



Dartmouth Outing Club
Dartmouth College
P.O. Box 9, Hanover, NH 03755-0009

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

Woodsmoke

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a steep, dark mountain slope. A small figure is visible near the top of the slope, and a valley is visible in the lower left corner.

Spring 2004

Woodsmoke

Articles

Winter Carnival: a Seussentennial
by Will Morrison '05 2

A Great Adventure in Moving
by Nate Monnig '05 4

More Ways to have fun: Schlitz Fund
by Katey Blumenthal '06 8

Fifty Miles to Go Before I Sleep
by Brett Carr '07 9

A Day In the Woods With Alcott Smith
by Matt Kemp '04 13

Lost in Batholith Country
by Victor McConnell '04 14

Cabins and Trails
by Kelly Swartz '05 22

Excerpts from "Big Salmon Creek"
by Zack Strong '05 24

A Voyageur at Night
by Matthew Richardson '07 28

Climbing Will Save All Our Souls
by Brenda Whitney '02 30

Mementos From the Tropics
by Barry Hashimoto '06 36

Poetry

Swayambu's Shadow
by Arjun Heimsath 12

Walking the Dusty Road
by Arjun Heimsath 16

Finding Gold
by Brenda Whitney '02 29

From the Editor

Life is full of adventure. Some adventures take you to cold places and remote regions, or to raging rivers and dense jungles. Sometimes a paddle down the Connecticut River can be an adventure.

As you can see from these pages, adventure is an important element in the life of a Dartmouth student. Taking an Friday afternoon to paddle the rapids of Hartlands can be the best medicine after a rough week of meetings, classes, and papers. An expedition that spans an entire off- term can be a centering force in our life and can put the rest of our Dartmouth years in a new perspective. Adventure is about growing, learning, being challenged, being excited, being rejuvenated, and having fun. Adventure has the power to calm our nerves and change our souls.

Our beloved club, the DOC, is a great catalyst for adventure. It brings us together, inspires us with its rich history, and feeds the flames of inspiration. With the encouragement of the North Woods, it fosters the spirit of adventure in all its members.

With this new edition of Woodsmoke in your hands, I invite you to sit back, relax and enjoy a good armchair adventure.

Will Morrison '05

Woodsmoke

Spring 2004

Editor-in-Chief Will Morrison '05

Editors Katey Blumenthal '06, Catrina Lindgren '04, Matthew Richardson '07

Contributors

Katey Blumenthal '06, Brett Carr '07, Barry Hashimoto '06, Arjun Heimsath, Matt Kemp '04, Victor McConnell '04, Nate Monnig '05, Will Morrison '05, Matthew Richardson '07, Kelly Swartz '05, Zack Strong '05, Brenda Whitney '02

Photography

Vicki Allen '06, Jeff Bate '07, Jacquelin Burnett '02, Pamela Collins '07, Rory Gawler '05, Libby Hadzima '06, Barry Hashimoto '06, Arjun Heimsath, Jen Hill '04, James Joslin '05, Page Kyle '02, Melina Marmarelis '07, Nate Monnig '05, Will Morrison '05, Matthew Richardson '07, Zack Strong '05, Nick Taranto '06

front cover: A climber on the lower pitches of El Capitan (Photo: James Joslin '05)

back cover: Trees in the White Mountains (Photo: Pamela Collins '07)

Reflections

Notes

Winter Carnival: a Seussentennial

by Will Morrison '05

An Seussian cat sat cooly on his hat behind President Wright as he spoke to open Winter Carnival 2004. The voices of a capella groups rang in the night as the ski team marched by, glowing torches in hand. It was another typically peaceful ceremony to begin one of the most celebrated weekends on the Dartmouth calendar.

But fifteen hours earlier on that very spot, volunteers on the Winter Carnival Committee, led by Jeff Woodward '06 and Victoria Solbert '07, shovelled and sculpted frantically to give the cat and his hat their recognizable shapes. With

little snow in the preceding weeks, the situation had appeared bleak, but a timely blessing from the snow gods precipitated the frenzy. In fine Dartmouth style, the sculpture was finished in the eleventh hour.

Winter Carnival, themed "Oh, the Places It Snows," kicked off the multi-week celebration of Dr. Seuss's 100th birthday. Seuss, whose real name was Theodore Geisel, graduated from Dartmouth in 1925. His fun and imaginative spirit set the tone for a Winter Carnival that will go down in history.



The snow sculpture dominates the Green with Baker Tower in the background. (photo: Vicki Allen '06)

A Great Adventure In Moving

by Nate Monnig '05

At 5:30 AM on November 14, 2003, Mike Holliday '05 and I checked in for our flight to San Jose, Costa Rica. For \$25 apiece, Taca Airlines took our whitewater kayaks, pathetically wrapped up in black plastic and duct tape disguised as surfboards, and we left the frigid temperatures of Boston for Central America. After changing planes in El Salvador, a quick flight landed us in Costa Rica. A lot of arguing in my newly revived Spanish hired us a van into downtown San Jose for a few dollars less than the going rate. After a nice stay at the Hostal Pangea (the best place to stay in the whole country) we made the trip to Turrialba, the center of Costa Rican whitewater. At a price of around \$1.50, the 30-mile trip took a mere two hours on the ultra-fast Directo Bus. Our next mission was to find a cheap place to stay that we would make our home for the next week or so. Our ever-so-helpful Lonely Planet Guide recommended the Hostal Primavera ("Hotel Spring") as a cheap, basic place with shared bath. Well, it was cheap. Known better to the locals as the "sex hotel," it provided us



an acceptable home base. They didn't ask much about our strange ways, and we didn't ask about theirs. It was a good thing Mike and I are very sound sleepers. To say the least, Costa Rica is a very noisy country, and the Primavera was no exception. Loud music blasted over the partial walls all through the night to muffle the less reputable goings on down the hall, I suppose. It was worth it though; any money we could save on hotels was more we could spend on boating.

Our seven-week trip to Costa Rica could best be described as a great adventure in moving. Navigating the bus system, while quite reliable, was quite a hassle at times with our heavy plastic kayaks. We spent countless hours waiting in bus stations, as one full bus after another couldn't take our boats. We became experts at roping our kayaks into the trunks of small taxis in mere seconds, before they could tell us "No cabe!"

In the Turrialba area, we paddled the Lower Pacuare, the Pascua section of the Reventazon, and the Pejibaye Rivers—mostly big water, class III-



shelter, and began privy construction. With assistance from David Hooke '84, construction began at the start of Fall Term. With the help of Eric Benson '04, trips to the shelter went out almost every weekend, consisting usually of only one or two upperclassmen and large groups of excited 'shmen and 'shwomen. Construction has halted for the winter season, but should finish up early in the spring term.

It has also been a banner year for the Forestry team. In the spring meet at Colby College, in Waterville, Maine, Dartmouth fielded a men's, a women's and an alumni team. Kim Iwamoto '03 came home with her fourth consecutive doubles canoeing title. After a summer of using the skills gained in "practices" up on Moose Mountain, the team went to the University of New Hampshire in the fall and came home with two trophies, one in men's Team Relay and one in men's Wood Splitting. The team also had a good showing at the winter meet at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, with a second place finish in women's Axe Throwing. The team has now begun the extensive preparations for what will certainly be an exciting meet at Dartmouth this spring. The 58th Annual Spring Woodsmen's Weekend will take place at Oak Hill on Friday April 23rd, and on the Green on Saturday April 24th.

CnT continues to run all sorts of exciting hikes and trailwork trips, sometimes as often as every day. Although a disturbing number of local diners have closed down, DinerToure has bounced back and found new diners for cheap, good eats in the mornings.

Cabin and Trail hosted a feed in the fall following a major Smarts mountain trailwork trip, with special guest Bernie Waugh, class of 1974, on guitar playing great sing-along songs. Attendance at this feed was so big that even the huge quantities of food normally prepared for a CnT feed were barely able to nourish the masses of hungry Chubbers—but rest assured that this is a rare occurrence. A Mt. Isolation backpack, Lafayette hike, Camel's Hump, Franconia Ridge, and many other great hikes are the bread and butter of CnT's repertoire.

Under the direction of alternating Chairs Eleanor Alexander '04, Matt Kemp '04 and Chelsea Lane-Miller '04, and Summer Co-Chairs Whitney Maughan '05 and Rory Gawler '05, the club has continued to welcome beginner and more advanced outdoor enthusiasts. Coming up is a great spring break trip to the Petrified Forest National Park (Arizona) and an exciting revitalization of the leader training process. Cabin and Trail meets Monday nights at 10 PM in the basement of Robinson Hall. Even if you've never heard a single song in the songbook, Cabin and Trail can't wait to help you get outside!

Rory Gawler '05
Vicki Allen '06

everything in reach, I felt latent. The doldrums had claimed my wandering ship. My land of milk and honey had been gulped, and the residual mixture that I couldn't bear to conjure had lost semblance to the native flavor. Despite the chilling disappearances of the climbers who had passed me on the streets, the unsettling fragility of the political harmony, and the sometimes-unbearable amount of litter in the wildest of places, I cherished the aftertaste *del Sur*. I had feared that the second-generation cosmopolitans in Paris, Rome, and the manic routine of college would soon efface the emotion that gripped me like a panic upon rushing through the *calles* of deep, dark Lima to my flight. In the plane seat, I had anxiously turned my head to the mottled web of lights outside the window, and as I crystallized the last memories a chill pranced out of my mind and down my spine. And, as it was for the few enchanted *conquistadores* sailing for the last time from a haunted fog and its marshy Peruvian coasts, my story's loose ends were fastened by an ethereal presence. Un-

earthly winds whipped my face with crystals from unknown snow slopes as they surged across loveless crevasses, over ancient divides, through the cols I came by. What steeped in my mind then felt like the gritty *naranjas* pressed with brown hands tasted, felt like inhaling the pungency of salted *lomo* through a stray's bark in the open door, but felt nearly as momentary as a glimpse of a miniature Eden through the looking glass. When the attendant's voice woke me in Houston and the stiffness of my body stole my attention, I couldn't remember for how long I had been asleep.

Cabin and Trail

This year has been one of continued growth for Cabin and Trail. Since our last report, we've added over a dozen new leaders to our pool of enthusiastic Council Members, and graduated eight fantastical seniors in the class of 2003.

We've also added a shelter to our section of the Appalachian Trail. Moose Mountain Shelter, a project

that has been in the works for a few years, began construction late spring 2003 under the guidance of Rory Gawler '05. With the assistance of Ben Honig '05 and dozens of hearty Chubbers, trees were felled, peeled, and moved to the site (not far from the old shelter) during the summer term. During DOC Freshman Trips, groups dug the foundation, cut the trail to the

IV(+) runs. The warm water made for amazing playboating, and great women's bathing suit tans from our lifejackets. It was incredible to have the opportunity to paddle miles and miles of big water, day after day—a bit of a rarity to us New England paddlers. Every day we'd pull off the river dead tired and hungry and head for the bars for our shots of Guaro. Guaro, the local sugar cane alcohol, which is a lot like moonshine, was recommended to us by many of the other gringo boaters traveling the area. They insisted it was always necessary to purge any organisms from your body that you may have collected from the rivers. It always made for good times, so we didn't argue much.

