a tiny silver sphere.

Our endurance is rewarded with scores of ephemeral waterfalls that appear along the canyon walls. We see a colonnade of cascades stretching away in an array of colors: terra cotta, café au lait, cream, deep sienna, pink, blue-white, and ocher. Boatman Geoff stands up in his raft, swinging his video camera around and shouting "Wunderbar!" Boatman Jim allows our raft to drift, while we all watch the spectacle in silence. After a few moments he grins and says, "Now exactly how does erosion work, again?"

THERE IS A KIND OF PROCESSIONAL DIGNITY ABOUT plunging down a rapid, despite all the violence. The waves themselves are massive, but the volume of water moving through them is truly mountainous. So, progress up the face of a wave and down into the hole behind it is stately compared to, say, the jolts and buffets of skiing. Part of the progression is the awful sense of inevitability as you look ahead during the last seconds of flat water before the roaring passage. Then you feel the grip of the first descent, like being tied to the back of a blue whale.

Each boatman has his or her own style for navigating rapids. Sue, though lean and muscular, doesn't have the body weight to push a raft around in the midst of big waves, so she operates on skill and finesse. Our trip includes one boatman, Dentist Jim, who has just gotten his permit: he's made only nine trips through the canyon. Because Geoff knows that Jim needs coaching for the biggest rapids, we get to hear some river-rat talk that would have been diluted into dude terms otherwise. "Watch those little rising compression waves," Geoff says to him as we scout Lava Falls. "See the line of them right along the break between the flat and the rough water? You've got to line up your oarlocks with those, and follow them into the V-wave, or you're chub-bait in the hole."

None of our boatmen flipped a raft, including Dentist Jim, but his was always the wildest ride. Michael the German and I happened to be on his boat for the first big rapid of the trip, where he promptly lost an oar. "Oh my God, the oar's out!" he shouted. "Put it back, quick!" I was paralyzed by the sight of the waves, but Michael managed to fling himself across the boat frame and replace the oar. Dentist Jim didn't notice that it was back in the oarlock, however, until we were through the rapid and rotating in an eddy.

SUN CAN SIT FLAT ON THE RIVER, SHOWING ONLY THE color of the water. Then ahead, in the shadow of a wall, it becomes reflective, creating a wide band of brilliant blue. A shade more metallic than the Arizona perfection of the sky; "gunbarrel" or "raven's wing" could describe it. Because of ripples on the surface, strips and coins of white light still flash from the darkest shadows. But here's the best thing: in certain shaded stretches, the water all around us breaks into alternating stripes of color: the tangerine of the lit-up canyon wall, and the blue of the sky.

In Granite Narrows, we float alongside a drowning tarantula. The creature's distress, combined with the look of its flailing legs, comes to me as the apotheosis of spider horror/empathy. I scoop her up with a gallon-size bailing jug and drain the water. As we row along in the sun toward Deer Creek Falls, she be-

gins to get her legs under her, and to look for a way out of the jug. On the end of each leg (she is missing two) are double grappling hooks, effective even on smooth plastic. At the last moment, I tap her back to the bottom of the jug. Then she begins another ascent, using her two long fangs as picks, needling them into the plastic with each grope up the wall. I'm tapping a little more urgently now, and excuse myself at the beach for a shaky sprint toward good tarantula habitat. At a boulder pile far from the trail I prepare to free her, realizing that we are alone together, and that I have no idea how a tarantula sees, how aggressive this one might be, or how quickly she might move in the open.

Of course, horror evaporates when I see her standing on the boulder; she looks shakier than I do. She is very thin, and not as big as she looked in the jug. She embarks on a tentative and somewhat lurching hike to the edge of the rock, gains confidence on its vertical face, and then continues underneath, hanging upside down. In a smaller spider this wouldn't surprise me, but she weighs as much as a square of baking chocolate. Orbweavers sway in their webs and have to work hard to hold on when they walk upside-down. This creature, by contrast, is in control of gravity, displaying a masterful strength and grace, even though she is injured.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT'S ALWAYS A RELIEF TO JUMP ashore and begin the production of setting up camp. It's October, so not much direct sunlight penetrates the canyon, and the shadows are pure refrigeration all day. We warm ourselves by forming fire-lines to unload the rafts, then scatter to choose campsites. Most nights, there is no need for a tent. Just claim a spot that appeals to you, and throw down a groundcloth.

I like to unpack everything, and arrange it all. Because I have so few "things," each seems more significant and treasured than it ever is in ordinary life. These soot-blackened, cinder-perforated sweatpants will be forever dear to me. And my drafting pens, which get scrubbed with Grand Canyon silt-water each time they leak (daily), seem as essential by now as any thumb-scraper or bone awl.

It's cocktail hour, and the tribe is eating smoked oysters in the "kitchen," but I bring a Sierra Club cup of wine back to my spot, pick up my book and pens, and write until it gets dark.

The boatmen prepare astonishing dishes, night after night, with fresh ingredients. Usually there are tiers of ember-layered Dutch ovens containing pizza or brownies or cheesecake. All of it is choreographed in the dark, with one lantern, a few headlamps, and firelight, to the tune of Geoff's


Color leaches out along fractures
Fluted & polished schist
Pebbles caught in a hollowed pocket
Looking up at columnar basalt
Stones at dusk on the Narrowway outwash
Potholes, windows, passages in granite

old cowboy music, played on an ancient tape player inside a ziplock bag.

One night we camp in a howling wind that appears to be blowing a snow squall our way: the canyon rims are already white. Yet dinner is prepared with the same unruffled good humor. We eat flawless pasta with two sauces, our backs to the sandstorm.

AFTER DAYS OF GRAY SKIES, WE finally begin to see patches of blue. I set up a flaccid tent, still soaked from the rain that began at 3 a.m. The bliss of putting on dry warm socks and hiking boots! Our entire party, in small groups, climbs a talus slope to get a closer look at Anasazi granaries tucked into an alcove. Bodies I know as kayak centaurs take buoyant strides up the steep trail; older bodies move more deliberately, but I can see they've logged many miles in mountains. We admire the fine stonework, without touching anything, and stay for as long as we can stand the cold, glad to have an aerial view of the river's body.

At dark we return to camp, and are greeted by cauldrons of *Glühwein* steaming on the stove. We encircle the fire, cups in hand, radiating creaturely cheer. I'm in my usual position, sitting amid a forest of legs, so that I can write by firelight. The Germans, who seem to be true connoisseurs of light and form, alert me to the fact that the moon, still hidden behind the cliff, has lit up the western walls. We move away from the fire to monitor its progress, guessing how long it will take to rise over the cliff. I learn the words *Mond, Wölken,* and *Schatten,* and put them together to identify the movement of cloud shadows, cast by the moon on the great walls.

After dinner, the talk is sporadic. Silences extend, but no one notices. It's a single shared silence, comfortable for that reason. No one seems interested in remembering other lives. Fire, river, wine, and night are a sufficiency. Victor leans his chin on a staff of driftwood that, lit from beneath, looks like a mask or a gargoyle. He still wears his enigmatic smile, but now so do we all. ■

HANNAH HINCHMAN *is the author of* A Life in Hand: Creating the Illuminated Journal *(Peregrine Smith Books/Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1991) and a frequent contributor to* Sierra.

SIERRA CLUB SAVING THE WILD PLANET

The Grand and Glorious Gorge

To Explore and Enjoy

Each year the Sierra Club's national outings program runs several excursions in the Grand Canyon. This year's raft trip (#95282) will head down the Colorado from August 21 to September 2. For an out-of-boat canyon experience, consider the Club's late-May and mid-September trail-building service trips (#95090 and #95345), or a camping and hiking trip for families in June (#95247). For more information, contact the Sierra Club Outing Department, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109; (415) 923-5522.

Rafters will want the mile-by-mile *The Colorado River in Grand Canyon* by Larry Stevens (Red Lake Books, Flagstaff, Ariz.; 1993) or *Grand Canyon River Guide* by Bill and Buzz Belknap (Westwater Books, Evergreen, Colo.; 1989). For general information, look at three Sierra Club books: Dave Ganci's *Arizona Day Hikes* (1995) or John Annerino's *Hiking the Grand Canyon* (1993) and *Adventuring in Arizona* (1991).

To Protect

Since people just can't seem to leave the big ditch alone, the Sierra Club is working on several Grand Canyon issues:

Club activists are lobbying the Bureau of Reclamation to ensure that water releases from Glen Canyon Dam meet the needs of the canyon and not merely the cash-register concerns of the region's hydropower interests. As part of the effort, Club members are urging the agency to institute an experimental flood release to rebuild the canyon's beaches.

The Club is also working to shape the park's upcoming general management plan so that it will curtail traffic congestion and Disney-like development at the popular north and south rims. Sierra Club members are hoping to block construction of a new hotel on the north rim, and a massive proposed commercial development on the park's southern border.

Look! Up in the air! It's a plane—and a plane, and another plane! Ten thousand tour flights crisscross canyon skies each month, rendering natural quiet a relic of days gone by. The Sierra Club supports a Park Service proposal to reduce airplane noise by closing one air corridor and making more airspace off-limits to "flightseeing" tours, but wants the agency to go further by expanding backcountry no-fly zones and limiting the total number of aircraft buzzing above.

Though it may be quieter overhead, you won't see much if the region's air-pollution problems aren't resolved. To clear the canyon of summer smog blown in from Southern California and year-round pollution from local coal-burning power plants, the Sierra Club is proposing cleanups of southwest power generators and increased emphasis on conservation and renewable-energy sources.

To help protect the Grand Canyon, contact the Sierra Club's Southwest Office, 516 E. Portland St., Phoenix, AZ 85004-1843; (602) 254-9330.

Across the Great Divide

WE LEFT CHICAGO IN mid-afternoon beneath a pewter-colored sky—automatic floodlights already blazing in the parking lots beside the track—and slashed through thinning suburbs and into open country near Aurora, Illinois. The earth was damp (many of the fields newly plowed and marked by harrows as if by the claws of giant animals), and with bruised clouds confronting us from the west, it seemed a puzzle whether we would meet first the inevitable rain or the inevitable dark. But the dark won, and the rain held off until we had rattled across the Mississippi River at Burlington, Iowa.

No surprise, I guess, that in November the *Zephyr*'s passenger list seemed tilted toward amiable retirees—grandmas and grandpas off to see the kids—along with a full quorum from the not-so-frequent-flyer club. Also aboard: squalling babes and squirming youngsters; at least one amorous duo of blue-jeaned college kids; at least one wicket-legged old cowboy (who tottered painfully from his coach seat to and from the rest room); and almost certainly only one professional poet (for so he introduced himself), in sport coat above a saffron shirt, spouting Allen Ginsberg.

by William Poole

Some of these passengers had been attracted by the *Zephyr*'s reputation as the premier mountain sightseeing train in the Amtrak system. But the schedule shortchanges lovers of wide-open prairie country, who may drift off to sleep in rolling Iowa and awake with the Rockies in view. All night long we sprinted across Nebraska through towns like Hastings, and Holdrege, and McComb, 90 miles from the nearest interstate—where a shining pair of parallel rails may offer the only transit out of town—and by 6 a.m. I was back in the glass-walled observation car, the *Zephyr* still plowing through ink. The blocky shapes of grain elevators hulked dimly beside the track, and, off to the north, a rattletrap pickup chased its own headlights down a lonely road. If it was winter I had wanted, it arrived that morning, with Christmas thrown in for good measure. Nebraska rain had fallen as Colorado snow, and it was foggy, see-your-breath weather in Denver, where we stopped after breakfast to service the train. Then, still in fog, the *Zephyr* began a laboring, switchback course up the flank of the Rockies—coyly showing us its head, first to the left, then to the right—the firs at trackside pendulous and white. For a while it seemed that the engines must surely fail and that we would begin a long, ignominious slide back to Denver. But this railroad does not so much hurdle the Rockies as pierce them, and soon the 27 tunnels began (children in the observation car screaming at each enveloping darkness), culminating with the six-mile-long Moffat Tunnel beneath the Continental Divide. And when the *Zephyr* burst above the fog into the splendid

Outside Thompson, Utah

sun-flooded and wintry canyon of the South Boulder River, and the rooftree of the Rockies appeared cold above us in the distance, then all that was lacking for Christmas was the choir of angels, the blare of trumpets, the tinsel and the bow.

By now it was standing room only in the *Zephyr*'s observation car. Here at last was the route's much-touted scenery, landscape with movie-star charisma. Each succeeding tunnel faded the stage to black, reset it for another snow-smothered scene. At Granby, Colorado, gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, I was reminded how the nation's western railroads founded their prosperity on such scenery and fought mightily for the national parks and the rail-riding tourists they would draw. Even John Muir had to acknowledge the synergistic potency of conservation linked to railroad commerce, and did what he could to support his allies. After a visit to the Grand Canyon he wrote that newly arrived locomotives and trains there were like "mere beetles and caterpillars, and the noise they make is as little disturbing as the hooting of an owl in a lonely woods."

The *Zephyr* picked up the Frazier River and then the Colorado, as yet little more than an irresolute stream. Through more than 200 miles of snow-dusted meadows and battlement-hung canyons, we followed the river named "Red," although here it was nearly as green as its attendant firs and pines, russet only where winter-stark willows marked its margins. We passed a beaver dam, a log cabin tumbled to ruin, congregations of grazing cattle, haystacks, and hay bales (both rectangular and cylindrical). Ever westward, ever downhill, the firs giving way to piñon and junipers, to sagebrush, to cowboy country: yippee-ti-yi-yo. The river's malachite pools tempted me. I was thinking trout.

A doubtful enterprise in November, probably, but had I planned ahead I might have clambered off the train at Glenwood Springs, to flail the river with a fly rod and, incidentally, soak my bones in the hot mineral baths nearby. The little town with its blocky sandstone hotel (patterned after a Medici palace) anchors the western portal of twelve-and-a-half-mile-long Glenwood Canyon, a neck-craning gouge through dark old rock, said to have inspired the first glass-topped railway cars in the 1940s. The canyon's steep, spire-topped walls brood high above the river, above the railroad, and now above recently completed Interstate 70, which feels its way along the base of the cliff on an elevated causeway—an extraordinary, if controversial, feat of engineering.

Past Grand Junction, we parted company with the Colorado and headed northwest, into the pocked and layered sandstone country of southern Utah. At an evening station stop I climbed down to the platform at Helper, named for the "helper" engines sometimes added here to assist trains in yet another mountain climb up ahead. It was good to be out in the air. I drew a deep breath, then another: cold mountain medicine, spicy with piñon smoke, and for the first time since Chicago something in me genuinely wanted to hang back, find a room, take a walk. Above the station roof hung a perfect silver hemisphere of moon.

Next Stop: Elko, Nevada page 66

Crags and Crum

BEING A NEW YORKER, MY LIFE IS VERY pedestrian. I walk a lot, but it would *never* have occurred to me to test my ambulatory skills *mid-December* in an ex-urban wilderness north of Central Park. Sensible urbanites spend hunting season at the theater, the dance, or the opera, and leave the woods to the deerslayers.

Nevertheless, on being asked ever so nicely to brave the dangers of a hike beyond the Bronx, I dusted off my *New York Walk Book* to check the operatic crags of the Shawangunk ("shon-gum" to locals, "the Gunks" to us) Mountains, just 90 miles (and 450 million years) removed from Carnegie Hall. I knew vaguely about the Gunks, but, having been raised between the Cascades and the Olympics, I had serious reservations about calling 1,500-foot drumlin bumps *mountains*.

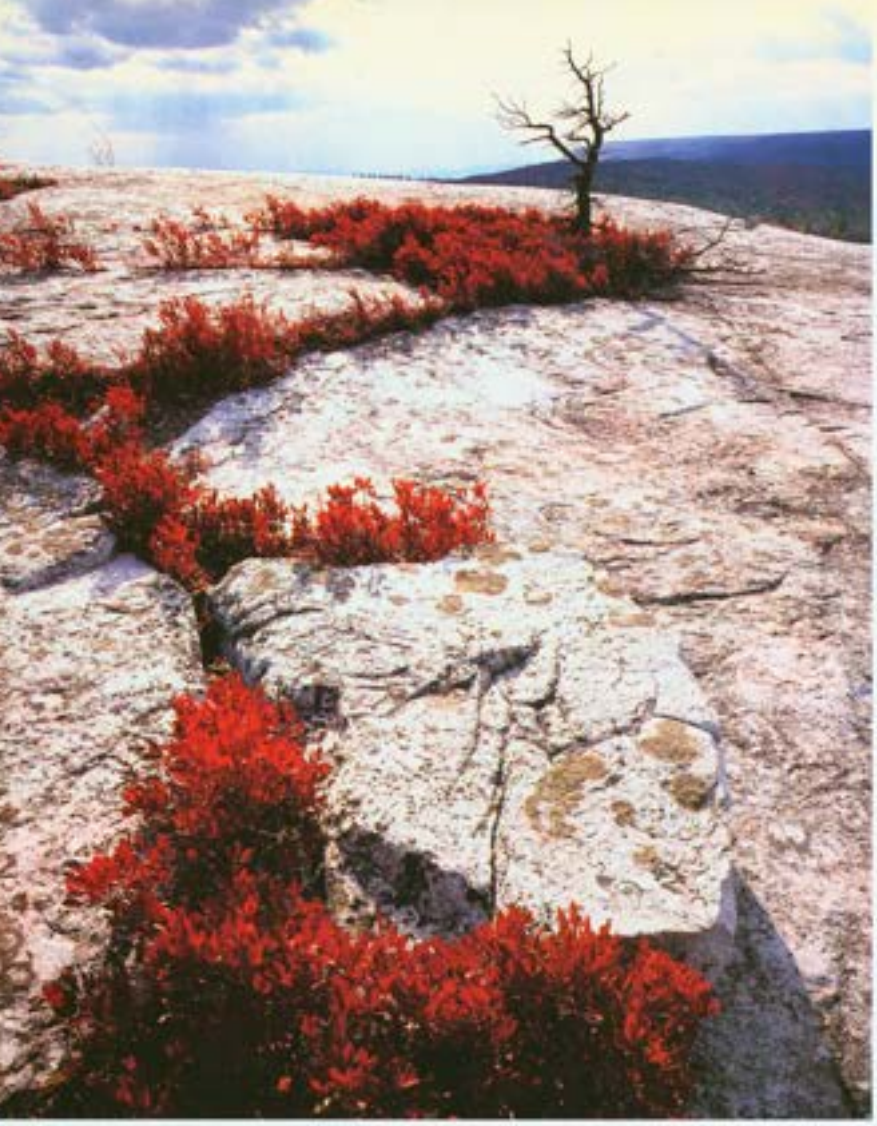
Rising above my western-mountain chauvinism, I hiked forth from the NYC subway, through the tawdry wilderness of Times Square, and caught the 7 a.m. Adirondack Trailways bus north, on assignment to the Gunks. Whereas it took the Wisconsin ice sheet a thousand years to melt from Manhattan to the Shawangunks, I did the distance in 90 minutes, cool; a driver from the Mohonk Mountain House collected me in the old Huguenot village of New Paltz, and by 8:30 we were in the mountains doing a sedate 20 m.p.h. in accord with Mohonk's polite road signs—"SLOWLY and QUIETLY, PLEASE."

