EXPLORATION

Volume 1, Number 4

Quarterly

97-7398 VIRGINIA [1590?]

We shall not cease

ABOVE: Testing the 2024 Toyota Tacoma in the foothills of Tucson's Rincon Mountains *(32°16'23.79"N, 110°33'12.823"W); Jonathan Hanson photo. OVERLEAF: The Great Sphinx of Giza and the Pyramid of Khafre, Egypt (29°58'30.853"N, 31°8'16.522"E); Jonathan Hanson photo. COVER: 1500s map of Virginia, John White, active 1585-1593 (author) and Theodor de Bry, 1528-1598 (engraver), from the New York Public Library (PURL).*

EXPLORATION Quarterly

Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 2025)

"WE SHALL NOT CEASE FROM EXPLORATION

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time." – T.S. Eliot

Welcome to ***Exploration Quarterly,*** the publication for those who do not cease to BE CURIOUS . . . to LEARN . . . to EXPLORE . . .

We define exploration in the broadest sense:

Exploration can be geographical.

Exploration can be fractal.

Exploration can be introspective.

Exploration can be expansive.

Exploration can be structured.

Exploration can be unplanned.

Exploration can happen every day.

Exploration is continuously seeking new places, new ideas, new knowledge.

Exploration is the essence of being human, what brought us from the forests into the savannahs, and beyond the horizons of Earth to the edges of the known universe.

We shall not cease from exploration.

Thank you for joining us.

Jonathan Hanson Roseann Hanson

Founders, Curators, Editors, Designers

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"There are those who follow maps, and those who make them."

– Alberto Villoldo (anthropologist)

Become the Maker

A guide for explorer-cartographers

by Roseann Hanson

To paraphrase Jonathan Strange, explorers do not stay at home dreaming over maps that others have made—they go forth and make maps, "the greatest of all epic poems" whose lines and colors show "the realization of great dreams" according to Gilbert H. Grosvenor (1875–1966), president of the National Geographic Society and first editor of *National Geographic* magazine.

Jonathan Strange is a fictional character (*Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell* by Susanna Clarke, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009) but the sentiment is absolutely true.

Geography is deeply enmeshed in our endeavors as explorers, naturalists, and travelers, so we absolutely should be including maps in our field notes and nature and travel journals. Maps literally ground us, they "are a way of organizing wonder" (naturalist and writer Peter Steinhart) and sharing that wonder so that we may develop a deeper understanding of nature, cultures other than our own, and the workings of the planet.

In this tutorial I hope to inspire you to create these "epic poems" with lines and colors as well as give you some useful tips and tricks for your cartography toolbox, so I have put forth four types of maps I feel best capture the subjects of our explorer community. You may use all four, or only one. Or you may experiment and create a hybrid of several. What matters is to find something that works for the story you are trying to tell, because every map tells a story. So before you choose a type of map to try, ask yourself:

1. "***What is the story I am trying to tell***?" Is it the story of a trip? A story of one special place? Some fascinating nature detail?

2. "***What media am I using (type of journal, paper, and size) and what is the best way to add a map***?" Is it a larger journal with plenty of space, or a small pocket-size? Is it watercolor paper (best for wet media) or smooth text stock (best for ink and colored pens or pencils)?

3. "***When are you creating this map***?" All in the field? Or do you have time to work on it back in a studio-type environment?

4. "***What kind of map best fits these parameters***?"

For each of the four types of maps I will present examples for inspiration and a "toolbox" of techniques and elements with which to execute similar maps.

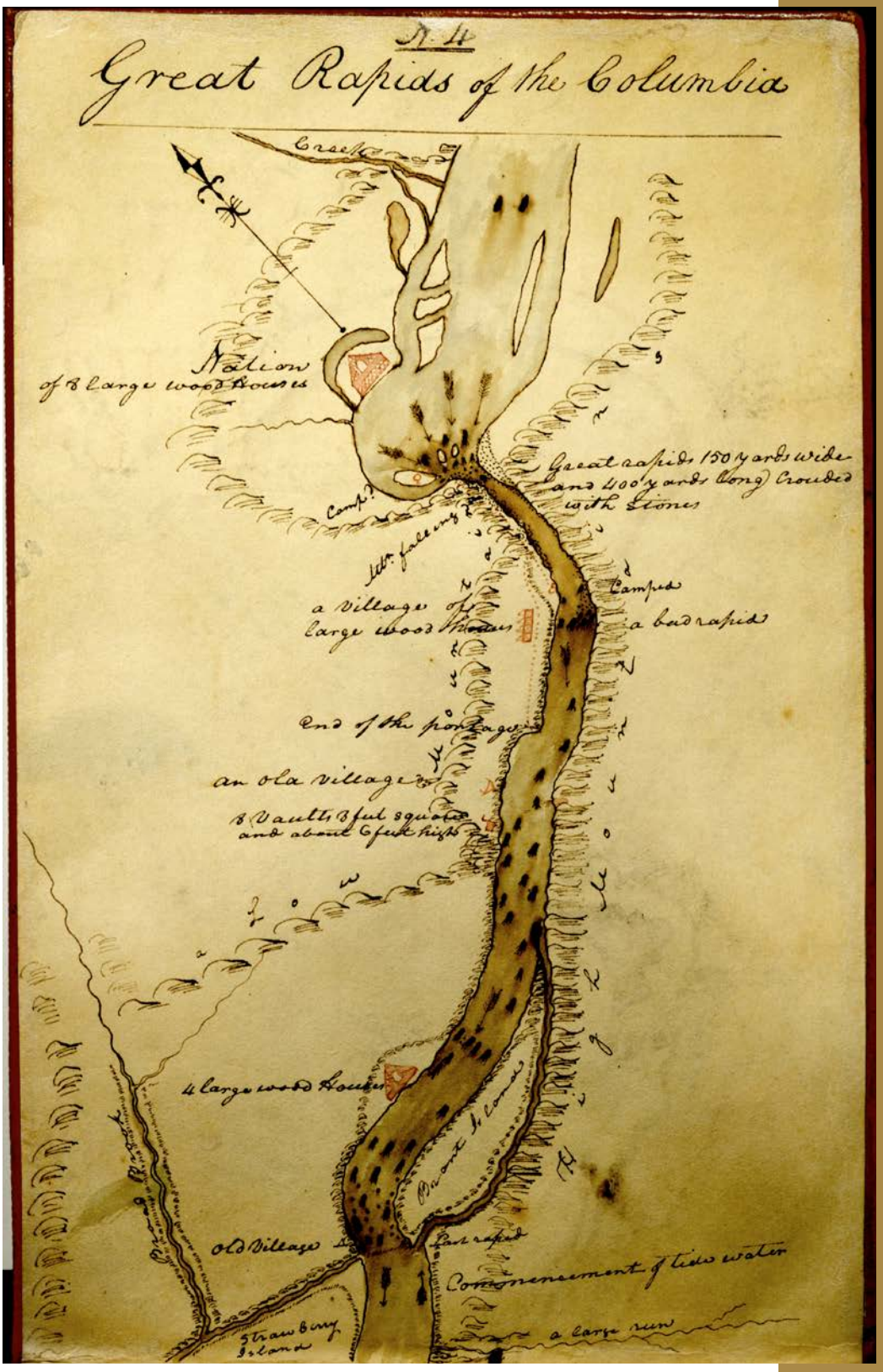
Expedition or Journey Map

This is a classic explorer's map to show an overview of the journey and its discoveries. Expedition maps could also have secondary (or tertiary, etc.) expanded-out sections for more details of important parts of the story—these could be "blown up" squares or a even a section that folds out of your journal page as an extension (see pages 30–32). Full or double-page spreads are commonly used with this type of map, such as the 1911 Gordon Home "Map of Roald Amundsen's South Pole Expedition" shown at left behind the text, and in full on page 22; William Clark's map of the Great Rapids of the Columbia River (right); as well as the running strip-type maps that jump pages (see examples, pages 30 to 32).