I'll never forget the Lower Pacuare—one of the true gems of the whitewater world. Offering eighteen miles of continuous class III and IV big water, through a beautiful remote canyon, it's a playboater's paradise. On our first day on the river, the mere sight of the waterfall below Upper Huacas rapid, cascading hundreds of feet down the canyon wall to the river made the whole trip worth it. The Pacuare offers some of the most beautiful and fun whitewater in the world—we can only hope that plans to build a dam that would submerge the entire run are thwarted.

In addition to paddling in Turrialba, we ran the Upper and Lower Sarapiquí, and the nearby ten-meter waterfall Pozo Azul. The Upper stands out as some of the best technical whitewater I've paddled in my life. Long, continuous and very technical class IV drops challenged us the whole run and left us wanting more at the take-

out. Running the waterfall was an unforgettable experience. We hiked our boats down into the canyon, and lowered them down to the water above Pozo Azul with our throwropes. We paused to observe how much larger it appeared while standing on the lip. After some significant mental preparation, all that was left to do was run it. Off the edge, a couple seconds of free fall and I hit the water. Before I knew it, we were all hoisting our boats back up on a rope to do it again.

We also spent time on the Pacific Coast catching some big air on the ocean waves at Mal Pais. On our last day at the beach, just before heading back to meet up with Nicole Mansfield '05, Allison Forbes '04, and Shannon McCarthy '04, we unexpectedly ran into our friend R. Scott Cushmann '03.



Together we returned to the same rivers Mike and I had run in our first few weeks in Costa Rica. After re-running the rivers, we traveled to Manuel Antonio on the Coast. In addition to surfing in the ocean there, we ran the Naranjo and General Rivers—a couple more fun play runs.

On occasion, usually when we were too tired and sore to paddle another consecutive day, we'd take a day off from the river to enjoy some of the other experiences Costa Rica had to offer. We were big fans of the Serpentario (Snake Place) outside of Turrialba. For a few dollars, the man we came to call Yo Yo introduces you to all his crazy poisonous snakes. (Those of you with at least a rudimentary knowledge of Spanish might be able to guess why he receives this nickname...he's not exactly modest about his accomplishments.) The impressive tour will make

you thoroughly afraid of the jungle. You haven't lived until you've seen the frog he brings out as the grand finale. Everybody talks about it, and you'll laugh when I say this, but that frog changed my life; it's just that cool. It's florescent colors look like they're from another world. Truly an incredible creature.

Our time in Costa Rica was an opportunity of a lifetime. We'd like to give special thanks to the Davis Kirby Adventure Fund and Ledyard Canoe Club for providing significant financial help and making the trip possible. If you have any questions about the trip please feel free to contact us. We'd be happy to throw in our two cents if you're thinking of a trip of your own.

Pura Vida!

Nate Monnig '05

Environmental Studies Division

The Environmental Studies Division of the DOC is working on building up momentum. This term we are focusing on energy use at Dartmouth and in the Upper Valley. We have Ecostews every other Tuesday at noon in the basement of Robinson. At our last one we learned about dams from Frank Magilligan, in preparation for a trip to the Wilder Dam. We are also helping to sponsor an Earth Week Celebration this year. The Earth Week Committee met bi-weekly to plan the week's events. Monitor our bulletin to get in on the action. Weekly ESD meetings are Thursdays at 9PM in the basement of Robo.



(Photo courtesy of Jacquelin Burnett '02)



mountain rides on a wooden truck bed with broad-brimmed hats, bright Quechua shawls, goats and sacks of hamsters are far from memory by that time. From there, the familiar McWorld unleashes what you had felt was missing, and washes clean your mind and sun-caked cheeks.

I sat next to an American on the bus weaving through gorges back to the sea, and down the coast to the capital. He was a Georgian who had been to the range over eight seasons, had explored the dusty *avenidas* of Huaraz when I was eleven. His last climb, a week earlier, had been a solo of Artesonraju, but had been aborted when he saw a mess of ripped clothing and person flipping about in the glacial wind. It was a solo accident. The climber lay at the base of the fifty-five degree slopes Page and I had raced and gasped up a month earlier, where we knew that the loose pickets we slid in every forty meters were merely for our psychological welfare. The Georgian

told me that it was a Spaniard he found—not a pretty sight, and that he had somehow fallen at least a few hundred meters. I asked his name. He pronounced “Raoul” with a Southern flatness, told me he was from Catalan. I momentarily forgot all of the moments of the past two months I thought were the beautiful ones. The golden memories and purple majesties of all of my escapades in the Cordillera Blanca, and every close encounter there froze like a nightmare at the waking moment. I didn’t ponder long whether I would have been lying out with him had I not missed our dinner appointment, or if I might have saved his family the sorrow of receiving him in a bag by having climbed with him.

Eighteen hours of the most unfamiliar abstract separated Lima from Seattle. There, the things in the exact places I had left them exuded an air of stability that threw me off. A day passed, the boredom crept out from beneath the bed I lay in, and with

off at the moment, anonymous, at new latitudes, with thick, black curls spilling onto the pillow next to me. Wearing my oddly fitting, deep blue silk shirt, strolling through the middle of a sun-washed street, the caramel beauty acted as if we were brother and sister, implored if I was hungry, and flipped her head as we passed one of the ubiquitous chalked menus. "*Quiero arrrrrooz langostino!*" she said, almost begging—rolling her tongue violently as an irresistible Latina can. We prospered in each other's company. Later, as my attention for her wavered, the fantasy caprices of swinger life after the climbs grew stale, and I tired of the taste of *Cuzqueñas* and the same songs. I had forgotten the promises I had made to myself, and she seemed to realize it as she slipped back out of my life. Without speaking, it was if she had concurred that our instant was just a flirt of time, an indulgence in the common pleasures. Those days came to an end, and I felt that I had to climb again, be with my life tangibly attached to something, or at least to be alone.

Later, as the weather repulsed more efforts, I dabbled in the distractions that were foreign to me, and I felt divorced from the mountains whose pictures I had put on my walls at Dartmouth—their peaks just above me, jutting through the jealous Amazon nimbuses. I spent the final, several days of my time in Peru appreciating the people I met, and went to Lima with a curious and beautiful student. And a miracle happened on the last day sitting on a bench in *barriochino*

with her—the fog cleared. The impenetrable gray curtain drew back to the port over elegantly rotting, yellow *iglesias* of Incan gold-plated interiors. I touched the lion's obsidian head above Pizarro's tomb, walked again past statues of Tupac Amaru and through squares named for Simon Bolivar. Winter's grasp was loosening on the city; gangs of filthy pigeons and the horns and motors echoing off of the walls in the cool mornings sung in tune with the sun's alien light.

In the catacombs I saw the skulls of generations of 17th century Spanish immigrants, and thought about the ancestors of a Catalonian alpinist I had sought named Raoul. As he was the only person in Huaraz willing to commit to climb peaks at that time, I had been to his hostel and asked at bars, but never had found him. I blew my chance and slept through an arranged dinner—a planning session for our climb. He had mentioned Artesonraju in an email, and I probably would have accompanied him in desperation for a parting summit. But I never found him, and never got another email after I missed our rendezvous.

The eight-hour bus ride to Lima seems like it should be the first, painful step of the return home, but it's not. The honeymoon is over as soon as your proud, jocular hostel proprietor realizes you're leaving, produces a bottle of his father-in-law's "home-made pisco" from behind the counter, takes you on a blurry night tour of every spit and sawdust affair in town, and forgets you in an alley. It's your last taste of country. The bumpy, hitched

Dartmouth Mountaineering Club

This year the DMC was up to the same old mischief, namely climbing, climbing, climbing.

New freshman made a strong showing in the fall of 2003. They are an adventurous, dedicated, and super-active group of climbers who have already contributed much to the club in terms of their fun presence and participation in trips, feeds, and club activities. During the fall Alana Hanks and Christine Balaz chaired, and took trips to Rumney and Pawtuckaway.



The winter, during which Robin Batha '06 and Bree Inglis '06 chaired, was a time of many beginner trips. Many freshman went on their first ice climbing trips to Holt's Ledge, Ascutney, and the Flume. Of particular note was that an overwhelming majority of the participants were girls, who all came back raving about their trips (as did the boys), and many of them started going out ice climbing on their own. Dartmouth hosted its annual indoor competition for Dartmouth undergrads. Nearly a hundred routes were put up by dedicated graduate students for the undergrads. It was a success, with James Joslin '05 and Christine Balaz '04 winning the gym rat categories. Those routes, in addition to some put up later by the undergrads, were used for the Dartmouth intercollegiate comp, which too was a success. Dartmouth climbers went to most of the

other intercollegiate comps, making a particularly strong showing at Middlebury, where they dominated and maintained possession of the coveted pink chalk bag given to the winner of the comp each year.

DMCers were also active outside of Dartmouth. During a three month trip to the Cordillera Blanca of the Peruvian Andes, Barry Hashimoto '06 and Page Kyle '02 climbed the Ferrari Route on Alpamayo (5947m), and the Direct Southwest Face of Artesonraju (6025m). Barry also soloed the Northwest Ridge of Tocclaraju (6034m) and climbed the Southwest Ridge of Chopicalqui (6345m). They gave a great slideshow upon their return, which was a great way to show less experienced aspiring mountaineers what a trip like that entails. This summer Will Morrison '05 and James Joslin '05 spent a week in Yosemite climbing in Tuolumne Meadows and the Valley. Also this summer, Victor McConnell '04, Tristan Perry '04 and Ben Graham '04 packed into Cirque of the Towers and climbed Wolf's Head in the Wind River Range in Wyoming. Nira Salant '03, Gabriel Martinez '99, Mike Pirozzi '00 and Cheryl Shannon '00 journeyed to Bishop over winter break for some good bouldering, as did Melina Marmarelis '07 and Robin Batha '06 on trips of their own.

Robin Batha

'06

DMC Co-Chair

More ways to have fun: Schlitz Fund

by Katey Blumenthal '06

Conceived in the spring of 2003 by Kate Huyett '05, the Wolfgang Schlitz Adventure Fund encourages undergraduate DOCers to plan and go on outdoor adventures. The Schlitz Committee meets once per term to review proposals and allot funds and gives preference to applicants who demonstrate attempts to accrue funding from other sources, particularly from the member clubs of the DOC.

The Schlitz Fund first sponsored a trip in the summer of 2003, partially funding an ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro by a group of Dartmouth '05s.

Anthony Bramante '06 and Rory Gawler '05 received a Schlitz Fund Grant in the fall of 2003 to spend two weeks in Norway ski touring from Lillehammer to the Rondane Mountains this past December. The following is an excerpt from their journal:



View from Astkyrkja (Photo: Rory Gawler '05)

December 12, 2003

"We awoke to a beautiful, crystal clear night. Seeking to make the best of every minute of precious daylight, we headed out from the hut an hour before sunrise. The mountain before us would be our first of the trek and we looked forward to the climb and the possibility of a view. This would be our fourth day out, and the first that held any promise of decent visibility. We began the climb, switch-backing up the mountain's ridge, fighting a bitter wind the entire way.