> In New York's Shawangunk Mountains, an exhilarating day in the wilds always ends with a proper cup of tea.

Rarely is it possible to change wildernesses in under two hours. I felt like a Rip Van Winkle in reverse waking in the late Silurian environs of the high-Victorian Mohonk Mountain House. My fantastically turreted and gabled base camp was the 275-room architectural equivalent of a glacial erratic come to rest on the western shore of Lake Mohonk, a pristine alpine fjord at altitude 1,250 feet. Where the white Shawangunk-conglomerate cliffs leave off, the Mountain House takes up.

by Patti Hagan

pets



In 1869, a Quaker family named Smiley fell in love with the Shawangunks and purchased 300 acres around the "sky lake" of Mohonk. The preservationist Smileys quickly discovered, however (according to Frederick E. Partington in *The Story of Mohonk*), that "no amount of moral force could preserve the character of Mohonk and keep away nuisances" —that is, the Smiley's neighbors, people with habits of casual deforestation, pyromania (to stimulate wild berry crops), and blowing up historic precipices when in need of building stone. Consequently, the Smileys of Mohonk (as they came to be known) made "over one hundred distinct purchases" and established a 7,500-acre "state of immunity." Another branch of the family bought up 10,000 acres and built two more Mountain Houses at Minnewaska, a sister sky lake further west on the Shawangunk ridge. This property is now Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

Today, 126 years later, the Smileys of Mohonk still have stewardship over the Mountain House and 2,200 acres immediately surrounding. "Since its beginning in 1869," says the official House map, "environmental awareness and responsible stewardship have allowed Mohonk to preserve the surrounding wilderness while providing a restful retreat for guests." Since 1963, perpetual open-space protection has been afforded 6,200 acres of adjoining land by the Mohonk Preserve, making it New York's largest private nature sanctuary.

I had laced up my boots in the city so as to hit the ground walking. The Shawangunk Mountains cover some 100 square miles, but given Mohonk's miles of antique carriage roads—many a century old—and well-mapped footpaths and hiking trails, I would not be bushwhacking. As the Mountain House bulletin board declared all Rock Scrambles "CLOSED for the Winter," I would confine my rambling to the lands of the two Mohonks, Preserve and Mountain House, and the "recommended walks" looping out from the latter.

Another bulletin board advised hikers to "please use caution," since deer hunting is in progress, Monday through Friday, on the adjacent Mohonk Preserve. (Orange safety vests were to be had from Guest Services.) Suitably vested, I strike out from the East Porch for the top—Sky Top, elevation 1,550 feet, walking a fine, rugged line above the boulder-chaos known as the Labyrinth. The micro-mountain scale of the Shawangunks registers like an optical illusion; I have entered an exquisite mini-montane Lilliput, an Alps as ruggedly and asymmetrically neat as a Japanese temple garden. The mosses, lichens, ferns, and bonsai pitch pines are ubiquitous on the caprock, in clean, elemental design.

Achieving the height of the Albert K. Smiley Memorial Tower atop Sky Top, I am suddenly dwarfed, engulfed, in an infinity of blue-purpling space extending over six states. I confront *géologie vérité*. The adamantine Shawangunks are an island surrounded by valleys: The Great or Wallkill Valley to the southeast, the Rondout Valley to the northwest, and the Hudson River Valley to the east. I look west down the 20-mile length of the Shawangunk ridge, taking in the white Moby Dick headlands of The Trapps cliffs and Millbrook Mountain. The scene is oceanic, an uncanny reprise of the shallow Ordovician sea, Iapetus, that covered this place 500 million years back. I make my descent, unable to improve on the journalistic rappel by the *New York Independent* reporter in 1870 who "came down from Sky-Top with enlarged ideas of power and sublimity."

Still getting the lay of the land, I join a guaranteed "short and easy" one-mile expedition west, from the West Porch this time, to Cope's Lookout. En route, we stop to gaze from fanciful pagoda-roofed gazebos sited like peregrine falcon perches along the cliff edge, offering the Big Picture. Mohonk Preserve staffer Ilka List gestures dismissively toward the nearby Catskill Mountains: "We're on *real* mountains—*those* are just eroded plateaus!" ("Mountains only in the erosional sense," sniffs the *Hülk Book*.) List informs us that the Rondout Valley was the Wheat Belt of the United States in

the early 1800s. The Gunks served as the Tannin Belt (from the bark of the tannin-rich hemlock) and then, when the hemlocks were logged out, the Millstone Belt. This is a wilderness in recovery, a forest redux. It is also eminently walkable. Unlike the Rockies, 3,000 miles long and miles high, the Gunks are finite and user-friendly; you can pick a peak—yon Millbrook Mountain, or the far Trapps, west down the ridge—and, within a few hours, walk to it, around it, over it.

> I swing along, ever mindful of the glacier's great, looming, shaping, presiding Absence.

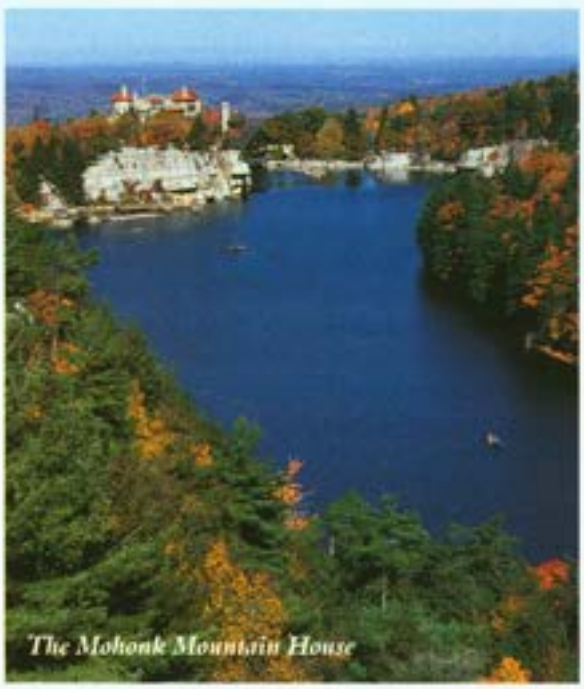
Back in the great Mohonk Dining Room for lunch, I'm assigned an orchestra window-seat with a vast view over the Rondout Valley unto the plateau peaks of the Catskills: Thunderhill, Peekamoose, Balsam Cap, Ashokan, Indian Head. I'm looking out on the origins of the planet, the raw, prehistoric foundations of the Appalachians. The wholesome Mohonk table cannot compete with the extraordinary tableau. My typical Mohonk meal: a feast by binoculars.

At Mohonk, naturalists are plentiful and forthcoming. Thus, when a 14th-generation descendant of Pocahontas, E. Barrie Kavasch, is scheduled to lead a postprandial "Eastern Woodland Ethnobotany Walk"—a lichen hike—I tag along. We set out briskly enough on the east side of the lake. A lichen, we learn, is actually two plants, an alga and a fungus living in a symbiotic relationship yet passing for one, and can survive on vertical rock faces under the harshest conditions. ("When an alga and a fungus take a lichen to each other," says Preserve Ranger Sybil Rosen, "the marriage is on the rocks.") Lichens are the most widespread of all plants in the world, and older than the bristlecone pine. Some lichen colonies in the Arctic are 4,500-plus years old, though you wouldn't guess it without lichenometric studies, because they grow at glacial speeds. They are very susceptible to sulfates, very sensitive indicators of atmospheric pollution. Their retreat from the rocks of the Shawangunks for much of this century is thought to be a response to the increasing acidity of the rain and snow (which, as researched by Dan Smiley, was already killing fish in Shawangunk lakes as far back as 1915).

Hand lenses at the ready, we inch along the first lichenated rocks we meet, glassing Blistered Rock Tripe and Smooth Rock Tripe. Kavasch is exultant: "The lichens are so *compelling* in wintertime!" (Evidently not the case for Carolus Linnaeus, father of binomial nomenclature, who considered lichens "the poor trash of vegetation," *rustici pauperrimi*.) We barely move, examining crustose lichens, foliose lichens, haircap moss, blue-copper fungus, turkeytail tree fungus. "Many of our more dynamic algae are in the tree bark," Kavasch notes, such as the all-but-legible *Graphis scripta*: "Look at the beautiful writing!"

We have advanced all of 400 feet. "The thing about an ethnobotany walk is that *everything* around you has special meaning." But then it is teatime. After lichening in 28-degree weather for several hours, the retreat to the Lake Lounge, with its burnished wainscoting, for properly served tea (porcelain cups and saucers, milk or lemon wedges) with freshly baked cookies in front of a congenial fire is pure Victorian bliss.

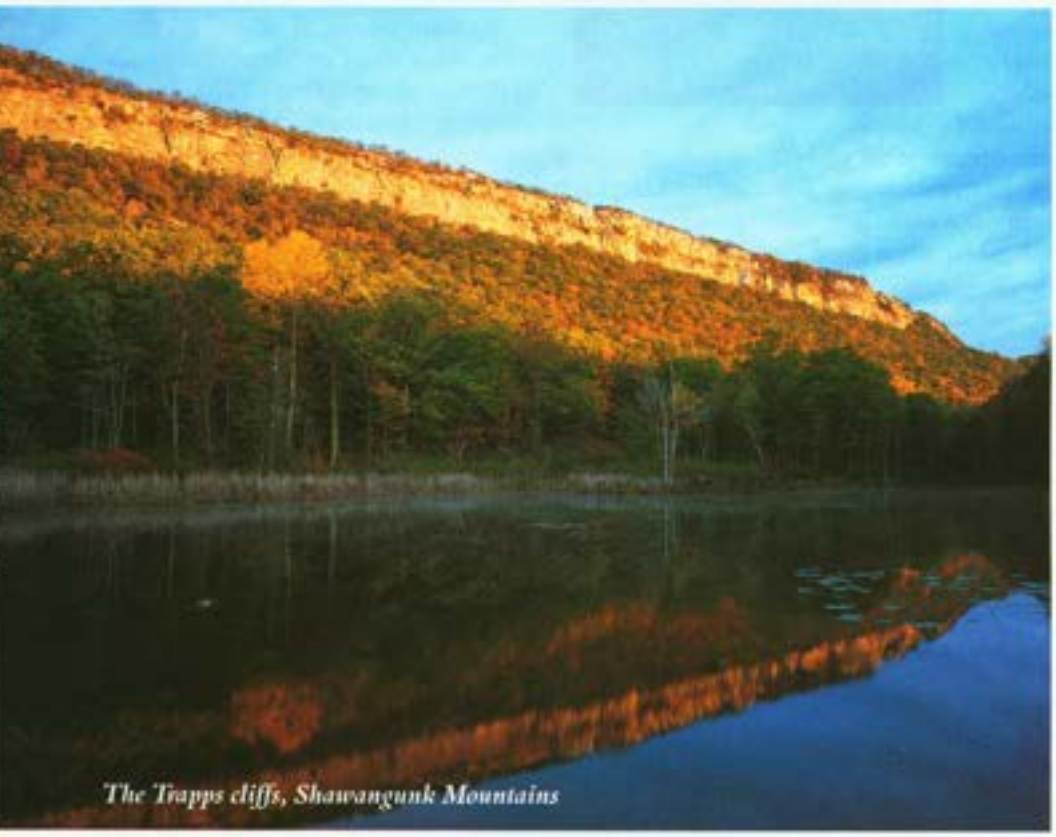
Being a very civilized wilderness, Mohonk permits hiking between the hours of 7 a.m. and dusk only. "Night hiking is not permitted," insists the House map. Outdoors, that is; nothing forbids night-hiking the eighth-of-a-mile-long corridors of the Mountain House. There are glassed tabletop exhibits of lichens, mosses, and shells to study. There is a cross-section of a venerable white oak downed on Humpty Dumpty Road in the hurricane of September 21, 1938, when it was 60 feet tall and 300 years old. The tree had lived through the First Esopus Indian War (1663), the New Paltz Land Purchase "from the Indians" (1677), statehood (1788), and the "original Mohonk purchase by Albert K. and Alfred H. Smiley" (1869). The Mohonk Preserve Room boasts a recording barometer "in use since 1938" and a display case filled with bird nests, each with a spritely caption. (The ruby-throated hummingbird, I learn, finishes off its nest in lichens for cryptogammic camouflage.) The corridor-hiker can also take in miles of alpine mountain art—romantic crags and canyons the world over, suitably framed.


The Mohonk Mountain House

That night there is a sleet storm. The next morning I venture into a glazed landscape: red barberry, huckle-

berry, and blueberry glacé, the crystalline woodland tinkling and clinking in the breeze. Ice melts off striped maples, hemlocks, and pines in iridescent globules. Map in hand, I am outward bound for the day. I head southwest on Lake Shore Road, through frozen mossbanks, and quickly realize that Mohonk is no place to sharpen my orienteering skills. Signs with names, arrows, and distances are posted on trees at every point you might possibly go wrong. ("Not to Mountain House, Turn Back," "To Plateau Path. Caution: Rough Path.") Off-mountain day-trippers cannot get even slightly disoriented; when in doubt, you can simply look up and key off Sky Top or Eagle Cliff.

My pedestrian objective this day is Trapps Bridge, an eight-mile hike. The shale-surfaced Old Minnewaska Road will get me there comfortably, which is fine—I am not out to blaze trails or conquer anything. What then to make of another arboreal bulletin with an ideogram showing steep, jagged, mountain pinnacles? Here I am trying to adopt the Walker Errant spirit of Henry Thoreau, trying to develop a Thoreauvian "genius . . . for sauntering"—noncompetitive, unsuperlative, just walking—and a tree says I'm on the "most difficult" road! Fortunately, the degree of difficulty seems highly exaggerated; there's no need to shift out of saunter.



The Trapps cliffs, Shawangunk Mountains

About a mile out I round a bend and sight The Trapps cliffs, 1,300 feet tall, looming white above the woods like a lost cliff city, an Appalachian Tikal, a New York Chichén Itzá. Approaching the Rhododendron Bridge, I hear gunshots; another tree tells me that I have left the "safety zone." "Hunting today" a communiqué warns, listing the dates between November 15 and December 20 for "bow/muzzleload only" and "shotgun/pistol only," and ending, "We discourage use of the land by non-hunters from November 21 through November 27 and weekdays through December 20." Should there be bullets to dodge, I can seek the safety of the boulders lining Undercliff Road, a 1903 carriage road built by hand through the talus, an engineering masterpiece that would be impossible to replicate today.

I had read up on the Gunks to prepare for the tour, and the boulders beginning to pile up tell me I'm *In Suspect Terrain*—John McPhee's "encapsulated history of the eastern United States, according to plate-tectonic theory and glacial geology" (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983). McPhee had refreshed me on the "rhythm of glaciation," in which the geologic present is "nothing more than a relatively deglaciated interval." I feel grateful for a break long enough to amble through the powerfully remodeled lithoscape left by the last glacier, the two-mile-high Wisconsin. I swing along, ever mindful of its great, looming, shaping, informing, presiding Absence. The talus heaped in its wake ranges from squared-off rocks the size of Grand Central Terminal to tiny pea-shooter pellets. Slabrock overhangs the road in many places, and I imagine rolling back the right rock to find a cave with bison, mastodon, deer, and antelope at play on its walls—Lascaux Gunks! But, having perused the Preserve's "Reptiles Checklist," I am not about to turn over any rocks in The Trapps talus. *Crotalus horridus*, the timber rattlesnake, makes its winter den here, as does *Agkistrodon c. contortrix*, the copperhead. Winter seems a fine time to postpone interspecies interface and let vipers be vipers.