Expedition maps such as these share some important elements:

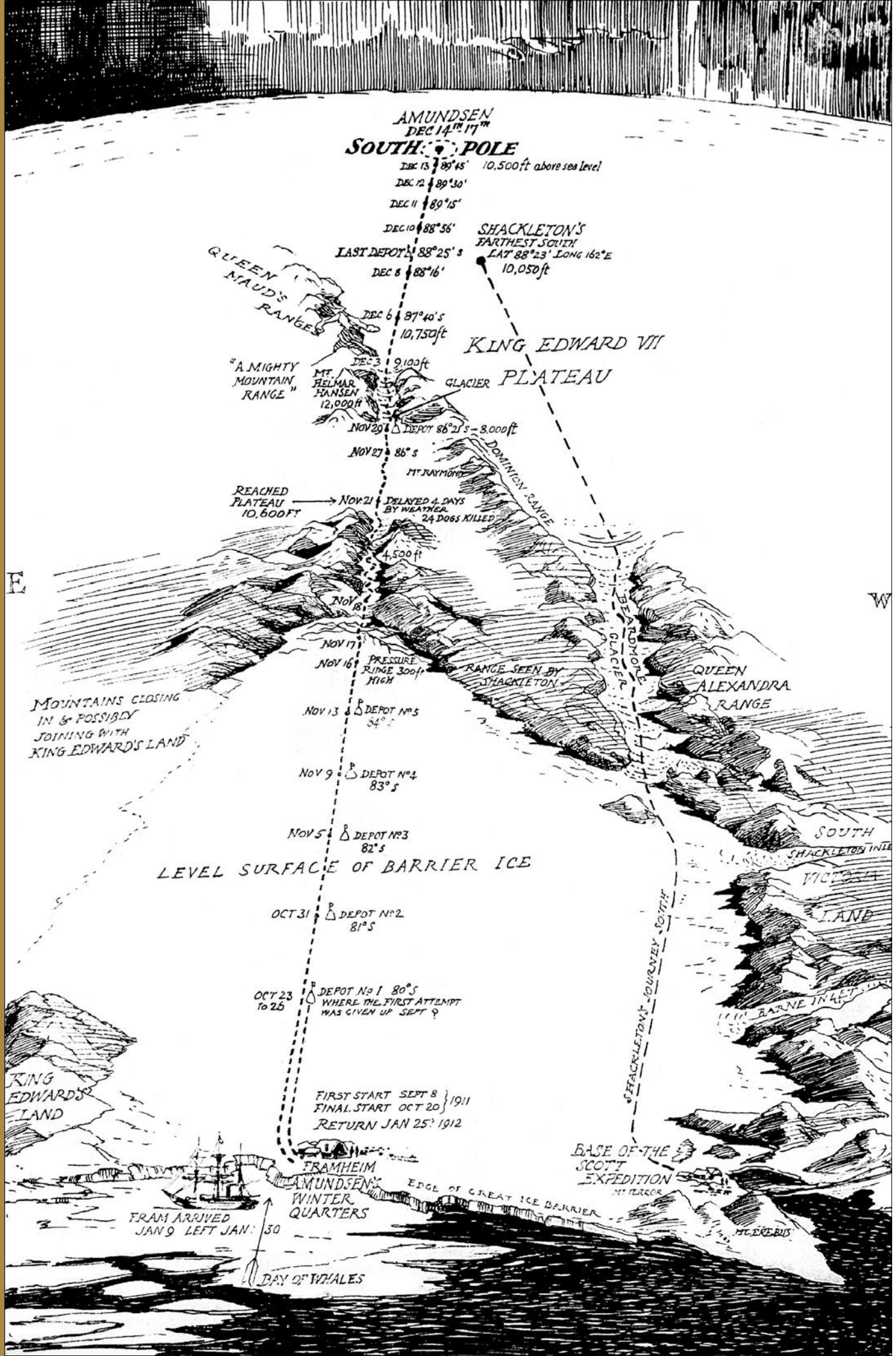
- A lexicon of visual symbols that represent landforms such as mountains, water features, roads, etc.
- A visual representation of a journey, expedition, or experience over time in a larger place.
- Data about the expedition or journey—camps, routes, dates, expedition benchmarks, and so forth.
- A distance scale.
- Indication of direction, often a compass rose or just a "north" indicator.

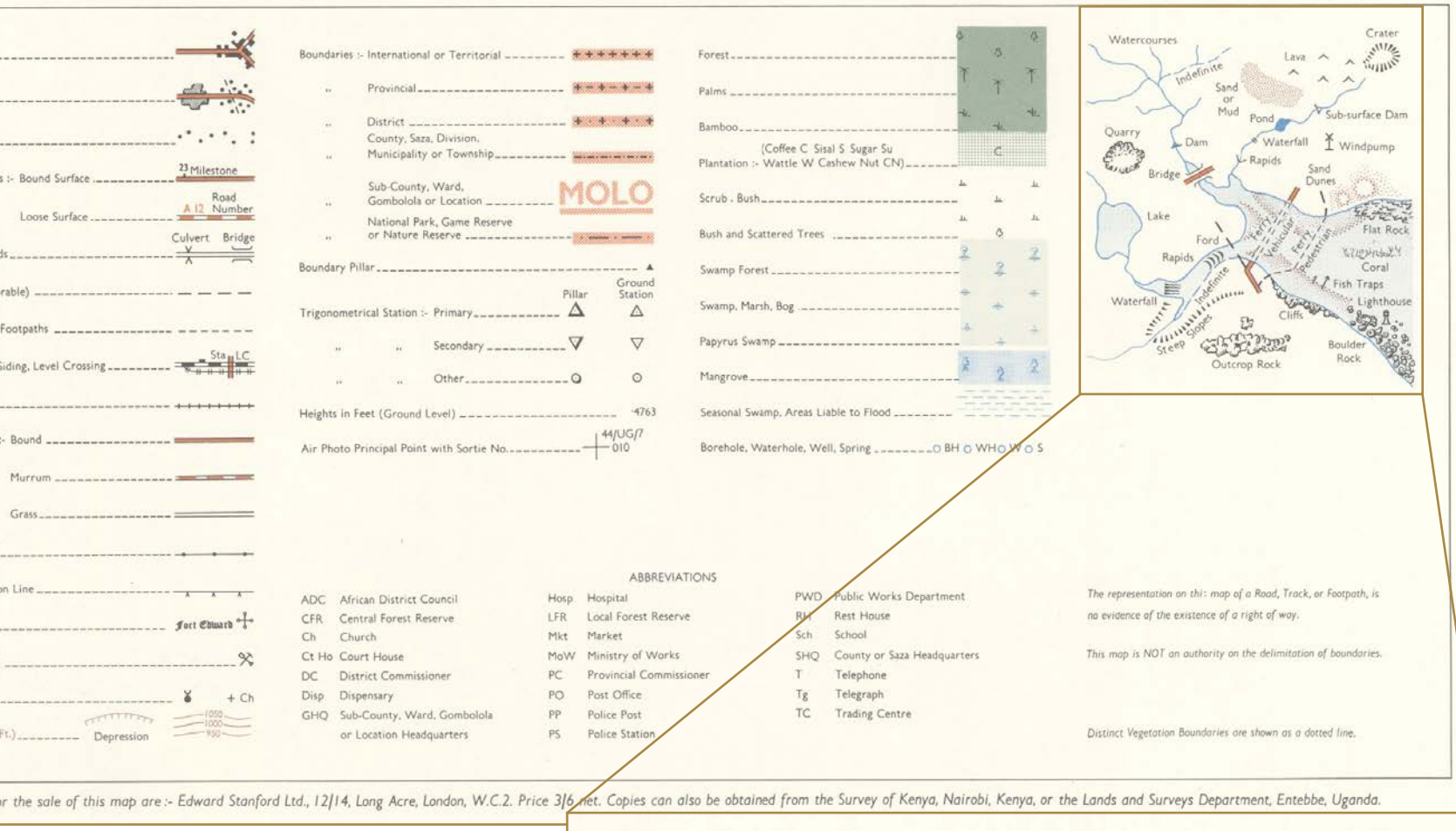
Take a look William Clark's map at right, which was created in the field during the Corps of Discovery in 1806. Thomas Jefferson bade the Corps to create detailed maps and extensive field notes to describe the lands they were exploring on behalf of the government of the United States of America. This particular map shows landforms such as "high mountains" and "low mountains," cataracts and rocks in



ABOVE: Great Rapids of the Columbia (Cascades) of the Columbia River, Washington and Oregon by William Clark, from his journal dated October 30, 1806, during the Corps of Discovery, Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806). Collection the Clark Family, Missouri Historical Society Archives.

LEFT AND PAGE 22: Gordon Home: Approximate Bird's-Eye View, Drawn from the First Telegraphic Account: Map of Roald Amundsen's South Pole Expedition 1911.


