



Beyond Basecamp

The Newsletter of Montana Yellowstone Expeditions

Thanksgiving From Basecamp ◀◀



When I was a kid, Thanksgiving was a huge holiday for my family. Christmas was cool, birthdays were always fun, but Thanksgiving was the time when it really mattered that we were there as a family. We did not have any special rituals, or say any special words of thanks; it was just the fact that we were all there that made it special. Now our family is scattered across the country, and I miss the connection and love that those long ago Thanksgiving days would give us.

I feel a bit the same way about MYE this Thanksgiving. I was so thankful to see each group return from the river, hiking, or climbing this summer. It was like a family coming home. We would sit down to a great meal, share stories, and laugh together. Just like my family. Now all of you in the MYE family are scattered across the country, doing your own great things, and living your own lives. A piece of you remains at MYE, and a piece of MYE remains with you.

That is what I am thankful for this Thanksgiving.

▶ **Andy Leider**
MYE Executive Director



MYE Life Skills Program and Foundation Program Scholarship

▶ Attention Florida and New York Alumni!!

As we outlined in the MYE September Newsletter, there are a range of ways alumni can stay involved with MYE after attending a course in Montana. Presently we are organizing Retreats, Workshops and events in California and Montana in our Life Skills Program. Although we will keep alumni in Florida and New York informed of any events or workshops we hear about in your areas, currently we are not running dedicated MYE retreats in either place. This is mainly because the small numbers of alumni in these States make it impractical for us to do this. This may change as the numbers of alumni in these areas increases.

In the meantime we encourage alumni in Florida and New York to, either individually or together, find activities or events that are of interest to you and fit the criteria for our Life Skills Program or MYE Foundation Program Scholarship Fund. Let us know about them and if they fit the criteria and the budget, we will consider supporting your attendance through one of these programs. Scholarship criteria are outlined on the MYE website.

Also - let us know about anything happening in your area so we can put the word out to other alumni.

▶ Funding From MYEF Program Scholarship Fund has paid for activities like the following:

- ◆ School or organization sponsored trips to Washington, DC, San Francisco, and Phoenix.
- ◆ Extra curricular activities like choir, sports, or band.
- ◆ Spring Break trip to Joshua Tree National Monument for a week of rock climbing.
- ◆ After-school programs, like AHA!, AVID, Wilderness Youth Project, and Teens Outside.
- ◆ Fees associated with college applications, scholarships, testing, or visits.

▶ Montana Alumni

We are currently working on the Life Skills Program in your area. We will keep you informed about the details via email and through subsequent newsletters.

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2007 California Fall Retreat - Report

▶ Lauran Eastman

The Fall 2007 MYE Retreat had by far the biggest turnout of all the CA Life Skills retreats. We had a group of 20 alumni and we even had a waiting list! Due to windy weather, our kayaking adventure was changed from Refugio Beach to West Beach in downtown Santa Barbara. The students had a great time kayaking around the pier and we had plenty of time to have group discussion about upcoming MYE Life Skills opportunities.



The retreat was a chance to see some of the friends i have made over my summers at MYE in Montana, many of whom I don't see on a regular basis. The combination of kayaking along the coast, and then having time to hang out and talk was definitely a good way to see everybody again.

Ryan Marquez - MYE 6/Intern 2007

MYE Is All About - Keeping in Touch

▶ Yeni Magana MYE 14



College is topical subject as many of you prepare applications for entry into your 2008 college of choice. Yeni Magana(MYE 14) wrote to us about her experience as a freshman at Davies. Knowing many of you may be having a similar experience this time next year, we asked her to write some more about her college experience to share with other MYE alumni and staff.

In September Yeni wrote:

I am just starting out at Davis and its going great!!

I have taken my first couple of classes. Here at Davis the people are so friendly and welcoming. If MYE would ever like to come out and visit Davis I would be glad to give a tour of the place. Since everything is close to Davis there could be a field trip to Lake Tahoe and I know that there are places to hike and do other things.

More recently:

Bicycle parts colliding at 15mph is what you typically see or experience here at UC Davis. Because of this I have come to accept the fact that my bike will not always be dent free. Riding my bike to classes is a way that I can socialize with students, faculty or the squirrels that often greet me on Campus.

