

Woodsmoke

A photograph of a kayaker paddling down a narrow, tree-lined waterway. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, reflecting the surrounding dense green forest. The kayaker is in the center of the frame, wearing a red life vest and using a yellow paddle. The trees on both sides are tall and lush, creating a natural tunnel effect. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

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**Special thanks to ASE Thomas '91
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Front Cover:

Kayaking in Abel Tasman National
Park, New Zealand, Dec. 2005
(photo: Esther Perman '07)

Back Cover:

Skiers at Mount Saint Anne, Quebec.
(photo: Anders Wood)

From the DOC President:

I hiked Moosilauke. Yes, I also worked on crew at the lodge, but any off hours were spent hiking the peak we watched from the crew porch. I'd run down ridge trail at dusk to get back to do dishes, or do my morning chores early so that I'd have enough time to stop and eat wild raspberries at far trailhead of Tunnelbrook. I learned trails- where the mossy rock under the canopy is on Hurricane and where the wind will blow helium balloons on Mount Jim. No maps needed, just a nalgene and a few hours alone on the mountain. Moosilauke is my place of dreams and imagination, my space for solitude.

In Woodsmoke, Dartmouth men and women share their own stories of the wilderness, whether on Moosilauke, or during their rambles 'round the girdled earth.' The words and photographs in these pages are their record of those often too-fleeting journeys in the out-of-doors, in the land that surrounds us.

Ada Graham '08
DOC President



Taking Back Mt. Cadillac

Victoria Allen '06

Last weekend, I went to Acadia National Park. Traveling with 2 Dartmouth friends, it was a trip to enjoy this area that is so close "yet so far" from Dartmouth before classes began. I knew in the back of my mind, though, that I had a greater purpose in going to Acadia. At the tender age of 10 years, I ventured to Acadia with my classic, all-girls, Maine summer camp. We were of group of about 12 young ladies who had been told that on this day, we would go on a hike. We camped the night before (I think), and the following day we hiked Mt. Cadillac, the summit of which is famous for being the first place to see sunrise on the East Coast.

I hated it. Hiking is hard. 10-year-olds are not good at group dynamics and don't recognize when others need to rest

and when the group pace is too fast, even when the girl with whom I was sharing a little backpack carried the water we had brought. I remember getting up to a clearing immersed in fog and being so excited we had reached the top! Only to discover that there was "only a little bit more" that dredged on for as long as the first bit had. When we finally did reach said summit, I discovered there was a road we could have driven up. I was overwhelmed with frustration, and have a lesser memory of the spectacular views of the harbor and the beautiful green hills reaching down to the ocean. I officially hated hiking.

But on a foggy day just over 11 years later, I had a secret mission of retribution and retaliation. Over the past 3 years at Dartmouth, I have slowly but surely turned from a hiking-hater to an embracer of the hiking

experience. For me, it's not about covering the most miles or peak bagging, it's about spending three hours on the summit of Moosilauke on a sunny afternoon in August, taking new people up to Gile Mountain for the views from the fire-tower, or even just walking to a first lookout, or along a stream bed. I had a bone to pick with Mount Cadillac. I had a need to hike that mountain--



Cadillac Mountain at Sunrise (photo: Brendan Willis '07)



View from Mt. Cadillac (photo: Victoria Allen '06)

and like it!

We got up at 4 am to complete “the ultimate sunrike.” Sunrike stands for sunrise plus hike. It requires getting up at an unpleasant hour of the morning and being on a mountain in view of the sun when it peaks over the horizon and exhibits many brilliant colors throughout the sky (thankfully it does not require being on the summit for sunrise). Now, I’m not a big fan of these hikes, but since Cadillac is the first place to see sunrise, we deemed this “the sunrike of all sunrikes” and therefore absolutely essential--unless it was pouring rain in the morning (as it had done the 2 days prior). You see, when we arrived the first day, there was so much fog at Acadia that we weren’t even sure there were actually mountains in the park. Unfortunately, there was no pouring rain in the morning and it was only misty when we woke up oh-so-early. We began our hike in the dark, struggling

to find the trail-head but eventually walking at a rapid pace that surprised us all. Not long after we reached the “false summit” (that had annoyed me so much when I was a camper), the sun became visible over the ocean and through the clouds. A blazing pink ball, we repeatedly paused to take in the view. At

some points I thought to myself “wow, this would be a huge pain in the ass if I were 10 and not very fond of hiking.” Slowly but surely we climbed up to the summit and found the notorious parking lot at 1,500 ft. There were 2 cars, and a group that had biked up the road, both relishing in this sunrise above the fog.

After soaking up the view some more, we continued along to the North Ridge and made our way down, rounding out more than 6 miles by 9 am. We all were ready for a nap by the end, though surprised that this hike actually wasn’t that hard. On the one hand--I agreed. My muscles weren’t tired, I didn’t sweat a lot, and only drank a portion of my water. But I know that there is a lot more to that mountain--there’s more for me than just a trail to hike. Like fighting siblings that have finally grown up, that mountain and I have finally learned to get along. 🐿️

Kearsage North

A Sonnet

‘Twas Kearsarge North, the mountain we would climb,
 Our prospect was the summit to attain –
 Yet reason must have left us, likewise rhyme:
 The prior day had known a hurricane.
 In muddy guise the morphèd earth had run
 Along the mountainside and down the trail –
 This earth, tamed not by hiking boot or sun,
 Did shift and slide, to hide within the vale.
 To be betrayed by surreptitious earth:
 This fate awaited ev’ry hiker’s shoe,
 But hike we did – regardless of the worth
 These travels had – as hardy hikers do.

Though ‘twas a journey not without demand,
 We chose upon the mountaintop to stand.

Emily Winkler '08



Beaver Brook (photo: Anders Wood)

The Apache Warrior

Laura Case '06

Sarah and I froze mid-step as we descended towards the pillars of pocketed stone, startled by panicked hoof-beats and the swift cracking of dense undergrowth, closer, closer. My heart raced like the dark, nightmarish predator I imagined flying towards me, shining claws extended, yellow eyes penetrating my petrified being. Instead, a deer tore past, mere inches away. Grant, the shaggy orange and white hunting dog accompanying us on our day of climbing at these hidden outcroppings, shot after it.

I had been on edge all morning. The night before, in the ramshackle kitchen of this far-flung Mexican ranch, the wild-haired owner, Donna, had told us ghost stories about her land, her many-thousand acre spread of golden fields, rolling hills, river, and rock. I could now sense the heaviness of native history

in each blade of grass, each twisting tree-branch, each cleaved boulder. The past appeared to be winning its tug-of-war against the present; an eerie mist of ancient spiritualism engulfed my rational mind.

I had not signed on for a voodoo-world challenge to my overfilled head of Euclidean book learning. It was my sophomore-

year winter break from college and I was there to climb whatever routes Donna had to offer.