When we finally reached the summit of Astkyrkja, the sun broke through the horizon. An amazing dome of color towered over us. In the south, the sun's light bathed the world in fiery reds and deep burnt-oranges. The colors faded to yellow and then light blue directly above us before plunging into a sea of deep murky blues and purples punctuated by an occasional cloud and the bright, setting moon. And finally, in the north the white-capped mountains silently waited. A breathtaking rainbow of color stretched horizon to horizon as we plodded along underneath.."



The porch of Rondvassbu hut
(Photo: Rory Gawler '05)

Chilean pop hits after the busloads of young women enjoying a dry pisco sour, swinging to "Like a Prayer." The local *jovenes* in meager clothing stick together at the fringes, and the *campesinos* in the street outside peddle gum and cigarettes.

As we headed for 3:00 AM alpine starts, pumped the stove with our meaningless rituals, and stamped to keep our toes warm, the nagging valley lights on the horizons of glacier and slope were like oases separated by the expanse that marks the difference in our ways of life. Disparate vectors intersect in that little town when the streets are crowded; when they are empty at *siesta*, cool winds blow, and climbers wander alone through the *plazas*, are watched from windows, and followed by fearless children, season after season. After Tocllaraju, I was content to spend more time at plastic café tables, in the meager bookstores, speaking with foreigners, and in sight of the alluring women, bundled in knit, mountain sweaters against what I felt were tropical breezes.

Back in Huaraz after a high, but easy climb on Chopicalqui with Nick and a strong German, I combed the message boards around town for experienced partners for an attempt on Huandoy Norte, or on a peak in the Cordillera Huayhuash. All the posts advertised partners for trekking peaks, however. At the bars I was told that everyone was leaving for La Paz to climb, biking to Colombia, or drinking
Spring 2004

pisco to forget the dangerous clouds, which had been sitting on the summits every afternoon. Losing patience, my interest waned and I took off the blinders, weaving a daily circuit past the vendors, llamas, and bank lines in town. I caught *collectivos* to smaller towns, biked the switch-backed roads that were so frightening to drive down, climbed boulders in the hills, cooked plantains, and enjoyed the night. My sun-peeled face healed, and I forgot about the deep powder calf burn and the damp, bivouac sack mornings. Nick left for the South, but instinct forced me to stay behind to wait out the weather in what time remained.

The ease with which Sojai, a woman of the north Peruvian coast, and I, from the golden-gray Midwest slipped into each other's lives astonishes me, and as I lay in my bed, surrounded by white walls and the noise of Huaraz's street vendors below the window, I thought I saw the climax of my life in the hourglass. The strength of a thousand, cramponed steps flowed through me; I was alive, healthy, free, and well





of kamikaze alpinists who frequented the big ranges until the 1990s. It was a dramatic place for a sociological discussion on climbers from converging cultures, beneath a wind-stunted forest in the opaque, Andean twilight. I watched his thickly bespectacled eyes drift over my shoulder as he narrated his last climb—Artesonraju. Extending an arm to outline the distant, bony rock bands and hanging glaciers of the famous pyramid, I wondered then if I would know its slopes on our next excursion. I would—sooner than I had thought—waking at 20,000 feet inside her, gasping in a dark snow cave for our last ounces of water.

We had slogged up a kilometer of her impossibly steep powder under dark hail and high winds. We had blown through our turnaround time, and spent the night with neither stove nor food, packed into a hole we'd dug at the summit. Two days later, we hiked back to our place of failure, Alpamayo, and blitzed the Ferrari in the freeze of pre-morning, swinging our way up water ice and under drooping ice gargoyles. My pick broke in the bullet-hard ice of the initial pitches,

and clouds raced over its combed crest like fleeing ghosts.

An endless night in the steaming disco followed our return, and Page left Peru with sun-chapped lips and throbbing fingers. After recovering in Huaraz, I hopped in a taxi alone to a southern *quebrada* and slept a nervous night inside a groaning bergschrund. The following morning, I

soloed Tocclaraju, a pyramid perched in a whiteout, traversed an elegant backbone of granite to Urus, and descended to make my rendez-vous with Nick Taranto—a dazed New Yorker at a creaky hut that swelled with Italian and German travelers sipping *matté* in the thin air.

Rules of the Latin social game became an interesting study for me during my rest days. The chic *Limeñas*, I found, resent the rustically beautiful *Huarazinas*, with whom they must share space in a familiar *discoteca*, El Tambo. The latter group forms a nightly contingent at the old haunt, is naturally acclimatized, and spends the week in company of an international settlement of climbers and adventurers. The former languishes in the humid, coastal *garua* among ten million, and flees the Friday commotion for the heights of the Andes. After the sunny days end, busloads of men tired of the capital wade in black suits through sweaty cigarette haze and pounding

Fifty Miles to Go Before I Sleep

by Brett Carr '07

The morning was beautiful and cloudless but I couldn't see it. A light wind blew through the treetops but I couldn't hear it. I stopped and took a long drink of water from my Nalgene but I couldn't taste it. Sweat soaked every piece of clothing I had on but I couldn't smell it. My break over, I started hiking up again. I took a step and winced; I could feel. I could feel the quarter-sized blisters on both my feet. I could feel my twisted knee refusing to bend. I could feel fabric rubbing my body raw. I could feel every fiber of every muscle screaming at me to stop. I could feel the nausea that turned my entire world into a blurred vision of the next few feet of trail in front of me. I rested. Then, resolute, I took another step, and another, and another. I leaned forward, forcing myself uphill. I grabbed tree branches, literally pulling myself along. I couldn't stop. Not this close. Not after this long. Not here. The trail turned and suddenly opened up into tundra. I stopped. I moved my head to gaze upwards, and I smiled. Blood from my cracked lips trickled into my mouth but I couldn't feel it. I was there.

The summit of Mount Moosilauke is exactly fifty miles on the Appalachian Trail from Dartmouth College, and every fall, thirty students attempt to cover that distance in one long, excruciating push.

It's called the Fifty Miler, and this past fall I was lucky enough to win a lottery spot to go on the hike; fifty other people wanted to go, but there wasn't room. That's right, I was lucky. I was lucky to have the opportunity to turn myself into a stumbling, moaning, rancid shell of a man. As I charged up that last stretch to Moosilauke's pinnacle, I was beginning to understand why. When I took those last few steps to 4,802 feet, my senses came back. I walked straight to the highest point and stood there. It was as if my eyes opened for the first time. The valleys below me were glowing orange with fall colors, where birds chirped as they flew around and people lounged about, talking, eating, laughing. It was a good day to be alive. Barely visible as a small bump amidst the haze on the southern horizon was Smarts Mountain. At twenty-five miles away it was the halfway point on the hike. I looked east, down the slopes of the



The author, right, with his group on Moose Mountain (Photo: Jeff Bate '07)



mountain towards the Ravine Lodge. Just 3.6 downhill miles and I was done. I looked at my watch. It was 1:30.

Twenty-four hours earlier I had started out from the steps of Robinson Hall with two friends as a happy, healthy, pain-free college student. If I had only known. If I had only known that I would knock off the first nineteen miles in five and a half hours. If I had only known that Moosilauke would be the sixth mountain I would climb on the hike. Moose Mountain and Holt's Ledge I had done in the daylight, still fresh, still excited, and still running the downhills like an idiot. By the time I was on Smarts Mountain it was dark. The trail charged straight uphill and so did I. Many times I would enter a clearing and stop to gaze up at the night sky, the full moon farther across the sky each time. During those stops, though, my eyes always seemed to settle on the summit. It was so far away. It was so far above me. It didn't seem to be getting any closer. My pace between clearings became slower, my rest stops longer, and my morale lower. I was starting to feel those miles. At ten o'clock I struggled to the summit. I told myself I was halfway there. If only I had known that this was just the

beginning.

I descended Smarts with my strength waning and my knees buckling. At midnight, a short rest and some warm soup at a rest station at the twenty-ninth mile kept me standing. I began climbing Mount Cube. My new energy was quickly spent and I resumed my slow, painful push onward. I made a high step with my right leg and pushed up. My leg cramped.

I gritted my teeth as the pain contorted my face into something from a Picasso painting. A tear ran down my cheek. The cramp had locked my knee straight and I couldn't move it. I chugged a quart of Powerade on the spot and threw whatever Advil I had into my mouth. After maybe two minutes I grabbed my shin and with a roar that echoed off the surrounding granite bent my knee back. The cramp subsided and I trudged on. I made the summit at two in the morning. I barely even remember being there. If only I had known my brain was about to shut down.

The descent off Cube was up to that point the worse experience of my life, though the ascent of Moosilauke would soon take that title for itself. I was asleep on my feet and walking in a daze. The trunks of trees bent and oscillated like weak rubber. I saw nonexistent trail signs telling me I was almost finished. Rocks were dancing in the trail, moving out of the way and then back again just in time to trip me. I couldn't even bring my arms up to stop my falls. I just crashed to the ground. I was not in good shape, and I was only thirty-five miles in.

snow fortresses knows his name, and associates it with the greatest lines on *gratte-ciels* like the twin Chacarajus, Huandoys, Huascaráns, Alpamayo, Abasraju, and grand Santa Cruz.

The *Limeñas* swooned at the cantinas when his jubilant *arrieros* and friends related his most recent accomplishments. Their simple astonishment at a man able to climb the most grandiose entities of their world probably mattered little to him. The winter before, he had spent three weeks alone at 22,000 feet, observing his physiology, far from any human acknowledgment. Would he often step out of his tent on those nights and, watching the lights turn off in the Callejon de los Huaylas, wonder why he chose to place himself so often near the land of the dead? Would his life, his youth, and the collective memories of him on a distant continent mean anything to the *indigenes* who might find his strange remains, crumpled between those huge Andean *neve penitentes*? He gave proper goodbyes to them all, though, and saw Paris again. But that was 1978, and now the doctor lies somewhere unknown on Lhotse.

He had tried that year to link its summit with that of Everest and paid the Himalayan toll with his life. The lists of young and famous names written on the talus at base camps in that region are humbling warning to modern climbers. What life was left ahead of them when they perished in white monsoons, avalanches, and crevasses?

retreating from our first Alpamayo attempt. With the consolation of a near empty fuel canister, we hiked out a famous trekker's route, picking our way past the beautiful behemoths and the crumbling fortresses flanking their valleys in repose. The sights of Artesonraju, Rinrihirca, and Taulliraju—summitted only six times—stunned our labored lungs. These were Quechua names that the passing, local *arrieros* pronounced with nonchalant eloquence. I imitated their native tongue under my breath, memorizing the region. My only other memory of the trek is of encountering the embarrassing European ethic of leaving toilet paper and candy wrappers under and around every obvious rock bordering the trail. I barely greeted anyone except the hired Peruvians on the trail, clad in the common tire rubber sandals, clicking tongues at their clients' mules, giving kilometers to the next landmark.