Writing on the geological history of the region in 1959, A. Keith Smiley, Jr., explained that "Albert Smiley and his family have been careful to leave the rocks in the breath-taking piles in which he found them." Amen. Otherwise, in 1869 the Smileys took over grooming the Shawangunks where the last glacier left off, adding practices such as "aesthetic forestry"—selectively removing trees that might interfere with treasured "viewsheds."

Hiking the Shawangunks solo in winter offers a rare opportunity to indulge an appreciation of silence. In six hours on the trail I saw maybe a dozen other humans (most of them scrambling on the cliffs). My chances of running into

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a black bear, *Ursus americanus*, were almost as good, since the Shawangunk ridge is their commuter route into New York from New Jersey. I had hoped to sight bear before tea, but had to settle for rock climbers. Climbing pioneer Fritz Wiessner happened on the Shawangunks in 1935, "and the major climbing area east of the Rockies had been discovered." According to a history of rock-climbing in the Gunks, that year (with the consent of the Smileys) Wiessner and friends "proceeded to climb the center of the cliff at Sky Top, naming their route *The Gargoyle*." After 1940, climbing with Dr. Hans Kraus, Wiessner pioneered routes such as Overhanging Overhang, Easy Overhang, and The Layback.

Today, the Mohonk cliffs are popular with a new generation of gym-trained mountaineers—indeed, perhaps overpopular. A "Dear new climbers" letter from one Donald Perry, posted on a kiosk at the cliff base, advertises the danger of "accidents and death" and Perry's fear that "if we continue on the path we are on, climbing activity will become banned" in the Preserve. Mohonk is obviously alive to the potential liability that goes with owning the most popular rock faces in the East. "WARNING!" signs scream. "ROCK CLIMBING IS DANGEROUS: Skill and Training Are Essential. CLIMB AT YOUR OWN RISK: The Mohonk Preserve provides no supervision, inspection or maintenance of the rocks or cliffs." As I finish Perry's sobering epistle, giant ice daggers break off the frozen falls on the cliff, crashing and splintering across Undercliff Road. I will stick to the horizontal, thank you.

Some blame overuse of the cliffs by Mohonk climbers for the failure of peregrine falcons to re-establish themselves here. In the 1970s and '80s, 30 peregrine falcons from Dr. Tom Cade's famous program at Cornell were released in the Shawangunks, but none remained to nest. (One female moved on to New York City, where she lives on the Verrazanno Narrows Bridge.) In *The Northern Shawangunks: An Ecological Survey* (Mohonk Preserve, New Paltz, NY; 1988), Erik Kiviat suggests that "intensive recreational use of the Mohonk Preserve cliffs, especially for rock-climbing, is probably a serious obstacle to peregrine falcon nesting."

Compared with other peculiar uses people have dreamed up for the Shawangunks and vicinity over the last three decades, however, rock climbing seems relatively benign. Off the rocks and on the road, climber Annie O'Neill of the Friends of the Shawangunks ("watchdogs for the ridge" op-

Continued on page 88

Navigating the Gunks

To Explore and Enjoy

As wild areas go, the Shawangunks are exceptionally well documented. Good, detailed maps of the region, as well as the invaluable *New York Walk Book* (Doubleday), are available from the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, 232 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 685-9699. Guidance regarding the Mohonk Preserve may be obtained from its knowledgeable staff; contact them at 1000 Mountain Rest Rd., Mohonk Lake, New Paltz, NY 12561-9434; (914) 255-0919. For recreation information from the adjacent Minnewaska State Park Preserve, write P.O. Box 893, New Paltz, NY 12561, or call (914) 255-0752.

The Mohonk Preserve publishes two natural histories of the area, *The Shawangunk Mountains: A History of Nature and Man* by Bradley Snyder, and *The Northern Shawangunks: An Ecological Survey* by Erik Kiviat. Climbers will want to refer to the three volumes of *Shawangunk Rock Climbs* by Dick Williams, available from Rock and Snow, his shop in New Paltz at 44 Main Street, which also carries a large supply of maps and guidebooks.

Those wishing to stay at the Mohonk Mountain House may make reservations by calling (800) 772-6646. Be sure to ask for the schedule of environmental "theme programs" during your stay. For listings of bed-and-breakfasts and camping facilities in the Shawangunk vicinity, contact the New Paltz Chamber of Commerce, 257-½ Main St., New Paltz, NY 12561; (914) 255-0243. Alas, there is no camping in Minnewaska State Park Preserve, but camping is possible at private campgrounds in the area.

To Protect

The Mid-Hudson Group of the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter has worked closely through the years with Friends of the Shawangunks. Ten years ago, the two groups helped establish the Minnewaska State Park Preserve. Current joint campaigns include attempts to limit expansion of power lines across the park, prevent the construction of a cellular-phone tower on the Shawangunk Ridge, and permanently protect endangered upland pine barrens. For more information, contact Jim Mays, Atlantic Chapter Chair, at (914) 657-2013, or Keith LaBudde of Friends of the Shawangunks at P.O. Box 270, Accord, NY 12404; (914) 687-4759.

Down to the Pacific Shore

by William Poole

I DREAMT THE TRAIN HAD slipped onto the smoothest track of the trip. So smooth was this track that the *Zephyr* had ceased all rocking, all clickety-clack; even the hum of the sleeper's climate-control system had stopped. After two days of train noise and motion, the stillness was profound, although I could feel my body flying forward, forward, at 80 miles an hour. But how did they ever make it so smooth?

Gradually I came awake. Outside the window was a darkened train yard, and in the corridor was a kitchen worker headed for the dining car to prepare breakfast.

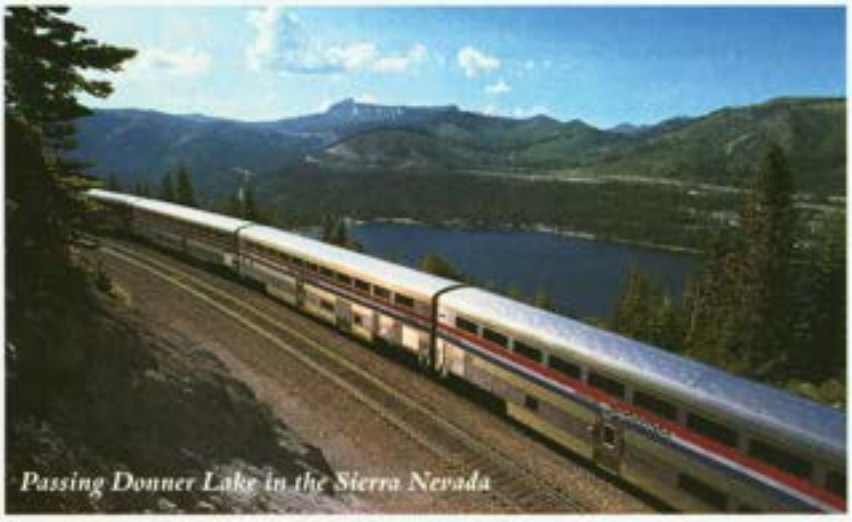
"Where are we?" I whispered.

"Elko." His voice blended resignation with disgust.

An hour late and counting, the *California Zephyr* sat dead on the tracks in eastern Nevada, its umbilical to the engine severed and undergoing repair. Cold leaked through the metal skin of the sleeper. An hour and ten minutes late . . . an hour and twenty minutes late . . . the train jolted to life and pulled out past the carnival glow of Elko's casinos. Waiting for breakfast outside the dining car, some passengers computed how tardy they would be at Sacramento. But I secretly thanked the locomotive gremlins for an extra hour of daylight in a favorite part of the world.

We picked up the skimpy Humboldt River then. Mark Twain once wrote of this stream that a man could leap and releap its thin flow until thirst consumed him—and could then proceed to drink it dry. Another moody morning, the sagebrush brown, bedraggled, with muddy puddles beside the track; and with even the abrupt mountain ranges—sometimes two or three visible at once in as many directions—blanched by snow and smothered in cloud. "Go back to sleep" was the message most of the *Zephyr*'s passengers discovered in this brooding transit. For much of the morning the observation car held only a man with a book, me, and a pair of lovers, for whom even this privacy seemed not private enough.

We dawdled along on rock-and-roll track, following the route of 19th-century wagons, while trucks and busses on Interstate 80 passed us by. Through Winnemucca (named for a Paiute chief, the route guide said) and into Lovelock, exactly an hour and forty minutes late. Near here the Humboldt disappears,

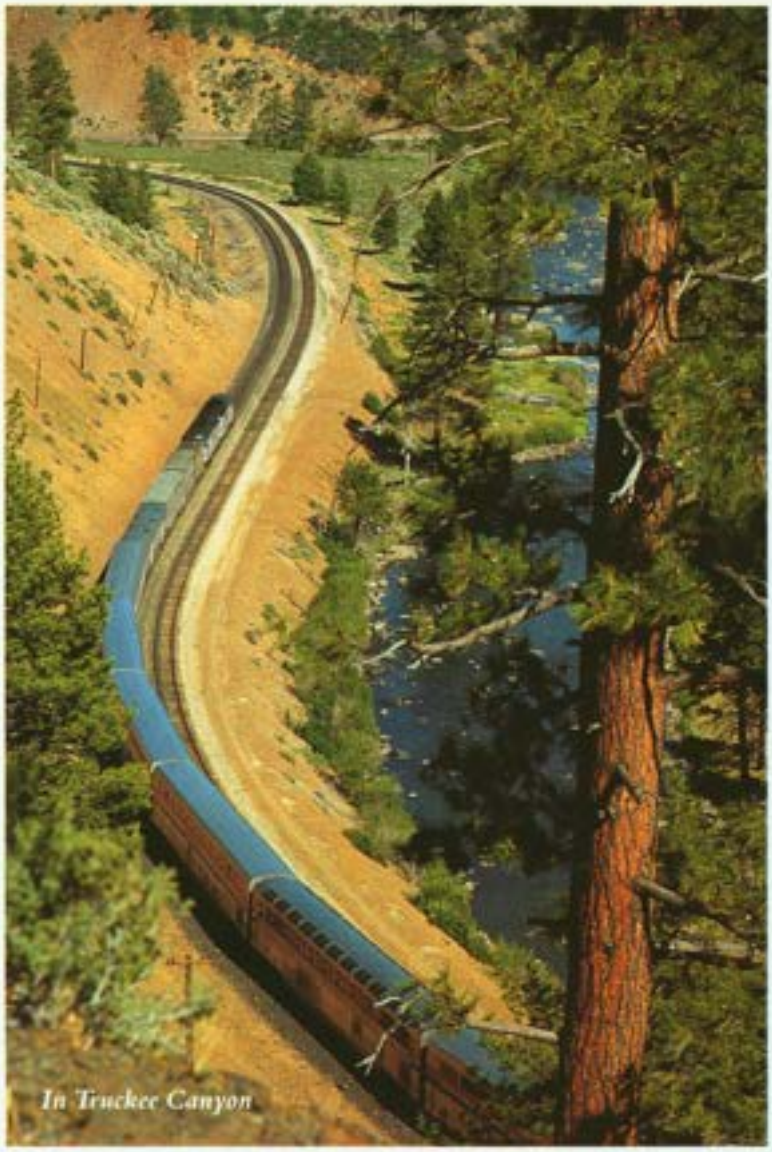


Passing Donner Lake in the Sierra Nevada

exhausted from the simple effort of being a river in such country, and the *Zephyr* inclined southwest for a last bolt across scabrous volcanic rock and all-but-unvegetated saline flats to the California mountains.

"Very little of note save dust and brightness of the glittering sand, now and then a grave," wrote pioneer John Clark in his diary, crossing this desert in 1852. Even today the *Zephyr*'s passengers seemed to heave a collective sigh when we picked up the Sierra Nevada–born Truckee River and followed its oasis canyon into Reno. As if on cue, the clouds thinned, and with another mountain range ahead, the observation car filled with camera-toting tourists. For several miles the train courted the river, first from one bank, then the other, chunky hawks decorating the fall-bronzed cottonwoods along its banks and ducks dotting its placid surface.

At Reno we picked up a party of gamblers headed back over the mountains to California, and an interpreter from the California State Railway Museum in Sacramento. We were now ascending Truckee Canyon, the interpreter announced over the train's public address system, and it was near here that in 1846 the Donner party of California-bound emigrants—20 wagons, 87 suffering men, women, and children—were trapped and ultimately reduced to cannibalism by another early November snowstorm.



In Truckee Canyon

For there was snow again for this mountain passage—not as much as doomed the Donner Party, but enough to fly up off the wheels of the engine during the long horseshoe ascent of Coldstream Valley, as Donner Lake appeared below us in a wintry bowl. As in Colorado, here also were snow-encumbered firs and pines and half a horizon of assertive peaks.

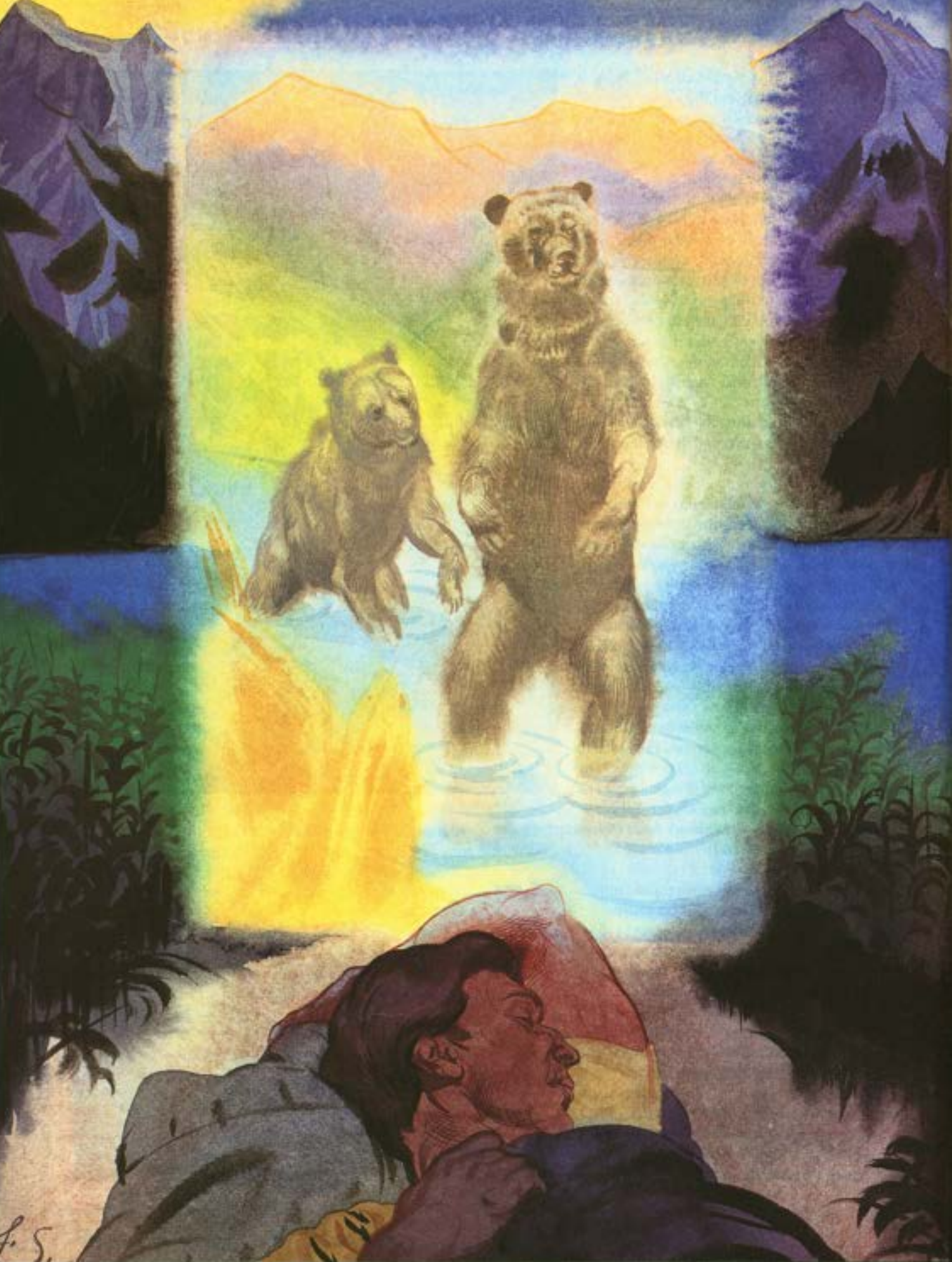
We broke out of the summit tunnel into sparkling sun. Down the Pacific Slope now, almost home, feeling our way above the American River Canyon, a 2,000-foot-deep absence of mountain on our left. Chinese laborers blasted this right-of-way and laid these tracks, the man from the railroad museum said. He pointed out the old hydraulic-mining scars along the route, still festering after more than a century. The snow was softening now, sloughing from the trees, the sun pushing back the season where aspens glowed like candles beside the tracks.

We crept downhill through the heart of California's Gold Country, through Dutch Flat to Gold Run, where we found ourselves once more idling on a siding. Five minutes . . . ten . . . before the conductor made his announcement: We were stopped for an important train to pass. Soon we heard the whistle, and the massive silver nose slipped into view, striped blue and white and red. Here was our sister train, today's eastbound *Zephyr,* and I wondered who might be aboard, off to see the country from its rocking vantage.