As I am a full time student, I spend most of my time in the library or in the Student Academic Center. I am currently taking Psychology, Atmosphere and Pollution Science, Math, and English. However, on weekends I have the opportunity to go out of town into the neighboring cities or stay in Davis and attend a sporting event's. Everyday I come to love this campus even more, with its beautiful nature, weather and great outreach programs for undergraduate and graduate students. I am glad I have the opportunity to attend UC Davis.



Greening your world ◀

We were inspired by the following letter we received from one of our alumni and wanted to share it with you. We are actively looking into ways we can support their passion to make a difference in the world. This letter made us wonder how many more of our alumni are in the same situation, wanting to make a difference but not sure how to take the first step. If this describes you, or you have some ideas to share, we would be interested in hearing from you.

I've been remembering all of the things I learned in Montana. How we should be friendly to our earth. How Global Warming is AFFECTING us greatly! I remembered when I was in Montana, I decided I wanted to do something in my community to change some of our bad habits. For example, not recycling, the light bulbs we use etc. I have found that since it's my senior year, I wanted to do something that for my school.....So I have decided I want to help my school be a green school. I want to change the food they serve at school, the light bulbs, reduce the amount of light we use, and maybe how our recycling can be improved. But I have no idea how to start! I need your help! I wanted to start by asking questions, for example, asking the cafeteria where the food they sell is coming from? So I need your help, if you have time. Please write back, I will be very happy to hear from you guys!



▶ College Applications 2007

It is that time of year again when high school seniors need to start preparing their college applications. Our MYE team are working to gather information and make contacts to help facilitate this process for our alumni. We have some information available in this newsletter and will email other information as it comes to hand.



Financial Aid Workshops 2008

"Cash for College/Financing A College Education"

Evening workshops for parents and students. Come learn about financial aid resources and how you can apply for them. **Workshops will be available in Spanish**

▶ School: Santa Barbara High School

Date: 1/15/2008
Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm
Location: Cafeteria (English) Room 61 (Spanish)

▶ School: Bishop Garcia Diego High School

Date: 1/16/2008
Time: 6:30pm-8:00pm
Location: Room 202 (English) Room 201 (Spanish)

▶ School: San Marcos High School

Date: 1/22/2008
Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm
Location: Cafeteria (English) Spanish (Music Room)

▶ School: Dos Pueblos High School

Date: 1/23/2008
Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm
Location: Cafeteria (English) Library (Spanish)

▶ School: Carpinteria High School

Date: 1/24/2008
Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm
Location: Library (English) Teacher's Lounge (Spanish)

"Saturday Cash for College Workshops"

These workshops will provide parents and students with the opportunity to get individualized assistance completing the FAFSA. **By appointment only.**

Date: Saturday, February 9, 2008
Saturday, February 23, 2008
Time: 9am-2pm
Where: Santa Barbara City College (East Campus - Cafeteria)

For more information or to sign up for an individual appointment, please contact Cal-SOAP at 963-6417
Visit our website at www.sbcalsoap.org

▶ College Application Support People for MYE Alumni

Would you would like to have someone to critique your college essay and help you do the best job possible?

Kim Phillips, an MYE supporter, has offered this service to our alumni. It is free to you, all you need to do it contact her via email, let her know who you are, that you are an MYE alumni and go from there.

▶ Contact Kim at: kphillips38@yahoo.com



MYEarth Practice seeing nature - why not start on Thanksgiving Day?



▶▶ Take A Walkon the beach, in the woods, down the street:

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays celebrated here in the United States; it is not a common holiday worldwide. It is the time to be with family and friends and one of its main purposes is to celebrate the end of the growing season (in some places) and the harvest. It's a time to be thankful for all the food we are able to have and share.

I also like to add time on Thanksgiving Day to be thankful in general for all of the people and places that I love. I also like to take a walk, just get outside and marvel at all of the beautiful things around me: the trees and their leaves, the ocean, air and wind, flowers and their amazing colors and in the case of Montana snow on the hills

"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you"

- Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect

▶ So this Thanksgiving why not lead your family/friends on a local walk? It could be a neighborhood stroll or somewhere farther a field.