On the way to the mosquito-ridden terraces of Vaqueria, the previous night's human encounters replayed, as do things that stick in the mind during a full day's hike. With a tepid, Peruvian beer at the base camp, I had watched the shaky, pixilated screen of a hand camera taken by the Greeks on Alpamayo; it showed them in the midst of magically steep, ethereal flutings. Page's eyes glazed over and his face expressed a restrained frustration. The defeat and exhausting descent hadn't affected me as strongly, and I spoke with an aging, muscular Japanese alpinist about the American influence on the bouldering generation of climbers in his country. He told me stories of his dead and retired friends, members of Japan's dwindling breed

My partner Page and I ended up

ikhenn . . . Yoh haff moch expedienz in beeg mown-tennz?"

Months later in France, I heard a tape recording of Albert Camus, and when he spoke of the gentle indifference of the natural universe, I thought of the monstrous, toppling summit cornices lashing out suddenly against the silence in which the eight had been climbing. My oxygen-starved thoughts at the Alpamayo base camp had been cached like a dream, and they pinged in response when I wrote about the absurdity of continuing in existence without "knowing." I had heard climbers speak of the weather, the mountains like their mistresses having a good or bad day, benevolent or cruel. The truth is that they are just indifferent. Your life will be crushed without mercy in the most ominous or innocent of places, by anything as small as a broken ankle where the air is thin or a hold that dislodges at an inopportune time.

Months before Peru, during a brainstorming session, a particular article on a different part of the world by Tim O'Neil captured my attention. Below a picture of his emaciated figure, his words were



"Patagonia will rock your world. It is not concerned with your hopes, goals, or loves. It offers sunshine and triumph with the same indifferent hand that slaps fear and humiliation into your face." It's great to be a winner in the mountains; nobody ever wants to feel what losing is really like. Winners are who climbers look up to—talents like Peter Croft, Mick Fowler, and Carlos Buhler.

Reinhold Messner, Renato Casarotto, and Alex Lowe were winners once, too.

Although faded under the tropical sun, the memory of another, Dr. Nicholas Jaeger is somewhat revered in that little Andean city, Huaraz. Ever since the summers when he would stroll down the Avenida Luzuriaga in a black suit to take his *desayuno*, people have admired what he was, and what he did there in his brief time. Under the white cloaks of the Huascarán and Ranrapalca, the educated and daring Frenchman would have stood out. He had a penchant for soloing hard, dangerous peaks with few visible weaknesses, or repeating difficult lines in the same manner. Nowadays, everyone who wants to climb in that tumbling and soaring enclave of exotic

Every time though, I picked myself up, brushed off the mud and dust, and hiked another hundred yards or so before falling again. At four in the morning I was thirty-nine miles into the hike and at the next rest station. I mumbled something incoherent to the people there and collapsed in a sleeping bag as my hiking partners continued on. I had been awake for twenty hours, and was sleepier than I was exhausted. An hour later, looking a lot like one of the undead to those around me, I rose, put my boots on, and left with another group. I spent the sunrise struggling over Mount Mist to reach forty-six miles and the last rest station before the lodge. If I had only known that the worst was yet to come.

The most pain I have ever experienced in my life was when I was hiking Moosilauke. Every system in my body was shutting down. I was no longer aware of my own actions. During a bathroom break a fellow fifty-miler, not much better off than I was, had to tell me that I was urinating on the trail. But when I saw that summit, something deep down clicked on. I was operating on pure adrenaline. I had no energy left. The descent was nothing less than a momentous charge. I was afraid to stop for fear of not being able to start again. I was running on the fumes of my reserves, and hitting empty would mean needing a rescue team. I stayed upright, and though the trail seemed to be endless I eventually stumbled onto the leach field at the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge. I raised my hands in victory and let loose a raspy yell. I

stopped moving. I laid out my sleeping bag and crashed. My body ached. My knee felt like someone had taken a hammer to it. So did my head. It was twenty-five and a half hours and 53.6 miles since I had set out. I had never felt such agony. If I had only known.

I still would have done it.

I had never felt such accomplishment or joy. That evening as I limped slowly around the lodge people parted in front of me as if I was carrying a staff and emerging from the sands of Egypt. They looked at me with pity, astonishment, and awe. I liked the awe. Sometime later, once everything but my knee had healed, a friend asked me the big question after I told my story.

“Why?”

I opened my mouth to begin the answer I thought I knew: for the glory, for the self-discovery, to push the limits of human capability, to bag six peaks, to hike under the night sky. These were all reasons I had considered and thought justified my actions. I had given those reasons before, and was consistently told I was crazy. So I paused this time. I thought about all the insane, suicidal adventures people



*The Lodge on Fall Weekend
(Photo: Will Morrison '05)*

do: kayaking waterfalls, skiing over cliffs, climbing 8,000-meter peaks without oxygen. Why do some people seem to have a lust for seeking out death so they can spit in its face, return alive, and do it again? What drives those to suffer as they do in seeking a seemingly arbitrary goal? I must admit, there is something just a little off about all these people, and I count

myself among them. Justification is meaningless to this group. They simply *do*.

I thought about my answer, and George Mallory, the climber last seen alive on Mount Everest in 1924 still climbing towards the top, came to mind. So I paraphrased his now famous three-word mantra:

“Well,” I finally said, smiling slightly, “because I could.”

Swayambu’s Shadow

Photo and poem by Arjun Heimsath

Oil lamps lit,
prayer wheels spun,
path trod round
and round Swayambunath stupa.

Incense burn
city smoke
then the view opens.

Swayambu’s shadow spreads
covers wheels and lamps,
pigeons and praying monks.

The shadow cools
throat-catching haze.

Monkeys scamper
below spinning wheels,
grab rice and squat.

Devotees walking praying walk-
ing,
in and out of shadow
eyes not lifting,
not seeing flags hung low.

Those long stairs up,
then winding down.
Look up

through Swayambu’s shad-



alpinist we had met on the walk in from Cashapampa. When I inquired about the rescue effort, I was informed, "By the time any rescue arrives, the situation will have resolved itself." Climbers drop like flies in these mountains. Two Swiss plummeted from Rasac in the southern Huayhuash. A Mexican asphyxiated in his sleep on Huascaran Sur. A young, Japanese climber slipped away a week earlier, probably somewhere near where I lay, sick from ascending too quickly.

I had seen earlier that day a well-built Israeli at my feet in the serenity and savagery that is a crevasse-slit glacier in the sun. He was just a hard piece of frozen meat in expensive, synthetic wrapping then. But perhaps two weeks earlier, as I sat safely in Seattle contemplating the risks I was about to undertake, he was breathing hot air into freezing shadows. In one of the flutings on Alpamayo's southwest face he was shouting the lexicon of alpinists to his girlfriend at the far end of the rope. On that face, the echoes disappear across a blue void, or are absorbed into the vapid, white belly of the mountain. A green blanket belonging to the Peruvian mountain police covered his body, but I could tell that his helmet was still in place. He was so tall that his plastic boots stuck out from the blanket's end, and his legs were frozen together. Surrounded, he reminded me of the dead dog that was laying in the street market gutter the day we arrived in Huaraz.

The Peruvians joked about heavy drinking the night before on the *pampas*, and sipped at *matté de coca*. Some Brits puffed Lucky Strikes and took photographs as we waited for our pulses and thoughts to decelerate. The Israeli was only one of eight climbers killed on the tragically beautiful face when a summit cornice decided to take all eight for a ride. I imagined the eight buried under tons of snow beneath their Mona Lisa, among the haphazardly strewn blocks of ice that one sees in alpine environments, or stuffed into the yawning bergschrund slashing across the pyramid's base. After the carnage had ended, the astonished strangers and friends at high camp who had been awaiting their day on the face would have combed the mess for any color, then hastily retreated to their mules in the rocky valley below, and to Huaraz.

A white-bearded Slovenian up the slope in a red snow bib, regarding me through his crusty, black glacier goggles delivered me from my thoughts. He looked ancient for a climber and said in gnarled English, "Yoh err Amer-



Mementos From the Tropics

by Barry Hashimoto '06

Nighttime in Lima is full of sound and air, the smell of roasting chickens, covers of "Hotel California," Latin machismo, black jeans, black market watches, lost Australian hippies, and lost climbers. On July 1, Page Kyle, my summer climbing partner knocked on the door of my *hostal*, which was, in fact just the private apartment of a family augmenting their income. After a check at the peephole, my hostess let in the odd-looking transplant, whose spindly frame and Czech complexion stood out among the Incan populous on the streets. With a Eurasian heritage and quickly darkening features, I was familiar enough to many Peruvians that they would mistake me for a local in the weeks to come. Page and I had arrived separately, but wandered together for a day in the former capital of the Spanish Americas, marveling at the filth on the walls, the mysterious *garua* fog that veils the unregulated sprawl, and the circus of noise, most of all. The living orchestra of Japanese car horns and motorbikes screaming and slipping from road to sidewalk shocked our northern sensibilities. The hordes of chatting, young *Limeños* and the buskers in the charged streets threw us into a quiet shock, and we hastened to the crumbling shell of the bus station where my reservations were found to be conveniently non-existent. I collapsed on my red duffel and breathed in the developing world; beaten Toyota vans and lacquered Mercedes cycled in an endless procession. The bus line was called Cruz del Sur, although we were going north, as close

as we could come to the Andean sun and her secret city of towering ice. Page made the new arrangements in rusty *castillano*, and the indifferent functionary placed us on the overnight bus to Huaraz, Peru's ramshackle climbing hub. We passed by the ongoing lives of ten million people, and stole away from the bloated, former seat of the rotted Spanish legacy when we'd just barely felt its heaving pulse.

I am in a wretchedly cramped tent at the most photogenic spot in the worl—the Alpmayo high camp—among an international contingent of alpinists. Concerns other than impending commitment and glory at hand occupy my mind—chilly toes, which won't rewarm, ice that has formed between the laces of my "waterproof leather" climbing boots, and the altitude of 5300 meters affecting me like a fever of 103. I can hear the British outside planning a rescue operation for two, visible alpinists on Quitaraju, descending slowly at dusk with no bivouac gear. Meanwhile, the pain in my head is making me delirious.

Nobody is climbing Alpmayo right now, except the crazy Greeks who marched back from her as Page and I labored to melt water. Nobody is climbing Alpmayo because she shocked the community of climbers at camp by taking eight people to their graves. "*Si on tombe, c'est la chute; si on chute, c'est la tombe*" remarked a bereted

A Day in the Woods With Alcott Smith

by Matt Kemp '04

October 25, 2003

1028 hours—Six of us pile out of Vox Van 103; Alcott emerges from his dusty red Subaru, sporting a camouflage fleece shirt and cherry walking stick. Before we even enter the woods he launches into a discussion of continental weather patterns and the resultant abundance of gray autumn days in New England. With Alcott, there is always a story—an overturned log, the gnarled shape of a hemlock trunk, the putrid stench of fisher scat, the bitterness of red oak acorns—they all reveal something about what goes on in the woods. Sometimes the story was written last night, sometimes last winter. Sometimes Alcott even invokes the evolutionary history of an organism to flesh out his tale. There is no limit to what the woods divulge to those who can, as Alcott says, turn down their intellect and trust their senses.