Ahead on our own route lay the Sacramento Valley, its rice paddies burnished in the setting sun, and further yet (the *Zephyr* two hours late by now), a littoral of lights around San Francisco Bay. And while I would have been sorry to miss these glories, part of me would just as soon have made a great leap at Gold Run, have traded one *Zephyr* for another and my exhausted stack of tickets for a fresh one. Let's see, from Denver I could catch the *Pioneer,* and then the *Empire Builder* from Seattle . . . and from Chicago?

Well, who could tell? ■

WILLIAM POOLE *is a freelance writer and frequent traveler based in San Francisco.*



The Perfect Day

FIREWEED BLAZES; the summer's almost over. We're checking out a rumor—and a good one—about a grizzly sighting in Colorado's Weminuche Wilderness. A man on horseback recently saw a silver-colored bear digging out a Weminuche hillside, chasing a gopher or something, sending roostertails of dirt 30 feet into the sky. The man watched the bear until it moved on, then rode down and got hair from the dig. Sent it in to be analyzed; turned out to be grizzly.

There are ten of us in a meadow on the Continental Divide looking for strawberries. Some are down on all fours and some are half humped over, but none are standing upright, so that it looks, especially in the gloomy blue dusk, as if some weird evolutionary regression is going on—something that happens only above 12,000 feet, perhaps.

This is pretty-boy country at the top of the world, with rolling meadows and horizon-vistas. The trail system here has gotten such heavy use—not just from backpackers but from our friends the horse people—that the trails are rutted ankle- and even knee-deep in places, and plumes of lunar dust rise in our footsteps. I feel exposed. I do not feel wild and I do not feel like this is wilderness. The calamitous scent of humans is everywhere: cigarette butts and matches and tin cans and toilet paper. I put on a brave face for Dennis and his students, who are attempting to repair and restore and learn about wildness in the West through Round River Conservation Institute. But inside I am heartsick.

> A search for ghostly grizzlies leads past cigarette butts and tin cans to life on a higher plane.

We camp back in some old trees alongside a rushing clear river. It feels better back in the trees; it always does. This feeling of sanctity lasts about ten minutes before the next travelers come through. They set up camp on the other side of the meadow, about half a mile distant, but we can hear the clang of horseshoes and the aluminum *doink!* of bat meeting ball in the softball game, can see them rounding bases like crazy dogs chasing their tails, and that night we can hear them playing their trumpets, this Youth Bible Camp, and in my fevered half-sleep I imagine they are playing "Deguello," the Mexican call for "no mercy" that haunted the besieged Texans in the Alamo.

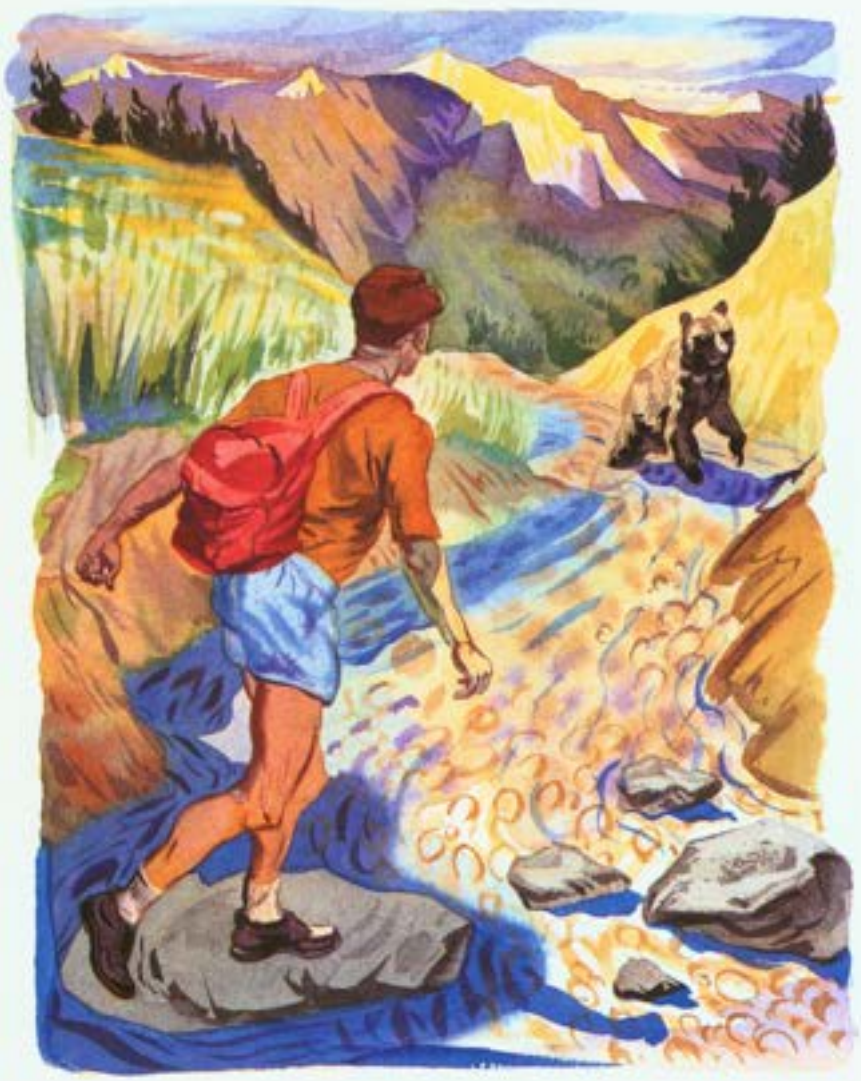
Dennis' students were up at 4 a.m. studying the stars, and then writing in their journals by candlelight until six. By seven they had their

by Rick Bass

Illustrations by Jeffrey Smith

breakfasts cooked, eaten, and cleaned up, and now, at eight, they are out in the meadow's tall grass doing yoga. Some of them are sitting on boulders with their legs crossed in lotus-yo-yo positions, holding their palms out to face the rising sun, while others are down in the tall grass doing perverse solitary stretching exercises, each of them stationed a long way from the others, so that anywhere I look in the meadow I see a bare leg sticking up, or a pair of exalted arms, or someone's pretzel-combination of both. It depresses me to see how *adjusted* everyone is. Not only are the students untroubled by the tameness of this open rock-and-ice alpine country, they are truly being made happy by it.

I feel like an old fart. My back's stiff, my knees hurt, my



teeth hurt. Dennis' ankle is sore from his rugby days several decades ago. Dennis' son leaves our whiny mumbling to be with the students out in the meadow. He chooses hope, not despair.

Soon we are hiking through gentle forests, across meadows, gathering data to load into the computer. Instead of Clinton and Gore's information highway, I am on the fecal footpath. With DNA testing, scientists can identify species and determine family groups and histories from hair and scat samples. With other techniques, they can figure out the dominant vegetation in any season of any year, what the animals prefer to eat, and the moisture content of the soil. They can cache deep in the computers' humming bowels the story of Colorado's grizzlies, coyotes, lynx, black bear, and badgers. If it's brown and stinky, I pick it up and bag it.

Still I have to rein myself in. At one little pond, the marsh grass is writhing with newts. Rebecca sees me holding one and examining it, then photographing and measuring it, and then evaluating it, and she knows I'm thinking, "How can I get this little guy to crap?" and she says, "No, Rick . . ."

We wander, that first day; we stroll. We leave the trails but do not really find any wilderness. Even while bushwhacking, we keep coming across people trails. It's windy, and ravens drift overhead, circling, cawing as if laughing at us: "No griz, no griz." Or perhaps they are saying: "Look harder, look harder."

We descend a slope of wind-felled lodgepole, and come into a lush, old-growth fir forest. There's this one moment where everything conspires to feel more wild—the slant of light, the change in temperature, the sound of the creek, and other undefinable things—echoes and memories—all unprovable abstractions, but we can feel it, and we comment on it; it's as if we've crossed into some new and different country.

Another hundred yards, and we find a bear's day-bed in the ferns, next to an old rotting log. The sun's striking the orange, pulpy tear-away flesh of the log, and I lie down in the bed and pretend I'm a bear. The night before at the campfire, Dennis had told us that the best way to learn about the woods was to get down on all fours and sniff things. So we study the log; we crawl around as if it has somewhere in it the meaning of life. And we find one blond hair—possibly grizzly?—and one black hair—surely a black bear—stuck in the log. Still it doesn't feel that wild. The softball game's only two miles away! Most likely that blond hair is from the blond phase of a black bear.

That night, three German chaps join our campfire, uninvited. They come crunching through the forest and then pause at the edge of the firelight, lonely as hounds. They're part of an international conservation corps exchange program. They've been up here on the Divide for two weeks digging ditches and blasting dynamite; when we ask why, they tell us they're not sure. Then they ask where the near-

est social life is. We laugh at them, which makes them angry or hurts their feelings; I can't tell. They ask what we're doing here. Looking for bear, we tell them. Now it is their turn to laugh at us.

One of the young men is holding a huge black metal box, an electrical apparatus that looks like a transformer, and I worry at first that it's some kind of detonating device. But, no, it's a radio transmitter. They've lost contact with a friend who has "gone up on the mountain to look at the moon."

"Can't he see it from here?" Dennis asks.

"He wanted to be like John Muir, or someone," the radio guy says.

The radio guy crouches, turns the black box on—a red operating light blinks brightly, like a lone evil eye—and he squelches the unit back to a dull crackle, murmurs something in German into the microphone, but there's no response. John Muir is lost in space. The mountain looms above us, arching to join the stars, the world of sparkling jewels, all of them so close that we can almost hear them shimmering.

"Call us if you need help," Dennis says, and the visitors understand then that they are being asked to leave. They depart, branch-crashing and limb-popping back into the night, radio crackling with static, and even after they are gone and an uneasy silence has returned, the hairs on the back of my neck are bristling.

> The earth's center is drumming louder, telling us to hurry, to see more, to see it all.

The mountain that old John's thrashing around on up there is the one we were going to check out tomorrow. It's the one that yielded the grizzly hair to the man on horseback. They might as well be up there setting off fireworks, I think, and then I remember: They already have been. Really big ones.

That night, I dream a strange dream that's more like a vision. It has black bears in it, not grizzlies. Dennis is leading a long single-file group of us down a steep, grassy slope, somewhere in the West. We're about to cross a broad, rifling stream. When I look upstream, I see that two large black bears have also come out of the woods, and are standing in the middle of the river. We stop to keep from frightening them, and the bears turn and leave the river and run back into the woods. Then Dennis and the students and I are in quicksand, and we've got to keep moving, and we do, and we get out of the quicksand.

It was a clear dream and, except for the part about the quicksand, remarkably relaxing; that next morning, sipping coffee with Dennis, I mention the dream. It seemed so real that I wonder if he dreamed it as well. No, he says laughing. "But I *did* dream you carried my pack out for me."

Moronically, I've lost all of yesterday's hair and scat samples. I thought C.J. had them, and C.J. thought I had them. They must have either fallen out of one of our packs some-

Colorado at the Continent's Crest

To Explore and Enjoy

You might not encounter any grizzlies, but you can be assured of splendid wildflower displays, top-of-the-world views, and the challenge of ascending the Needle Mountains' 14,000-foot peaks and 13,000-foot passes on a Sierra Club backpack trip to the Weminuche Wilderness July 23 to 30. During the week of August 19 to 25, a naturalist-led group will explore the same wilderness at a more leisurely pace, following Turkey Creek to the Continental Divide at 12,000 feet. For more information on either of those trips, contact the Sierra Club Outing Department, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109; (415) 923-5522. Ask about trip #95159 or #95193.

For armchair wilderness buffs, or for pre-trip planning, read Mark Pearson's *The Complete Guide to Colorado's Wilderness Areas* (1994), with color photos by John Fielder, from Westcliffe Publishers, P.O. Box 1261, Englewood, CO 80150-1261; (800) 523-3692. Pearson, a Sierra Club activist, has been exploring and working to protect Colorado's wild places for nearly two decades.

Also helpful for Colorado wilderness forays are *A Sierra Club Naturalist's Guide to the Southern Rockies: The Rocky Mountain Regions of Southern Wyoming, Colorado, and Northern New Mexico*, by Audrey D. Benedict (1991; $30, cloth; $18, paper); and *The Sierra Club Guide to the Natural Areas of Colorado and Utah* by John Perry and Jane Greverus Perry (1985; $10, paper). The last two books are available from the Sierra Club Store by phone at (800) 935-1056.

To Protect

While local activists wait for a confirmed grizzly sighting, they are making sure the legendary predator's habitat is secure. The Weminuche Group of the Sierra Club is working with the Colorado Environmental Coalition to draft a "citizens' alternative" to the Forest Service's ten-year management plan for San Juan National Forest, which includes the Weminuche Wilderness. Still in the data-gathering phase, these activists are already committed to protecting roadless areas, expanding existing wilderness areas, and identifying wildlife-migration corridors. To volunteer to help on the citizens' alternative, which is slated for completion sometime in 1996, contact Weminuche Group Chair Trevor Berrington at (303) 884-9697.

where back in the woods, or, more likely, are lying in the duff back there at the bear's day-bed where I was acting all foolish.

Two groups will go north and south over the top of John Muir Mountain, but my punishment is to repeat the past—to go back and look for yesterday's scat, yesterday's hair. Dennis asks Paul to go with me. Dennis has been telling me how pleased he is with Paul, who was quiet and shy when he first came out West and is now blossoming.

What Dennis means by blossoming is perhaps not what Paul's hometown Chamber of Commerce would. The conservative, handsome, clean-cut American proto-youth—he's only 19—is becoming a woods savage.

Paul and I strike out across the meadow, back toward Bear Creek, which in my mind I am sulkily calling No-Bear Creek. I admire Paul's cheerfulness. If he is discouraged about not getting to go with the others, he doesn't show it.

We angle our way through the brush, up and over ravines, through forests, back to where the old day-bed is. We drift into the shady glen of magical woods. The feeling's there once again: it's a special place, somehow; a 50-acre sanctuary of wildness within the wilderness. That's one of our Euro-white-trash elitist slide-rule-minded weaknesses: thinking that to be worthy of the name all wilderness must be absolute and peak. Then wilderness is a monoculture, too—just as homogeneous as the concrete jungle. Gentleness is an aspect of the wilderness also.

We find the film canisters filled with my samples resting in the day-bed like Easter eggs. While I am zipping them into the pack, Paul is poking around a rotting tree. "What's this?" he asks.

I walk over and examine the base of the tree, where quite obviously an animal has been tearing at it with tooth and claw in search of insects. "It looks like some big strong animal with a long snout has shoved his head up in here," Paul says, measuring the size of the cavity. "Something with blonde fur." He begins pulling out wisp after wisp of long golden hair from the bark, where

the bear's snout has pressed up hard into the trunk in a greedy, ant-licking tongue frenzy. "Could this be from a bear?" he asks, and I have to laugh.

The day swings, after that: it turns wild, as if curtains or blinders have been lifted from our eyes—or as if some spirit has turned us and pointed us in the right direction. And we're having fun. We cross a shady little jungle creek with a sandbar in the middle, a tiny little island beneath a 12-foot waterfall. It's cool and breezy at the base, where, with our hands, we sculpt grizzly tracks—*big* ones, 15 inches long—that meander across the sandbar before disappearing into the waterfall.

We cross rivers; we ascend cliffs. Paul's bear-tree discovery has filled us with a kind of wild helium. We now know we're going to be able to hike all day, to go anywhere and do anything that we want. We've fallen into a kind of slow-burning euphoria, where the spirit soars and the body asks not to be left behind.

We sit down to lunch on a rocky knob in a high, dry, sun-heated, swirling wind, and look at the rolls of mountains beyond—the green velvet hills above treeline, and the dark fir forests, with those magical blebs of slickrock granite dotting the forest here and there—little strongholds of mystery, little castles, where the earth's igneous spirits have come to the surface and revealed themselves. We point to the ones we'd like to go check out, and the ones beyond that, and then farther still, and we moan the eternal lament, that we wish we had more time.

We're becoming part of the mountain, part of the wilderness, part of the molten energy at the center of the earth on this, the perfect day; and everywhere we turn, the animals are coming to join us to reveal themselves to us. Ravens circle us out on the rocky point, and begin showing off, dive-bombing and acrobat-twisting, and then the swallows get into the act, swarming us.

We stand and stretch in the warm sun and decide it would be a sin not to spend all of this magic energy that's suddenly passing from the earth up into our feet and through our bodies. We

feel obliged to dance like puppets until our legs are tired, and we can't dance any more.

We spread the maps out, three of them overlapping, and point to all the places we'd like to go, if we had an extra four or five days. We give them our own names. Dog-Face Canyon. The Paper Cliffs. The Jungle. The High Lakes Behind Us. The Bear-Trap Mountain. Owl Mountain.

We draw a route with our fingers that will take us to all those places, and we decide to go to all of them that day. I'd told Dennis earlier not to worry if we didn't get back in before dark. I didn't tell him on which day, though.

We start out at a quick trot down what is probably a centuries-old game path. There's coyote scat all up and down it. We jog through sun-shadow and sun-dapple. We stop at caves and collect white hairs—lynx? badger?—from each of them. We crest a mountain, and the lower end of the valley stretches below us. The fastest way across it and into the other mountains we hope to explore is straight down, over a couple thousand feet of cliff walls and wind-felled fir and spruce.

We spill like water over the mountain's edge; we plunge. It's too steep to do anything but roll and tumble, to leap and take flight for long stretches at a time. The phrase "breakneck speed" comes to mind; the pull of gravity is too strong to hold back. A few minutes later we are at the bottom, trembly-legged, panting, in a wet area among ferns and mushrooms.

