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Four months on the Appalachian trail teaches a person a lot about the country and about himself

The Cover
The fisheye lens is a wondrous gadget, for with it a camera can see more than it ordinarily sees and can put a new shape on things. Floyd Jillson aimed a fisheye at the dome-covered waiting room of the 1909 Terminal Station in Chattanooga, Tenn., which has been saved from the wreckers and converted into a restaurant. The develop-

Americana, Brazil

I read with great pleasure Frances Cawthorn’s article “Look Away, Look Away” (Feb. 3). Though I now live in the mountains of North Carolina, I am a “descendant.”

Something about the article was more understanding and sympathetic toward the Confederate exiles than anything I have seen. They did get homesick, and they faced many problems and hardships. I heard more about missing churches and schools than anything else.

They did something about both problems and many others, and on the whole made a real contribution to the land of their adoption.

My people have been accused of wanting to own slaves, running out on the hard times at home, being immigrants, etc. I got the impression that they were unreconstructed and broke!

The article brought me home again after more than 40 years.

Mrs. Marion J. Murray
Banner Elk, N.C.

Meal Planning
Grace Hartley’s food pages in the magazine have planned many a meal for my family. I had planned to write and ask for a sweet-and-sour sauce for Chinese food and she gave an answer in the Feb. 24 magazine. I would like her to know that her pages have provided many a recipe for my collec-
It's a Long Walk From Maine to Georgia

By Richard Judy

6/3/73  My first day on the trail. Took off at 6:45 a.m. The trail to the peak of Katahdin was one of the roughest I've ever seen, but the view was incred-
mountain footpaths in the United States. It juts massively above the wilderness lake country surrounding it, and com-
pared to other “scenic wonders” in this country, it is relatively unknown. After a brief ego trip during which I practiced my Ernest Hemingway scowl while in the north Georgia Blue Ridge. The trip took 140 days, which is far from a record-setting pace. An ambitious fellow named Warren Doyle made the trip south to north this past summer in 66½ foot-blistering days, thereby setting a new record.

where I saw several big moose. While I was up there, the ground was boggy with a combination of melted snow and spring rain. Every day I hiked in Maine ended with soaked boots and shriveled feet.

But the most maddening part of
From Springer Mountain where the Appalachian Trail ends, hiker Richard Judy gazes at the incredible Blue Ridge beauty of Georgia.

By Richard Judy

6/3/73 My first day on the trail. Took off at 6:45 a.m. The trail to the peak of Katahdin was one of the roughest I've ever seen, but the view was incredible...

For my money there is nothing, absolutely nothing, east of the Mississippi River to compare with the view from Mt. Katahdin on a clear day. The northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail is located on Katahdin's Baxter Peak, and I stood there last June 3 on a flawless clear day looking south toward the 2,000 plus miles that lay ahead of me.

Katahdin, accessible only by dirt roads, looms silently and interminably in northern Maine. Its summit can be reached only by some of the roughest mountain footpaths in the United States. It juts massively above the wilderness lake country surrounding it, and compared to other "scenic wonders" in this country, it is relatively unknown. After a brief ego trip during which I practiced my Ernest Hemingway scowl while gusts of wind bristled in my sideburns, I took that first spine-tingling step that must begin every journey, even one more than 2,000 miles long. After bouncing over more boulders than I care to remember, I was at Katahdin Stream Campground located at the bottom of the huge mountain. My first day was finished.

The Appalachian Trail is a marked footpath running for about 2,047 miles from Maine to Georgia. Like a big meandering snake, it winds casually along ridges and down into valleys. Maintenance is handled by the volunteer efforts of a large group of individual organizations governed by the Appalachian Trail Conference whose headquarters are in Harpers Ferry, W. Va. The way is marked by white paint blazes located on rocks and trees at frequent intervals.

After leaving Katahdin, I traversed 14 states before I reached Springer Mountain, the trail's southern terminus, in the north Georgia Blue Ridge. The trip took 140 days, which is far from a record-setting pace. An ambitious fellow named Warren Doyle made the trip south to north this past summer in 66½ foot-blistering days, thereby setting a new record.

But as I followed the white blazes out of Katahdin Stream Campground on the second day of my hike, speed was the last thing on my mind. I was hiking with Jim Smith, a fellow Atlantan, who walked with me through Maine and part of New Hampshire.