AMUNDSEN
DEC 14TH 17TH
SOUTH POLE
DEC 13 89°45' 10,500ft above sea level
DEC 12 89°30'
DEC 11 89°15'
DEC 10 88°56'
SHACKLETON'S FARTHEST SOUTH LAT 88°23' LONG 162°E 10,050ft
LAST DEPOT 88°25'S
DEC 8 88°16'
QUEEN MAUD'S RANGE
DEC 6 87°40'S 10,750ft
KING EDWARD VII PLATEAU
"A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN RANGE"
DEC 3 9,100ft
MT. HELMAR HANSEN 12,000ft
GLACIER
NOV 29 DEPOT 88°21'S – 8,000ft
NOV 27 86°S
MT RAYMOND
DOMINION RANGE
REACHED PLATEAU 10,600FT
NOV 21 DELAYED 4 DAYS BY WEATHER 24 DOGS KILLED
4,500 ft
E
W
NOV 18
NOV 17
NOV 16 PRESSURE RIDGE 300ft HIGH
RANGE SEEN BY SHACKLETON
BEARDMORE GLACIER
QUEEN ALEXANDRA RANGE
MOUNTAINS CLOSING IN & POSSIBLY JOINING WITH KING EDWARD'S LAND
NOV 13 DEPOT Nº5 84°S
NOV 9 DEPOT Nº4 83°S
NOV 5 DEPOT Nº3 82°S
SOUTH
SHACKLETON INLET
LEVEL SURFACE OF BARRIER ICE
VICTORIA LAND
OCT 31 DEPOT Nº2 81°S
OCT 23 to 26 DEPOT Nº1 80°S WHERE THE FIRST ATTEMPT WAS GIVEN UP SEPT 9
SHACKLETON'S JOURNEY SOUTH
BARNE INLET
KING EDWARD'S LAND
FIRST START SEPT 8 } 1911
FINAL START OCT 20 }
RETURN JAN 25TH 1912
FRAMHEIM
AMUNDSEN'S WINTER QUARTERS
BASE OF THE SCOTT EXPEDITION
MT TERROR
EDGE OF GREAT ICE BARRIER
FRAM ARRIVED JAN 9 LEFT JAN 30
MT EREBUS
BAY OF WHALES



...r the sale of this map are :- Edward Stanford Ltd., 12/14, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Price 3/6 net. Copies can also be obtained from the Survey of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya, or the Lands and Surveys Department, Entebbe, Uganda.

the river (marked by arrows and circles), where tidal water was noted, and locations and numbers of houses. Each of the features is represented by symbols—and this is something you will want to develop for your own expedition and journey maps.

Above, and expanded out at right, is an example of a symbol legend for the 1962 Survey of Kenya (images courtesy Stanford University Library in its "Depicting the Landscape" virtual exhibit). Note the simple and clear symbols used to depict rock outcrops, steep slopes, waterfalls, rapids, sand dunes, cliffs, and boulders. These symbols are the language you will develop for your own journey depending on the terrain—it's a fun excercise to create your own legend with representations of grassland, forests, tall mountains, low hills, dunes, and water features, for example.

Once you develop your own lexicon of symbols, practice using them in made-up maps so you become comfortable with them—and like them. If not, make adjustments.

King of the Wild Frontier

by Dexter Oliver

"Born on a mountain top in Tennessee,
Greenest state in the land of the free
Raised in the woods so's he knew ev'ry tree,
Kilt him a b'ar when he was only three
Davy, Davy Crockett, king of the wild frontier."

– From *The Ballad of Davy Crockett* (music by George Bruns, lyrics by Thomas W. Blackburn)

Walt Disney and Fess Parker, the actor who played Davy Crockett in five television shows that were parlayed into two movies, used the catchy theme song and an international marketing campaign to create a 1950s phenomenon that became known as "The Crockett Craze." While buckskin clothes and a .40 caliber flintlock were part of the allure, it was the coonskin cap with its dangling ringed tail that came to represent rugged frontier independence and self-reliance to a generation of boys and girls. They just had to have that iconic headgear; even girls had their own version in white fur called the "Polly Crockett,"

named after Davy's first wife. At the height of the craze, an average of 5,000 coonskin hats were sold worldwide *every day*.

The ubiquitous common raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) that provided the raw material for such a fashion statement had, in fact, been doing so for a very long time. The gray, brown, white, and black prime winter pelts of this 10-20 pound omnivore had been used in robes, clothing, and to keep a person's head warm since Native Americans were the only inhabitants of North and Central America. European immigrants were quick to pick up on the value of such furs and they used the easily obtainable pelts in the same fashion.

During the French and Indian War of 1754-1763, Rogers' Rangers—a Province of New Hampshire company of soldiers attached to the British Army—were known to modify their uniform caps with raccoon fur or just use the much warmer complete fur covering. Ten years before Davy Crockett was born (his birth date being August 17, 1786), two of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, were in France trying to drum up

UPPER LEFT: Fess Parker's coonskin hat (archives of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution). LOWER LEFT: Portrait of Benjamin Franklin in a Fur Cap (1777, etching and engraving by Augustin de Saint-Aubin after a drawing by Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Library and Archives). TOP: Screenshot from the 1915 movie *Martyrs of the Alamo or The Birth of Texas* (public domain, Wikipedia). ABOVE: U.S. Postal Service Davy Crockett stamp, 1967 issue (scan uploaded to Wikipedia by Gwillhickers; art in public domain).

PRE-DRIVE CHECKS

How not to break down in the first place

by Graham Jackson

A pre-drive check revealed a startling sight under their Land Cruiser Troopy a day before Jonathan and Roseann Hanson were booked on the ferry to Tasmania. A dishonest mechanic in Sydney had used a conterfeit “Toyota” seal for the camshaft (no doubt from China—Australia and Africa are awash in such fakes), resulting in a nearly immediate failure and copious loss of engine oil. If missed, the leak could have resulted in a dangerously low oil level and pressure on a long drive in a remote location. Fortunately Mitchell River Diesel Services took the ailing Troopy in right away and had it repaired in time for the sailing.

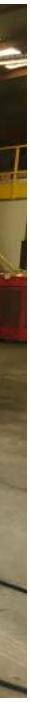
Standing by the side of the highway in Mexico in an area notorious for cartel activity, I had other things on my mind. Well, on my mind and in my hand. The entire rear body and engine wiring harnesses of my beloved Land Rover Defender was now a combined, snarled bird’s nest of ripped and shredded wires. Yes, you read that correctly: I was holding the wiring harnesses in my hand; the Defender was going nowhere. I had a moment to reflect that even the most experienced and competent people can make mistakes. How many classes had I taught over the years on how to avoid this very scenario? (Probably closing in on a hundred). And yet here I was, a victim of of hypocrisy and not practicing what I preach with a very broken vehicle very far from home in a very undesirable location.

I reflected on the squeak that had been coming from the Defender for the past several days. On the fact that I thought I knew what it was (the bonnet catch) and how it did not really match a bonnet catch squeak because

it wasn't related to engine vibration. How I had done everything I teach not to do: make assumptions, ignore issues, cave in to hubris and fall into the trap of thinking I know better.

Overconfidence, in this case, can be just as dangerous as under-confidence, which is something common to people just starting their journey into overlanding. This is normally exhibited as a reluctance to get out there into the wild for fear of something happening, getting stranded and having things go from fun to relationship-destroying or life-critical very quickly. Gaining confidence comes through education . . . read on.

The subject matter here—pre-drive checks (PDCs)—comes from and incorporates a lot of different aspects of remote vehicle travel. One critical cornerstone of expedition and overland travel is mechanical sympathy. This is the concept, coined by Tom Sheppard, of driving and interacting with your vehicle in a way that respects, understands and exploits, but does not over-tax or abuse the capabilities of the vehicle. Driving on expeditions and overland trips requires a change in mindset from daily driving or even four-wheeling: always pay attention to the vehicle. Look at it, listen to it, take pictures of it, become intimately familiar with it. If you ever needed an excuse to buy the vehicle you want rather than the practical vehicle you need, consider this: the vehicle you want will be the vehicle you love. If you park at the grocery store, get out and walk away without looking back, you have the wrong vehicle. The vehicle you love will be the one you take care of.



What is it?

PDCs. Called other things like 'First Parades' (by the British military) or 'Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services' (by the U.S. military), I choose the term Pre-Drive Checks (PDCs) following the lead of pilots who routinely do something very similar called Pre-Flight Checks (PFCs).

In its most basic form, a PDC assesses a vehicle before use for the day to ascertain if there are any mechanical issues that need to be dealt with, and to ensure the vehicle is fit-for-purpose for the task ahead. We are looking for something that has changed since the last time we did a PDC (usually the day before). This is not a mechanical tear-down, and it is not something you need a lot of mechanical knowledge to perform, though the more you have the easier and quicker it will be. The key is to be very familiar with your particular vehicle and its load and systems.

The process is similar for any regular vehicle, from a Subaru Forester to a Ford F450. There are just some details that differ with regard to what systems each vehicle employs.

Why?