We step out of the woods to cross the river on a broad, flat stretch of stepping stones. Something, as if I am owned by some other spirit, tells me to look upstream. There's a high wind in our faces. I look, and am confused at first when I see a big black bear standing there at river's edge. Everything is exactly as it was in the night-before's dream, except there is only one bear, not two. Everything else is freeze-frame identical—the shiny black coat of the bear, the expression of surprise on its face, the river, the mountains beyond—*everything*, so that I wonder, for a moment, if this isn't the dream.

The bear is only 40 or 50 yards away. Evidently our mad flight jumped him off his day-bed. He holds our stares for a second, then whirls and gallops back into the woods, and does not cross the river.

We do. It's time to climb again. The 2,000 feet we just pissed away must now be earned back, plus another thousand, up to 13,000 feet: and it feels good, following tenuous switchbacks through sunny, swamp-springy pockets of *Heracleum*, and dark, steep, fir forests, to be pulling our way up, as if to heaven. Our legs are burning so hot that it feels as if you could light a cigarette just by touching the backs of our calves. The earth's center is drumming louder, telling us to hurry, to see more, to see it all—telling us, with its pulse, the pace to match—and we give up on the torturous switchbacks and say, "Let's see what it's *really* like," and begin to climb, gasping, drooling, and sweat-slippery, panting like pigs, straight up into the shining sun, crawling up the mountain.

Whenever we stop to suck in blazes of bright, clean oxygen, each view below is better than the last—new valleys, new glaciers, new meadows. If there are not grizzly bears out there, then this is not a real world; it is all only a dream anyway and none of it matters.

But it is not a dream. Our lungs are flaming. How far have we gone? Maybe only eight or ten miles, with that many left. But so far it's been all up and down, and of the miles still ahead on our loopy route, all of the rest, except for the last one, will be on top of the world.

The afternoon becomes a parody of the Perfect Day. As we pant beneath a guano-streaked aerie at the base of a sheer cliff, a golden eagle drifts past, and utters something we can't decipher. Higher still, then, into the hidden lakes near the top of the world—boulder and tundra country. There must be grizzlies up here. The softball players are light years away. We hike the last, long, sloping mile to the crest. The sun is sinking like lead, becoming orange in the late afternoon. We trot. The wind is cold. One lone, slate-colored cloud

drifts across the blue sky and spits corn snow down at us, then passes on. One last little pocket of Doug fir lies ahead of us, and beyond that the highest lake.

The spirit-juice is hot on the bottoms of my feet. As I walk through that last stand of woods, it compels me to tell Paul, "If we're lucky, maybe we'll come up on a herd of elk up here."

We come out of the trees, round a corner, and there they are, a hundred cows and calves belly-deep in sedges, sun-struck by the glorious butter-yellow light. They do not see us, and we watch them for several minutes as they drift like schooners through the high grass. Then the wind shifts and they catch our scent and begin to trot away, flowing like water away and over a pass, back down into the trees.

After that we're running again: loping like coyotes, as if we've escaped from something on this one day, perhaps our very own human skin.

Marmots dive into tunnels at our approach, shrieking like hawks. We're into the wildflowers now—lupine, columbine, gentian, penstemon, paintbrush, and the loveliest, most demure of the mountain flowers, alpine phlox. Glacier lilies. Spring was just here last week, and though it's late August, there's still the freshness.

We hike to the ridge's highest peak to get a good running start down the mountain's spine, pummeling and massaging it with our tiny feet. We peer over into the next valley below and listen to a pack of coyotes yip and shout into the shadowy gloom of dusk. "Call back to them," I suggest. Paul cups his hands, leans his head back, and cuts loose with a bowels-of-the-earth thunder-cry, a wolf howl that rolls out and echoes across the mountains and dislodges loose boulders from the ice-grip of glaciers and sends them tumbling down the sides of mountains. The sound rolls on and on, out and away from us, echoing off the Divide, and the coyotes, in the meadow half a mile below, fall immediately silent. We see their dark shapes streaking in terror for the safety of the forest.

"Oh well," Paul says. Long summer days and weeks in the mountains have

given him a new power. His father has called Dennis two or three times to marvel at the change. I wonder if he has seen Paul's spirit necklace yet: the bones, teeth, claws, and feathers fastened on a leather cord around his neck. I glance at it as the setting sun casts an orange light on one of the coyote teeth. That'll be the big test, I think—what the father thinks when he sees that spirit necklace—what he thinks when he hears it clinking together, making bone sounds.

There is no doubt that Paul is going to use his new power in a good and kind and strong manner. His father should perhaps direct his next phone call to the mountains: should cup his hands and murmur thanks against a stone, or whisper into the water of Bear Creek as it rushes past, snowmelt on its way to the Pacific.

We roll on, loping. We're not tired, though we're a tad thirsty and hungry. We still have about a pint of water left, and in the bottom of my pack I have a little plastic squeeze-bottle of honey and half a loaf of French bread.

With the fading light, we finally begin to feel a bit weary: it's like landing, like coming slowly back to earth after a long flight. We stop to rest on the ridgeline's halfway point, next to a wind-tossed lake at 13,000 feet.

Paul didn't realize I had some food left. He wasn't going to complain, but he's 19, right? He almost sobs with joy when he sees me pull out that battered length of French bread.

We smear honey over it and eat the bread in gobs, like clumps of wasp nests, and take tiny sips of cold water, and feel the strength come back; our legs desire the mountains again. "This is the best food I've ever eaten," Paul says.

We're sitting in the wind among pebbles and tundra, and a covey of mottled ptarmigan comes creeping past, completely unalarmed. Their mottle matches perfectly the background of the soil and rocks and lichens, so that when they stop moving, they disappear. How many tries did it take to get that right—to match the ptarmigans' individual feathers to

the very soil on this ridgeline?

A flock of mallards comes jetting in, touches down on the lake; I've never seen ducks at 13,000 feet. They're heading south, maybe to Costa Rica or beyond. They've probably been using this lake forever, each and every autumn, across the generations.

We resume our trot. We pass the stretched-out gleaming skeletons of a mule train that must have been hit by lightning. The carcasses have been picked clean by ravens, coyotes, wind, and snow. We hurry on, running again, through the high lake country.

The sun has set as we finally reach the slot in the earth that we will descend. This side canyon will deposit us (if we have read our maps correctly) square into the middle of our camp.

The clouds above us are blazing orange and red and pink and purple. The mountains across the valley are flaming with alpenglow, and we stand there watching it for a moment, understanding that this is the last breath of our blessing, this day; that for a day, we were granted a leave of absence from humanity, but that now we must return.

We fly down the side canyon, hurtling down game trails in the dark. The moon is up quickly, and we race alongside a rushing stream that makes lovely riffle-music and eddy songs. Flowers blossom in the night, along the stream's edges. A night hatch of caddis flies rises spiraling and ghostly from one of the creek's deep pools, a shaft of tiny insects ascending a beam of moonlight, and in the eddy, little trout swirl and fin, chasing and leaping after these tiny angels. The canyon smells sweet with the scent of fir and flowers.

We plunge into camp an hour after dark; the campfire's been lit, and supper's being served. We eat a lot, and gulp water, and when all our friends ask how our day went, we tell them it was good. ▪

RICK BASS, *author of* Winter: Notes from Montana, The Ninemile Wolves, Platte River, *and* In the Loyal Mountains, *is working on* The Lost Grizzlies of Colorado.

THE SIERRA CLUB

BULLETIN

THE NEWS FORUM FOR SIERRA CLUB MEMBERS

Standing Up for the Planet

by B. J. Bergman

Inside the Red Lion Hotel in Salt Lake City, "anti-regulation" Western politicians—from Utah Senator Orrin Hatch on down—were still reveling in the two-month-old election results. Representative James Hansen, for example, an eight-term Utah Republican who wants to shut down some national parks, vowed to roll back protections for endangered species.

But when the politicians, ranchers, miners, and others attending the Western States Coalition Summit ventured out to the street, they were met with a rude surprise: some 75 picketers, deployed by the Sierra Club and the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), demanding what Rudy Lukez, chair of the Club's Utah Chapter, calls "our basic environmental rights."

Since November's elections, the Sierra Club has been shining a bright light on the anti-environmentalists' largely hidden agenda. Club members nationwide have campaigned tirelessly to expose the legislative War on the Environment—camouflaged, in the Contract With America, as populist, anti-regulatory provisions—and to pound home the message that Americans want stronger, not weaker, environmental protections.

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Now, having survived the chaotic first 100 days of the 104th Congress, environmentalists are taking the offensive. Joining in a unified front with health, labor, civil rights, and other public-interest organizations, green groups are waging a counterattack, with a singleness of purpose not seen since the days of Ronald Reagan and James Watt.

Having survived the first onslaught, green groups wage a counterattack in the War on the Environment.

Anchoring the campaign is a petition drive led by the Sierra Club and the PIRG and backed by Greenpeace, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Audubon Society, and a half-dozen other groups. The petition includes an Environmental Bill of Rights affirming every American's right to "a safe, secure, and sustainable natural environment."

The organizations aim to collect more than a million signatures by summer, to be presented at the U.S. capitol to the nation's top elected officials. To help reach that goal, the 32,000-member Sierra Student Coalition is stationing clipboard-wielding members at shopping malls, movie theaters, rock concerts, and other heavily trafficked places, while the Club's membership-recruitment canvassers are taking petitions door-to-door in 16 states. Most Sierra Club mailings will also include a copy of the petition. (*Sierra* readers are encouraged to use the one bound into this issue after page 80.)

The petitions are designed to wake up politicians, but they have another, equally important objective: mobilizing grassroots' opposition to polluters' efforts to gut a quarter-century of environmental protections, from the Safe Drinking Water Act to the Endangered Species Act. Toward that end, the Sierra Club has launched the Environmental Rights Activist Network, a nationwide roster of Club members who want to take part in the campaign to stop the War on the Environment. (To join, write the Environmental Rights Campaign, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109, or call 415-923-5597.)

And that's just the beginning. In response to congressional field hearings that have largely been stacked against the environment, the Club is planning a series

of citizen hearings on new legislative threats from Congress and statehouses. The aim is not only to raise the level of debate, but to ensure that elected officials—whether they attend the hearings in person or catch them on the nightly news—hear the voice of the people.

The intent is to change the politics in key congressional districts, and make Congress responsive to the majority of Americans, who want strong environmental laws. From late January through March, the Club's Midwest field office alone had held training workshops in six states, coaching an estimated 300 activists in such critical skills as lobbying Congress and waging a media campaign—from landing a TV interview to staging a press event to talking back to talk radio.

Carl Zichella, the Club's Midwest staff director, says the workshops—versions of which are being held throughout the country—are part of an ever-expanding campaign that has Sierra Club members in the region working with mining-reform activists, Native American tribes, municipalities, and others to stem the anti-environmentalist tide. "These issues affect everybody," he says.

And everybody, adds Rudy Lukez, has "the right to breathe clean air and drink clean water, and to keep public lands in public hands—to protect our common heritage."

As the petition says, we "will hold public officials who represent us accountable for their stewardship of the planet."

If Senator Hatch, Representative Hansen, and the rest of the 104th Congress haven't gotten the message yet, they soon will. ■

►To stand up for your environmental rights, please fill and mail the petition at right.

Environmental Bill of Rights

Every American has the right to a safe and healthy environment. We urge all elected officials — local, state, and federal — to protect that right. We oppose any measures that would roll back the environmental progress of the last 25 years. We commit ourselves to support the following simple principles, and will hold public officials who represent us accountable for their stewardship of the planet.

I. Prevent pollution. Every American is entitled to air, water, food, and communities free from toxic chemicals. Government policies and regulatory standards must prevent pollution before it happens, expand citizens' right to know about toxics, and guarantee protection for citizens, particularly for the most vulnerable among us — infants, children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

II. Preserve America's national heritage, wild and beautiful, for our children and future generations. Wildlife, forests, mountains and prairies, wetlands, rivers, lakes, historic sites, urban parks and open space, oceans, and coastlines are all part of our national heritage.

III. End the give-aways of public assets, such as mineral, timber, grazing, and fishery resources. End the subsidies for oil and energy companies. Polluters should pay to clean up the mess they create. No one has the right to use property in a way that destroys or degrades the surrounding community. We reject the idea that good neighbors must pay bad ones not to pollute.

IV. Conserve America's natural resources by controlling waste, increasing energy efficiency, and protecting against overuse and abuse. Encourage sustainable technologies that meet human needs without destroying the environment.

V. Get the big money out of politics. No more government for sale. Let's take our government back from the big campaign contributors and exploiters who control it today.

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	STUDENT? ☐
ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP	PHONE
NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	STUDENT? ☐
ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP	PHONE
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NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	STUDENT? ☐
ADDRESS	CITY/STATE/ZIP	PHONE

For more petitions, please call (415) 923-5653. Please return petitions to: Sierra Club, Environmental Rights Activist Network, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968.

Sierra Club ▪ 730 Polk Street ▪ San Francisco, CA 94109 ▪ (415) 776-2211

One Earth, One Chance

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FIRST
CLASS
STAMP
(32c)

Sierra Club
Environmental Rights Activist Network
P.O. Box 52968
Boulder, CO 80322-2968

To make a self-mailer, please fold in half and affix a 32¢ stamp.

Volunteer
SPOTLIGHT

The Education of a Lobbyist

by Amy Wilson

When Joni Bosh joined the Sierra Club as an Arizona college student two decades ago, she figured her membership dollars were buying lobbyists for the environment. But she couldn't stay a checkbook supporter for long. She was quickly drawn into river and wilderness battles, and today is a savvy volunteer lobbyist, leading the fight to defeat anti-environmental measures springing up in states throughout the nation.

A fourth-generation Republican who was born and raised in Iowa, Bosh moved to Arizona when she was a teenager. There she developed an enduring respect for the wild beauty of the desert, most of which had no protection from development. As a young adult, Bosh caught wind of a proposal by Arizona's Republican Representative Bob Stump to build a dam in the Grand Canyon. Alarmed, she called the Sierra Club's regional office to find what she could do to stop it, and became the newest activist recruit.

JONI BOSH

The dam was never built, and Bosh went on to defend other Arizona rivers and wild lands. In the early 1980s, she served as coordinator of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, a job that taught her the importance of one-on-one training for conservation activists.

"You can hand someone all the books in the world, but until they've worked with a seasoned lobbyist, they won't succeed," says Bosh. "We started with people who wanted to help save Arizona wilderness and ended up with a group of expert lobbyists and leaders."

While Bosh was spending several hours each day working with Arizona activists, she was also holding down a full-time job as a clean-air lobbyist for an auto-emissions inspection company. This gained her an insider's understanding of corporate lobbying. "I discovered that industries have a different sort of access to elected officials," she says. "Congressional staff would check campaign records before meeting with industry lobbyists to see how much money they'd given—and how much sway they would have."

Bosh just ended a six-year stint on the Sierra Club's Board of Directors and now chairs the Conservation Governance Committee, which oversees all aspects of the Club's conservation work. While she counsels others in that capacity, she is personally taking on one of the greatest challenges the environmental community has faced: the emergence of "takings" legislation.

Bosh vividly remembers the 1991 meeting where she heard an Arizona cotton grower complaining about restrictions on spraying toxic pesticides. To her astonishment, the grower said that the government was "taking" the value of that land by preventing him from using these poisons without regard for his neighbors' health.

"That spring, Arizona legislators introduced 17 bills that dealt with

such private-property 'takings.' Legislators began signing on to a particularly obnoxious bill without knowing what it really meant," says Bosh. The bill, requiring expensive analysis of every state action that allegedly affected property values, would have forced taxpayers to compensate polluters for not polluting. "Most of our legislators ultimately approved the bill, but many later told us they simply didn't know how to argue against it."

"Within weeks we hit the streets for a referendum," says Bosh. Three months later citizens had collected 72,000 signatures—enough to block implementation of the measure by getting it on the 1994 ballot.

"The law would have undermined everything from safety at daycare centers to clean water to clean restaurants," explains Bosh. "So our strategy was to build a diverse coalition with a simple message that resonated with the public. We talked with public-health professionals, neighborhood groups, religious groups, and sportspeople. In turn, members of those groups went door-to-door educating voters about the dangers of the takings law."

The strategy worked. The law was rejected by a resounding 60 percent of the vote last November. Bosh thinks the success of that campaign can help guide environmentalists fighting ever more daunting battles in a hostile political climate.

"Environmentalists have had the luxury of a friendly Congress for years," says Bosh. "We have a lot to learn from the states, where unfriendly legislators have long been the norm. Our victory in Arizona stemmed directly from the efforts of an army of dedicated volunteers who brought the real story about takings to the public. We would be wise to follow their example on the national level." ▪

View From the Grassroots

Some 3,000 of you—a characteristically vocal minority—responded to the questionnaire included in the November/December issue of *Sierra*. Of that group:

✦ Ninety-three percent rate the Sierra Club "effective" as an advocate for the environment. Only 4 percent believe the Club is "not effective."

✦ Understandably—but no less gratifyingly—93 percent also expect to belong to the Club in a year. Just 3 percent said they "probably will not" renew their memberships.

✦ Roughly 40 percent view "protecting wild places" as the Club's number-one priority, while 20 percent identified "cleaning up pollution" and 18 percent said "population stabilization." "Creating a sustainable economy," "safe energy," and "preventing global warming" all came in at 10 percent or less.

✦ Nearly 45 percent thought that "lobbying and influencing legislation" was the Club's most important activity, followed by "educating people about the environment" at 31 percent. About 8 percent put "local grassroots activities" at the top, while litigation and outings each mustered 6 percent.