The trail route is dotted with three-sided shelters commonly referred to as lean-tos, and it was in these primitive little havens that I spent many a dry and comfortable night either alone or with the companionship of other trail bums. Usually there was a trail register in these lean-tos where hikers could trade information, tall tales or curses upon the difficulty of the trail.

Maine contains about 267 miles of the trail route, and in those miles I was broken in roughly and rudely to the life of a long-distance hiker. The northern part of the trail in Maine loops around lakes and across streams and rivers where I saw several big moose. While I was up there, the ground was boggy with a combination of melted snow and spring rain. Every day I hiked in Maine ended with soaked boots and shriveled feet.

But the most maddening part of Maine and of the entire trail would have to be the black flies. These tiny insects attack any spot on the body, exposed or unexposed, and latch on to suck blood. At times they clouded around my head like a black plague while the blood from their bites ran freely down my arms.

It was while I was in the midst of these pests, (the mosquitoes were just as bad, but I don't care to remember them) that I met Bob Brugmann, from New Jersey, who joined me in battling them with the only effective repellent—a sense of humor.

Long-distance hikers refer to themselves as through-hikers, and Bob was the through-hiker's through-hiker if ever one existed. I followed his long hiker's stride out of the boggy lake country of northern Maine and into the rugged mountains of southern Maine, many of which were above timberline.

In southern Maine lies the Mahoosuc Range, probably the ruggedest stretch on the entire trail. But it's worth...
Like a meandering snake, the trail winds casually along ridgecrests for 2,047 miles

every bump, bruise and blister. The mountains here with names like Old Speck and Goose Eye are some of the wildest on the trail, and the route which ascends high above timberline to their summits is so rugged only seasoned hikers should attempt it.

It was in the Mahoosuc's that I had my closest call of the trip. Mahoosuc Notch, a magnificent canyon strewn with huge boulders and bracketed by sheer-faced rock walls, not only exhausted me, but very nearly eliminated me. While I was walking on the edge of a bluff looking for the easiest way to get down, the ground beneath me gave way and I went slipping over the edge. I clamped my hand around a small pine sapling and watched in horror as the roots of the tiny tree began ripping loose from the ground while my body and my 40-pound pack pulled against it. The fall could have easily maimed or killed me, but I managed to muster the necessary strength to inch myself to safety.

6/21/73 I'm definitely getting in good shape, and I'm trimming down. Nice to finish Maine with its messy bogs, mosquitoes, black flies, etc. Still loved it. It's been the greatest physical and mental challenge of my life.

The day I entered New Hampshire my spirits were high, and I was ready to eat up some more trail. Bob and I pulled ahead of Jim as we entered the White Mountains which rival the Mahoosuc in ruggedness and surpass them in beauty.

When we reached the Presidential Range, the weather was reasonably clear. We walked for miles over this section, which is all above timberline and provides the ultimate in unobstructed views.

We hit rain as we reached the heart of New Hampshire's White Mountains. Although we didn't know it at the time, the rain was the beginning of the worst prolonged rainstorm in New Hampshire and Vermont since 1927. The trail became a mudslide, and at times Bob and I had our hands full trying to keep our footing and our sanity in the midst of the freezing rain and mud. At times my hands were so cold that I couldn't unzip my trousers or unbutton my shirt without an effort.

On June 29 we reached Beaver Brook lean-to at the foot of Mt. Moosilauke, and I decided that I'd had my share of mud-slogging for the day. But Bob wanted to reach Georgia in time to get back to high school in the fall, so we reluctantly parted.

6/30/73 Today was the kind of day that could make or break an A.T. hiker. The trail up Mt. Moosilauke was so steep that there were ladders and cables in some places. It was raining so hard that the trail was knee-deep in water in a couple of places.

Several days later the weather began clearing, and as I reached Hanover, N.H., I was feeling like the world's toughest hiker. A family near Hanover looked beyond my bearded face and my dirty clothes, and saw a weary person who wouldn't mind joining them for the night and cleaning up a little. It was a pleasant prelude to Vermont's Green Mountains, where I hiked along easier trails and found some nice shelters.