Sarah had met Donna through her mother's ex-boyfriend, an old-time climber. Proud, strong, and knife-edge bright, Donna is a mountain guide with a PhD in biochemistry. She and her husband Bob had purchased the ranch about six years before, hoping to transform it into a model of sustainable living. They have succeeded in many respects: they raise and butcher their own livestock, harvest vegetables, make their own cheese, develop their own climbing, and build using adobe bricks baked on the premises. Sixteen miles from a two-store town, the place is geographically remote, yet isolated neither from the criminal encroachment of nearby pot-growers nor from the turgid currents of its rich



Chile (photo: Alex Kehl '07)

Apache history.

Standing around a small, paint-peeled table under two bare bulbs, sipping shot-glass sized margaritas, Sarah and I listened to Donna's wild tales, tales of the frightening intersection of the physical and spiritual realms. Outside, stars streamed from the ink-black void of night. The cows mooed restlessly. The dogs crunched on chicken bones. Wide-eyed, Donna told us about Jesse, her late son, merely an infant when he died of carbon monoxide poisoning. After the tragic accident, a ghost began to visit Donna nightly in her sleep, a menacing man with long black hair and deep black eyes. He threatened to harm her three other children. Acutely frightened, she consulted her husband's medicine man; without having heard the haunting details, the visionary explained that the man in her nightmares was an Apache warrior who had been killed thousands of years earlier in a battle on her land. His piercing anger sprouted from a painful inability to escape this world.

A few weeks after that jarring meeting, Donna's five-year-old son, tow-headed Colin, approached her and told her, cryptically, that everything would be O.K.

What? Her blood cooled.

He won't hurt you, Colin responded innocently.

Who? she asked, voice quavering.

The man with the long black hair in the other room, Colin explained simply, failing to grasp the heft of his words. Aside from the medicine man, Donna had told no one.

Upon hearing the retelling of this exchange, I curled into myself, afraid of the wilderness of private horror and ancient anger impinging upon our small pocket of kitchen humanity. Unstoppable

and unmovable, as if in a trance, Donna continued to pull these stories out of the recent past, her words shrouded in mystery.

Several cold hours curled by before Sarah and I were finally able to break away from these tales and retreat to our sleeping bags. We shivered silently within our own personal darkneses. The night was no longer the night, and the prospect of dreaming assumed a sinister aspect; my mind and its potential wanderings danced madly outside my grasp. It was over an hour before I stopped resisting, stopped fixating on the sound of the dogs gnawing on the bones, loud and hollow in the spectral Mexican stillness. Sleep overtook me eventually, mercifully empty of dreams.

I tried to expunge it all from my mind, tried to keep out the white noise as I climbed the next morning, dancing through the delicate sequence of Thai Dinner, a beautiful line up the center of one of the limestone behemoths. Once I clipped the anchors, however, and once Sarah lowered me to the ground, the fear returned with the force of the deer that had darted by, terrified, mere hours before. At that moment, Grant returned, bathed in blood.

The red darkened to black, and the dog's eyes, glistening in the cool aftermath of his bloodlust, sank into themselves. The Apache ghost gazed out at us from those deep pools of noir.

We packed quickly and hurried back to the ranch, on the way encountering a skull staring out from beneath a perfectly balanced boulder. I quickened my pace, frightened by the realization that he was omnipresent, this demon of history, this wraith of the landscape, this phantom dancing in the interstice of past and present, the now and the nevermore. 🐾

Ursus

Jean Polfus '06

I wake filled with a strange premonition. I have just spent the night in a cabin in central New Hampshire with a group of friends. As we pack up and walk along the path up to the road I feel a heightened awareness to the sounds of insects and birds. I offer to drive the van back to school. The day has begun clammy and grey, with the first hints of spring sprouting up along the side of the road. As I turn onto 25C, just west of Warren, I feel as though the edge of something rough and powerful is chafing my awareness. Not unlike the prickly sensation of static before a lightning storm, it causes all my hairs to stand on end. I begin glancing down every side road and through the fog I catch glimpses of big boulders in the woods. I struggle with the sensation that I am fumbling to filter a familiar song out of static. I slow down. Driving slower and slower my passengers urge me to hurry; we need to get back to class. But I can't be rushed. I'm looking for a bear.



The first time I saw a black bear my sister was in the sink. I was only three years old, but I have a distinct memory of the incident. Next to the kitchen were two full length glass doors that allowed me a clear view into the back yard. Uninterested in my sister's cleanliness, I gazed out into woods; my face and hands pressed against the glass. In the haze of my childhood memory I can see the imposing black shape of the bear contrasting with the shimmering orange of fallen pine needles. Just past my new green swing set, the bear stood within the shadow of a stand of red pines. Even

now I can feel her gaze, a glance over her shoulder, and a sense of wilderness. I was awed and grateful that the bear had come to visit our house. Ingrained into my memory are the sounds of Claire cooing to herself in the sink while my parents and I watched the bear amble away.

Growing up bears were my protectors. I slept under a quilt that was covered in black bears. My mother, an artist, had spent hours sewing the lifelike felt bears onto the flannel fabric. When she finished she realized they weren't the happy teddy bears under which most children slept. Each bear stalked its separate square cell. Some were detailed portraits of bears' faces while others outlined full body profiles. Fearing that her blanket would scare me, I was told that the fearsome blackie bears on my quilt would be my guards. My very own black bear clan was created to protect me. I used to imagine my bear companions prowling around my room at night, keeping the monsters away. Fear was replaced by warmth.

For Halloween, I became a black bear. An old black hooded sweatshirt was transformed into my fur. Two small round ears were sewn to the top of the hood. My nose was painted black and surrounded with a light milky tan circle. Whiskered dots dabbled across my cheeks. I was a cub, and I loved playing the part. Crawling around on the floor I grunted and growled, pretending I was Smoky the Bear, a-sniffing and a-snuffing and a-smelling the air. Claire and I often imagined our golden retriever, Birch, was our mommy bear and we were her formidable cubs. During our play, our perceptions of human and animal

became intertwined. As children we were radically open to the voice of the natural world.

In the woods across the road from our house, we discovered our own voices. My language became thick with new vocabulary. White oak, red pine, sugar maple, paper birch and poplar. Blueberry, lupine, trailing arbutus, trillium and columbine. Wisconsin's mixed deciduous forest was my second home. I swung on young birch saplings that grew up along the old trails, and nibbled on wintergreen whenever the bright red berries caught my eye. I thrived on the subtle suggestions of natural relationships. Dark black scat filled with little seeds meant that a bear had discovered the unripe blackber-



*Suspension Bridge in the Second College Grant
(photo: Elena Severinghaus '09)*

ries under the powerlines. The number of acorns during the fall could predict how

many squirrels would be at our feeder in the winter. But a more memorable experience convinced me I was capable of communicating with bears.