✦ Half of all respondents said they were more attached to the national Club than to their local chapters or groups, while a quarter deemed it a toss-up; most of the rest identified more strongly with their chapters or groups.

Some clear trends also emerged from written remarks. An impressive number of members voiced concern over the discussion of selling the Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge in the Sierra Nevada. (We're keeping it.) Many were unsure how to get more involved. (Call your chapter office, or call San Francisco headquarters at 415-923-5597.) And a majority of *Sierra* readers prefer environmental and political news to nature writing. (We'll be adjusting the balance in future issues.)

Here's a small sampling of members' comments:

"I belong to six or seven national environmental organizations. The Sierra Club is the only one that sends me a local newsletter full of projects, activities, and schedules of meetings."

"Mailings are too wordy, require too much time to digest. I would like more people-oriented action, maybe a demonstration here in D.C."

"As a matter of principle and interest, I'll probably always belong to the Club. A bit less of the internal squabbling would be welcome, but that's the nature of the beast (a broad-based, democratic organization made of strongly opinionated members)."

"Keep from getting too cozy with the Washington legislators and bureaucrats and promote very strong environmental laws. Don't compromise so easily."

"Don't get into positions on issues where we're looked upon as eco-freaks or tree-huggers."

"Show more support toward vegetarians and animal rights."

"Stick to core environmental issues. . . . Avoid peripheral issues such as animal rights."

"Stop endorsements of particular political candidates, don't get involved in general political issues, and concentrate on particular environmental policies, issues, and legislation."

"Become more aggressive on environmental issues that affect the quality of all our lives by becoming more political. Support the candidates who support the Club."

"Limit fund-raising requests."

"Just keep fighting as hard as you can." ■

Ecoregion ROUNDUP

In 60 chapters and hundreds of local groups spanning 21 ecoregions and two nations, Sierra Club members are hard at work for a healthier planet.

by Tracy Baxter

Pacific Northwest

OREGON They wore bright-orange fish buttons—big ones—and were taken very seriously. Late last year, Oregon Sierra Club members and other salmon advocates convinced the Northwest Power Planning Council to make the Columbia River system safer for the migration of young salmon to the sea. Spilling more water over the dams and routing fish over the spillways will help to reduce the need to transport salmon to sea in trucks.

Atlantic Coast

SOUTH CAROLINA To some, living in nearly pristine seclusion on an isle far from urban pressures but ten minutes by skiff from modern-day services seems too good to be true. For the Gullah families who have called South Carolina's Sandy Island home for six generations, this reality may be too good to last. The planned construction of a logging bridge, augury of resort development elsewhere in the Sea Islands, is threatening the viability of this unique African-American community and various rare plant and animal species. A coalition of local environmental groups and community activists including the Club and George County's League of Women Voters has sued to overturn approval of the bridge until all the environmental and cultural impacts have been weighed.

Sierra Nevada

CALIFORNIA Thanks a half million to Takara Sake USA. For a decade Takara, one of the world's top-ten sake manufacterers, has promoted community efforts to save Japan's Shimanto River. Now it is directing its attention to the Golden State. Takara's $500,000 gift to the Sierra Club will be used to help preserve ancient forests in the Sierra Nevada and coho salmon habitat throughout Northern California. With water from the Sierra Nevada a staple ingredient of the sake produced in its California operation, Takara is affirming its corporate philosophy that a healthy environment is good for business.

Southwest Deserts

CALIFORNIA An underfunded and irresolute U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has fallen behind in meeting its obligation to the peninsular bighorn sheep, which inhabits the desert mountain ranges of Southern California. After agreeing that the creatures warranted federal protection, the Service is over a year late in deciding to grant them endangered status, a deadly delay to an animal population whose number has nosedived from 1,200 to 400 in ten years. A suit filed in February by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund on the Club's behalf demands speedy and full protection for the vanishing ovine.

Rocky Mountains

COLORADO Recent door-to-door canvassing in Littleton doubled the city's Sierra Club membership and helped bring a satisfying end to a conflict that had pitted anglers against local enviros over use of the restored Cooley Quarry. Citing Club community mobilization as a key factor in its decision, the city council voted to keep the transformed Cooley Lake and the surrounding 130 acres wild.

Southeast

FLORIDA The Florida Chapter and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund are appealing a decision by the State Department of Environmental Protection to allow a kraft paper mill across the state line in Georgia to pump its murky effluent directly into the Withlacoochee River. The seven-mile pipeline the Packaging Corporation of America intends to build from its plant would allow the mill to sidestep cleanup of its operation, and the discharge would threaten the well-being of fish, wildlife, and the public.

TEXAS AND LOUISIANA Though "produced water" sounds like the bland outcome of a lab project, the substance is far from innocuous. This byproduct of the oil-and-gas industry contains aromatic hydrocarbons, metals, ammonia, and even radioactivity—all of which are bad news for coastal ecosystems. Yet for decades oil companies, unwilling to assume expenses of safer disposal, have been dumping the noxious liquid along the shores of Texas and Louisiana. Citing data indicating the brine's toxicity, the Sierra Club launched a salvo of suits against the polluters. As a result, some of them were forced to stop spewing and, in January of this year, the EPA banned discharges of produced water over the next two years. ■

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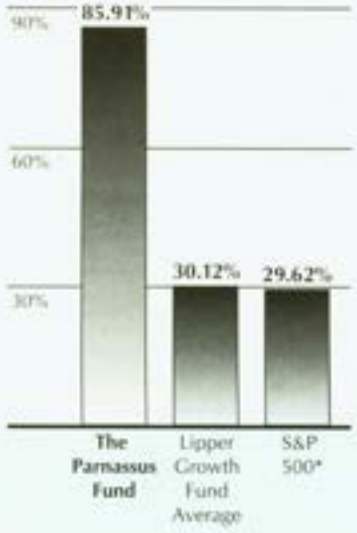

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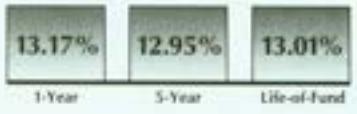

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Georgia's Sea Islands

Continued from page 47

Keeping barrier islands natural allows them to do what they do best: protect the mainland. As Steve Braden explained over dinner, barrier islands absorb the energy of Atlantic storms. Steve is a big fan of Orrin Pilkey, the Duke University geologist who has spent two decades crusading against thoughtless beach development. Pilkey has described a winter beach as a "battlefield filled with pitfalls." Each time the army of the waves advances over it, the waves lose a portion of their force. "So when people flatten out the dunes to build," Steve told me, "there's no defense against storms and hurricanes."

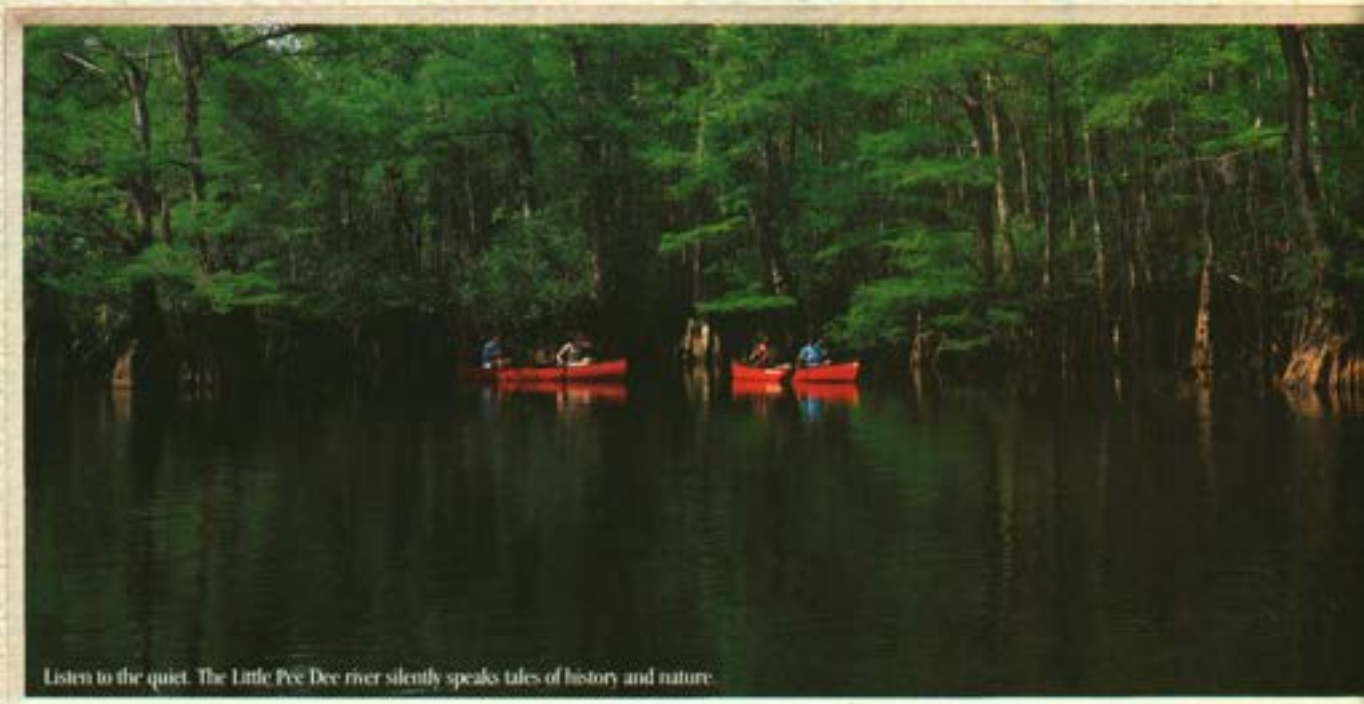
That night, the storm kicked up again. Gordon was now a hurricane and was doing his best to underscore all that Carl and Steve had been saying about the foolishness of trying to create permanence on barrier islands. In North Carolina's Outer Banks, 16-foot waves were toppling beach houses and pulling the carpet out from under part of Highway 12. The wind battered my tent with such force that I thought it was going to lift me up and carry me to Oz. When I poked my head out in the morning, I found that the water had risen almost to the front door.

The sea was too rough for us to travel anywhere, so we spent the day roaming the island. I ventured into a forest of pines and live oaks and amused myself dodging small thorny missiles launched by the jump cactus, which seemed equipped with a guidance system that sought out exposed flesh.

I blundered through a tangle of creeping vines and curtains of Spanish moss, until I burst out onto a vast expanse of red-tipped green cordgrass crossed by narrow saltwater creeks. Over the marsh, birds were wheeling and diving—snowy egrets, blue herons, and a pair of ospreys.

In the afternoon I sat on the beach and watched the sea birds. It was still raining, but by now I was so used to being wet and sandy that I scarcely noticed. In fact, I seemed to be taking the damp better than the great blue heron that was fishing apathetically by the edge of a creek. It stood ankle-deep, shoulders hunched like a reluctant swimmer, and raised first one foot and then the other as if shaking off the cold. Pelicans bobbed over the water wearing smug expressions that reminded me of fat restaurant patrons trying to settle on dessert. But my favorites were the skimmers, black and white sea birds with overlong bottom jaws. When feeding they fly low, dangling their oversized chops in the water in the hope that a fish will swim right down their throats. (I wondered how many cigarette butts and pieces of seaweed they end up swallowing in the process.)

Gordon began petering out by the end of the day, and the next morning we tried to get to an island called Petit Chou, nine miles away through a tortuous maze of channels. If we played the tides right, though, we could cut



Listen to the quiet. The Little Pee Dee river silently speaks tales of history and nature.

through on a creek with the unappealing name of Mosquito Ditch and shave off a couple hours of paddling time.

I was in a double kayak with a New Jersey naturalist named Douglas. We had paired up because we had discovered a shared fondness for the music of the '60s and '70s and had spent most of the past few evenings singing around what would have been a campfire if there had been any dry wood. Now we planned to sing all the way to Petit Chou, and had already drawn up a song list that included Janis Joplin, Simon and Garfunkel and the entire soundtrack of *Godspell*.

Within ten minutes we had barely enough breath to hum. Both the wind and the tide were against us, and it seemed as if we had to paddle with all our might just to keep from going backwards. After an hour, we hadn't even covered a mile. Mosquito Ditch was still a ways ahead, and we had already missed the tide. There was no way to get to Petit Chou before dark. We were forced to turn back.

As we paddled toward our old campsite, the landscape that had been done up in shades of gray for the past three and a half days suddenly dissolved into Technicolor. The marsh turned an emerald green, the sea sparkled sapphire-blue, and a yellow ball of fire appeared in the sky. The sun was out.

The storm had turned on its heels and fled back down the coast, and for the remaining two days of the trip we had perfect weather. That night, as we ate dinner on the beach, the full moon ascended over the rim of the horizon and a single dolphin capered along the milky ladder of its reflection. Later, a few of us paddled up the creek deeper into the marshes. The night was perfectly still and the moon was so bright that we cast long shadows on the sand as we carried the boats down to the water. After the days of stormy chaos, the quiet was hypnotic. We spent an hour gliding through the marshes, hearing only the splash of our paddles, and the frantic flap of a great blue heron startled by our presence.

Even so, when the trip was over and I had returned home, I found that what stayed with me was the storm itself. Sitting in my house in California, a description of ocean waves that I had read in *The Beaches Are Moving* by Orrin Pilkey and Wallace Kaufman kept coming to mind. "A wave is like a bulge traveling across the ocean's surface," they write. "The bulge is not water itself racing from place to place, but energy traveling like a ghost through the body of the sea."

That energy, that ghost in the body of the sea, was the same spirit I had seen animating the shape-shifting coastal islands. In the sunshine, Little Tybee had been docile as a sleeping seal, a tropical postcard of white beach and swaying palmettos. But in the storm it had been alive and breathing, sloughing off its placid, sandy skin to reveal a wild and capricious soul. ▪

DASHKA SLATER *lives in Oakland, California, where she works as a staff writer for the weekly* Express.

THE SHAWANGUNKS

Continued from page 65

posing "private land grabs and unsuitable development") fills me in on the history of threats to the region. In 1963, for example, a bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate proposing a "skyline parkway" the length of the Shawangunk Ridge. In the 1980s, after the Minnewaska Mountain Houses failed, Marriott eyed the area for a hotel/condo resort. The '80s also brought plans for a 4,600-acre "wind farm," a repository for nuclear waste, and "Parc Europe," a French-backed theme park complete with synthetic Renaissance villages—Gallic revenge, perhaps, for Euro Disney.

Thoreau's sentiments from *Walking* (1862) seem appropriate to the situation. "Every walk is a sort of crusade," he reckoned, "to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels." Mohonk, after all, has traditionally been a place for walkers. "We all know that pedestrianism, just the plain process of walking, is the most healthful exercise known," proclaimed the May 18, 1912 *Mohonk Weekly Bulletin*. And tucked in my daypack is Keith Smiley's own pithy booklet, *The Importance of Walking*.

"What use the rocks?" asks Smiley elsewhere. For a time in the 19th century, the answer was millstones; 90 percent of the nation's supply came from Shawangunk conglomerate, and the Mohonk carriage roads were surfaced in local Martinsburg shale. Smiley answered his own question in the quiet emphatic: "May we repeat that the major importance of these two different types of rock is as co-creators of fine scenery." Amen, again.

By Trapps Bridge, the western Trapps cliffs—cracked, cleft, sheared to a fault—look like hastily stacked rock fillets, conglomerate Sheetrock in need of edge alignment. As I turn onto Overcliff Road, I feel like a Rhine Maiden bidding adieu to the Wagnerian high drama of the beetling crags for the miniature wilderness on their backside. The long mile to the Rhododendron Bridge is through acres of "Wisconsin Was Here" graffiti—chatter marks, gouges, slickensides, tilted slabrock. It's enough to make a hiker lose her sense of balance. Throughout, the rock-lichen-moss-fern tableau arranges and rearranges itself with slight variations in leaf duff, sometimes fixed frozen in ice on the near side of a giant rock ottoman, upholstered in green moss and luxuriant kelp-like lichens.

One charm of this deciduous pygmy woodland is that a person of average altitude can easily see through it and over it—say west to the white cliffs of Rock Hill and Ronde Barre, and north to the eroding plateau of the Catskills. I find a brown-and-white feather, 14 inches from quill to tip, and wave it quizzically at a man race-walking by. "Left wing-feather of a wild turkey," he says, without breaking stride. I have heard the turkeys take flight, found dozens of dancing turkey tracks in the snowdust on the road—and assume I missed a turkey tango.

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I move through the gauntlet of roadside plants: evergreen, omnipresent mountain laurel, freeze-dried asters, goldenrod, boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*). It reminds me to pull out *The Importance of Walking* and reread a Thoreau journal entry from January 1857. "This stillness, solitude, wildness of nature is a kind of thoroughwort, or boneset, to my intellect. This is what I go out to seek. It is as if I always met in those places some grand, serene, immortal, infinitely encouraging, though invisible, companion, and walked with him." My winter walking is in the company of a ghost glacier.

Serene between gunbursts from the contiguous Minnewaska State Park Preserve, I round a bend and catch Sky Top at a perfect moment—miniaturized by distance, the beacon of hope, like the mountain fortress the pilgrims are trying to reach at the rear of a medieval triptych. Three hundred feet below Sky Top, tea will be served in half an hour—if this pilgrim can hotfoot it back in time. A goal at last! I press on across the Rhododendron Bridge and re-enter the Mohonk cease-fire zone, pausing to scan the six-acre Rhododendron Swamp, so paleo-earthy that I would not have blinked had a mini-apatosaurus surfaced from the bog. I pass up an exposed Martinsburg shale bank, exfoliating, presumed fossiliferous, taking in a soft purple-pink-pastel gloaming through the bare trees.