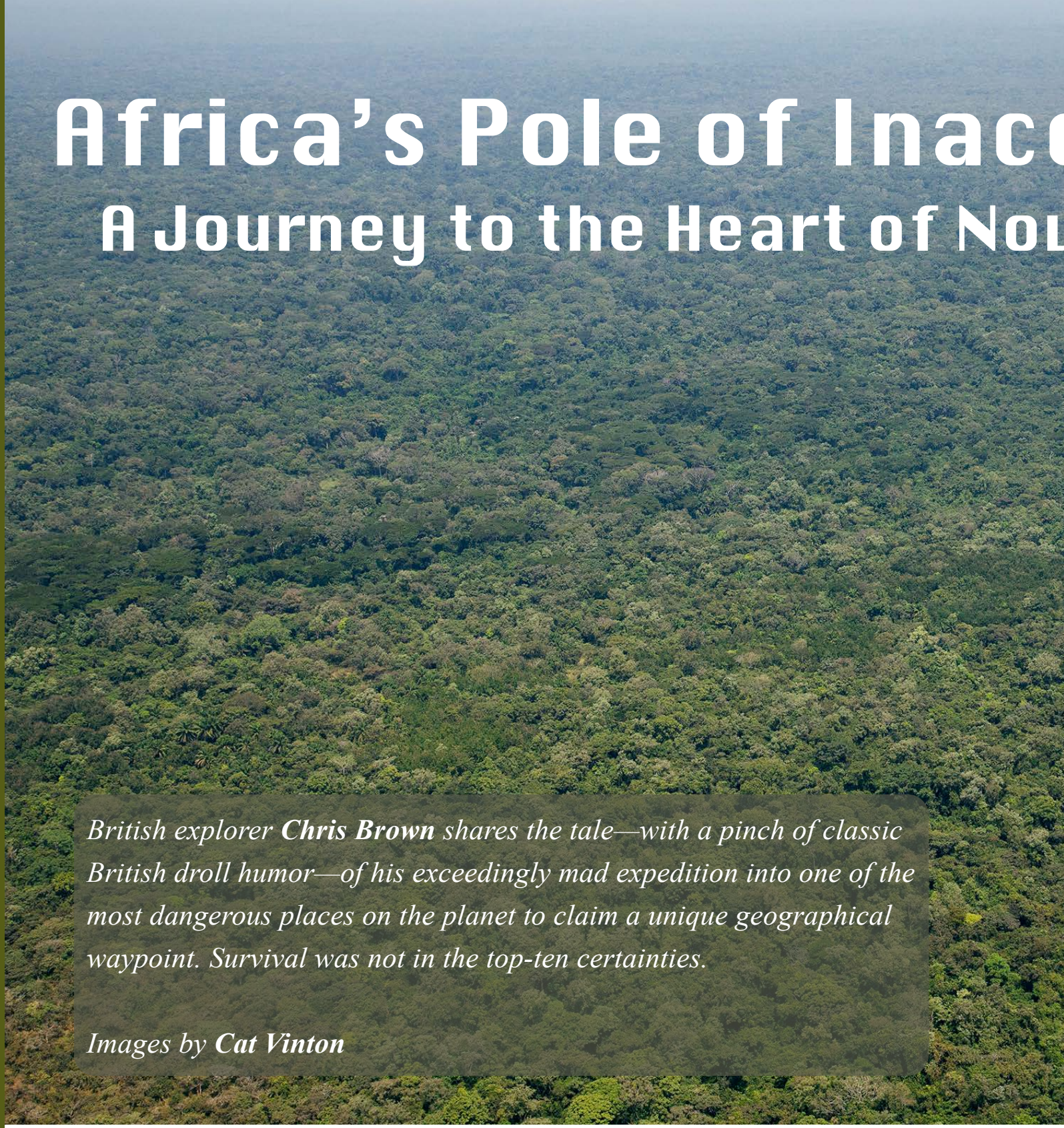
Why perform PDCs? On a remote expedition or long overland trip, in many cases your vehicle is your home and your lifeline. You rely on it getting you out to experience the vast wilderness (or exotic foreign land) and then to bring you back to civilization again. Remote travel is arduous and tough on heavily laden vehicles as well as on accessories added for homely comforts or load carrying. It is far better to find an issue as it begins: find the leak that is starting, find a crack before something breaks, find the loose bolt rather than the missing bolt, find the loose lug nuts before the wheel leaves the vehicle under speed. Or, in my example above, investigate the new squeak before the constant velocity joint explodes and rips the wiring harness out. Finding a prop shaft U-joint or CV-joint going bad can lead to a fairly easy fix; remove the prop shaft and drive the vehicle in 2WD until you can replace the damaged item. Even with minimal mechanical knowledge, finding a problem like this early allows driving to a mechanic (and even a joint going bad can last a long time if driven carefully) where they will easily be able to get you back on the road. Compare that with trying to get a vehicle moving again after its wiring harness has been ripped out along with a destroyed prop shaft far from any help, and the true value of the PDC becomes self-evident.

When?

The first consideration for PDCs is when to perform them. Opinions differ and there is no perfect answer. On his 1975 crossing of North Africa, Tom Sheppard had his team do PDCs in the evening after they stopped to camp. There is a lot of merit to this as events are still fresh in the mind, issues found can be addressed immediately without delaying travel and early starts are more convenient.

Africa's Pole of Inacc

A Journey to the Heart of Nor



*British explorer **Chris Brown** shares the tale—with a pinch of classic British droll humor—of his exceedingly mad expedition into one of the most dangerous places on the planet to claim a unique geographical waypoint. Survival was not in the top-ten certainties.*

*Images by **Cat Vinton***

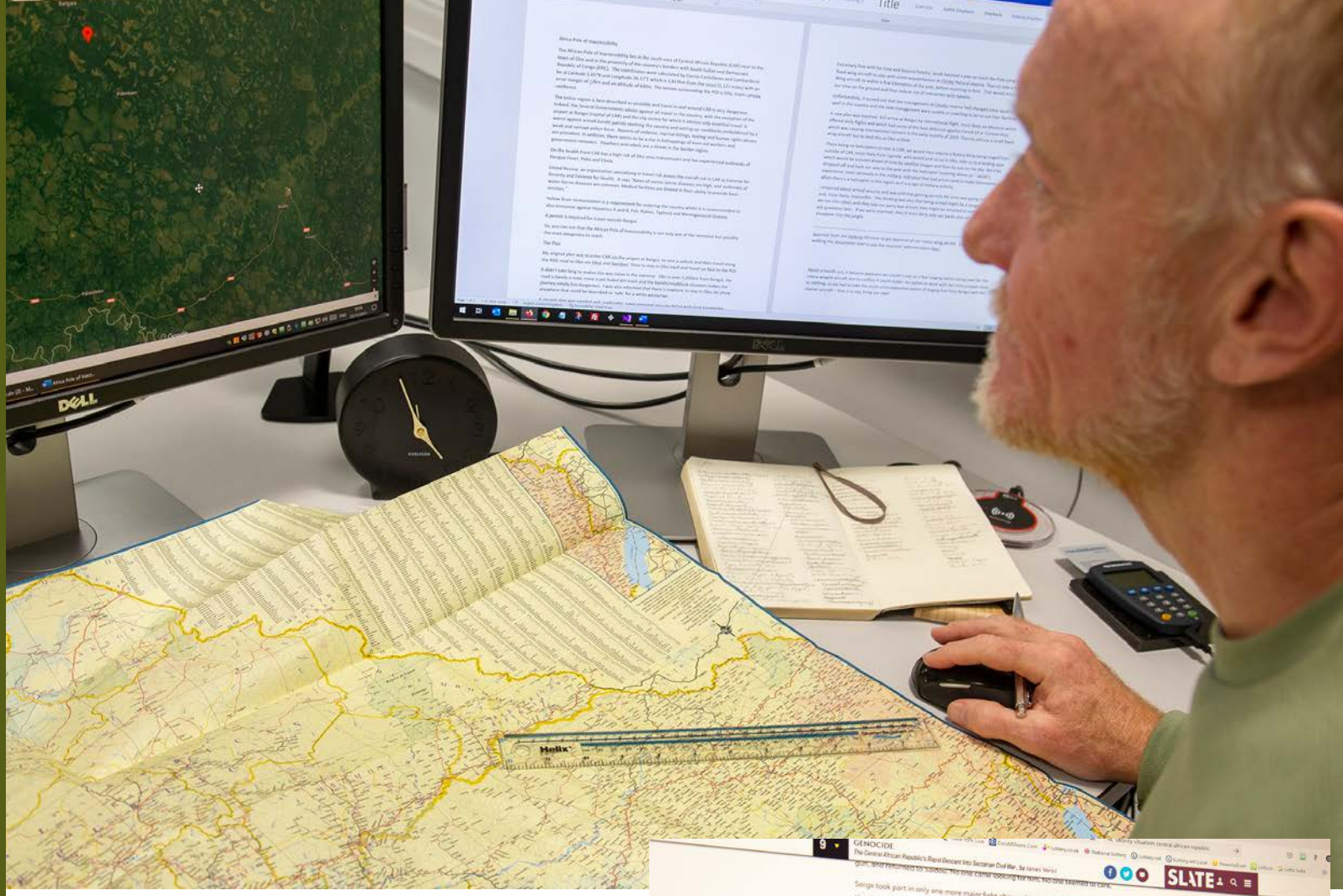
Deep in the southeastern corner of the Central African Republic (CAR), a little-known geographical Easter egg beckons the adventurous: the African Pole of Inaccessibility. This specific location, first calculated by geographers Garcia-Castellanos and Lombardo (see sidebar) lies at latitude 5.65°N and longitude 26.17°E, a staggering 1,814 kilometres (1,127 miles) from the nearest coastline. At an elevation of 640 meters and in the middle of nearly impenetrable triple-canopy rainforest, it is an epitome of remoteness. Yet, its isolation isn't just geographical; it's fire-walled by an environment fraught with extreme danger.