On one particular walk in late autumn, Claire dropped one of her mittens in the woods. When she realized she had lost her favorite mitten she was not easily consoled, and so, when the mitten showed up the next day on our front door she was ecstatic. And so was I. For the mitten had not just magically appeared alone, though it seemed that magic had played a part, because with the mitten was a note. Signed by "Mrs. Blackie Bear" and accompanied by a dark black paw print, the note became the absolute proof that bears could talk to me. It was better than my letters from Santa. Claire and I brought the note to school for show and tell, and were so committed to our faith in Mrs. Blackie Bear that we scoffed at the other kids who said it was a fake. The next weekend my whole family went into the woods and left a special present of honey on a stump to thank our friend and wish her a happy hibernation.

Bears were signs. When my parents had to make the decision to put Birch to sleep due to her escalating arthritis, we were all comforted by the appearance of a bear running across the road on our way to the vet. To us, a bear sighting foretold good things. Since our interactions with bears were rare, each was a special occasion with special connotations. Ambling flat-footed, with the hind legs slightly longer than the front legs, bears would magically shuffle through our lives. We once saw five bears in one ten mile stretch of highway in British Columbia. When we found bushes and bushes of ripe blackberries at our camp-



*A moose visits the East Wheelock Cluster,
September 2005 (photo: Paul Magyar '09)*

site that evening, we were not surprised. In this way I was taught to watch for and listen for delicate connections. These associations lie low and solve questions long before the actual answer springs to mind. Below my analytical lists of flora and fauna was a deeper and more spiritual connection with the environment that made understanding and predicting natural occurrences possible.

When I moved to New Hampshire, I discovered boreal coniferous forests filled with a different assortment of trees. I came across ancient beech trees that had escaped beech bark disease. Many of these giants were covered in old scars, some of which must have been established when I was only three years old. The long rough marks pock-marking the smooth silver bark created a

written history. But I was no longer the naive girl who believed that black bears wrote in cursive. I learned that the bears depended on the mature beech trees' annual crop of beech nuts to tide them over the long winter hibernation. Because so many other animals also depended on this nutritious food source, the bears have learned to climb the largest trees and eat the nuts just before they ripened and fell to the ground, becoming easily accessed by mice and deer.

When my parents and sister came to visit the mountains, I took them to see the bear scarred beech tree. I explained the natural history but I also let them feel the magic of the bark, the intimate connection between hand print and paw print. I could feel a mysterious pulse close to the bark. Spreading my hands

across the cool wood, I imagined a thick shaggy body melding with my own. With my fingers fully extended I could barely touch all five fresh scratches created by the massive set of claws. I hugged the tree and looked up. I was five years old and wanted to be a cub again. How easy it would be to jump up the tree if my fingers could find purchase in in the vertical wood. Above I could sit in a strong notch and pull the surrounding branches towards me, eating my full of fresh beech nuts.



On the road, the mist grows thicker as we enter the river valley. I try to shake my irrational prediction of a bear sighting from my mind. I remind myself that the chances of seeing a bear today are just as good as any other day. But the five year old within me persistently nudges my consciousness. She reads the notes, follows the signs and believes with every

part of her soul that she can talk to bears. The repercussions of my long association with bears influence me. I drive more slowly still.

Then, suddenly, there she is. A swift and formidable shadow loping across the road only a hundred feet in front of me. I slow to a stop. We all strain to see through the twisted trees on the left-hand side of the road. The bear stands motionless. She is staring at me with a transfixed gaze. An apparition and a testimony of a deeper place within myself. Then as suddenly as she appeared, she vanishes. My spine tingles with the loss. I don't remember her moving. It was as though the woods simply closed in and obstructed my view. The premonition I had sensed is replaced by the same awestruck wonder that I felt for the bear framed within my green swing set. I roll down the glass and let the breeze in. As I give a little gas to the van the sign on the next road came into view. Bear Camp Road. ↻



*Sign on Wall
(photo: Jenny Strakovsky'09)*

The White Silence

May-June 2005

Barry Hashimoto '06

The door opens and I find myself studying the shape of a young woman. She catches my eye – brunette, tall, and attractive. She notices the three of us gathered in her older brother's room, and speaks casually. I can't help but stare at her, the sister of my college friend. She knows my name, but I don't know hers. A soft rain dampens the windows. The huge trees of a lush Washington, D.C. suburb drip in a mid-spring shower. It's warm.

Days flash past in the capital. I think of the slow mornings, the long moments under the sheets before class at 11:15. We laugh like kids, swinging on the iron sculpture behind the museum on the first, hot spring moon. I forget your face in the dark. Remember the breezes and the sunsets, clouds bursting over Dartmouth Hall. I meet a new girl at Georgetown. She disappears, one day, and doesn't return my calls. The memories go away. The South Face of Denali swims six thousand feet in a storm across an ocean of continent. I lie awake in the dark, watching the ceiling. In the silence, something explodes.

The young girl shuts the door behind her. My friends say goodbye. Ledyard Bridge gives way to the New Jersey Turnpike, then the Appalachian

Parkway. I drive through night and day. I rest and climb at the Red River Gorge, meeting friends at Miguel's Pizza in the Kentucky forest whom I hadn't seen in years. We have nothing new to discuss. I had become obsessed with mountains, and they didn't understand my lack of passion for pushing my envelope only on sport routes. Most had disappeared to more important things, and a new crowd of college students and software consultants arrived from Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Lexington. I leave them, melt down my savings bonds, fly to Seattle, and then on to Anchorage, Alaska.

My jet liner screams past the Cascades and over the open ocean, cruising north. My gear is in its belly. I have plans for the Moonflower Buttress of Mt. Hunter and the Cassin Ridge of Denali. The photocopied topo maps are marked with the ink of my partners and me. We have searched decades of climbing magazines for the information of other climbers. Just a few photographs – a climber traversing an ice wall with Mt. Foraker in the background, a young man leaning back at the belay to look out at the clouds – is all that we found. The pillars we will climb rise like twin suns from the Kahiltna glaciers. One is black,



one is white.

The Moonflower was first climbed by an Alaskan legend, Mugs Stump. He disappeared in a crevasse, just at the base of Foraker. Alaskan crevasses are monstrous. If you don't escape, you are ground to dust over the years, then spit out into the Susitna River basin. The Cassin was climbed by a famous Italian – a "Lecco Spider." He had stolen the first ascent of the Walker Spur on Les Grandes Jorasses from Giusto Gervasutti in 1938. The photographs of young Italian climbers in the Grigna and Domolite massifs pluck my nerves. They spent their lives between world wars in the silver age of Alpinism. Cassin, a bellows boy in the thirties before climbing new routes on Cima Oveste and Piz Badile, had shot down Black Shirts in the streets a decade later.