1045—We pass through a fine grove of aspens to arrive at a beaver pond. A group of wood ducks, mallards, and hooded mergansers, accompanied by a lone great blue heron, flees at our arrival. Though an intact lodge sits out in the water, Alcott decides this pond is currently unoccupied—the dam is penetrated by a substantial trickle of water (beavers wouldn't let that happen), and most of the good food sources are too far away for a beaver's comfort. We do find evidence of another aquatic mammal, though: fresh scat on the dam filled with claws

and exoskeleton bits from crayfish. Otter droppings, he announces, easily identified by their contents and rank smell (characteristic of all mustelids, or members of the weasel family).

1102—We move deeper in to the woods and pause for a brief discourse on gray birch identification (heavily branched, and the bark doesn't peel) and the effects of the white pine weevil on tree morphology. Alcott can age the pines with a glance and tell exactly what year the trees were attacked by the weevil—the typical whorl of branches coming off the main trunk gives way to a splitting of the trunk into a number of vertical stems.

1112—Black bear signs. Alcott points out the scratches about five feet up on the bark of a big red pine (the scent of which is apparently irresistible to the bears) and pulls out a few strands of bear hair lodged in crevices in the bark. The vertical and diagonal marks are from claws, the horizontal from teeth.

1135—We come upon a stand of birch saplings hacked in half, the dead branches splayed on the ground stripped of leaves. Some of the cuts appear relatively fresh—there are still wood chips lying on the ground. Others are faded with age, and all of these are farther from the ground, at about eye level. Two different herbivores of disparate stature? Look again, says Alcott, and we soon determine that the

smooth tooth marks are identical on all of the severed limbs. They're all from a beaver, he explains, but for these older cuts, he had a bit of a boost...a three-foot snowpack. The higher branches were gnawed last winter .

1141—Alcott takes off in a new direction. We have to half-trot to keep up, he strides so quickly through the forest. How he ever spots the wonderful minutia of animal signs that he does is astounding—I have enough trouble managing my own two feet at the pace he bushwhacks. The next stop is abrupt, and with a slight grin he challenges us to find signs of three different mammals, all within ten feet of where we're standing. We find one, a small overturned log, but are at a loss for interpretation. Black bear, digging for insects, he tells us. And on top of the log are a few husks from a pine cone—a red squirrel dined there. A few feet away, he shows us scrapes on the bark of a hemlock sapling (the result of deer browsing last winter), completing the lesson. We press on.

1209—Another stop with a variety of subject matter. I get the feeling you could plop Alcott down at any random point in the forest and he could talk for hours about what he sees without moving a step. Here, he points out a grid-like pattern of holes on a hemlock trunk. A few of us actually know this one—a yellow-bellied sapsucker foraging site. He also passes a fallen oak branch around for us to inspect. There's a hole in the middle, and the branch appears to have been eaten out from the inside. Exactly so, says Alcott, this is the handiwork of the "oak pruner" longhorn beetle larva,

that complete part of its development inside oak branches. We find more signs of bear activity nearby as well: a hole in the ground where one tried to unearth a yellowjacket nest.

1235—We surprise a trio of white-tailed deer browsing in a low marshy area. The forest is filled with animals—as the past two hours with Alcott attest—yet our encounters with them are exceedingly rare (deer and squirrels are the only live mammals we see all day). I wonder if this is why the art of tracking is so appealing: it lets us glimpse a world we rarely witness firsthand. We're voyeurs, really, striving for a little taste of that which is foreign and alluring.

1242—Discussion of the differences between the bark of white oak and red oak. You should be able to identify every tree at eye level, says Alcott. Apparently looking at leaves makes things too easy. Someone finds scat composed entirely of berries and we are surprised to learn that it belongs to a coyote. The guys just love berries, he tells us. Who knew?

1259—Lunch break, dominated by a discussion of Vermont's population of timber rattlesnakes. Alcott taught himself not only to find the snakes (which are phenomenally rare in the state) but also how to handle them bare-handed. A red-tailed hawk glides overhead.

1349—We resume hiking. The next item of business: porcupines. A series of gnarled, almost banzai-like hemlocks prompts the discussion.

Gallery

Left: Mt. McKinley, Denali National Park (Photo: Libby Hadzima '06) Right: (Photo: Arjun Heimsath) Bottom: A Chubber on the summit of Mt. Cube during the Thanksgiving cabin-hopping trip (Photo: Pamela Collins '07)



Dartmouth Organic Farm

This year at the Dartmouth Organic Farm has been marked by adventurous ideas and experiments with new directions for the farm. The farm continues to be a living laboratory for various student interests as well as just a great place to be. In the sunny fields by the river, in the woods above the farm, and in the greenhouse and farmhouse, students have found a space to make their own.

Many writers have found a place for solitude and reflection out at the farm. Springtime at the farm was very literary and the farm hosted Stonefence Review meetings and readings by authors such as Terry Osborne. Summer saw the arrival of new faces at the farm: three Jacob sheep who kept us company as we enjoyed the fields. Early mornings were often very busy in the fields as students harvested fresh vegetables for Collis, for farm-stand, and for the local food shelter, the Haven. Professors Jack Shepherd and Ross Virginia brought students out to the farm as part of their Environmental Studies classes. The summer arts festival saw the installation of several sculptural works in the farm field, a dance workshop, and the creation of a makeshift shelter for the Jacob Sheep. White Mountain Oysters entertained a large crowd that feasted on fine home cooking as the sun set over the river.

The end of summer marked the transition into harvest season. While the student farmers still

have the intention of making animals a permanent part of the farm landscape, we had to say goodbye to our hardy and spirited Jacob sheep at the end of the summer. Chickens, anyone? This fall and winter the farm has been host to other student projects, such as an engineering project involving the monitoring of electricity usage at the farmhouse, a compost toilet project, an ecological and cultural study of Basket Ash trees, and an exploration of Urban Gardening. The pumpkin harvest was especially fine this year and jack-o-lanterns lit our barn dance in October. In December, Scott Stokoe, our esteemed farm manager, served as an advisor to the Tucker Cross-Cultural Education and Service trip to Nicaragua that promoted sustainable practices.

Winter at the farm means good food and good company and... sledding. Sugar season is coming soon and we are looking forward to tapping the Maple stand at the beginning of spring term. We are also looking forward to the planting of a new berry orchard and another fine season in the fields. Join us for Farm meetings every Tuesday at 1PM in the basement of Robo. Come find us three miles north of Hanover on Route 10. Blitz "Dartmouth Organic Farm" for rides and to find out how to get involved, or check the Organic Farm blitz bulletin. Or just show up! Visitors are always more than welcome. We hope to see you out here!

Jacquelin Burnett

'02

The trees were, Alcott says, chewed by porcupines at various stages of growth. Not really surprising, at least to him—a large rock outcropping nearby would provide ideal shelter for the rodents. Porcupines apparently became extremely abundant in the decades after the '20s when fishers, one of their only predators, were trapped out, though their population has dwindled somewhat in past years (while fishers are doing quite well). Alcott tells us of a time when a young, football-sized porcupine mistook him for a tree and climbed all the way up his dungarees to perch on his shoulder. Porcupines are not renowned among forest animals for their intelligence or observational prowess.

1359—We pass a dead snag that has been excavated by a pileated woodpecker hunting for carpenter ants. The behemoth of the woodpecker family, pileateds leave gaping rectangular holes that penetrate halfway through the trunk; fresh foraging sites have impressive piles of woodchips strewn about the ground underneath the tree.

1425—The topic turns to plants and fungi. Alcott unearths some brown stalks of Indian pipe, which no longer retain their distinctive curved shape (they turn their flowerheads up at the end of the growing season for pollination purposes). Puffballs are out in force today—little rounded fruiting bodies of fungi, chock full of delicious little spores that fly off in a misty beige cloud at the slightest nudge. Alcott tells tales of gigantic soccer-ball sized puffballs that could fill his living room

with brown reproductive smoke. They are purportedly good eating, in case anyone was wondering.

1500—More plants, this time a hophornbeam (also known as ironwood). It's the strongest, densest wood in the forest—would give our crack forestry team a real run for its money. We also find a fine batch of "rock tripe," green and black lettuce-like leaves of lichen coating the vertical face of a large boulder.

Throughout the hike, latin names are flowing freely from Alcott's mouth, along with organic chemistry designations for the compounds that promote growth in white pines or give wintergreen its distinctive flavor or help buck moths from freezing to death, not to mention technical physiological terms for aspects of ruminant digestion and chipmunk hibernation (he used to be a veterinarian).

1538—The sunlight is dwindling. We begin making our way back to the van. Alcott takes the path of least resistance, the way animals would. Sometimes, he says, I just close my eyes and feel my way out of the woods—you just have to let your feet do the thinking.

1601—Time for one more lesson on beaver ecology. We pass another abandoned pond and notice a number of large hemlocks with the lowest three feet of bark completely stripped. Alcott says that indicates the beavers have literally eaten themselves out of house and home—the hemlock bark is generally the last to go after all other food sources have been used up. We

head downstream from the pond and encounter a series of smaller dams that hold back just enough water to give a beaver comfortable protection from predation. Beavers never like foraging more than fifty meters away from water. To this end, they also dig little canals out from their ponds into the forest, several of which we presently discover. Alcott says once while he was standing over one of these canals a particularly brazen beaver swam right between his legs. They are fearless in the water. Amazingly, considering how prevalent beaver ponds seem to be in the area today, they only returned to the Northeast in the 1960s after being extirpated in the 1800s.

1625—We return to the vehicles, humbled and exhilarated by our day's ramble. As an active chubber, I like to think I spend a fair amount of time in the woods, and as a biology major, I

like to think I know a bit about how things out there work. Really, neither is very true. Spending time with Alcott is a lesson in how little I still know. More importantly, perhaps, it is a lesson in *how* to acquire that knowledge, and a very plain message about *why* we spend time in the woods, which offer infinite curiosities for the patient and quiet observer. Peak-bagging, kayaking, snowboarding, and ice-climbing certainly have their place and tender their own rewards, but all too often we neglect to slow down and genuinely explore the environment that gives us such inherent joy. Anyone who has spent a day in the woods with him is, I'm confident, quite thankful that Alcott embraced this value fifty years ago and is so generous in sharing the magic of the woods with anyone willing to listen to his or her natural senses.

Walking the Dusty Road

by Arjun Heimsath

Driving the washboard dirt-road
rattles every bone, every screw
for days across the Tibetan Plateau.

Emerging from sapphire skies:
yak-skins,
pointy-boots,
fur-hat
pilgrim
walking the dusty road.

My head turns, I ponder
the enviable task.
could I leave work behind,
walk the dusty road to Lhasa:

khora at the Jokhand my only goal.