A few days into Vermont I stopped for a break at a place called Gov. Clement shelter. The entry in the register there reads as follows: "Bob Brugmann—Flemington, N.J. Me.-Ga. Stopped briefly in rain." After this entry someone added: "Died on same falling off log over Mill River. It had been raining for two weeks, and he tried to ford the Mill River after the suspension bridge fell—Died at age 17—Rest in peace."

The through-hiker's through-hiker was dead, and when I met his family later on by coincidence, I told them that I wouldn't stop until I hit Springer Mountain because now I was hiking for two people. Bob's brother Jeb had started north from Springer Mountain on the same day that Bob had started from Katahdin. They had planned to meet somewhere in the middle of the trail.

His family was in Vermont during the search for Bob's body. Jeb had left the trail near Roanoke, Va. to come to Vermont, and I met them in Manchester, Ver., after thumbing down to buy supplies.

For a few days after, I hiked along wondering why the best hiker on the Appalachian Trail had to die. But my mind soon became occupied with the trail again, and the magic of the trail began to return.

6/8/73 Just heaved a rock at a mammoth porcupine. Beamed him, but he got away. This place is crawling with them. You even have to hang up your boots at night to keep them from getting chewed up. The nastiest, ugliest creatures I've ever seen—rats included.

After battling these trophy-sized porcupines (if there is such a thing) in Vermont and admiring the sun-dappled forests of the Green Mountains, I began hiking through Massachusetts and Connecticut. The trail was a little easier there and (Continued on Next Page)
closer to the civilized world.

I pressed on into New York where I battled a mixture of miserable wet weather and even more miserable hot weather. New York was a little disappointing for several reasons. Much of the trail route follows roads, and this is not only dull but also rough on the feet.

Also vandals have mistreated the shelters so roughly that many have been torn down, and those that remain standing are often in poor repair and bushes of trash are scattered around.

PROBABLY the worst negative feature in New York was the water situation. What water there was often looked more like something you’d flush instead of drink. One hiker I talked to said that once he got so thirsty in New York he began licking leaves for moisture.

But New York still gave me a thrill. One night from a mountaintop I could see the glow of New York City. It amazed me that I could be so close to the huge city and still be in rustic surroundings.

It took only two pleasant days to stroll through New Jersey. The trail route runs on a level course over the Kittatinny ridge. It is not at all strenuous and is quite beautiful. I was later told that I was seeing the most beautiful country New Jersey has to offer.

Then I hit the Delaware Water Gap, crossed the Delaware River on the Pennsylvania turnpike and found myself in Pennsylvania. Bob Brugmann’s parents came over from Flemington, N.J., and treated me to the first decent

Before I split with my folks, I bought a brand-new pair of boots! My old boots were slick on the soles and the uppers were full of holes. I started breaking in the new boots with dad, who put in a 14-mile day with me before heading home.

THEN, I was on my own again. A couple of days later I met my old college roommate, Jay McKinley, whose nickname is Bird. We hiked into Maryland the next day, and I’m glad to say that my memories of Pennsylvania are fond ones. Though the rocks practically destroyed my feet, the country I saw was rich in historical significance and the people I met were generous and fascinating.

Now I was past the halfway point, and I had no doubt that I could finish. Maryland was a quick state with nice shelters and great views of the valleys shrouded by the late morning mist robbed me of hiking time when I took one break after another to gape in silence.

The first long section of the trail in Virginia winds through Shenandoah National Park. Through the first part of the park, Bird and I were doused by a depressingly long rainstorm. When it finally cleared, we found ourselves battling the crowds for sleeping space in the shelters and solitude on the trail. Vacationing hikers flock to Shenandoah National Park from some of the big East Coast population centers, and during the summer the crowds ruin any real opportunity for a true wilderness experience. Mobbing the trail, these people hike as if in a panic to see some of America’s eastern wilderness before it becomes a victim of man’s overzealous ambitions.

Bird and I were glad to leave the park and head for Virginia’s George Washington
hiker I talked to said that once he got so thirsty in New York he began licking leaves for moisture.

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Then I hit the Delaware Water Gap, crossed the Delaware River on the Pennsylvania turnpike and found myself in Pennsylvania. Bob Brugmann's parents came over from Flemington, N.J., and treated me to the first decent meal I'd had in days. Jeb, they told me, was hiking up in New Hampshire and headed for Katahdin. Nothing can stop a true hiking freak from hitting the trail.