Everything is lucid and fragrant in the month before the trip. The trees drip Seattle rain onto my head and smack the azaleas as I telephone Andy Tuthill, a friend and famous New England climber. He had been on the Child expedition to Gasherbrum IV in 1986. Pakistan, armed to the teeth in the Cold War. He had done more hard routes in New England than anyone I knew. "You want Andy on that climb," my brother advised me over the phone. "He can lead the A3 and continuous pitches of vertical ice. Be careful."

I knew. The exposure would stupefy my small human brain, a speck of living matter in an ocean of dead water and rock. The hauling would shred my gloves, my protection from the cold granite. Ice – trillions of tons of ice everywhere would poke at my face, shatter against my helmet, and bruise my knuckles. My feet would go numb in my boots during bivouacs. My arms would burn with every action. My thighs would go numb at

belays in the thin harness, the spindrift would fill my jacket and gloves, my teeth would chip against aluminum carabiners. Each day I would abandon my warm cocoon for hours of work in an inhospitable place. I would deal with all that as it came. A tango by Osvaldo Pugliese is on the radio. I'll go to Buenos Aires when this is done.

Much of the pain I expected on Hunter never arrived. "There's no ice on the Moonflower this year," said a friend of a friend from Seattle in Talkeetna. He spat chew into the green grass of the air taxi's lawn. The smell of Talkeetna is overpowering and green. The sun is gentle. We throw an amazingly small amount of gear in the back of the plane and float over the incredible swamps and rivers. Running from the mountains ahead of us forever, they form a mess of fen, braided stream and forest. There are no roads, and the noise of the airplane is oppressive. A wall of rock and ice in front of us seems impenetrable





We zip through “one shot” pass and the Alaska range cracks open. The pilot quizzes us on our routes, pointing through the windshield at the black and white topography. It’s more beautiful than I expected. I look straight down as the plane turns – at thousands of slots in the lower Kahiltna glacier, blue minnows on a glistening streambed. Then we land, and foreign climbers are running to us, dragging our bags to camp. The plane slides back down the runway of snow. Within seconds, it is a red dot on the flank of Mt. Hunter. The powerful noise of the engine we had ridden next to for an hour becomes a flat mosquito hum in the distance, fades to a moan, and vanishes as we all watch it. The silence is overwhelming. It creeps me out, like an Ingmar Bergman film does. This is the Tokositna Glacier. The claustrophobia sets in, and the beauty of our setting is indescribable.

Bad weather. More bad weather. Jack Tackle comes off of Huntington with a new route. Other parties retreat.

We go. Bad weather and failure. We fly to the Kahiltna glacier. We wait. We go. Bad conditions, then bad weather. Failure. Hundred of miles to the South, the Gulf of Alaska slings wetness and cloud at us. This is what happened.

We finish a dozen pitches of snow, ice, and mixed climbing on the West Face Couloir on Huntington, reaching the juncture with David Robert’s Harvard Route. The climbing is difficult – the ice hard as rock and steeper than we expected, with chips of granite embedded in a grey matrix. With a pack for three days, the strain on my calves and back is beyond belief. Bivouacking with no sleeping bags in a snowy whiteout, we stare over the edge of a gigantic precipice. In the night, we lose our motivation to continue like fools. The summit slopes lay before us but were notorious for avalanches. Many of Andy’s partners had died in avalanches.

In the morning, echoes of a dozen explosions reach us, tons of snow rushing down the labyrinth massifs of Hunter, Foraker, and Denali. I look into Andy’s blue eyes and hear the doubt in his voice. I want the summit, but I’m afraid. The peaks of several mountains are just visible as the clouds sink. Somewhere below, enormous avalanches still pound their way to the glaciers like falling ballerinas. Before I follow Andy’s rappel through the fog, I try to pick our summit out of the fog, just 1,300 easy feet above.

Days later, we tiptoe past hanging seracs and wet avalanches on the West Ridge of Hunter. Andy loses a crampon, and a small avalanche barely misses it seconds later. A falling rock the size of a machete plops into the snow next to me from somewhere above. I look up in time to see a hundred pounds of snow pummeling me directly. We both

curse for climbing in the mid-day heat as huge avalanches roar off the opposite ridge into space and smash into our approach route. As we gain the ridge, I feel the snow give way beneath me where Andy had crossed a small slot. I drop 10 feet, then halt with my back against one soft powder wall, my feet out against the other. I think I’m in a crevasse, at first.

I scream weakly as I peer down at bits of snow vanishing into a chasm. It’s not a crevasse, but a slit between one ridge and the other intersecting at an oblique angle. I stare at hundreds of feet of slope beneath me through tiny holes in the powder floor. Far above and out of sight on grade 3 ice, Andy hears nothing, and I keep sliding the rope through my belay plate. I yell for him to place protection, not wanting to pull him off the ridge and into space. The end of the rope tugs at my harness, and I imagine Andy sitting at his anchor, wondering what his partner is doing. I begin to chimney upward with all of my strength through the powder, which cakes me completely. Reaching the lip, I hack away until I find solid ice. This is pure joy.

Thinking of the lost time, I swing my axes up the rope-length of ice at a sprint and find myself below a formation the local guides call “the Walrus.” Andy sits in a belay shoveled out of soft snow, so I say nothing about my fall below. For day one of the climb, we’d made time as good as our friend, Freddie, our perpetual benchmark. As we pitch a camp, clouds race across the

range and the sun disappears. The next forty-eight hours are spent in the tent, staring at the dirty, yellow walls, battered by wind. I drift in and out of sleep the entire time, dreaming of the expeditions and routes the tent had been carried on. With two and a half days ahead of us, we peer outside to check the weather every two hours. Finally, fear sets in. The climb to that point, which had been treacherous, would be even more so with the additional snow. On the morning of the fourth day, we descend through surprisingly good conditions.

Andy leaves the next day, worried that time off from his job and wife had stretched too long. I fly out with him, hungry for pizza. Returning to Talkeetna, the smell of grass clippings and oven grease, the feel of tennis shoes, and the sight of a bakery leave me in euphoria. In between pizzas and beers, I think of our climbs. No summits. We reached no summits, for the first time. Rejection.

I wait for Bryan to arrive, hopping trucks and cars southbound to the Kenai Peninsula. In the rain on the Homer spit, I watch a solitary kayaker spinning in a light storm from my tent on the beach. In the bar, a deck hand my age with a scar across his left cheek giggles with delight and thunder claps over the Cook Inlet.