I try his walk
test his shuffle
No air, I gasp, grab a Coke,
sit
while the pilgrim strides onward,
aquiline nose forward.

smiles his red face
spins his prayer wheel:

one hand then the next.

Always ahead
despite the dust
despite the rutted road.

For the two weeks at Winslow for Freshman Trips Climbing Croo '03 teaching freshman the basics of climbing, climbing brought me once again back into myself, gave me the space and perspective in which to reorder my life, and reminded me again where my priorities must lie: in appreciating simply being, breathing in and out, moving with quiet grace through the world, working hard when and where possible, but always being grateful just to be alive and able to participate in the beauties and workings of the world.

And so now I must wonder, what is it about climbing that makes it such a saving grace? Is it the movement, or as John calls it, the dance over the rock? Is it feeling the rough textures at your fingertips, the bloody scrapes, and the dirt under your fingernails? Is it the good-natured company of other climb-

ers? Is it being so intimately involved in the elements of the natural world? Is it simply hiking and wandering from place to place, appreciating the pressureless peace and time out of busy schedules to enter another world in which time is measured in millennia? Is it the touch of reality that reminds us we are living beings, that our intellect is not a thing separate from our bodies or spirits?

In climbing, all three come together...the mind must be hyper aware, problem solving and alert. The body moves in response to the mind. The spirit rejoices in the movement, in the fresh air, in the sunlight and broad vistas. You are truly whole, living completely in the present, and worries drift away.



(Photo courtesy of Melina Marmarelis '07)

was one of the first snowfalls of winter term, '04. We sat inside watching the snow stir into eddies along side the drifts. He made some comment about its beauty; I said: "I suppose it's easy to take for granted." He replied, simply: "I'm trying not to." An Idaho native and skier, snow was as common to him as water to a fish. And yet still it did not cease to amaze him.

I've often wished I were a skier, and could appreciate the snow more. Instead, I turned to thinking of how many times climbing has in fact, often quite literally, saved me by virtue of being able to wake me up each time without fail.

My Dartmouth climbing career has been inconsistent at best. I left campus often to travel. Months, years even, would go by without moving over the solid surface of rock. My fingertips would find themselves tracing along the stone walls of buildings just to remember the rough textures. Driving back to Dartmouth after my travels and seeing the granite road-cuts along the highway has always been my signal that I am coming home, back to the rock, and to me it is a beautiful sight. Over the years, my saving graces have been few and precious. Climbing has been one of the most sure, the most true.

Wandering red rock country and spending days sweating and sunning and working out at the dry desert cliffs is enough to bring calm into my chaos, and I am renewed. The same is true for all the days someone has pulled me out of living too much inside my own head and gotten me out into the sun moving over the rock of Rumney, the Gunks, or the Etna boulders.

over the years had sat in this cave, contemplating. I thought of the deer John and I had startled as we followed fresh tracks bounding away from us through the snow. I thought of our hike in under the white canopy, the snow deep in the forest interior not yet blown or melted off the branches. I thought of the highways and busy traffic patterns of wildlife we saw tracked in the snow, so much more than I had imagined judging by the seemingly silent, empty forest of fall. I thought of my own life, and its direction. I looked around the cave and thought of the lines and forms, of the ice sculptures flowing down its sides, and of the animals who had sought refuge there within. I thought of the surface of the rock outside, and the routes waiting to be climbed come spring. But mostly I thought of nothing and simply breathed in and out. Sometimes, it is a gift to simply *be*, to co-exist, for once, in the world equal among the rest of creation.

Someone once said: "There are but a few people truly awake in the world, and they live in a state of constant amazement." How I wish I lived in that state! Another friend once startled me awake with a simple statement. It

Lost in Batholith Country

by Victor McConnell '04

Paul leaned forward and prodded the fire with a long stick. The flames leapt up and he squinted his eyes against the growing heat and brightness. Suds from his beer clung to his thick mustache and gleamed in the firelight. He stood and looked over his left shoulder to the north at the Mojave Desert behind him. The dark, chaotic branches of the Joshua trees dotted the flat land beneath the white moon. Pale, rounded domes of boulders cast shadows among the trees. Paul pointed at something just out of my line of sight.

"You see that?"

I shook my head and stayed seated. I figured it was just another coyote.

"What is it?" Tristan asked, setting his beer on the boulder and standing up beside Paul.

"Mountain lion. Hadn't seen one out here in years."

Tristan looked off in the direction Paul was pointing. He seemed unconvinced.

"I see something moving," he said. "You sure, Paul?"

"Oh yeah. Big one. You can see it good once your night vision kicks in." He paused and leaned forward, concentrating. "Ain't that something. It's a female too." Paul kept

watching it, holding up one hand to block the fire. I stood up to look for myself and could see only a vague, gray, coyote-like form moving in the distance. Tristan sat back down but Paul remained standing, watching and muttering in a low voice about the lion. I looked for a while more, but saw nothing else. When Paul asked, though, I told him that I saw it – and that it was, indeed, something.

A near-vertical, fifteen foot boulder sat just outside the fire ring. Hours earlier, when the fire had been at its hottest, there was just enough light to make out small dishes and nubbins spaced meagerly across the boulder's face. Paul had helped us finish off our bottle of whiskey and he sat and watched as we put on our climbing shoes and began looking for a route up the steep side of the boulder. After several minutes of scraping and sliding off, Tristan discovered a small side pull to pull up close to the top with. He desperately pawed the slopers above and his feet skated off as he flopped half-

way onto the boulder's top. I stood under him, ready to prevent his rolling backwards into the fire in case he should fall. One more lunge and he was up. Once atop, he turned



and faced the fire with his legs draping over the sloping edge.

“Dude! That problem is all kinds of cool! C’mon!”

I looked over my shoulder at Paul. He was staring into the fire, seemingly unaware of our antics. I turned back to the rock and placed my left foot high on a slight indentation. The warmth of the fire pressed against my back as I fingered the starting hand holds. Joshua Tree’s sharp quartz monzonite cut into my finger tips, which were already raw and worn from five days of climbing. I pulled up and found myself pressed against the rock, balancing on my one foothold and pinching hard on a couple sharp crystals. I smeared my right foot on the wall and tried to keep my balance as I reached up for the sloping right hand. I latched it, and as my left foot came off I lunged desperately upward with my left hand. I couldn’t find the side pull, and I clawed for something to pull up on as I belly flopped the sloping top out. Tristan was doubled over in laughter beside me, waiting to see if I’d pitch off and tumble down to the ground. Luckily, my fingers closed onto a crimper hidden in the shadows, and I pulled up and sat on top.

From our perch, we looked down at the fire below. Paul looked up at us, raised his beer, smiled, and said, “Cool.” I smiled back and wondered how many times he’d sat in that spot and watched as kids half his age scaled this very boulder.

That boulder that we sat on was once part of the gigantic batholith that encompassed the hundreds of square miles that now make up Joshua Tree National Park. Over the course of millions of years, erosion and weather wore away the ground and broke up the rock, causing the infinite number of piles that are currently scattered across the desert. It was these piles, some as much as four hundred feet high, that drew us to cross the country and climb at Joshua Tree.

The trees themselves spring up everywhere that the rock is absent. They only grow in one place on the planet and that is here, on the plains of the Mojave Desert. No two look the same, and they routinely live hundreds of years, with the park’s oldest supposedly approaching a thousand. They were named in the 1850s by Mormon pioneers who thought the trees’ branches resembled the upstretched arms of Joshua, leading them to the promised land. Whenever I walked among them, I wondered how many had stood 150 years before to witness



boulders.

To watch Bobby climb is to see an exercise in persistence, patience and determination. He will practice the same single move hundreds of times over, knowing that the next time, he just might get it. He knows that once he gets it, he will then get it again and again, be able to link it to the next move and start trying another move. In this way he is able to complete the entire boulder problem from beginning to end. It might take a day, a week, a month, years. There is no point of frustration, of "enough is enough." Just, "one more time," again and again.

Those who have sacrificed much to dedicate their lives to the art, not just the sport, of climbing, spending days often alone or with friends, or on barren windswept summits, or up on towering cliffs, often carry an eccentric air that speaks of wisdom. To know Bobby, with his quiet, unassuming wisdom is almost to have met an angel. To know John Joline is to have a glimpse, a doorway, into the sacred, the profound. Both are welcoming and more than willing to bring another into their world, if only for a brief time, in which wandering is the goal and not the destination, in which the forest is magic, and the rocks are friends waiting to be visited.

Without Bobby or John to guide me, I would easily have been lost in that vast tract of land. More importantly, I never would have found or stopped to appreciate such awesome monolithic creations as those rocks dubbed "The Cosmic Egg" or "The Devonian Fish." I never would have found that



rock balancing on three smaller rocks, as if on a tripod, or been able to lie in the space there between the giant boulder and the ground, staring up at its flat underbelly just above my nose. I never would have seen the way that ice forms twisting sculptures as it runs down the angled surfaces of the rough rocks, branching and joining like rivers of clear crystal. An ice so smooth, it is truly one of the most beautiful and wonderful things I have ever seen and touched. And I never would have come across this cave, or had the chance to sit in it for a moment of silence on a still quiet winter day.

The floor of the cave was flat, almost as if carved by human hands, with just enough room to sit up. Our breath froze in the air, the cold crept into our bones, warmed though we'd been from our hike in, and still we did not care to stir from our spot. John and I sat in perfect silence and stillness, without pressure or plan, as the minutes extended on. We sat in quiet respectful awe, once again amazed at the creation around us, at the privilege of being in such a unique position, so close and yet so far from our common experience on campus.

I thought of how many others

Climbing Will Save All Our Souls

by Brenda Whitney '02

"Climb the mountains, and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine into trees, while cares drop off like autumn leaves."

-John Muir

"Enjoy yourselves, keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to your body, the body active and alive, and I promise you this much: I promise you this one sweet victory over your enemies, over those desk-bound people with their hearts in a safe deposit box and their eyes hypnotized by desk calculators. I promise you this: You will outlive the bastards."

-Edward Abbey

"Climbing will save all our souls." So spoke my best friend, calling me from her sun-drenched work station studying bat-biology in Bishop, CA. Another Dartmouth '02, we had met while climbing years ago, during our freshman fall, through DMC climbing trips to Rumney, New Hampshire, and on afternoons out at campus' own Bartlett Tower. Over the years and distances we have remained close; similar in spirit, she always knew what I most needed to hear.

I envied her, outside climbing hot desert rock in December,

stuck as I was in frozen New Hampshire. Just a few days later I found myself sitting under a rock in a small snow-filled cave, thinking again of her words. My companion, John Joline '70, Dartmouth's Climbing Gym manager, PE instructor, and overall rock climbing guru, had once again offered me a quick escape from the daily grind to lead me into the winter wonderland of the Etna forest, a large, undeveloped tract of land laying between the industrial complexes of Greensboro Road and the Centerra Park business district along Route 120. To me, the woods and ridgelines of this land, largely unexplored and untouched, are magical and inspiring. Our two to five hour jaunts always leave me feeling refreshed and renewed.