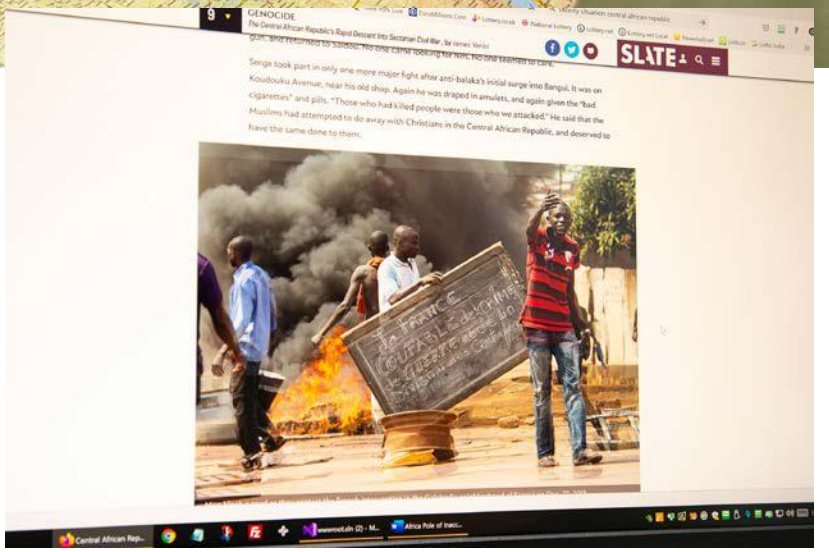
cessibility
where

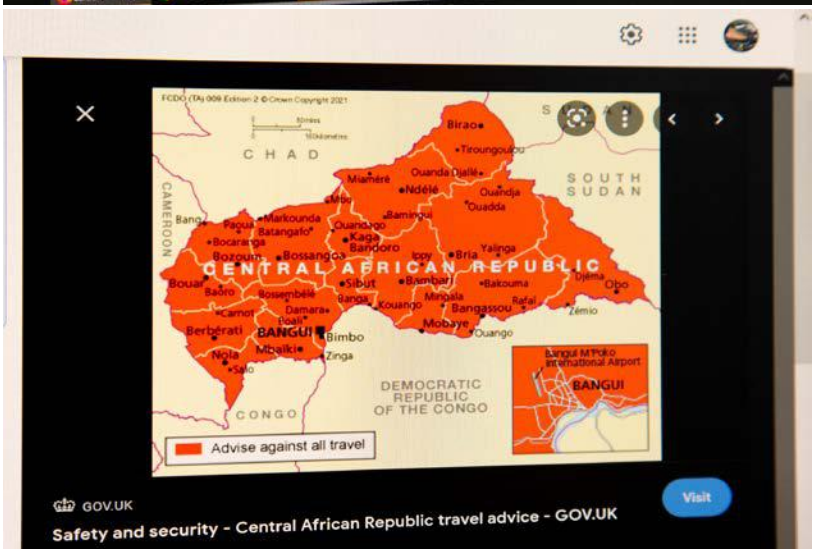
The Poles of Inaccessibility are the locations on Earth farthest away from the ocean, or, in the case of the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility and the Northern Pole of Inaccessibility, from land. Daniel Garcia-Castellanos and Umberto Lombardo are geographical scholars who developed an algorithm that allowed them to calculate the Poles of Inaccessibility for each continent plus two oceanic poles (see page 49); they published their work in the *Scottish Geographical Journal*, Volume 123, Issue 3 (September 2007).

Left: The African Pole of Inaccessibility lies in the center of a dense wilderness of triple-canopy rainforest with few settlements and—at the time of this expedition—more than a few poachers, rebel militias, bandits, and shadowy mercenary groups. Above: Google Earth image.

The entire region surrounding the African Pole of Inaccessibility is a paragon of instability. Governments worldwide uniformly advise against travel to anywhere in CAR, citing armed bandit patrols roaming the country and setting up roadblocks, emboldened by a weak and corrupt police force. Reports of violence, looting, and kidnappings—including those of aid



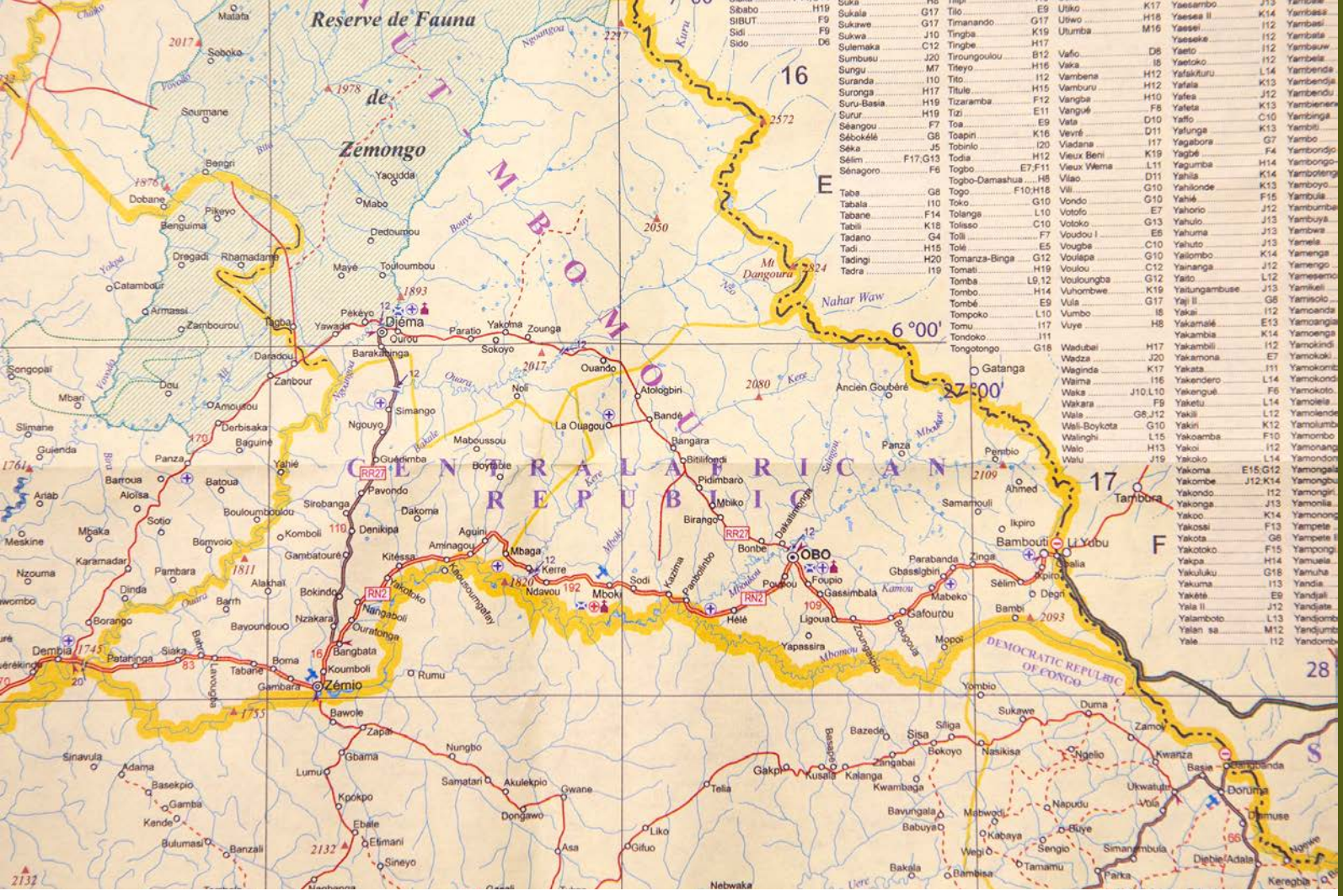




workers and government officials—have become grimly routine. Poachers, rebel militias, and shadowy mercenary groups (we all became familiar with the Wagner Group at the beginning of the Ukraine invasion) further haunt the lawless borders near South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

On top of all this, a host of health risks—from Zika virus and dengue fever to Ebola and polio—makes CAR one of the most dangerous destinations on the planet.