Bryan arrives, a fresh graduate of Dartmouth College. Ready for the world and its challenges. At 14,200 feet, his lips are blue and he cannot sleep. I hear his wild coughing as I ski back from the



West Rib, where I had cached gear in preparation for our ascent of the Cassin Ridge. Our camp is engulfed in windy clouds and hot fog for three days. I cook and make water for the both of us. My notes for the Cassin Ridge are useless, and I stare at them, cursing our stupidity for ascending so fast. We wouldn't even make it to the Japanese Couloir. We wouldn't even make it down the rib. So much money was wasted. In the middle of the night I play with the idea of soloing the upper six thousand feet of the West Rib to the summits. I couldn't help but be angry with Bryan, but it was also my fault. I was the more experienced member of the trip.

Several rangers guess my plan to climb solo and are hostile to it.

"Never leave a man behind."

Days pass as a single moment. With an hour's warning the high altitude "lama" appears as a noisy speck of black on Crosson's flanks. The rotor wash lifts up the skirts of our idyll world, the "Fourteen Camp." Bryan disappears into it, the chopper lifts, banks, and then slams into the air at incredible speed.

The silence returns, and the rangers crawl back into their canvas tents without saying a word to me, except "you're a free man, now." My partner's face disappears into whiteness, and I am utterly alone. I don't know if I will ever see him again. Ten miles of crevassed glacier and seven thousand vertical feet separate me from the landing strip. As the cold sets in, climbers return to their tents with their partners. Never leave a man behind.

During the night, I hold back tears of frustration, so nervous that I cannot sleep. In my waking dreams, every step I take into the cold morning is the exploding sound of a typewriter. I rationalize the unknown. The fear is too

great for me to climb for anyone other than myself.

It is four o'clock before I shut down, and I wake late. In the tent-heated atmosphere of midday, and I believe for just a moment that it is a summer Sunday afternoon at Dartmouth. Rushing to dress, I melt two bottles of water, take in a bowl of porridge without taste, and leave camp by skis to solo the upper West Rib. Loomis, a ranger who supported my hope of climbing Denali, walks out of the camp perimeter to wave me off.

The climbing is brilliant. When I reach an overlook, the fourteen camp is a yellow and orange smear of humanity on the surface of Genet Basin, thousands of feet below. The glacier reeks of power, cascading off the mountain into space. Crevasses surround the tiny camp like a fence, and the walls above are frighteningly high compared to their appearance from below. Light winds travel across the range, and I climb through the sun and spindrift in light layers, no helmet, and a



10-pound pack. A mixed section, a steep, exposed slope, a series of ledges. The route seems unnaturally easy, and my pace is perfect. The weather is so fine that I can't imagine being tent bound in the spots of arranged stones that I pass.

Below the summit plateau comes the crux of steep neve and rocks for sixty meters. Fleeing the shadows as the sun orbits the mountain, I traverse into the vast face between the West Rib and the Cassin. Peering through the gap between my feet with only the front crampon points in the slope, I exhale. There is a plumb, six thousand foot slide over compact snow and rock to the Northeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier. The end would be a quick one. Looking closely at the picks of my axes stuck a few inches into the ice, I reassure myself, breathing heavily at over nineteen and a half thousand feet. It was all for this.

When I leave the face and step onto the plateau, the world changes. The shelter of the South Face disintegrates with a blast from the North. Even as a strong wind pushes me to my knees, I can't remove my eyes from the beautiful sun hugging the horizon. Pulling myself up the final hill in the Alaskan twilight, I nearly fall over the summit and back onto the South Face. The vertigo stuns me, and I grip the icy ground. I imagine Ricardo Cassin looking to the South, waiting to hear Don Sheldon's engine coming back for him. At this spot, he imagined Italy, Lecco, his wife.

I descend to the fourteen camp by the stroke of my seventeenth hour on the climb. Thoughts turn to the descent. Covered in sweat and looking fifteen pounds lighter apiece, my friends from Juneau arrive in the early evening. Melting water like madmen and pouring chocolate into their mouths, they con-

gratulate each other and congratulate me. The Cassin is behind them. They had climbed in thirty-eight hours from the base. Here was my ticket back, here were my rope partners for the valleys of crevassed glacier. First, I hike up alone to the base of the West Ridge, traversing long, hungry crevasses, giving them their last chance to have me. Retrieving my skis, I look once over the ridge to the parallel Cassin ridge. In the fog, it is invisible, and I can only make out an icy serac here, a rock band there.

The glaciers are too icy to ski out, and my friends had abandoned their skis at the base of the Cassin, unwilling to walk past the hanging seracs of the Northeast Fork again to retrieve them. The way down and out brings an uncompromising pain. I have no water for ten miles, and drag a heavier haul bag. My feet and my back explode, and my throat parches until I can no longer feel it.

I can go home, now.

The mustachioed pilot of our De-Havilland Beaver flies circles around Mt. Hunter for the pleasure of two Germans and I. We say nothing, but grin once in a while. My thoughts turn to my family, my friends, to dancing with strangers in soft shoes, to the Black Sea and trains in the South Caucasus, where I am soon headed. Back in Seattle, the smell of rubber and exhaust in the air is intoxicating. My grandmother asks me about my hiking trip in Alaska. She chats about nothing in particular as she opens the mail. When she stops for a moment, we sit in silence. For a moment, I want to touch her white hair, the wrinkles of her once beautiful face, and kiss her eyes. We stare at each other from opposite ends of the table, and the clock ticks. 🐉

Note: all photos in this article by the author

Cerulean Skies

Ian Wheat '09

Quiet. It came before any other conscious thought. It was quiet. I opened my eyes but found only the thick, inky black of true darkness. I felt my hairs as wakefulness spread languidly along my body. The crackling energy in the air that made the hairs on my arms and legs stand on end was still palpable.

I remembered vividly the raw power of that night. After setting up my tent I had sat by the riverbank and watched the summer storm surge. Huge cumulous clouds loomed in the fading light, gray and darkly sinister with the threat of rain. Tendrils of lightning climbed the towering clouds, illuminating the granite walls and the deep wooded cleft of the valley that had already fallen into darkness. By the time I laid down to bed the distant

torrent had arrived, the mild rumble now a brazen cacophony that crashed down upon earth, the lightning casting a murky glow from the belly of the storm that shrouded the valley. The serenity of the mountains was shattered that night, the tranquil rhythm of the night subject to the raging skies. Even in this sequestered valley I felt exposed to the elements. Thankfully even the charged maelstrom could not prevent the deep satisfying sleep of utter physical exhaustion.

Had it really been the absence of sound that roused me? Slowly I could hear the soft sound of the forest creeping back. The rustle of insects, birds and rodents is always audible up here at night. These creatures do not know the subjection of human civilization; they



*From the Summit of Mount Moosilauke
(photo: Josh Hurd '08)*

do not know and fear my scent. This is their time to hunt and feed and mate; much fiercer creatures of the wild rule this land.