Pennsylvania left me with about 220 miles' worth of memories of sweltering heat, foot-bruising rocks and beautiful people. My folks took part of their vacation to come up from Georgia and meet me in the little trail town of Port Clinton in the heart of the Pennsylvania Dutch country. It was like a brief sojourn in Nirvana to take my first break from the trail with them.

8/5/73 My first day off the trail. Am amazed at how I love TV. A new situation comedy called "Watergate" is on. This is a new perspective. All these towns, people, cars and flat land. Ready for some more mountains.

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Now I was past the halfway point, and I had no doubt that I would finish. Maryland was a quick state with nice shelters and hazy views of the flat farm country in the distance. It seemed as if we were out of Maryland and into Harpers Ferry, W. Va., before we had time to think.

We crossed the lazy Potomac River on the Sandy Hook Bridge, and I suddenly realized that I was back in my beloved Southland. During a quick visit to the Appalachian Trail Conference headquarters in Harpers Ferry, I received words of encouragement from the executive director, Lester Holmes. Then, we quickly knocked off the short distance of the trail that runs through West Virginia and plunged into Virginia, the longest state on the trail.

Virginia forms almost one-quarter of the entire trail route, and I consider it to be the most idyllic state on the trail. For the most part, the trail here is graded for non-strenuous hiking, and the bed me of hiking time when I took one break after another to gaze in silence.

The first long section of the trail in Virginia winds through Shenandoah National Park. Through the first part of the park, Bird and I were doused by a depressingly long rainstorm. When it finally cleared, we found ourselves battling the crowds for sleeping space in the shelters and solitude on the trail. Vacationing hikers flocked to Shenandoah National Park from some of the big East Coast population centers, and during the summer the crowds ruin any real opportunity for a true wilderness experience. Mobbing the trail, these people hike as if in a panic to see some of America's eastern wilderness before it becomes a victim of man's overzealous ambitions.

Bird and I were glad to leave the park and head for Virginia's George Washington National Forest. Here, the crowds disappeared as if a switch had been thrown.

ON Sept. 1 we were joined by David Chandler, an old buddy of mine who goes to Georgia Tech.

David was rudely introduced to the trail as we ascended from the Tye River Valley to the peak of the Priest, a climb of more than 3,000 feet. However, David accounted well for himself, and we fell into a steady pace. The view from the top of the 4,063-foot-tall Priest was free of haze and one of the most impressive in Virginia. The same day we took a break at Spy Rock, which affords a 360-degree view begging to be photographed.

The next day found us (Continued on Page 61)
(Continued From Page 58)

crossing a number of cleared summits commonly known as balds. Though there is no timberline in the Southern Appalacchian such as I'd seen in Maine and New Hampshire, the balds gave us the same "cloudwalking" effect with views that seem limitless in all directions.

When the trail intersected with Interstate 81, it was time for Bird to head back home to start his senior year, and we reluctantly watched him start his long thumbing trip.

TTHEN David and I headed back into hills away from the pandemonium of the big highway. For the next five days we hiked along at a steady clip, battling wet weather and admiring places like Tinker Mountain, Sawtooth Ridge and tranquil farm valleys. During this stretch, we collected about 30 yellow jacket bites between us.

Eventually, the trail crossed a highway near Pearisburg, and we went into the town to see about getting a night's rest before David went to Atlanta by thumb. Here, we met Father Charles Beausoleil, a Catholic priest who treated us like brothers. I had heard stories of his kindness from hikers as far north as Pennsylvania. He fed us, washed our clothes, let us take a shower and gave us a place to sleep on that miserable rainy night. Here was still another example of selflessness by a person who lived near the trail.

The next day after a hearty breakfast—compliments of Father Charles—I hit the trail alone and David thumbed south. It was strange to be able escape hatch from an otherwise dreary future. Alone with my thoughts over these long stretches of backwoods trails, I could sense my life changing and new ambitions molding.