The tea-server, in formal black-and-white, asks if I saw anything out there. Only a pair of yellow-shafted flickers vocalizing beside a standing dead tree in Sleepy Hollow. Juncos on the flit. Three white-tailed deer. And bare-handed rock climbers in 29-degree weather. Now I add some spice cookies to my tea saucer and retire to a rail rocker on the East Porch balcony over the lake. Orange-rose-lavender-gray clouds push east in the lingering crepuscule. Smiley Tower light on Sky Top twinkles in Mohonk Lake. Absolute peace, crisp quiet. High tea.

DURING MY STAY, I DUCKED IN AND out of "theme" goings-on at Mohonk, such as "Celebration of the Night Sky: An Astronomy Weekend" and an "Environmental Values Conference," where two speakers addressed the "Biophilia Hypothesis" in the elegant Main Parlor. Yale professor Stephen Kellert explained the "notion" of biophilia as "the human need to affiliate deeply and positively with natural life." *Notion? Hypothesis?* If my spontaneous response to the Shawangunks' astonishing lithic landscapes, the pitch pine barrens, ice caves, and richly eccentric habitat isn't unconditional biophilia, what is? Biophilia washes in waves over the walker. I wanted to invite the good professor to take a walk to Eagle Cliff, gaze west from a gazebo, catch the last solar scintilla over a cloud banquette, and then ask what on earth might be *hypothetical* about biophilia. The case is closed, as far as I'm concerned. Now how about a spot of tea? ■

PATTI HAGAN *pens the gardening column for* The Wall Street Journal. *She lives in Brooklyn.*

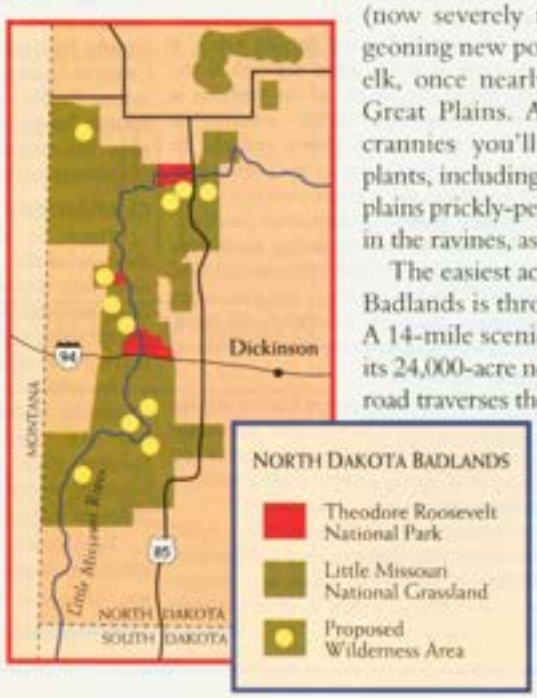
Reed McManus

Good Times in the Badlands

Long X Divide, whose juniper-forested slopes, mixed-grass prairie, and pockets of aspen are part of the Sierra Club–sponsored state wilderness proposal.

To most Americans, North Dakota conjures images of bleakness, blizzards, and occasional mentions of record-low-temperatures by television meteorologists. But one of the state's most famous former residents expressed another view: awestruck by North Dakota's "desolate, grim beauty," Teddy Roosevelt proclaimed, "I never would have been president had it not been for my experiences in North Dakota."

T.R.'s conservation consciousness was molded in the state's southwest, where wind and rain erosion have shaped the terrain into the breathtakingly eerie clay and sand formations known as the Badlands. This rugged landscape was formed when the Little Missouri River, rerouted during the Ice Age, began carving its way through the area's soft seabed sediments some 600,000 years ago. Today, infrequent but hard rains continue sculpting the vulnerable soils into buttes, tablelands, and valleys punctuated by gravity-defying ledges and monumental outcrops called "rain pillars."



In honor of the Badlands' presidential patron, Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park was established in 1947, and redesignated a national park in 1978. It's home to pronghorn, coyote, wild grouse, golden eagles, prairie dogs (now severely threatened), and burgeoning new populations of bison and elk, once nearly extirpated from the Great Plains. Among the nooks and crannies you'll find 500 species of plants, including the prairie coneflower, plains prickly-pear, wild strawberry, and, in the ravines, ash and cottonwood.

The easiest access to North Dakota's Badlands is through the national park. A 14-mile scenic route curves through its 24,000-acre north unit, and a 36-mile road traverses the Badlands of the larger south unit. Trails criss-cross both sections, which together contain roughly 30,000 acres of designated wilderness.

But Teddy's park encompasses only a

little more than 70,000 acres, or one-tenth, of North Dakota's vast Badlands terrain. Its three small parcels (which include the site of Roosevelt's ranch) are surrounded by the million-acre-plus Little Missouri National Grassland. The Little Missouri River provides one of the easiest routes through this area. Canoeists can float the 110-mile stretch between the two larger park units in about three days. May and June are usually the best months for river travel. A foot trail, the 90-mile Maad-Daah-Hey (Mandan for "grandfather"), will soon traverse the grassland.

NUTS & BOLTS

How to Prepare

You'll find the best weather conditions for Badlands hiking in late spring and early fall. Be prepared for high temperatures in the summer, and be aware that thunderstorms can appear suddenly. The national park is open in the winter, but some roads may be closed. Each park unit has a campground, and backcountry permits are available from the visitor centers in each unit. Backcountry water must be boiled or filtered.

For More Information

For national park maps and brochures, contact Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Medora, ND 58645; (701) 623-4466. Also contact the Little Missouri National Grassland: South Unit, Medora Ranger District, 161 21st St., W., Dickinson, ND 58601; (701) 225-5151; North Unit, McKenzie Ranger District, HCO2, Box 8, Watford City, ND 58854; (701) 842-2393. Nearly 6,000 acres near Roosevelt National Park are in Little Missouri State Park, c/o Cross Ranch State Park, HC2, Box 152, Sanger, ND 58567; (701) 794-3731. Officials there can also provide information on the 80-acre Sully Creek State Recreation Area along the Little Missouri River. For current canoeing information call the North Dakota Tourism Department at (800) HELLO-ND.

For Deeper Reading

Exploring the Black Hills and Badlands, by Hiram Rogers (Johnson Books, 1993). Largely devoted to the badlands of South Dakota, home to Badlands National Park, this guidebook also describes several trails in North Dakota; ***Theodore Roosevelt National Park: The Story Behind the Scenery*** by Henry A. Schoch and Bruce M. Kaye (KC Publications, Las Vegas; 1993), is a well-photographed primer on the Badlands.

The Politics of Place

The Sierra Club and 15 other groups have proposed designating 191,000 roadless acres in North Dakota as 13 wilderness areas, the bulk of them in the Little Missouri National Grassland. (The remaining acreage is in the Sheyenne Grasslands in the state's southeastern corner and the J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge near the Canadian border.) These areas would allow hunting, hiking, camping, and livestock grazing, but would ban further oil-and-gas development, which has destroyed three-quarters of the region's roadless areas.

In addition, the Club and its partners have proposed that the Little Missouri River, which runs 350 miles from the South Dakota border through the Badlands to Lake Sakakawea, be declared a national wild-and-scenic river, along with the shorter Pembina River in the northeastern part of the state. For more information, contact the Sierra Club Northern Plains Office, 23 N. Scott, Room 27, Sheridan, WY 82801; (307) 672-0425. ■

REVIEWS

Pioneer Naturalists
by Howard Ensign Evans
Henry Holt; $22.50

Collecting plants along the Missouri River in the early 1800s, naturalist Thomas Nuttall frequently got lost and had to be rescued. One time his party checked his gun before an Indian raid and found it filled with dirt; he had used it to dig plants. According to Washington Irving, Nuttall would go "groping and stumbling along among a wilderness of sweets, forgetful of everything but his immediate pursuit. The Canadian voyageurs used to make merry at his expense, regarding him as some whimsical kind of madman."

Today this eccentric biological pioneer is remembered, if at all, by the eponyms he inspired: Nuttall's woodpecker, Nuttall's blister beetle, Nuttall's sunflower, Nuttall's evening primrose, and *Pica nuttalli*, the yellowbilled magpie. Now author and entomologist Howard Ensign Evans has revived his life story and those of more than 100 other early naturalists in this enjoyable guide to the originators of English and Latin plant and animal names.

Evans tells us, for instance, that David Douglas (of Douglas-fir fame) died in Hawaii in a cattle trap at the age of 34, but not before he shone the first scientific light on some of the West's most distinctive trees: the sugar pine, western white pine, silver fir, and Oregon white oak.

Evans also describes the likes of Johann Forster (Forster's tern), "a temperamental, irascible man" who complained bitterly on Captain Cook's second voyage to the Pacific. And we learn that one Constantine Samuel Rafinesque (Rafinesque's big-eared bat) made a memorable visit to the home of John James Audubon in 1818: "Audubon heard him late at night running about his room and banging the wall. He had found Audubon's violin and was using the bow to knock down the bats in his room, not because they bothered him, but because they might be a 'new species.' "

Arranged alphabetically by plant and animal common names, this volume offers engaging descriptions of species as well as of their chroniclers. But Evans is guilty, more than once, of claiming that these naturalists "discovered" these plants and animals. For nature enthusiasts who can forgive that Eurocentric blind spot, the book is an excellent addition to the field-guide shelf. ***—Joan Hamilton***

Reclaiming the Last Wild Places: A New Agenda for Biodiversity
by Roger L. DiSilvestro
John Wiley & Sons; $24.95

An estimated 100 million wild animals end up as road kill every year in the United States. That the unfortunate creatures don't observe human boundaries of roads or lines on maps is just one of the many intriguing, depressing, and often messy discoveries supporting Roger DiSilvestro's thesis that to preserve our natural heritage, we must extend our notion of species protection far beyond the boundaries of existing parks and wildlife preserves and attempt to salvage, at the least, ecosystems, and beyond that, ecoregions.

DiSilvestro proposes an array of intelligent cures for our present limited vision and practice of ecosystem management. The most ambitious idea is a National Biodiversity Organic Act that would provide for "gap analysis" to locate new areas to be protected, and set up "a nationwide ecosystem/biodiversity network of wildland reserves connected by corridors."

Such an approach is a welcome challenge to proposals for closing parks or privatizing public lands that might cause even further fragmentation of ecosystems. ***—Bob Schildgen***

Caring for Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis
by Max Oelschlaeger
Yale University Press; $30

Judeo-Christian religions have taken too much blame for worldviews that lead to environmental destruction, says the author of this survey of "ecotheology." Philosopher and religious historian Oelschlaeger contends that the idea of human "dominion" over the planet in Western religions is less responsible for environmental crisis than the capitalist blasphemers who have made unbridled economic growth a "secular religion, and the GNP and rate of economic growth our holiest of holies."

Arguing that Judeo-Christian teachings can reinforce environmental ethics, he emphasizes religious traditions of reverence for and stewardship of the earth: Noah piloting his proto-Cousteauian ark of endangered species; ancient monastic and mystical beliefs about the sanctity of creation; religious injunctions against acquisitiveness.

This is a promising start in exploring the issues, but it remains too abstract to come to grips with thorny issues, such as Christianity's own self-contradictory role in creating the abhorrent "secular religion." It doesn't address, for example, changes that swept through the Western church—which in medieval times opposed technological hubris as strongly as deep ecologists do today—but later supported Faustian programs of dominion and exploitation.

Nevertheless, by introducing us to the important connection between religion and environmental ethics, the book serves a useful purpose. And by

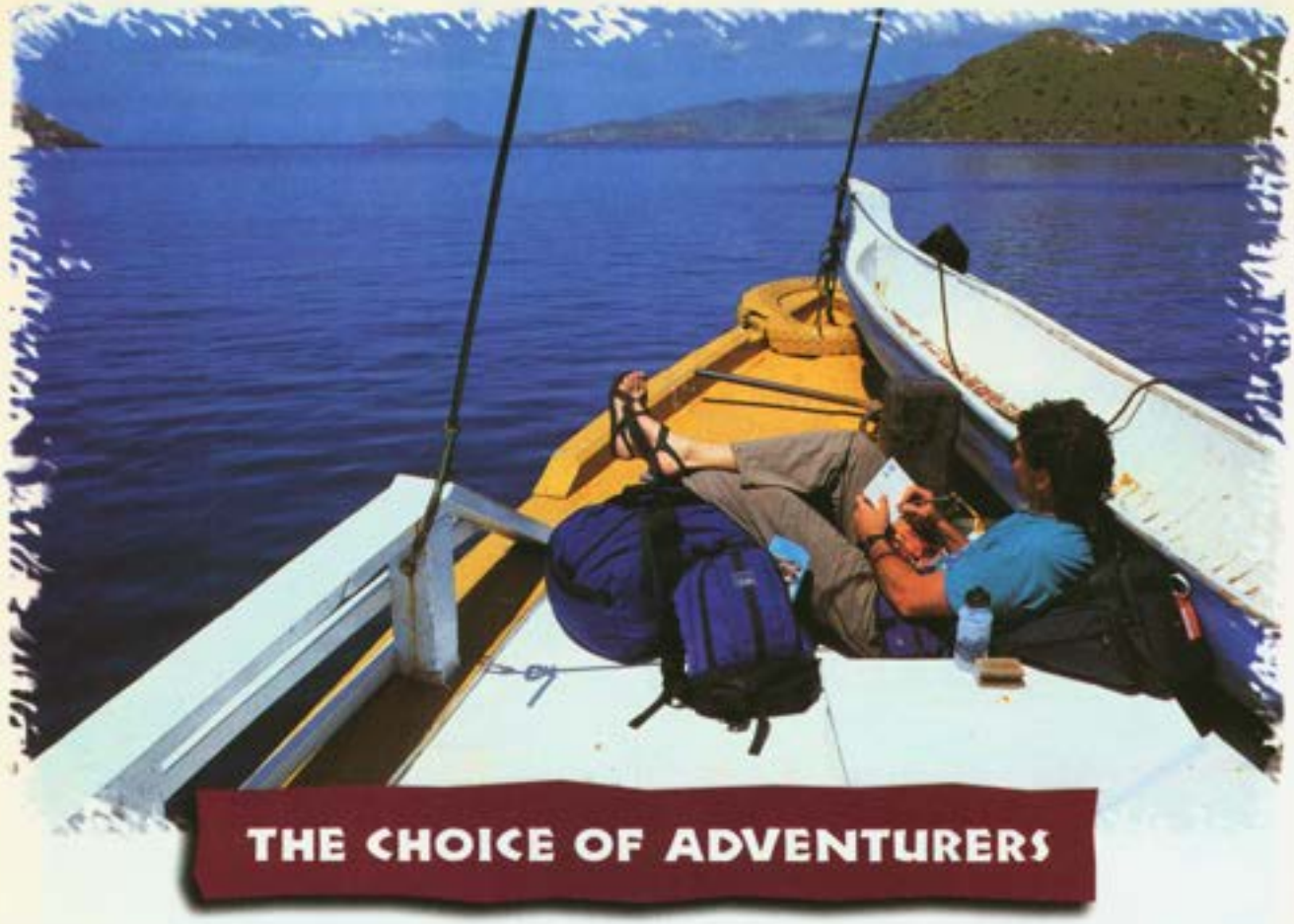


Photo: Nancy Bushnell, Flores Sea, Indonesia.