I hear a louder scuffling in the darkness, something much closer. I reassure myself that it is only raccoons or some other small scavenging creature. Despite my best attempts, the smell of last night's meal must still linger here. I lay in my warm down sleeping bag, aware of the flimsy one-person tent, barely larger than my sleeping bag that encapsulates me.

I think how the bed of fallen needles I lay on is quite comfortable. I am pleased that after weeks of camping I barely notice the knobby roots that criss-cross every inch of the dense forest floor. As I drift back to sleep I inhale the crisp air of the recent storm, the ruddy scent of pine trees, and the slight coppery scent of ozone that lightning left lingering.

Awaking with the sunrise is one of the true pleasures of living in nature. Time means something different out here. The setting sun heralds night and sleep, while dawn gives birth to each day with exquisite ceremony. As I emerge from my tent I witness the sun send out golden tendrils from the horizon, revealing the breathtaking vistas of the Sierras. Light moves lazily across the land, a thick soup that piles behind rolling hills and sheer cliffs and then flows slowly up the valley basin, igniting each tree and tracing the groves and scars of its weatherworn stone walls.

The glare bids me look away as light invades this small glade. I look about the campsite, the light casting solid gold beams through the trees, dust motes sparking and disappearing again into shade. Then I notice my Ruc sac, containing all my food. It is hanging where I left it, draped over a high tree branch. This

is intended to keep the food safely away from me and out of the reach of hungry animals during the night. I chuckle; this time it has failed. There is a fair sized tear in the right side of the bag and lying on the ground I see the remnants of an opportunistic feast. When I walk over and inspect the trash I find it is only a couple of granola bars and a half eaten raspberry cobbler. The dry fruit bag is torn open and almost entirely consumed, yet what must have been the contents of the crust and flavor packets sits in a disgusting regurgitated heap. This makes me smile. Even the omnivorous scavengers of this hearty land could not stomach the artificial sweeteners. I myself never use it; the rest makes a delicious dessert on its own. I pack the trash into the bottom of my bag, tie the Ruc sac up with the rope, and spread the biodegradable remnants among the carpet of needles. Satisfied that this spot is much as I left it, I finish packing and resume backpacking up the riverbank. The sun warms my back and the cool constant breeze of the valley pushes at my back and whistles through the grass; today is a wonderful day to climb.

As the sun reaches its zenith I crest a rise to find the river, which has become little more than a stream that formed a deep tranquil pool. It is no more than 15 feet across, but the crystal clear water seems endlessly deep. Looking around at the moss covered trees and feeling the soft grass underfoot I decide this is a perfect spot for lunch.

The glacial water splashes playfully across my toes, the surprising cold making me flinch reflexively. I force myself to submerge my feet and thighs in the frigid water, and after a moment of tension I relax and enjoy the wonderful contrast to the pressing heat of the day. Laying



Chile

(photo: Alex Kehl '07)

my head upon my pack I pulled open my book.

I was turning the second page when I heard a scuffling sound. I thought little of it, the woods were filled with noises and I am captivated by Herbert's description of the harsh desert of Dune. As it grows louder I casually reflect that the sound of crunching needles and twigs has the same weight and tempo as the scuffling I heard last night. I am still in a dazed stupor of utter relaxation when I hear a heavy snort. Detached but intrigued my head lulls to look back from where I had come.

Shit! The brown hump is unmistakable. Before I make a conscious choice my body spasms into violent action. Water sprays as I launch to my feet.

"Shit." I say it, not loud, but for a half second that stretches for eternity I am frozen, adrenaline coursing through my body. The moment the head rises above the crest of the hill, not ten feet from me, I am released from the spell. I grab my pack and retreat backwards. Exited by my action the huge brown bear lumbers up, its huge mass thrust forward on its powerful limbs. I have only taken a few

steps back, frozen in amazement by the rippling muscle and fat of the beast. It is this hesitation that saves me; the bear shuffles to a halt. Sniffing the ground he seems to lose interest, he knows I am no threat to him. I also know that if I flee he will give chase; despite my strongest instincts I know I cannot outrun a brown bear in his woods.

Attempting to slow my breathing, I inch slowly sideways putting the lagoon between him and me. Luckily he has found my hiking boots and pays me no mind. I am suddenly acutely aware of my barefoot status and am very glad of my decision. The bear looks up and I meet its gaze for the first time. Jet black eyes reflect a surprising intelligence, and I feel the one more closely scrutinized. I force myself to stare back intently; shifting my tense stance in a way that I hope belays neither aggression nor too much fear. Taking note of me again, the bear bounds up and down almost eagerly, the force of his mass sending a ripple across the flat surface of the lagoon. He begins to amble around the edge of the lake, and I shuffle as calmly as I can to stay on the opposite side of the water. After a few minutes of wandering back and forth around the lagoon I began to relax. My backpack was slung over my shoulder, as I was still not quite ready to relinquish it to the bear, but ready to drop in an instant if I really had to run.

Time passed excruciatingly slowly. The trees began to once again cast their shadows as the sun began to inch from its pinnacle above us. While I was still extremely cautious and would not imagine letting the beast get any closer to me,

my fear began to abate. What had at first seemed like raw animal aggression in my panicked surprise now more resembled a playful curiosity. I could see it in the way he moved, shaking his head back and forth to get a better smell of me, rubbing his drippy big black nose in my boots and where I laid down. He didn't chase me around the pool trying to catch me, but ambled back and forth to watch me move in turn. After some consideration I determined that this could not be an adult brown bear, it was too small. This meant it probably wasn't a mother protecting a cub or a mature male defending a territory; if it had the bear would have most likely reacted with greater hostility, and I would probably be dead by now. I concluded it must be a young male looking for food or a home, and I was only a curiosity, not a danger. Still this gave me little relief; even a playful pawing from this muscled creature could maim me for life.

Every once and a while he would dip his paw into the water, as if playing with the idea of swimming across to me. My heart jumped each time; I had no idea what I would do if he dove in, the pool was not big enough that I could get to one side faster than he could swim to it, and if I used the disadvantage he put himself at by going in the water to run, I would still face the problem of outrunning a bear once he got out. Each time he sank his left paw in down to the elbow, but finding no purchase there he withdrew. I breathed a sigh of relief and was thankful once again for the smooth stone walls that had made the pool so attractive in the first place.

After what I judged to be twenty minutes I began toying with the idea of throwing him the food. I had a hunching

suspicion that this had been the creature that had torn into my Ruc sac and that I had heard scuffling nearby after the storm. The valley was so narrow and rocky here, what else might a bear of his size hope to find this far up? He must have followed me all day, catching up when I took this break by the pond. Or maybe I was just fabricating the whole thing, trying to give rhyme and reason to an incredible and potentially disastrous occurrence. Either way I was fairly certain that he would be interested in the food, but would it be enough to keep him if I then tried to walk away? I wasn't certain; if that plan failed I might never be rid of this bear, and I was still a three-day hike from the nearest lodge. More time passed and I decided I could wait a little longer before making any rash decisions.