Next, I hit Damascus, a small southwest Virginia town near the Tennessee border. After stocking up on food, I headed out of Virginia and into Tennessee. During the trip, I avoided the freezedried food so popular with many outdoorsmen because of my limited funds. Each day I took a vitamin pill, and for much of the hike I also took as many 12 protein pills in a day. The food value I sought most carefully was protein because I figured it would help me to build my muscles after a rigorous day on the trail.

Therefore, I carried small cans of fish such as sardines or tuna and combined them with powdered soup and noodles to arrive at a high protein dinner, which I cooked over my little stove. It was a disgusting concoction, granted, but I was usually so hungry I didn't care what I was eating as long as it filled me up. Other foods in my diet were powdered milk, Lipton dinners, honey, candy bars (I became a Snickers junky) and Alpen. But my stomach was a bottomless pit, it seemed I was always hungry. In fact, during the trip I lost 20 pounds.

SO, with the distance ahead of me growing shorter as my beard grew longer, I trudged on into the rugged mountains of Tennessee, North Carolina and finally, Georgia.

After experiencing the majesty of such mountains as Big Bald and Roan Mountain, I trucked at a rhythmic clip to Davenport Gap, the eate-
admiring places like Tinker Mountain, Sawtooth Ridge and tranquil farm valleys. During this stretch, we collected about 20 yellow jacket bites between us.

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The next day after a hearty breakfast—compliments of Father Charles—I hit the trail alone and David thumbed south. It was strange to be alone again as I stood with my heavy pack atop drizzly Pearis Mountain watching a thunderstorm converging upon Pearisburg. Except for the last day of my hike, the rest of my trip would be in almost constant solitude.

8/13/73 I'll miss David and Bird. They've been superb hiking companions. I don't dread going solo, however. Very, very few people hike along these Virginia trails and I think I'll find the experience unique.

I wasn't disappointed. Trail hiking was the most natural form of living I'd ever experienced, and when I thought back on the money-oriented ambitions of the people I'd known in college, I began to understand why so many young people are breaking away to drift aimlessly these days. The pressureless feel of the open road is an irresist-

with powdered soup and noodles to arrive at a high protein dinner, which I cooked over my little stove. It was a disgusting concoction, granted, but I was usually so hungry I didn't care what I was eating as long as it filled me up. Other foods in my diet were powdered milk, Lipton dinners, honey, candy bars (I became a Snickers junkie) and Alpen. But my stomach was a bottomless pit, and it seemed I was always hungry. In fact, during the trip I lost 30 pounds.

So, with the distance ahead of me growing shorter as my beard grew longer, I trudged on into the rugged mountains of Tennessee, North Carolina, and finally, Georgia.

After experiencing the majesty of such mountains as Big Bald and Roan Mountain, I trucked at a rhythmic clip to Davenport Gap, the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

In the Smokies I put in a 27-mile day. I was beginning to smell Springer Mountain now, and I couldn't resist moving a little quicker. While I was in the Smokies, I got my only glimpse of a bear on the entire trip, and it was only a brief one near the summit of Thunderhead Mountain. I also saw two groups of wild boar. One of these mean-looking little creatures squared off with me and began snorting and pawing the ground, but when I made no threatening gesture, he disappeared into the thick undergrowth of rhododendron.

10/10/73 Last night I was awakened by a wildcat. Sounded like a woman screaming. Today I got my last view in the Smokies from check-up? Then diagnose its ills. And read the House Doctor for advice on how to put it back in shape.

Sundays in the Homes Beautiful section

The Atlanta Journal

The Atlanta Constitution

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Take your dog to your veterinarian for a heartworm check-up soon!
(Continued From Page 61)

Shackstack Mountain. The valleys were completely cloaked in a heavy fog, and all I could see were the tips of the Nantahala Mountains sticking out like craggy dune caps.

After descending out of the Smokies and crossing Fontana Dam, one of the biggest dams east of the Mississippi River, I hiked into the Yellow Creek-Wauchee-Cheoah region whose name is difficult to pronounce and whose terrain is even more difficult to traverse.

Often compared to the Mahoosuc region of southern Maine, this area is reputed to be the roughest on the trail. However, after nearly 2,000 miles of hiking I shared an endurance with other through-hikers that made me feel easily equal to the challenge. Though the trail was steep and the footing slippery, the views and the spookiness loneliness made it all worthwhile.