It's this forbidding reputation that left the African Pole of Inaccessibility, well, inaccessible. But as an adventurer and explorer, the challenge was irresistible. How could I overcome these serious dangers and become the first recorded person to visit the pole? Apart from being a requirement in my quest to be the first person to visit all of the planet's Poles of Inaccessibility, it would give me an edge over those other mad explorers with the same aim.



From Naïve Optimism to Stark Reality

At a glance, the plan seemed straightforward enough. I'd fly to Bangui, CAR's capital, rent a vehicle, and drive the RN2 highway to Obo, the nearest town to the pole. From there, I'd rely on Google Maps to guide me down a jungle track before setting off on foot. Perhaps with a little local assistance, I'd reach the pole by mid-afternoon.

It didn't take long for this bubble of optimism to burst. Obo is over 1,200 kilometres from Bangui, and the so-called "highway" is little more than a ribbon of potholed dirt. Banditry, roadblocks, and lawlessness would turn the journey into a suicide mission. Apparently the most likely outcome would see me being kidnapped before I'd even left the capital, then held in a wooden cage for ransom. If that wasn't forthcoming, I'd be sold to ISIS for their political aims. Nice.

Furthermore, I discovered that Obo lacked even the most rudimentary accommodation for travelers, let alone anything resembling safety for a Westerner. As a red-headed northern European, there was no way I'd avoid attracting attention or pass as a local.

Clearly, I needed a new plan—and a personal security detail with intimate local knowledge.

Searching for Allies

Hiring security personnel for a journey into CAR turned out to be its own labyrinthine ordeal. Most private security firms wouldn't touch the region with a ten-foot pole. Even hardened ex-SAS operators politely declined, citing the lack of reliable intelligence on the ground. "You need someone with experience of African operations," I was told.

Bearing that in mind, I turned to a group of South African mercenaries—as one does—but their response was equally sobering: "Too dangerous."

The African Pole of Inaccessibility was starting to feel truly inaccessible. Then, a stroke of luck came my way.

2024 TOYOTA TACOMA TRD OFF-ROAD

BY JONATHAN HANSON

Images & Videography by Jonathan and Roseann Hanson

When I finally read for sure that an "all new," redesigned Toyota Tacoma would be introduced for the 2024 model year, I remember thinking three things in rapid sequence: *Pleeease* let it have rear disc brakes. *Pleeease* let it have a fully boxed chassis. And please, *Pleeease*, God, don't let it look like the new Tundra.

When the first photos and details were released I was overjoyed to discover that my prayers were answered on all three counts, and more. Available coil-spring rear suspension and front anti-roll bar disconnect? Huzzah! An engine lineup with a shared torque peak at a proper, truck-like 1,700 rpm? Had someone from Toyota actually been reading my rants? No matter—I was suddenly more excited than I'd been in years to try a new vehicle.

I missed the first official media launch—not a big deal, as those are understandably orchestrated to show off the best aspects of the vehicle while concealing the weak points. I was happy to wait until I could get one for a week, on home ground. Last August I did so, with a TRD Off-Road model—probably the top seller of the line—in "Crush Blue Metallic" with the deluxe TRD package.

(An intermission here: You might be wondering why I'm just publishing this when I drove the truck last August. In fact I did intend to publish it earlier, but started hearing reports of transmission failures in the new model, so I decided to wait to see if this was going to be another disaster on the level of the self-destructing Tundra V6. That is thankfully not so. Toyota is handling the affected transmissions on a case-by-case basis, and the issue has affected a very small percentage of trucks. See later discussion.

Let's get my initial hopes out of the way first, because to be frank a couple of the major improvements in the new Tacoma did nothing but bring the truck to parity with its competitors.

If you bought a new Tacoma as recently as 2023, it would have been equipped with drum brakes on the rear axle.

In terms of when this feature first appeared on motor vehicles, that truck might as well also have been furnished with acetylene headlamps and wood-spoked wheels. It was, quite literally, century-old technology—which Toyota reps assured us with straight faces was "*better off road!*" despite the fact that they and we all knew perfectly well it was not. It was a cost-saving holdover, period, and would have bothered me a lot less if the company had admitted it rather than insulting my intelligence. Thankfully we now get modern brakes.

Also good news is the *return* to a proper, fully boxed chassis—found on Toyota pickups from the 1970s all the way through the last of the first-generation Tacomas in 2004, when the company regressed to an inferior partially boxed design. Fully boxed chassis have been standard on all Nissan, Ford, Chevy, and Ram trucks for years if not decades. My pet theory is that Toyota abandoned the concept after the rust issues with boxed chassis in the first-generation Tacoma. But if your boxed chassis develops rust issues that's a problem with your execution, not with boxed construction in general. Dare I suggest that cost-savings might have entered into the equation? In any case, I remember all too well our 2012 Tacoma Extra Cab and its open-channel frame under the bed. With a Four Wheel Camper mounted you could hear all the door weatherstripping squeaking as the structure flexed over rough trails. I once posed it with a front wheel off the ground for an article about locking differentials; when I tried to get out I almost could not get the door open, there was so much body flex. With no camper mounted the truck was fine, but loaded to GVWR it twisted like a 1960s F150. By contrast, our earlier 2000 Tacoma Extra Cab with a boxed chassis never showed any stress carrying a Four Wheel Camper.

The Chassis

Since we're on the subject of the chassis, let's start there on the 2024 Tacoma.

If you're not familiar with the nomenclature, this chassis is the TNGA-F (for Toyota New Global Architecture, F series), which is also used with variations in dimensions and material specifications on the 4Runner, Land Cruiser, Tundra, Sequoia, and Lexus GX and LX models. (The other half-dozen TGNA chassis are all unibody construction.) There are obvious cost advantages to having one basic chassis serve several models; fortunately, all indications are that this is a good one. In addition to being fully boxed, Toyota employs a material architecture known as TWB, for Tailor-Welded Blank, along with a sophisticated welding process called Dejima. In short, this allows combining sections of the chassis structure of various thicknesses, from around 3 to 5mm, and various tensile strengths as well, depending on where rigidity is needed and where the chassis experiences less stress. The assembly is accomplished with a ten-axis laser welder that can follow complex curves and join different gauges of steel edge-on so cleanly that the joint is invisible once painted. The result, in the current Tundra, is a 20-percent increase in torsional rigidity with a ten-percent *decrease* in weight compared to

2022 Lexus LX TNGA F-platform chassis (Toyota image).

the previous open-channel frame. I expect the figures to be similar in the Tacoma. In addition, the chassis is well-protected against corrosion with a factory-applied interior wax sealer, particularly in the center section of the chassis, the lowest area.

The base models of the new Tacoma employ leaf springs at the rear axle; higher-level models such as the this one and the TRD Pro move up to coil springs and trailing arms. This will be excellent for ride and compliance, as well as for the ease of upgrading should you wish to carry a camper. It's managed side-to-side by a panhard rod—not as sophisticated an arrangement as the Ranger Raptor's Watt's link, which keeps the axle precisely centered, but very, very few drivers could possibly notice the difference. The original Range Rover used a Watt's link, and no one ever complained about it.

Enough engineering for the moment. Let's get to the important stuff, such as . . .

Styling

It all starts in front, and here I was hugely relieved to see the Tacoma display an evolution of the previous model rather than a mini-me version of the Tundra. In place of the Tundra's monstrous cliff of a grille that's just barely too short for B.A.S.E. jumping, the Tacoma's grille is neatly bifurcated in the middle with a body-color cross-piece that divides radiator opening from bumper, resulting in a far sleeker appearance. There are still some overly aggressive creases and edges, along with rather naff ersatz vent plates under the headlamps and pointless (?) open slots in the front fender flare, but that's nitpicking. Thankfully the TRD Off Road is not burdened with the ghastly fake hood scoop of the TRD Pro, which Toyota made even more in-your-face than the previous Tacoma's fake hood scoop by adding full-length ridges in the hood alongside. The only thing more awful than fake hood scoops are fake convertible tops like you could get on mid-eighties Cadillacs—but you expect useless frippery on an '84 El Dorado. *Pleeease*, Toyota? Okay, pushing my luck, I know. On the other hand, I like the inset rectangular micro-fog lamps, and the simple hexagonal pattern of the grille itself. General impression: favorable.