See what you can point out that is beautiful, fascinating, and interesting about the incredible planet we live on and share. Think about, and if you haven't already, share one of your favorite MYE stories with your family and friends. Tell them about a time in nature that really struck you, you know what I mean? One of those times that just got inside you and filled you up.

And if you don't normally celebrate Thanksgiving maybe start your own tradition of taking a walk on this national holiday, when work and school are closed. It is so important to me - when faced with all of the information about sustainability, global warming and climate change - to remember why it is that I fight for our environment, the health and well-being of the place I live in, its people and the planet. I believe it is vital to connect as often as we can to nature and find the awe and beauty of our world, or else we forget why we need to protect and preserve it.

Perhaps this Thanksgiving we can all start a practice of finding something cool or different or beautiful about the outside world *everyday*. It can be as simple as the rain falling or the sun glancing off a window. When we slow down enough to remember that we live in an amazing world, no matter what community we live in, it makes all the things we are doing to save and protect it that much easier!



Something to ponder while you walk:

"The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependant upon it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do"

-Galileo Galilei, Philosopher and the "Father of Modern Science"

Enjoy your walk and Happy Thanksgiving! ◀

Cari Hanson
MYE Sustainability Coordinator



MYE Alumni are invited to apply for the ARC summer program!

Learn how to climb, sea-kayak, camp and backpack with ARC. It is a intensive 6 week program, combining outdoor activities and leadership training with academic study. The academic program includes English reading, writing and speaking skills and you will earn ten high school credits.

Interested?

Contact: Jennifer Gurecki, ARC Program Director, for more details.
Phone:530.416.5682 or email jennifergurecki@hotmail.com

Better hurry spaces are limited!

Beyond Basecamp is published monthly by the Montana Yellowstone Expeditions Foundation.
POB 962, Bozeman, MT 59771

November 2007

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Staff Page - The Wild Waters of the Grand Canyon



Ellen Sagmyr - MYE Program Director



In October I joined a group of friends on a 21 day trip down the Grand Canyon. The journey began just below Glen Canyon Dam in the deserts of North West Arizona. From here the Colorado River wends its way gradually southwards, 2-3 thousand feet below the Canyon rim. It ended nearly 300 miles downstream, where the river emerges from the canyon and flattens out into Lake Mead, a reservoir created by the Hoover Dam 10 miles downstream.

We put in at Lees Ferry several miles below Glen Canyon Dam, the focus of Edward Abbey's book "The Monkey Wrench Gang". It was the first of 21 gorgeous days, a cobalt blue sky, no wind and the translucent green Colorado River chugging along at a sedate five mile per hour. Our craft - 8 rafts and 4 kayaks - were half submerged under piles of kitchen and camping equipment, 21 days of gourmet food for 16 people, and the various technological items latter day adventurers require for this kind of undertaking.

This is a different story from that of John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition. The 10 men on the first recorded descent of the Grand Canyon ran the river in 4 wooden skiffs, not designed for white water travel, and came close to running out of food on the way. As they approached Marble Canyon immediately below our Lees Ferry put-in Powell wrote:

"With some feeling of anxiety we enter a new canyon this morning. We have learned to observe closely the texture of the rock. In softer strata we have a quiet river; in harder we find rapids and falls. Below us are the limestones and hard sandstones which we found in Cataract canyon. This bodes of toil and danger....."

As we pushed off our team was more optimistic - 10 party members having run the Canyon previously and the rest of us with plenty of white water experience. Previous knowledge might blunt the nerves, but we were still excited and awed. The Grand Canyon is an iconic trip for anyone interested in river running, archeology, natural history, geology and/or wilderness travel, and we knew we were lucky to be there.

- ▶ What followed was an experience that could fill several books and will undoubtedly be the topic of many nostalgic gatherings in years to come.

I could talk about the scenery, dominated by rock of a scale that is difficult to comprehend - even when you are there. Sometimes the sheer rock walls closed in reducing our world to just us and the river. Then the canyon would peel back and the landscape would emerge like a pop-up children's book, tiers of pink, green, blue and black cliff bands extending as far as you could see, revealing the multi-dimensional character of the Canyon Lands surrounding us.