For a while he sat down and just stared across at me. I hunched down and returned his gaze with a fair bit of curiosity. Then without so much as a snort or a second glance he got up and lumbered away down the narrow valley from where we had both come. I stood dazed for a few minutes, listening carefully to the sound of his footfalls growing farther away. When I was certain that he gone a good distance I jogged around the pool and looked over the ridge. A hundred meters away I could see him walking down the riverbank through the sparse trees. I watched until he passed out of sight behind a bend a half-mile down the valley.

It was hard to turn my back on him; so long had we faced off that it made me feel vulnerable. I quickly found my boots and slipped them on, ignoring traces of snot and saliva on the lip where he had nuzzled it. I set a brisk pace up the valley, not trying to run, just put some

distance between my adversary and me. Up ahead where the valley ended I knew there was a small cliff. I could easily get out onto the ridge that dominated this part of the Sierra national park. It was the view from this vantage that had been my ultimate goal. I also hoped that that was one place the great brown bear could not follow. There I would camp, and then next morning I could drop down into another valley and begin my trek back to civilization.

After a while the experience seemed almost surreal and I wondered if it had really happened, or was simply a day-dream by the pond. Then I would feel the tense ache in my muscles, the cold saliva on my boot and the goosebumps on the back of my neck. Despite heat and exhaustion I quickened my pace anew.

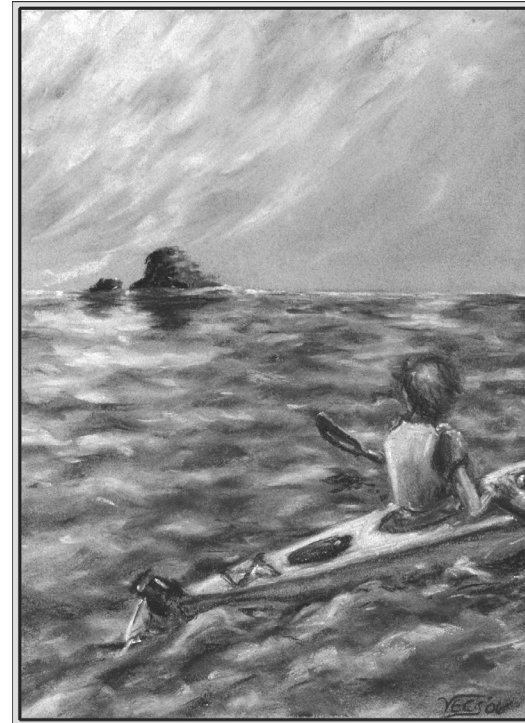
The ridge was a barren razorblade of beautiful rock, polished smooth by the wind and rain. Here the great mountains thrust proud, defiant daggers behind me, and I could see for countless miles of unbroken forest to the west. To the south sinister storm clouds from the night be-

fore darkened the sky.

The sunset that night I will remember until I die. As the brilliant, golden disc of the sun sank it flared a passionate bright red, fading with immeasurable patience to a deep, rusty bronze before disappearing. The horizon darkened to an eye-watering lapis before fading to a sensual purple that hung forever. Above me feathered cirrus and rippled cirrocumulus captured the twilight in a pastel riot of soft rose, violet tinges and golden backlighting. Planes of stratus were set afire, their crimson glow permeating the treetop silhouette. As the ceiling faded into the color of port, lower cumulous columns caught the light with a translucent turquoise. Small holes of jet-black space revealed the sparkling dance of stars as the fingers of transcendent color languidly slipped from the sky. A somber azure lingered, relenting to the darkest violet that finally submitted to night. A single strand of burnished golden light trickled down the horizon and then was gone. It was one hell of a sunset. 🐉

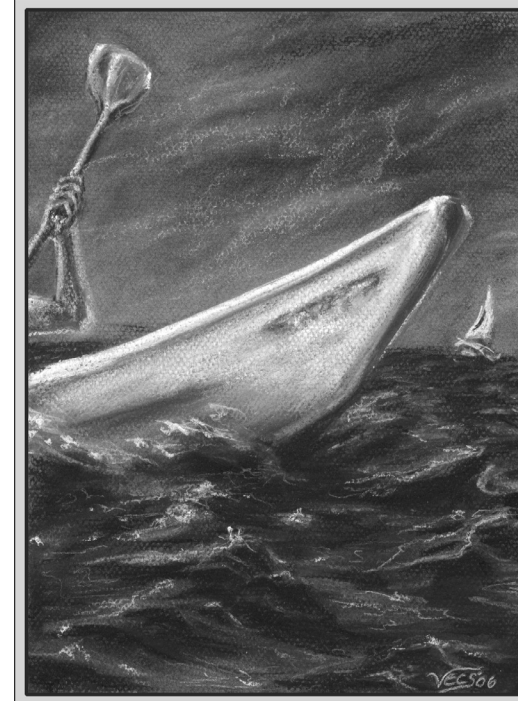


Mt. Cook at Dawn
(photo: Dan Oberlin '06)



Sea

Kayacking



Artwork by
Vic Solbert '07

Vox Crew member, DOC Trips 2005
(photo: Allison Smith '06)



The club's motto is "Get Out," and the crossed skis and snowshoes, its emblem.... Distinctly characteristic of Dartmouth itself is its broad aim, it has sought to open to the men of the College a new field of enjoyment...the Great White Out-of-Doors.... The intimate contact of the drifted hills and woodlands has broken down even the barriers between student and instructor, and has resulted in a newer comradeship, a deeper sympathy and understanding worth much to those who would foster the true spirit of Dartmouth.

The... idea of the club ... has been to keep its financial obligations so low that no man need be excluded... on the score of expense. It has extended its membership to faculty and undergraduate alike... and has thereby proved one of the most successful means of social contact between faculty and undergraduate.... The number of men taking the Saturday hikes... and the weekend trips to camps and mountains, has climbed... higher with each new season. The finest trip of the year is always the winter visit to the White Mountains, a trip which no man ever regrets, for the White Mountains in winter furnish scenery undeniably the finest in the East

From a speech published in the 1913 Aegis and reprinted in Reaching that Peak by David O. Hooke '84 (p. 9)



Waterfall at Mt. Saint Anne, Quebec
(photo: Anders Wood)

"Woodsmoke"

C. Ross McKenney

Editor's Note: C. Ross McKenney was Woodcraft advisor to the DOC for many years. His memorial plaque in the Second College Grant describes him thus: "Ross McKenney—woodsman, teacher, friend, builder of cabins, builder of men. Woodsmoke has provided inspiration to countless men and women of the DOC.