From the side the Tacoma is trim and handsome, especially the crisp fender lines repeated by the plastic flares, and the stylish lip at the back top of the cab mimicked by the top of the tailgate. The previous generation's front end had an odd bull-nosed look I never got used to; it's gone on the new one. The belt line on the windows continues back to the top of the bed. Perfect. I could have done without the

extra horizontal crease in the lower half of the doors, but that's personal preference. Not much to say about the back; the tail lamps do mimic the Tundra's but they're not bad. I still think the Ford Ranger is the cleanest and best looking of the current crop of mid-size trucks, but the Tacoma holds its own with the Colorado/Canyon and Frontier. Whew.

Interior

On sliding into the driver's seat the first thing one notices is the impressive 60-inch flatscreen screwed atop the dashboard.

Okay, I'm exaggerating, but seriously, the screen—actually 14 inches—is so dominant I had to remember to look and make sure all the other interior components were there. Steering wheel? Ah, there it is. Instrument cluster? Check. Shifter? Pedals? Yep.

To be serious, as long as one is going to have a giant screen I much preferred the high and horizontal orientation of the Tacoma's screen to, for example, the lower, vertical placement of the Ranger's 12-inch screen. While the latter is more incorporated into the dash structure, its "verticality"—to borrow the wince-inducing term Land Rover's Gerry McGovern kept using to describe the new Defender—breaks up the design. The Tacoma's placement suits the overall horizontal layout of the dash, and despite the placement does not block forward vision. (Note: "lesser" Tacoma models have smaller screens.)

With the factory navigation queued up the map is of extremely large scale and can be read with just a glance away from the road. (With amusement I note the friends who loathe big touch-screens, yet will happily stick a 10-inch Garmin Tread XL to the middle of their windshield on a RAM mount—obviously a far more sophisticated system for backcountry navigation, but still . . .) Also, unlike the Ford, the Toyota's HVAC functions are all controlled by knobs and switches rather than touch-screen operations—ditto the Tacoma's rear diff lock and front anti-roll bar disconnect. The Ranger's dual diff locks are annoyingly accessed through one of the screen menus. The Tacoma's touch functions do work well and quickly, and the resolution is very good.

However, if, like me, you object to operating a touch-screen while driving, on the unimpeachable grounds of safety, you can use voice command instead for many operations. With either a "Hey, Toyota," or a quick push on the talking-face button on the right of the steering wheel, you can adjust the climate control and entertainment, ask for a weather forecast, set a destination in the navigation, ask for

The Notebook: A meanderi

"No camper, be he hunter, fisherman, scout, naturalist, explorer, prospector, soldier, or lumberman, should go into the woods without a notebook and hard lead pencil (Fig. 242)."
– *American Boys' Handy Book of Camp-Lore and Woodcraft* by Dan Beard (1920)

ng tale of myth, romance, life, and love

by Roseann Hanson

The myth goes something like this, beginning as myths do with fact, and then morphing as they do into legend:

The famous travel writer and novelist Bruce Chatwin—*In Patagonia* being one of the most superb travelogues ever written, and *On the Black Hill* one of the finest novels—filled dozens of oilcloth-covered notebooks during his extensive wanderings. In his 1987 book, *The Songlines*, Chatwin described his "Paris notebooks" and said that they were known colloquially as "carnets moleskines." A carnet is a notebook, and moleskine the Frenchification of the English word for a thick cotton fabric named moleskin for its texture, dense like the fur of a mole. "Each time I went to Paris, I would buy a fresh supply," wrote Chatwin.

Bruce Chatwin

Random House author image

Chatwin's notebooks were made by a small family bindery in Tours, but alas the owner died and the business with him. Chatwin was bereft, because apparently at this time, the mid-1980s, these classic 5.5 x 8-inch carnets were actually getting very hard to source. Such simple perfect-bound hardcover books made in Europe from high-quality paper, often graced by a ribbon placemarker and sometimes an elastic closure, were a perfect utilitarian notebook style that had been made for centuries.

Look at historical notebooks through time and you'll spot very similar ones used by Mark Twain, Beethoven, Meriwether Lewis, and Charles Darwin (though the latter two favored a top-bound style rather than side-bound). Matisse and Picasso and Hemingway apparently also used very similar notebooks to Chatwin's carnets moleskines.

Now enter mythology.

Searching for iconic products to rebrand for the Italian luxury gift company Modo & Modo, designer Maria Sebregondi hit on the idea of bringing back Chatwin's "lost" notebook and in 1997 (eight years after Chatwin died) they trademarked the name Moleskine—and the rest is history. Except it's not. Most people assume the iconic notebooks made by Moleskine are the same European make and exact style as those used by Chatwin . . . and Hemingway . . . and Matisse . . . And you could be forgiven for thinking so, because the 75-word "story card" that comes with each Moleskine tells you this myth, exactly, calling it "an exact reproduction" and extolling its heritage as beloved of great writers and artists. In his exceptional 2023 book *The Notebook: The History of Thinking on Paper*, Roland Allen goes into much greater detail about what he calls "one of the most effective pieces of commercial copywriting of all time" being a lie. Tickling our romantic fancies, the story card cleverly conflates usefulness with romantic ideal and emotion, name-dropping the aforementioned famous Englishman, American, and Frenchman, hence cementing in the buyer's mind the connection between quality writing and art and quality European notebooks you must have. Allen points out the company conveniently leaves off that the notebook has always, in fact, been made in China.

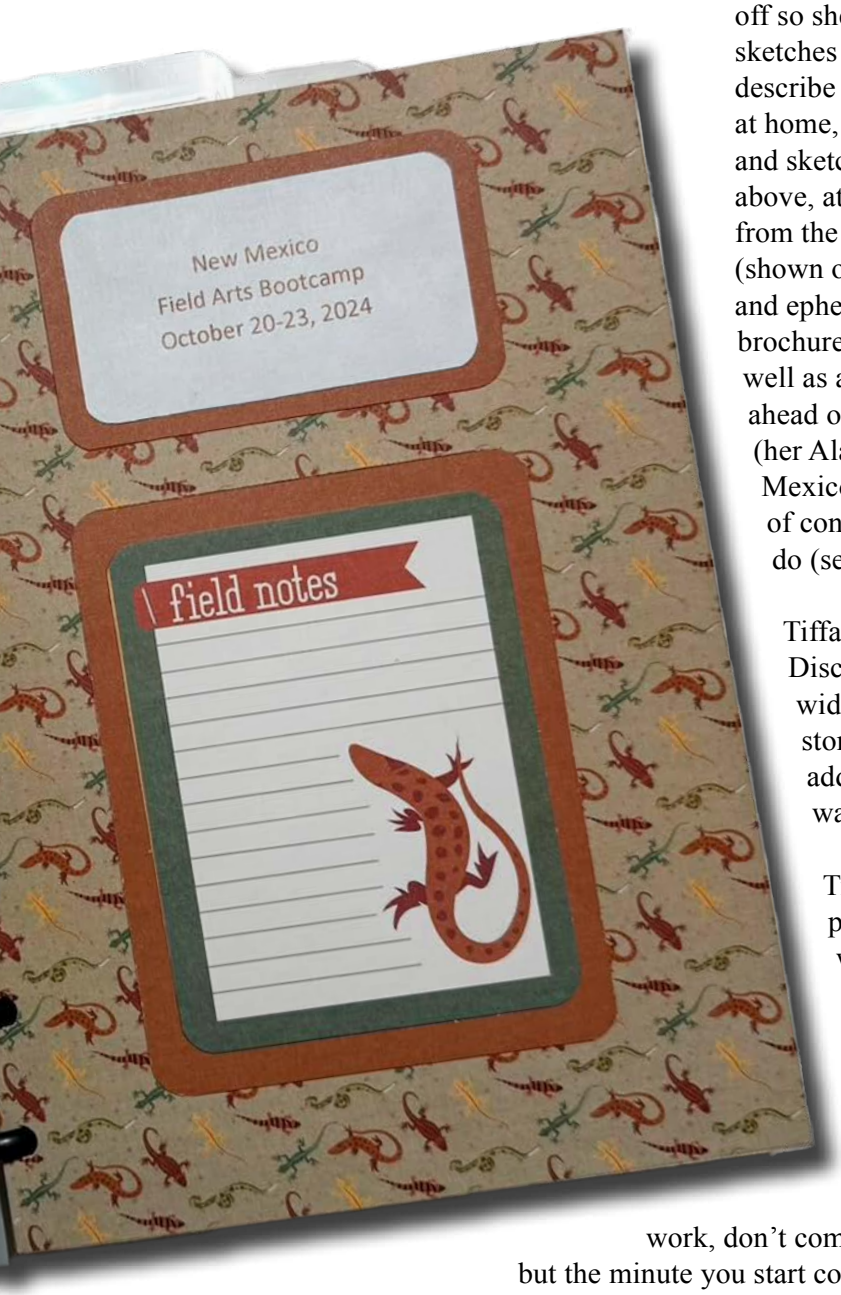
So good was Modo & Modo and Sebregondi's marketing copy and branding that even when Barnes and Noble had their own generic notebooks made in the same Chinese factory from the same paper with the same cover and elastic band and

Tiffany Levy

Nature journaler Tiffany Levy explores the world near and far with a cleverly designed modular field journal system that gives her plenty of room for creativity and flexibility.