- ▶ Ed Abby said of the rock, "How much can you say about rock? Its red here, gray there, it's hard, its badly eroded. It's a mess."

I found the rock of the Grand Canyon mesmerizing. The patterns and colors and shapes seemed limitless. Delicate sculptures in polished black Vishnu Schist laced with strands of pink Zoroaster granite; repeating patterns of fan shaped columnar basalt; twisting, convoluted side canyons; and walls of rose colored sandstone iced with dark lava flows, were all the result of several billion years of tortured upheaval, pressure, heat and transformation. And these were just some of the exquisite exhibits in the endless gallery that is the Grand Canyon.

I could talk about the river - in some places placid, bottomless and benign, in others a roiling, heaving mass of water that could flip your craft in a millisecond. Deep rumbling and a horizon line were the signs of an approaching rapid. Sometimes we scouted from the bank, committing to memory a way through the slalom course of rocks and holes and waves. Other times we plunged in blind; riding 15 foot haystack waves, deep drops and three dimensional boils; emerging downstream soaked, relieved and energized. Scouting always involved hand wringing and worried faces, but with the requisite amount of nerves, everyone made it through the hundreds of rapids we ran without incident.



Staff Page - The Wild Waters of the Grand Canyon



I could talk about the camping scene. Each campsite offered different challenges and comforts, tucked between rock formations, sprawled across sandy beaches and hidden in mesquite groves – all with a different angle on the canyon and rooms with a view. The kitchen and lounge were riverside, bedrooms chosen to individual tastes, while the groover was situated in some discrete cranny but always with a river outlook.

Keeping the chaos of a nomadic life to a minimum required everyone's effort. After long days on the river the first hour at camp involved unpacking rafts, ferrying gear onshore, setting up the facilities and doing individual chores. Only after this was done could we relax – except, of course, for the dinner crew. In the morning this process all happened in reverse.

I could also talk about reaching Lake Mead and being buzzed by no less than 30 helicopters, filled with sightseers from Las Vegas having their own canyon experience. The Lakes' tide line 30 feet above us was a reminder of the demands placed on the Colorado's water by the extended draught in the south west, and the ever expanding populations of the surrounding desert states and California. The Canyon – a natural wonder of the world - is not immune to development and exploitation as evidenced by these things and what Ed Abby described as the 'concrete plugs' at either end of the Grand Canyon.



► What I would like to talk about is traveling for 21 days, self propelled, in the wilderness.

The river dominated our lives. We spent every day focused on its mood, changing levels and deciphering its dynamics; at night its gentle murmur lulled us to sleep. The journey became a 21 day meditation as I adjusted to the rhythms' of the environment, the repeating patterns in the landscape, and the routines we established as river nomads. It forced me to slow down; and with the clutter of normal life stripped away everything was simplified down to our basic needs in the immediate environment. Left to the authors of the 1929 book "Grand Canyon Country" my trip and the insights it gave me, may not have happened. They said of the Grand Canyon:

"The National Park Service discourages this as a pleasure trip, and urgently recommends that it be attempted by none except those making it in the interest of science, accompanied by experienced boat river men, and provided with the best possible equipment".

I am thankful this approach did not prevail and although the NPS does limit numbers to preserve the quality of the experience, anyone can still apply for a permit and run the Canyon. Our access to wild lands is however, still being threatened by various factors, one being the rate at which it is disappearing. My journey reminded me how important it is to defend and preserve wild places and our access to them. Why? I'll leave the last words on that to Aldo Leopold.....

"Public wilderness areas are, first of all a means of perpetuating in sport form, the more virile and primitive skills in pioneering travel and subsistence.....Ability to see the cultural value of wilderness boils down, in the last analysis, to intellectual humility.....It is only the scholar who appreciates that all history consists of successive excursions from a single starting point, to which man returns again and again to organize yet another search for a durable scale of virtues. It is only the scholar who understands why the raw wilderness gives definition and meaning to the human enterprise"

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Photos: Drew Thate and Ellen Sagmyr