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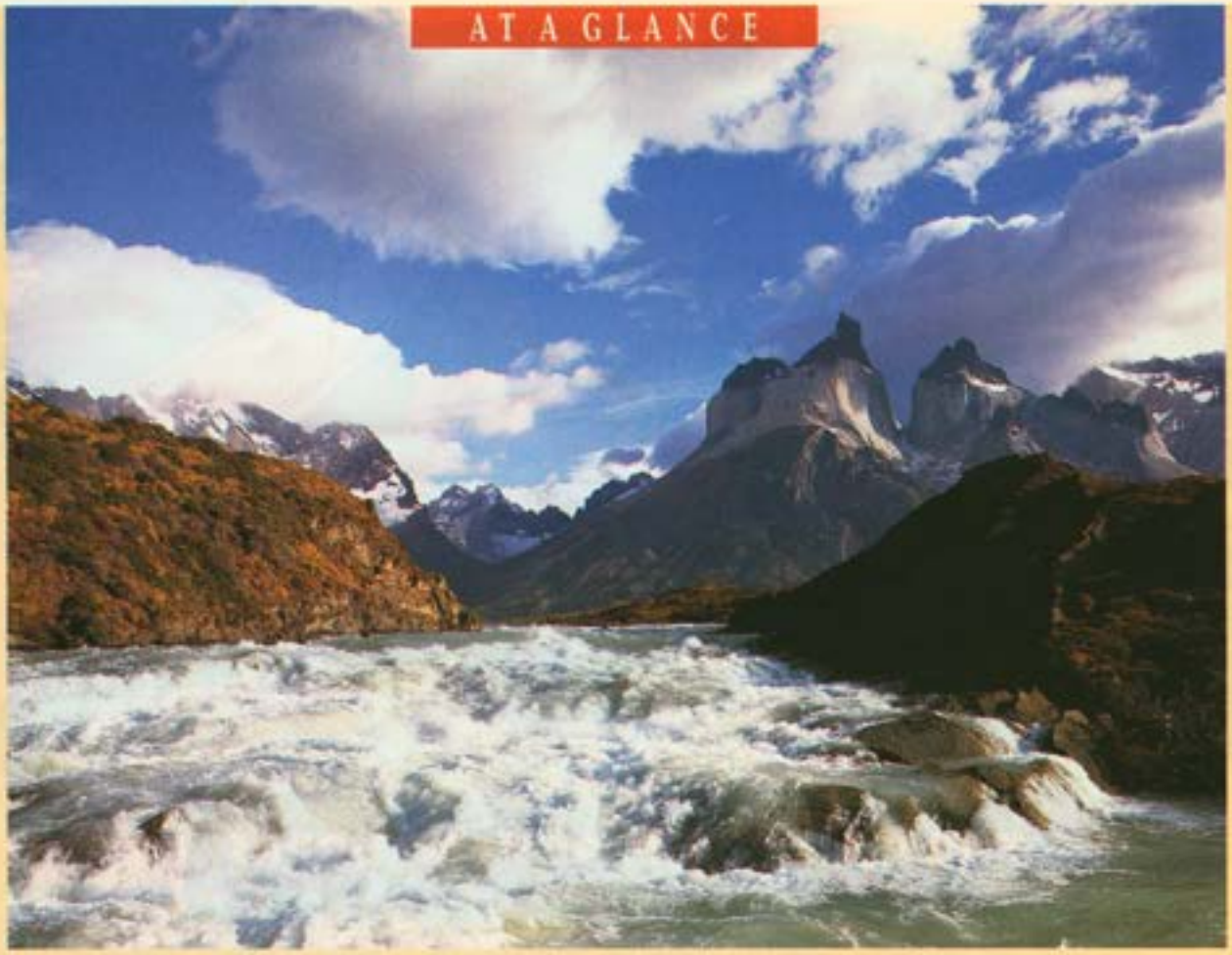

JEFF GNASS

Nowhere Is a Place: Travels in Patagonia
by Bruce Chatwin and Paul Theroux; photos by Jeff Gnass
Sierra Club Books; $18, paper

Two acclaimed travel writers and an artful landscape photographer record their impressions of one of the most remote and haunting places on Earth—Patagonia, the windswept wilderness in the desolate southernmost region of South America. "The word 'Patagonia,'" Chatwin says, "like Mandalay or Timbuctoo, lodged itself in the Western imagination as a metaphor for The Ultimate, the point beyond which one could not go."

emphasizing the historically influential role of religion in U.S. reform movements, and urging the application of this moral energy to the environmental cause, it will help open up more effective relations between religious and environmental groups. **—B.S.**

Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment
edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A. Grim
Orbis Books; $16, paper

Once upon a time in ancient India, a lion had a philosophical discussion with a Jain monk who convinced the lion to renounce his carnivorous ways. The beast was reincarnated as Mahavir, one of India's greatest saints.

Such fables have a lot to tell the modern environmentalist, according to Michael Tobias' essay on Jainism in this collection edited by two religion professors. The beast's conversion from consumer to worshiper is an allegory about reducing human impact on the environment while developing an ability to affirm earth—"every organism, every connection, the whole evolving biosphere." And if, as some essays claim, abuse of nature has become suicidal, such attitudes are less philosophical niceties than tools for survival.

This could all add up to yet another eco-sermon to "live lightly on the earth." But what's different is a presentation of a central—and environmentally crucial—religious principle: the more of the world you try to gobble up, the less likely you are to save your soul, and vice versa. With this in mind, the authors link environmental ethics to religion by showing how spiritual fulfillment rests on activities and attitudes antithetical to the plundering of people or nature, such as building community or appreciating mystics' intuition of the fundamental unity of self and nature, "divine" and "earthly."

Buddhist, Hindu, Baha'i, Taoist, Native American, and ecofeminist philosophies are covered, while traditional Western faiths are invited to a deeper

look at their roots. But the discussion is not confined to religion and philosophy. Science takes its own leap of faith, as cosmologist Brian Swimme reveals in declaring that physicists' research into the birth of the universe is the "discovery of entering a more profound relationship with our cousins of this great community."

The breadth of the collection reflects the editors' premise that "no one religious tradition or philosophical perspective has the ideal solution to the environmental crisis." This creates a rich anthology showing the importance of diversity in the complex process of reorienting humanity toward nature by fostering kinship with, rather than alienation from, Creation. —***Emily Gilels***

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- ***Notes From the Century Before: A Journal From British Columbia*** by Edward Hoagland. A reissue of the classic account of an odyssey in the wilds of British Columbia ($12, paper).
- ***Adventuring in the San Francisco Bay Area: The Sierra Club Travel Guide to San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo Counties and the Bay Islands*** by Peggy Wayburn. Newly revised and updated ($15, paper).
- ***Listening to the Land: Conversations About Nature, Culture, and Eros*** by Derrick Jensen. Provocative conversations with leading environmentalists ($15, paper).
- ***The Sierra Club Family Outdoors Guide*** by Marlyn Doan. This sourcebook is the complete guide for any adult who wants to introduce a child to wilderness adventure ($12, paper).
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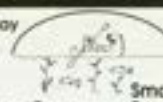

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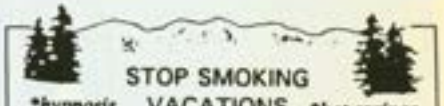

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Erik Ryberg
McCall, Idaho

My daily exposure to Bangkok's horrendous traffic and air pollution, abysmal water quality, and omnipresent litter painfully illustrates to me what happens in the absence of environmental concern. Sitting on the deserted shore of a Great Barrier Reef island and listening to the *scrup, scrup* of an endangered green sea-turtle digging her nest encourages me, and makes me look for ways to help protect her coral reef habitat. I've gained both experiences through world travel. Meeting both the world's natural woes and wonders face to face, when done responsibly, inspires travelers to become active environmentalists.
Sherry Rhodes
Bangkok, Thailand

Travel to developing nations in particular is destructive in that it encourages the growth of a monoculture—look at how traditional art becomes a commodity adapted to the desires of tourists whose understanding of "the natives" is limited to Fodor's or Lonely Planet guidebooks. Then come the T-shirt shops, prostitutes, Coca-Cola, adventure-travel companies, and similar scourges. I wonder what all the new-age "seekers" hope to find in Nepal and Tibet that they cannot get in the United States?
John Petroskas
St. Paul, Minnesota

Traveling the world to get a sense of nature's diversity is one of the best ways to become involved in protecting the environment. But it's easy for us to debate among ourselves about where we should go and how we should spend our big American dollars. It's harder to keep in mind that our faraway place is somebody else's backyard. What if the native-born of a developing country don't want to earn a living guiding tours through their wilderness? If we're going to use nonrenewable fuel getting to these areas, we'd better make sure of two things: that we're actually welcome, and that the indigenous people aren't coerced into playing host to us. Otherwise, "ecotourism" is just a nicer word for "exploitation."
Claude Swift
Salem, Oregon

Quite the contrary, traveling as an ecotourist protects the environment. Can someone truly care for nature when she or he has no intimate knowledge of it? Ecotourism is one of the most effective weapons to educate the public about corporate/governmental exploitation of the environment. My trip to Alaska two years ago completely changed my life and opened my eyes to the importance of protecting wilderness. If John Muir hadn't seen Yosemite, would there be a Sierra Club as we know it today? Let nature touch people's hearts, let nature baptize their souls, and as an anonymous 16th-century Danish educator put it, "Get away to the mountains, the valleys, the shores of the seas, the deserts, and the deepest recesses of the earth. In this way and no other will you find true knowledge of things and their properties."
Alice Tseng
Moorpark, California

We tramp into wild areas that would be better left empty, scramble into fragile habitats in search of the perfect photo ops, dive in ever-increasing numbers to gawp at the fish population of delicate and crumbling reefs, hurting the planet. If our tourist appreciation of the last wild places doesn't fuel our conservationist fires, then future travel to the far reaches of the globe will be done by insects.
Ann Cooper
Boulder, Colorado

The Caribbean islands of St. Lucia and Dominica now see that by keeping their rainforests intact they make more money than with banana plantations. Costa Rica gives its fishermen financial incentives to release turtles they accidentally capture unharmed. Early-retired loggers now lead hikes through rejuvenating wilderness, and ex-farmers share their home-cooked meals with hungry travelers. If we choose our travel destinations carefully, we can reward countries and entrepreneurs who have found a way to live comfortably in close harmony with their environments.
Keet Kopecky
Kansas City, Missouri

Like any industry, tourism has environmental consequences. It is crucial to remember the context in which "ecotourism" has been promoted as a new mode of sustainable development; the boom in travel is funded by the great surplus of global capitalism, which is obviously not "sustainable" in any sense. And the demand to visit the last remaining wild places is inspired by the degradation of natural places around the world. Let's work together to create an environment where no one needs to travel to experience the natural world.
Joel Wainwright
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

The upside: when caring people see those far corners, they are more likely to respect, value, and protect them. The downside: to make money, uncaring people will want to build a superhighway to get there.
Earl Wettstein
Tucson, Arizona

Because of the relatively small amount of time any individual spends traveling, daily behavior at home has a much bigger impact, and should be our primary focus.
Dean Murphy
Ann Arbor, Michigan

It's a matter of sensitivity. "Take only photographs, leave only footprints" has long been a basic ethic of many who venture into backcountry. The same motto should apply in every country.
Corey White
Litchfield, Maine

While globe-trotting gulps more fuel than a cross-state jaunt, ecotourism shows that it doesn't necessarily consume more resources on the whole. But whether the trip is to a far corner or simply around the corner, if traveling doesn't foster stewardship of the environment, the planet loses.
Jeffrey W. Lennartz
Cleveland, Ohio

FOR NEXT TIME...

TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD HUMANS MANAGE NATURE, IF AT ALL?

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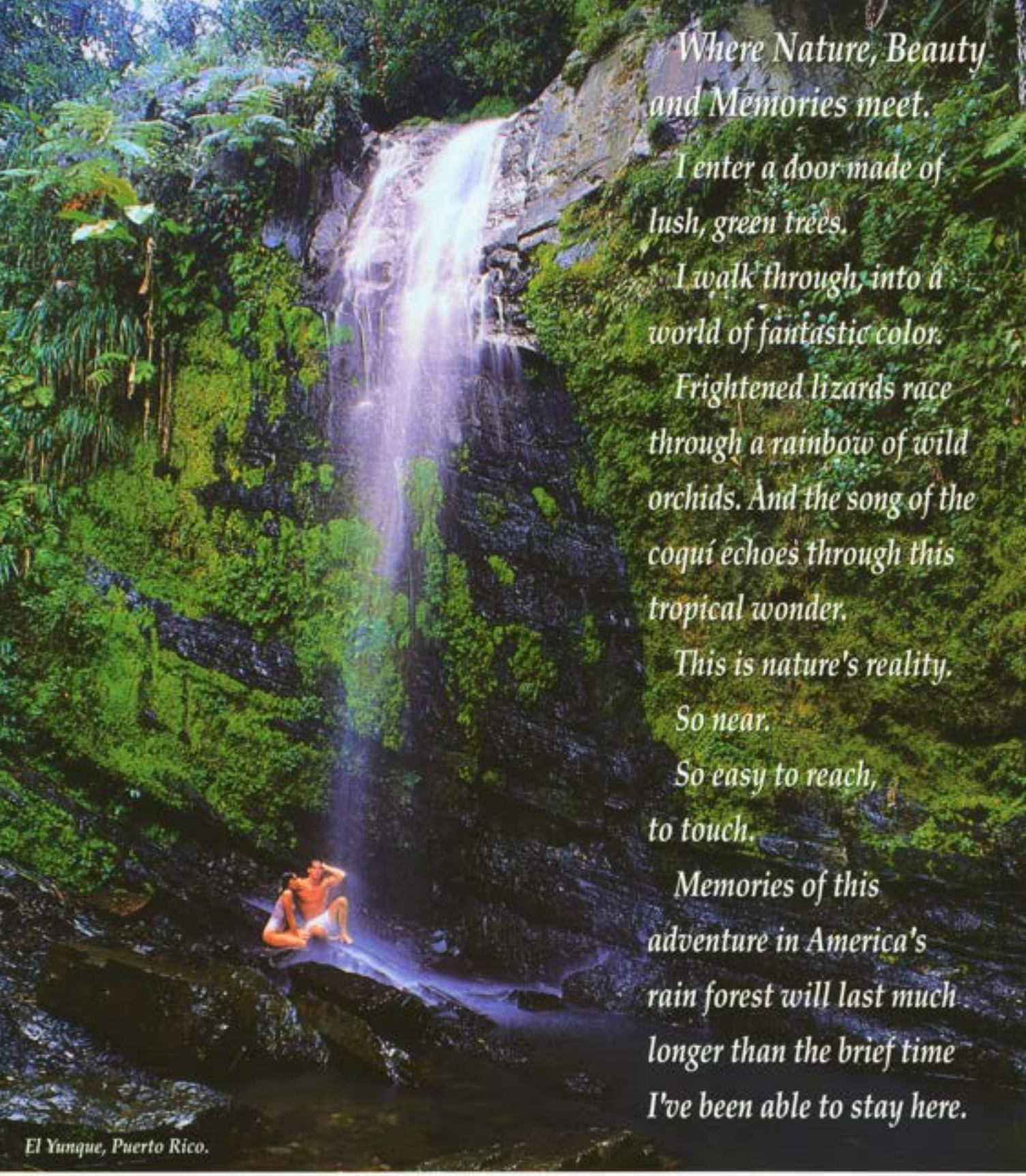

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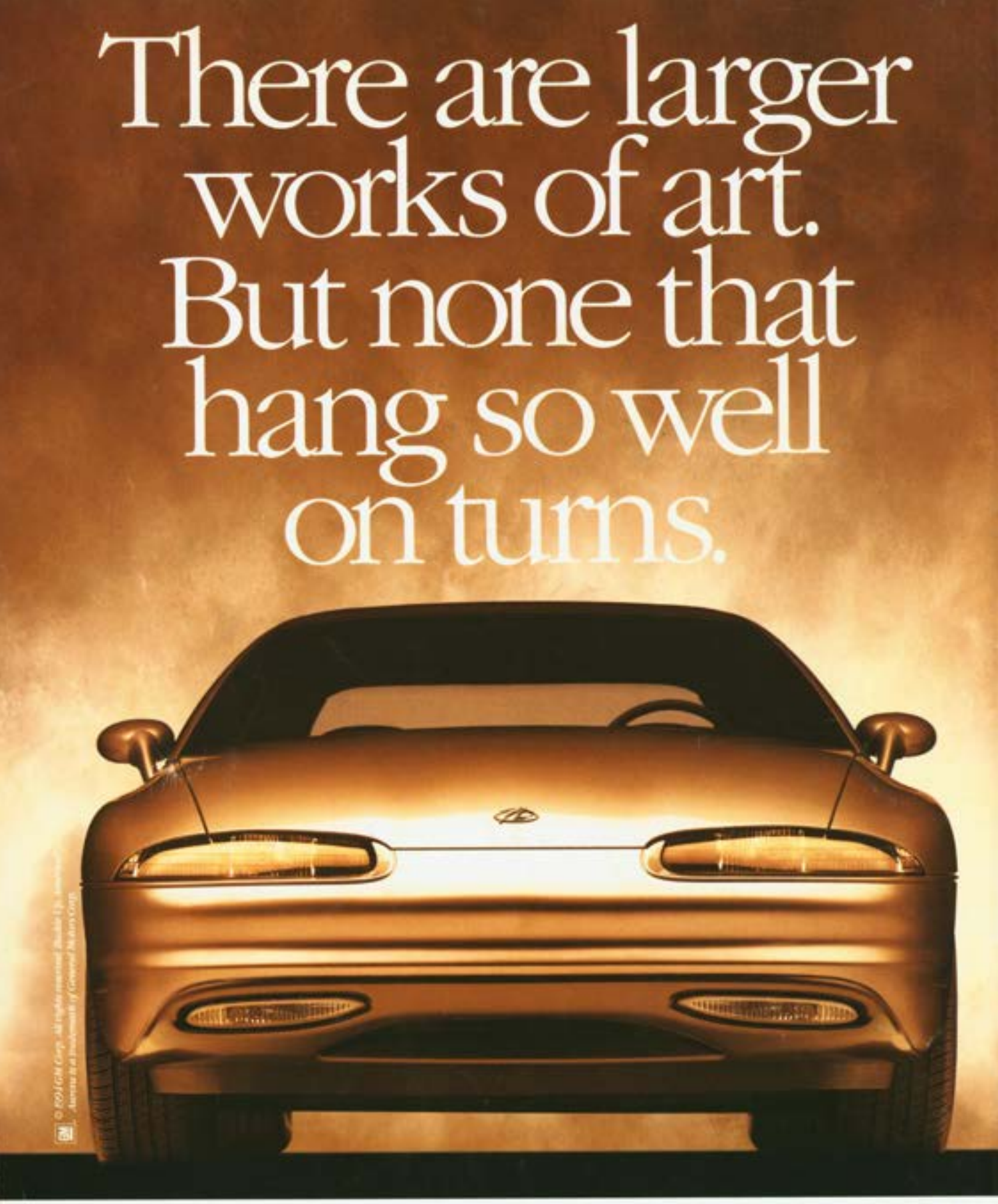

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