The rock we sat under was among the hundreds dotting the landscape, some solitary, some in clusters. Affectionately known as "Bobby's Boulders," they were found and developed for climbing by Robert Hardage '99,

with the help of John Joline and current Dartmouth climbers. The fall of '03 saw many excursions into Etna, not only to climb, but often just to wander among the rocks, to make a pilgrimage to the woods and visit our favorite

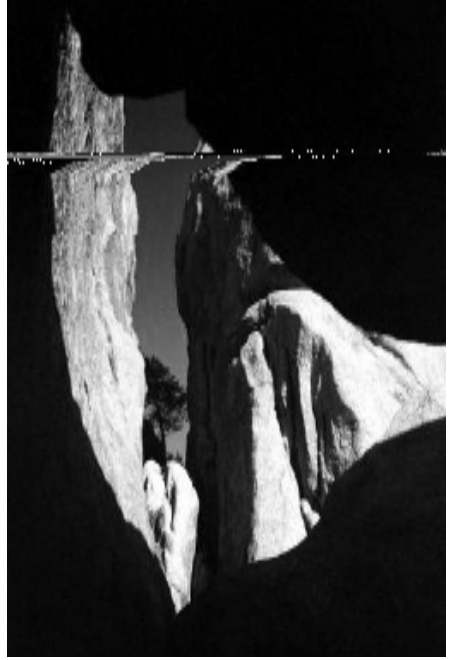


those pioneers passing through and giving them names.

Paul hadn't been there quite as long as the trees or the boulders, but, for our ten day stay, he was as much a part of the landscape as anything. He'd been living in J-Tree since 1982. After Vietnam, he'd spent a few years wandering, working, surfing, and sailing before "settling" out here amongst the rocks in the desert. The day we arrived he was sitting on a picnic table, soaking in the warm March sun. His skin was dark, creased and weathered from twenty years in the Mojave. He greeted us as though we were expected, getting up from his spot on the picnic table—where he had been sitting for who knows how long—and shaking each of our hands before showing us the best spots to pitch our tents. The engine of the van we'd driven in sounded bad, sputtering shakily when we tried to move it after putting the tents up. Paul came over, popped the hood and diagnosed and fixed it within an hour. And when our tent stakes pulled out, Paul brought over the flattest pounding rock around and helped us hammer them back in.

The sky was clear, but the wind was blowing strong, and it was after fixing the van that he first told me how this weather brought him back to his days on the ocean so many years ago. I listened to his stories as I unloaded my gear.

I figured Paul had been climbing out here for all these years, but when I started asking him about the best routes and boulders he replied in an odd, evasive, nonsensical fashion. It turned out that Paul didn't climb at all. I wondered what, exactly, he was



doing out there—and why.

After dinner that first night, we invited Paul to join the ten of us around the fire for a smoke. Everyone was relaxed, enjoying their first night out and feeling friendly towards Paul and one another. Our group dynamics were unique; there were four couples and Jan (pronounced "yawn") and me. And Jan, too, was getting married in a few months, though his bride-to-be was unable to make the trip. So I stood out a little from the group as the only "single" and one of the two who weren't retiring to a tent with their significant other at the close of each day.

So it was natural that I leaned up against the fireside boulder beside Paul that night. In fact, it would become

a ritual for me to stay out each night as everyone else headed, one by one, to their tents. And so that first night marked the beginning of Paul's and my nightly conversations.

Paul was on my left, and Tristan and his girlfriend, Hannah, sat on the ground to my right. Hannah was trying to block the wind, cupping her hands in front of Tristan's chest as he struggled to roll a joint against the breeze that seeped through her fingers. Paul was calm and quiet, and when Tristan passed the joint to me I sucked in deeply, twice, then handed it over to Paul. He took it, mumbling, "Thanks, brother," and raised it up to his lips and pulled in, then exhaled. I watched the smoke drift out his mouth and nostrils and fade up into the night sky. I asked him what he'd been doing out here for so long.

"Nothing, you know. Different things. And I haven't just been here. I come and go, you know. I like it here, though, like the people, just being out. It's a good place."

I nodded. Hannah and Tristan were listening too, and as Paul kept talking I looked across the fire at the rest of the group. Everyone was relaxed, smiling, and I could feel the haze descending over us. It was a pleasant haze; one built on warmth, fatigue, companionship, and the

mellowing effects of the good herb. The landscape around us only enhanced it, and everyone was silent, seeming to know, understand, and feel the same things that I did.

The joint had come around again and so I turned and handed it to Paul. As he inhaled, the tip lit up bright and red. Then he started talking again, rambling about his past, his family in Indiana, and something about the sheriff being out to get him and running him out of town. Occasionally he spoke of the war and the many other injustices he'd been subjected to. I couldn't really hear all of his words through the haze, and I wasn't sure if it was his stories or my mind that wasn't making sense.

The next morning marked the beginning of our fifth day of climbing, and everyone except Tristan and I was preparing to go to Palm Springs for a day off. They left and we spent our day on the Lost Horse Wall. We climbed until late afternoon and sunset found us wandering about, searching for the path back to camp.

We finally made it to camp a half-hour after nightfall. I wasn't sure what we'd eat for dinner, but, as we walked up, Paul called out and



I looked up at those stars whose reflection I had just ruined. Then I began to paddle forward, very slowly, for I was in no hurry. I looked from the sky to the water and back and suddenly realized how obscure the distinction between the two had become. One was the mirror image of the other, and it truly felt as though I were floating through space. I felt an amazing calm come over me at this realization, and I was sad when eventually I reached

the shore.

My canoe beached and upturned, my pike tied off for the night, I headed to bed. I dozed off almost immediately, still in a half-conscious trance. Before I finally slept I thought of being on the water at night, feeling an absolute immersion in the stars above, the water below, and the hills and forests around me, the only reminder of my physical existence the periodic sound of my paddle gently going in and out

Finding Gold

by Brenda Whitney '02

Gold, as found
in water wet leaves
covering concrete
steps and pathways
on a rained out night
of fireplace sofa side
books and teas

Step outside, gold all underfoot,
remember...

The forests, the rough granite
at fingertips;
black moss wet, and, brittle dry;
the acres of fire red and
warm gold
so far below.

The Raven above, calling
herself mountain rock, cawing:
Yes, I have survived.

The rocks come cry;
the valley flows rivers towards
the goal we seek.

And we, too, are granite now,
carrying the tests of time,
weathered down no small amount,
gullies and canyons and craters and
rivers
crying:
Yes, I have survived.
Crying.

Reading here, in the leaves at last,
ancient memories, dialogues of fu-
ture.

The morning we greeted the sun,
holding up our gold, in our minds
eye,
chanting
thankyou thankyou thankyou...
thankyou...
thankyou thankyou thankyou...
thankyou..
thanka thanka thankyou- thank you.
thanka thanka thankyou- thank you.
thankyou thankyou thankyou...

A Voyageur at Night

by Matthew Richardson '07

I sat in my canoe and watched the sun set, my fishing line dangling loosely in the water before me. As the twilight came, I knew the mosquitoes would be especially bad on land until darkness fell, so I decided to stay out on the lake until then. I reeled in my line for the final time, unbaited it, and tied the hook off on the pole.

I lay down in the bottom of the boat, beneath the thwarts, using my fleece as a pillow, and stared at the sky as the darkness slowly fell and the faintest hint of starlight began to

shine. I could hear the insects along the shoreline, and I was thankful for being far enough out to be safe from them. I dozed off, my mind totally blank, my body warmly fatigued by a day of hard paddling.

A loon call awoke me, an eerie but somehow comforting sound. It was totally dark now, or as dark as it could get. My eyes slowly grew accustomed to the dim glow that still emanated from the northwest horizon. I had no idea what time it actually was—I never keep a watch when I paddle—but I knew it had to be late, probably past

11, and definitely time for bed. I sat up, turned around and tugged on my stringer. I felt the weight of my catches for the day: two pike, neither longer than a foot, but enough for a good meal the next day. Good, they hadn't managed to swim away. I felt around until I found my paddle, which I set in my

lap as I took my bearings to find my campsite in the dark.

I could see well enough the rock outcropping across the lake where I had pitched camp that afternoon. I usually chose rocks because they are un-

protected from the wind, and therefore the mosquitoes usually aren't as bad. There were no lights on the lake and no unnatural sounds. As far as I knew I was the only human being for miles around. No moon was out, and even in the hazy glow in the north still made by the sun, the stars shone brightly. As I shifted to put my paddle in the water I noticed them reflected perfectly on its motionless surface. I felt a little sad disrupting the perfect calm, but I did so with as little movement and noise as possible.

As I aligned my boat toward camp,



asked if we wanted some spaghetti. "Sure," I answered, and we set down our packs and were soon huddled at the entrance to Paul's tent, warming our hands around his small stove and waiting for the sauce to finish heating. Paul asked what we'd done that day and we told him. He then told us that it would be a full moon that night and that the coyotes would be out.

As Paul lumped the spaghetti into my bowl, I realized that we were crossing the midpoint of the trip. I wondered if another day would be as good as the one I'd just had. I didn't know that it wasn't done yet, that over the next several hours I'd climb a new boulder and search for mountain lions in the moonlight.

Hours later, before the lion, Tristan

and I were sitting on top of the boulder we'd just scaled. The whiskey was warm in my stomach as I looked down at Paul beside the fire, then up at the clear night sky. The moon was just coming up over the mountains in the east and was beginning to outshine any stars near the horizon.

"Almost got lost out there today, man," Tristan said, as he too looked out towards the moon. "Would have been pretty cool. Maybe we will tomorrow. You know, get lost."

"Yeah," I said, thinking that, perhaps, we already had.

Editor's Note: The trip recounted in this article was unaffiliated with the DOC. The DOC does not endorse or condone any of the actions of the participants.

(Photo: Barry Hashimoto '06)

Cabins and Trails

by Kelly Swartz '05

There is a trail that goes north into the woods just behind the Hanover Food Co-op. It takes seven minutes to walk there from the Green and about thirty minutes to get to a lookout point from the sign at the trailhead. Plain and simple. You want to take a walk in the woods? Follow former Hanover resident Bill Brynger's lead.

The Velvet Rocks trail is part of the Appalachian Trail, a 2,160-mile footpath that runs from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. Cabin and Trail, the hiking and trail-work division of the Dartmouth Outing Club, maintains seventy miles of the trail from Vermont to Mount Moosilauke near Warren, New Hampshire. Trail maintenance is necessary to not just keep the trail passable for hikers but also to protect the environment from water damage and erosion. It's also a great way to get outside, whether one's plodding through snow or leaf piles.

Student volunteers on Cabin and Trail work trips build water bars to divert water from the trail in order to prevent erosion, clear fallen trees from the corridor, build wooden bridges over rising streams, and maintain trail signs and blazes. This work is necessary because the Appalachian Trail—especially in areas like Hanover where the trail is extremely accessible to

community members and students for everyday use—is heavily traveled.