10/15/73 “Breathe there man with soul so dead…”

Well, my soul’s not dead. As I got my first view of the good old northern Georgia Blue Ridge from Albert Mountain and later from Standing Indian Mountain, I was stirred. Tonight, I’m staying at Standing Indian lean-to, and tomorrow, I’ll start my last lap.

I left Standing Indian lean-to and knocked off the distance to Bly Gap, on the North Carolina-Georgia border, very quickly. Finally, I was back in my home state. From Bly Gap to Springer Mountain is about 79 miles, and the full realization of what I was about to accomplish finally began to occur to me. The so-called “endless trail” had an end after all, and wasn’t so sure that I wanted it to be true. The goal I’d been striving for was nearly within my grasp.

Though it was getting late in October, the leaves were barely beginning to turn color, showing sprinkled flecks of red and gold over the north Georgia Blue Ridge. My first night in Georgia was spent at Addis Gap lean-to where, by coincidence, I ran into Tommy Fellows, a guy I hadn’t seen since my days at Avondale High School. That night we were visited by what had to be the world’s biggest skunk. Fortunately, we kept our cool, and the skunk kept his.

Before noon the next day I was on the rocky summit of Tray Mountain from which I got one of the best views on the trail in Georgia. The sky was crystal clear, and I could see foothills instead of mountains as the Appalachians blended into the Piedmont region to the south.

During the next couple of days I spooked wild turkey and grouse as I walked along, something that had been occurring since I was in Virginia. I also caught a bad cold, my first ailment of the trip, which made me sound a little like Gregory Peck when I talked.

As I pulled into Neels Gap near Vogel State Park, I was feeling weak, and I couldn’t help but dread the long climb up Blood Mountain. I felt better after Mr. and Mrs. Earl Crosby, who operated the Walskyi Inn in Neels Gap, gave me a plate heaped with good hot food. Thanks to their generosity, I felt renewed as I hiked Blood full stride, never taking a break.

While sitting upon a huge boulder on Blood Mountain’s summit, I watched a sunset that would have made Peter Max eat his heart out. Then I hopped into my down sleeping bag wondering if all the tales I’d heard about Blood Mountain being haunted were true. According to the A.T.C. guidebook, Blood got its name from an apocryphal story about an Indian battle between the Cherokees and the Creeks. Mingled with the scratching noises of prowling skunks and mice that night were noises I would swear were made by the ghosts of Indians who met violent deaths in that battle.

Late the next day I pulled into Gooch Gap lean-to, and there to greet me was my old buddy, David Chandler. David had driven up from Atlanta to bring me a steak to eat on my last night before my bike ended. With him was Steve Skinner, an old friend who majored in physics at Georgia Tech. David had to go back the next morning, but Steve stayed and helped me cook the steak and some baked potatoes. Never again will a steak taste as good as that one.

10/20/73 A few minutes ago, a little before 6 p.m., my long walk came to an end as Steve and I took those last few steps to the summit of Springer Mountain. When I reached the summit, Steve clicked my picture and put a padlock on my adventure.

It was a beautiful day for hiking. We took a break beside the grassy field atop Hawk Mountain, and lounged on the rocks next to the little waterfall a few miles from Springer. South and

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10/20/73 A few minutes ago, a little before 6 p.m., my long walk came to an end as Steve and I took those last few steps to the summit of Springer Mountain. When I reached the summit, Steve clicked my picture and put a period on my adventure.

It was a beautiful day for hiking. We took a break beside the grassy field atop Hawk Mountain, and lounged on the rocks next to the little waterfall a few miles from the end. Despite Steve's goodnatured complaints about aching feet and blisters brought about by a cheap pair of hiking boots, we went striding up Springer Mountain's fern-covered summit in plenty of time to catch the sunset. Minded with the warm feeling of accomplishment was an equally poignant feeling of melancholy as I considered the sadness of having to tear myself away from such a genuine life-style.

Early the next morning the sadness would diminish slightly after I hiked down to Amicalola Falls State Park to be greeted by more than 30 handshaking, picture-taking friends and relatives. But as I fired up my trustworthy little camp stove for the last time during my final night under the stars, I knew my ambitions and dreams would never be the same after this 2,000-mile adventure, now over.