To many people Woodsmoke is just something that comes from burning wood. To others it is something that stands for peace and beauty, something that answers that longing for the wonder and solitude of the outdoors. To lie in a snug shelter at night, when the temperature is creeping close to minus, and watch the Woodsmoke drifting upward through the branches of the trees can instill within you that warmth and confidence that comes from happiness and faith in God. Once I heard some words truly expressive of the greatness of the outdoors, "A kiss of the sun for pardon, the song of the birds for mirth, you're nearer God's heart in the forest than any



Fire in Stoddard Cabin
(photo: Elena Severinghaus '09)

place else on earth".

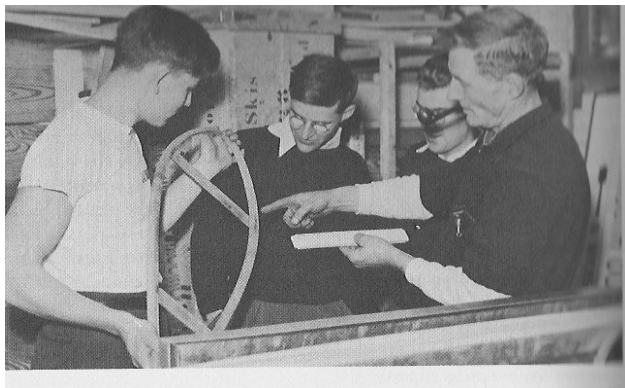
So let me say here that faith in God and Woodsmoke is a mixture that can smooth out some rough roads and keep one's faith in mankind strong and clean, even against mounting odds. These things we need as much as trees need sunshine to live and to give. Did you ever follow the life of a tree? Its seed is carried by the wind or the birds to the forest floor where the rains and winds beat it into the soil. A tiny root reaches down into the earth and the life of the tree starts. The young tree doesn't race upward in a mad race for supremacy. Instead it spends a few years throwing out a foundation root to brace itself against what is to come. Then each year its leader shoots upward, a growth emerges from the tip of each branch; and under the bark of its trunk a ring of wood is formed. Thus it grows outward as well as upward. It starts giving shade to hold moisture. Its foliage give fertilization to the soil. All through life it gives to the forest world and people, and to you and me. Although it may fall to the forest floor, stricken by a bolt of lightning or uprooted or broken by the wind, it doesn't stop giving. For even after many years when it decays and turns to soil, it still is giving. I have often asked myself, "Have I ever come close to living by this standard?" I find many errors and omissions, but have gathered to myself much warmth and happiness in correcting some of these along life's paths. Many of the answers have come to me through the upward curling strands of Woodsmoke.

In the years I have been with the

Dartmouth Outing Club many members have come and gone. I have watched them learn how to use an axe, build shelters, and cook a meal over the open fire. I have watched them making paddles, axehandles, snowshoes, packboards, and many other things. It has been a source of great satisfaction to me to watch their enthusiasm grow as they completed their projects, and to see the deep friendships form between them, lasting friendships built of the courtesy that comes both from their associations with the forest and from their confidence in themselves. I have seen many of these same students living a close parallel to nature's standard of living ... giving that the rest may live.

Within the shadows of the forest I have also learned the meaning of fear, fear that is within all of us and which can turn into terror and cause embarrassment or disaster; fear that can be governed and overcome in self-reliance. If you are lost in the forest, that fear fights to control you; yet all about you is the material with which to conquer fear: warmth, shelter, food, and a chance to gather your faculties together and figure out a solution.

Maybe you are running your canoe through rough water and suddenly you feel a strong undercurrent pulling you into some big curling waves that might swamp you. Fear again fights for control. Do you know how much your paddle will stand? Do you know the many ways to use your paddle against a river current — how to set the angle



Ross McKenney with students in his workshop, 1940 from Reaching that Peak by David Hooke, p. 308/ Dartmouth College Library

of your canoe so the current will swing you out of the breakers instead of into them? Use your head — your knowledge, and again you have licked that fear and your canoe glides out of the rough water into the quiet pool below. Perhaps you are hunting in the fall and your enthusiasm is running high for a shot at a deer. You see a flash of white as a deer bounds over a fallen treetop with white flag flying. You hurry to the spot with finger on the hammer or safety of your gun. That same fear tries to take over, the fear that you will miss a chance for a shot. You see a bush move, you hear a twig snap, that fear grows. You just saw a deer bounding into that spot, but the noise might be a hidden man! What happens? That's up to you and how well you have controlled that fear. Is it worth the chance? Fear says YES, your controlled judgement says NO. As in driving an automobile on the highways you have to learn to think quickly, when there's no time to figure out a solution, your reaction is determined by your background of experience and observation. Have you ever given deep thought to this hidden fear within you?

What would you do in an emergency? Think it over, it's time well spent.

The forests hold a well-kept record of the passing years if one knows where to look. Visible only now by a line in the bark, are the trails and property lines once clearly blazed by an axe, but long since healed over by nature. If you were to cut the bark and wood away you would find the weathered blaze still there. There is the tree with a crooked trunk where another tree had fallen across it and bent it to the ground. This tree, inspired with the need for sunlight, grew from beneath the weight and became a tall straight tree. Time and weather have rotted the fallen tree and it has become a part of the forest floor, but the crooked tree trunk keeps the record for you. When you fell a tree you open a book of that tree's life, for each year it puts a ring on its trunk.

The language of the forest is a beautiful language to learn. The forest's records, the night noise, the woods people and how they live and why. Whether you realize it or not you learn a little more of this language each time you enter the forest, and with the passing years you gather to yourself something that cannot be bought with dollars and cents. When you first built a shelter and slept under the sky, such things as the night noises were mysterious, and somewhat frightening, but as the years roll by those same noises become a sort of music, and sometime, somewhere, when life seems a bit "out of sorts" you will look back to those shelters, and those noises and the memories will give you peace and you



On Mt. Bigelow (photo: Anders Wood)

will find that perhaps the world isn't such a tough place after all.

In my years at Dartmouth the students have given me many gifts to show their appreciation. They have given me of their efforts, untiring efforts night or day, always ready and willing to do something for me. For this I will be forever grateful, but the thing they fail to realize is that they have given much more than that. They have given me their friendship, their faith, their courtesy; and like the blaze on the tree, it is within my heart healed over, it is mine forever and can never be taken away. Who will I thank for this? Will I thank God? Will I thank these men? Or will I dream in the warmth of happiness that maybe these things came to me, with the ability to hold them, from the fragrance and beauty of my many campfires and watching the woodsmoke curl upwards through the branches of the trees.

Hey Fellers! throw some more wood on the fire, slip a couple more slices of bacon into the frypan, and for-the-Luvva-mike put some more coffee in the pot, I can still pour it, you know I like my coffee in slices. ☺



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