Despite all the snow we had in December, in January Velvet Rocks was passable in tennis shoes. Foot traffic packed the snow and snowshoes were completely unnecessary. There is a three-sided shelter less than a mile up

the trail meant to accommodate hikers and campers year-round. This shelter and the privy nearby were built and are maintained by Dartmouth students. Lauren Hendrickson '04 organized the building of a new Velvet Rocks privy just last spring. I hiked to

the site with the privy's wooden seat around my neck, and others brought up more wood, tools, stain and aluminum roofing.

This summer I hiked up Moose Mountain with other members of Cabin and Trail and helped fell trees in order to build a new Appalachian Trail shelter. Moose Mountain is a small mountain about ten miles north of Hanover. The trail is very similar to the Velvet Rocks section and also popular with community members and any student willing to make the trek on bike or by trail from Hanover. Rory Gawler '05 has been in charge of the Moose Mountain Shelter project since last summer. He worked everyday with Ben Honig '05 and other students during the interim before Summer





it was over, and my hands gratefully responded. I flicked my wrist back; the hook was set. The battle had begun.

My adversary fought bravely, but it was over quickly. I risked snapping the line in getting it in quickly, for I never liked playing a fish to exhaustion. I brought it in to the shallows. Fortunately, the hook was caught just on the inside edge of the jawbone, and the fly protruded enough so that I could easily pinch it with thumb and forefinger. Without even having to touch the fish, I gave a sharp tug, and because the barb had been clipped, the hook slid smoothly out.

Not yet realizing that its surgery was over, the fish remained motionless, eyeing me. It was a cutthroat—a Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout—named for the two bright reddish-orange streaks running down the “throat” beneath the lower jaw and gills. Cutthroats were one of the few fish species native to Montana. They were tremendous fighters, and it was with a sense of privilege and deep respect that I looked into the prehistoric eyes of this warrior, and realized I’d done battle with a species that

had inhabited this lake many centuries before I was born. I hoped they would continue to inhabit it many centuries after I was gone.

Watching it as it watched me, I thought the species must be one of the most beautiful under the Big Sky. Its colorful body incorporated much of the spectrum—from pink belly and yellow gills, to pale white sides, to dark green back. Black dots speckled it from head to tail.

And, in the sunlight, the colors changed and shifted—each individual scale flashing and fading as the gills expanded, contracted, and the tail swayed, almost imperceptibly, working with the extended pectoral fins to keep its body balanced and upright. The tiny, meticulous movements reminded me of watching a red-tailed hawk glide into the wind, using the horizontal rudder of its tail in tandem with just the very, finger-like tips of its wing-feathers, making only the smallest, most necessary adjustments, while the rest of its body remained rigid, soaring.

Eventually, the fish realized it was free, and with a quick and powerful flick of its tail was gone, disappearing back into the deep to tell its friends about its adventure, and no doubt feeling robbed of midday snack. I checked my fly. One or two frazzled threads, but overall really no worse for the wear. No new nicks marked my leader. A successful catch and release.

rod and line, my eyes to the fly. And as I stared, it seemed to grow bigger. Minute details became more and more distinct. Soon the fly filled my entire field of vision—a giant, synthetic bug, afloat upon a puddle. I existed solely for that bundle of thread and steel, for each individual hair—and for the explosion I hoped the collected whole would produce.

The heat grew heavy, heavier. The still air pressed down on my shoulders, squeezed my back and chest, making it difficult to breathe. The dead quiet of the lake, and the forest, crept into my head, inside my mind, asking it to let go—of fishing, of waiting, of consciousness. I blinked, and my head nodded once. My eyelids tried to resist, fought valiantly, began to succumb. I nodded again. The fly became blurry, seemed to retreat, seemed to be very, very far away. The wrist holding my rod relaxed, dropped, snapped awake, began to drop again. The world stood still.

The sun yawned.

It was with almost closed eyes that I sensed, more than saw, the flash. It came, faintly, from the very edge of the shadowy deep. Immediately, I was awake. My heart leapt to my throat and began working its way up, threatening to pump my head right off. There it was! The monster emerged from the darkness of its lair, aiming for its prey, rising quickly—quickly, but so, so slowly! Every instinct told me to pull—pull now!—to jerk the line, to heave back with all my might. From a life of stream fishing, that reaction—flash, take, pull!—was ingrained into the very core of my being. In a stream, you never saw the fish coming, never

saw it until the fly was already in its mouth, so the quick reflex was necessary. But this was a lake; the fish was still rising, I had to wait until it had the fly, until I could see it had taken the fly. It was hard, but in my mind, amidst wailing sirens and bursting, blinding fireworks, the quiet voice of patience prevailed, overcame my trembling fingers and forearms, and I waited, and the fish rose.

Hours passed, days, the fish would never get there! It would see me, and spook. It would get bored. A million things would distract it. It would die of old age.

But the beast rose. And now it was too close, it had to be now, I had to pull now. The voice of patience was faltering, fading. Steady! It gasped, on its last breath. Hold! Hold! But the fish had arrived.

The lake blew up.

And out of the shattering, sparkling eruption, a fish as big as the universe came completely out of the water and froze—a great, gaping, wide-eyed jewel, outlined against an endless sky. I could see the fly in its lower jaw. It brandished its tail once, twice, then fell back into the water with a splash that soaked Heaven itself.

There comes a moment after every strike, when the brain has comprehended that a fish is on the end of your line, but the message has not yet traveled down your body, through your arms, to your hands. While in reality this process lasts only a fraction of a second, psychologically, of course, it lasts an eternity. As ready as I was, I still experienced this moment of surreal paralysis, when action had to be taken, but I could do nothing. But then

Term felling trees and stripping bark. In helping, I learned how to swing an ax, though I'm still pretty pathetic, and tasted fresh split wood that perspired with sap that was still running.

The work on the shelter continued into the fall. Two Freshman DOC Trips worked on the structure and the privy, also clearing a new trail to the shelter and readying the foundation for laying logs. *Alumni Magazine* did a story about the students working on the project and photographed Gawler and company. The group looked stunning in Carhart overalls, holding axes and showing sap-stained faces.

One of Rory's goals from the beginning was to construct the shelter using only hand tools. He never hauled a chainsaw up the mountain or used any energy other than manpower. It sometimes took more than nine people to maneuver one cross-hauler in order to carry a clean log to the roped-off site, yet the bulk of the work was completed before winter. Some days in the summer more than fifteen students volunteered to work on the shelter. Thanks to student help and initiative, construction progressed quickly and Rory plans on completing the shelter this spring. The old shelter on Moose Mountain was in very poor condition, but because of student interest in trailwork, despite academic pressure and often undesirable outdoor conditions, it will soon be replaced.

Members of Cabin and Trail have been maintaining trails and shelters within the Upper Valley for ninety-five years. Fred Harris '11 founded the DOC in 1909 and quickly began blazing trails in the surrounding woods for cross-country skiing and winter sports. The trails maintained by the DOC existed before the idea for the Appalachian Trail was conceived and organized and will hopefully continue to provide a simple and lasting way to experience the outdoors—both for the students doing the trailwork and for those who decide to explore the path heading north from Hanover.



Excerpts From “Big Salmon Creek”

by Zack Strong '05

The scent of pine trees and horses drifted into my dreams. Nearby, the noise of the River began filling the sleepy emptiness behind my eyes. It was a familiar sound—muttered conversation between rock and water. They talked quietly this morning—no arguing rapids here; not even the spirited debate of riffles. The water around this bend was smooth. But it moved quickly, and it whispered to the rocks as it slid by. It seemed to whisper to me as well, urging me awake, to get up, to move on. Always, move on.

I felt a breeze move across my face—cold air following the current downstream. With closed mouth I inhaled deeply, and the sharp sting high in my nostrils brought warm tears to my closed eyes. I let the breath back out slowly, and lay still, listening.

On the far shore, a horse whinnied. For a second, the echo haunted the still woods where it was hobbled. From a high branch above camp, a single bird chirped. Then all was still, again.

I opened my eyes. That always came last. Once your eyes are open, you stop learning. You're just reacting. Through clouds of breath, I stared up at the deep purple of the dawning sky. A few stars were still visible. Planets, too—there was Venus, and was that Saturn? Jupiter, maybe. I shut my eyes again and waited for the rest of me to come to life.

We were camped on the shore of the South Fork of the Flathead River, in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness. There were more than a dozen of

us—wranglers, guides, clients. Me. It was the largest party I'd ever camped with. It felt almost silly—so many of us packed together on this little gravel bar in the middle of a universe of wilderness. But, I thought, looking back up at the few scattered dots still barely twinkling in the lightening sky, people aren't like stars, and they aren't like planets either. They like to clump, to touch, to crowd. Then they can't figure out why they're so damn uncomfortable. Maybe they weren't uncomfortable, I reminded myself. Maybe that was just me.

I found the turnoff, followed the trail, and twenty minutes later the trees fell away and a great blue plain opened up before me. Big Salmon Lake. A few yards to my left, it emptied into a narrow stream, which wound between shadowy banks, and quickly disappeared into the mystery of the forest. Big Salmon Creek, I thought. Today, I will fish Big Salmon Creek. But I would warm up a bit first, and this lake would be a good place to start.

I got out my box of flies, unwound the rubber band that held it shut, and opened the aluminum casing. It was only about the size of a pack of cards, maybe the depth of two, but to me, it was like opening a treasure chest. Three or four dozen neatly organized

flies greeted my loving eyes, and I savored a moment's indecisiveness. So many choices, and in these wild waters, probably all of them good. At last I pulled out a Royal Wulff—a personal favorite—and held it up to the sun. I could see this wasn't its first dance—both wings were mangled and some of the tail hairs were starting to molt—and I knew the old veteran must have served me well many times before. And today, I thought, he would serve me well again, for beneath the beat-up appearance, the black and red thread still glittered, and their precise wraps still clung tightly to the shaft of the hook, holding the forward tufts of hair—deer? elk?—sturdily in place. I touched the point, turned my finger over, and nodded at the small bead of blood. The barb, I noticed, I had clipped long ago. My soldier was ready. I wanted to salute him before sending him out on this next, and possibly last—always, possibly last—mission. Instead I paid him the highest tribute I could think of. "If I was a fish," I whispered, "I would eat you."

Threading the rod and tying on my fly was a matter of practiced seconds. Then, crawling on hands and knees, I moved out of the brush to the very edge of the water. Kneeling, I glanced around, considering my options. Even this close to the lake, the trees rose all around and above, eliminating any back

cast. It would have to be a sidearm cast—and low, as dangerous snag-hungry branches overhung the water on either side. I paid out some line, letting it fall in white loops onto the muddy gravel at my knees. I pinched some mud, rubbed it onto the fly, and rinsed it, getting rid of the human smell. Then, rod in my right, line in my left, I flicked horizontally once, twice, and the fly shot up and out over the lake, missing the reaching branches, and landing peacefully on the glassy surface, about fifteen feet out.

A minute passed. Another. It was hot, even here in the shade. A single drop of sweat tickled partway down my cheek, lingered, tormented. But I dared not risk a hand to reach up and wipe it away. The window of opportunity, if it came, would last only a split second, and then it would be gone. I doubted if I would get a second chance. So my hands remained glued to the