Based in the Pacific Northwest, in the foothills of the Cascades not far from Mt. St. Helens, Tiffany Levy has been a journal keeper for most of her life—since she was around 10 years old. While much of that time her journals were more art-focused, about 10 years ago she decided to "get serious" about not only a regular practice but to add more nature notes and metadata. Today her journals combine three types of journaling— nature, art, and travel—seemlessly blended with creative illustrations and ephemera.

She favors a two-journal system—inspired by British nature journaling instructor Alex Boon: her small one (6 1/2" x 4 1/2") fits in a pocket and is for quick notes, messy sketches, jottings, and impressions. This takes the pressure off so she can focus on just being present, not fussing with perfect sketches and color—though she might make color swatches or describe colors and take photographs with her phone. Later, back at home, in camp, or a hotel, she refines her thoughts, observations, and sketches into the larger "main" journal (8 1/2" x 6")—see above, at work at a lodge in Alaska. Often she will take pages from the small journal to add as interleaves in the main journal (shown on pages 72–83). She adds photos from her mini printer, and ephemera such as leaves and flowers as well as parts of maps, brochures, menus, and other memorabilia. As a keen traveler as well as a lover of lists and organization, she prepares her journals ahead of time with matching customized covers for each journal (her Alaska journal covers feature coniferous trees, while her New Mexico journals, at left, sport reptiles). You will often find a table of contents, species lists, and things she wants to see / journal / do (see pages 72–83).



Tiffany designed her unique modular journal around the Discbound daily planner system, accessories for which are widely available from office supply stores and premium online stores like Levenger.com (see page 69). Pages are easily added or moved, and you can insert any type of paper you want, using a Discbound-system-specific hole punch.

Tiffany's creativity is apparent in her fascinating journal pages. As you flip through them, you will be diving deep with her into explorations of a place through a delightful mix of words, pictures, and numbers. If you would like to hear more about her practice and kit and advice, plase enjoy the video interview on page 71.

I asked Tiffany what advice she would give to beginner journalers: "Be kind to yourself. It's a hard thing to do. But don't be judgemental about yourself or your work, don't compare. I think it's very valuable to be inspired by people, but the minute you start comparing it's going to be bad. Stick with it, enjoy the process, no matter the outcome. Whatever you put down is the perfect thing!"

Extended Kit: The Backpack

When space allows, this kit includes special field arts tools for wild paint-making, bookbinding, weather-reading, close-looks, and printing mini photos.

A – Backpack is the Aya Pack 25 from Ethnotek. 11.5" x 18.5" x 7.5" (28 x 46 x 18cm); 1.5 lbs (0.7kg), empty. Ethnotek.com

B – Triplet Jewelers Loupe (10X) with leather case; Skybasic Digital Microscope w/connection to phone for photos.

C – Canon Ivy printer, Mini Zink paper (adhesive back). See upper right, page 71, showing the printer at work on a layout for journal pages from a New Mexico field arts workshop. Final results shown pp. 72–83.

D – Leather Pouch with paint-making supplies (limited edition from ExploringOverland.com):

- Plastic palette knife
- Vial w/Schmincke watercolor binder
- Mini mortar and pestle for mixing pigment and binder
- Strainer for filtering pigments with paper coffee filter (not shown)
- Tin paint palette with empty paint pans

E – UV light/flashlight for enhanced night-time explorations—many insects and a surprising number of mammals glow under UV (aka "black") light.

F – Kestrel 3000 portable weather station.

G – Leatherman Squirt multi-tool (model retired, but a similar one is the Micra.

H – Antique pencil tin with bookbinding supplies:

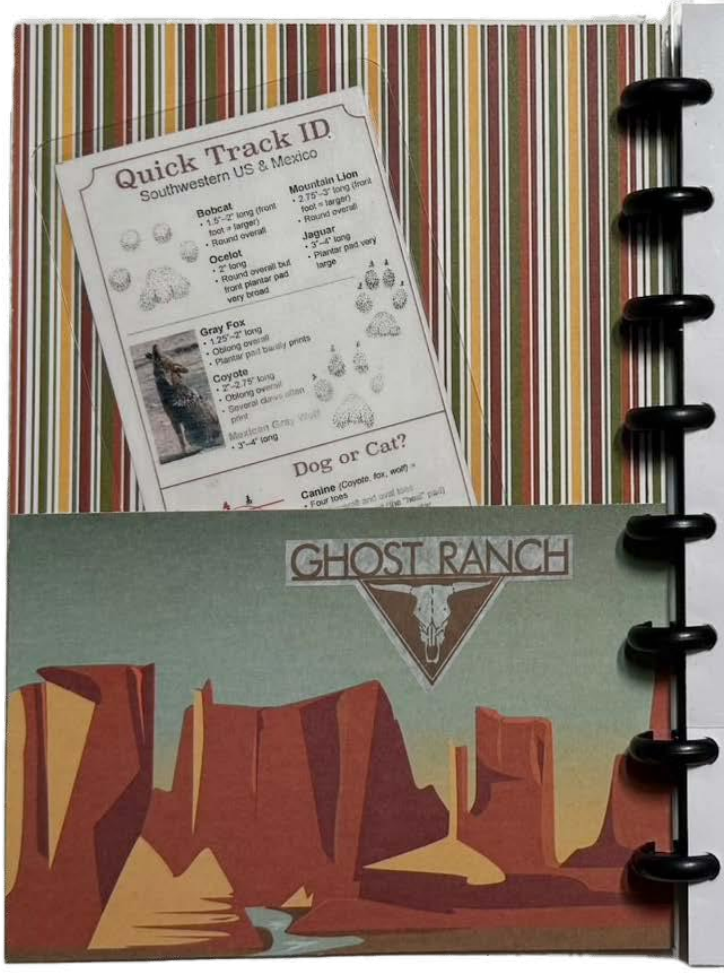
- Waxed linen thread and needles
- Hand2Mind circle drawing compass
- Bone paper folder
- Clear ruler
- Glue brush
- PVA glue in small tube
- Awl/hole punch
- Scalpel with cover

I – Tweezers with curved tip.

J – Carson portable microscope with slides.

VIDEO FEATURE: Roseann Hanson chats with Tiffany Levy about her decades-long journaling practice, her unique journal style, and her favorite tools. (Click above to view video within the flip-book; if you have downloaded the PDF, the video is available on the subscriber's portal, Vol. 1, No. 4 page.

Clear plastic protective cover.



LIST, & NATURAL HISTORY INFO FOR
FIELD ARTS BOOTCAMP
ober 20-23, 2024

ed about your Field Arts Bootcamp!
tes about the trip as well as a suggested packing
n resources, and reading material.
t me at roseann@exploringoverland.com or

d Arts Bootcamp: https://www.exploringoverland.com/

LE OF CONTENTS

1

Day 1 - arrival @ Ghost Ranch!

Sunrise 7:11am Sunset 6:21pm Waning Gibbous

The drive was beautiful - full of dramatic skies, rain lightening + RAINBOWS

First Impressions -
The desert is beautiful in the Fall, especially after a big rain storm - The skies were dramatic + the cottonwoods were glowing and contrasted beautifully

with the red rock cliffs - demonstrating why Georgia O'Keeffe was so inspired by this landscape!

The group met at the Ghost Ranch Welcome Center at 11:00am for a group orientation, followed by free time to explore before group lunch at the dining hall...

Day 1 - at Casa del Sol

36°20'24" N 106°29'52" W

Ghost Ranch elevation 6500'

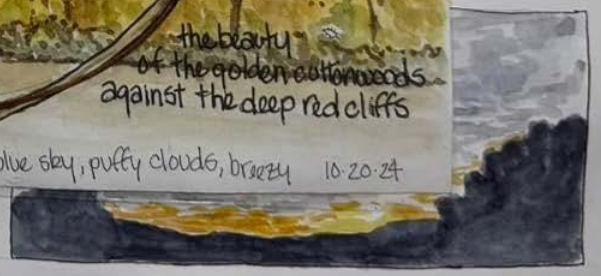
58°F @12:00

My first impression was of...

the beauty of the golden cottonwoods against the deep red cliffs

blue sky, puffy clouds, breezy 10.20.24

...e road was ...that drove ...the Visitor ...ll back to the



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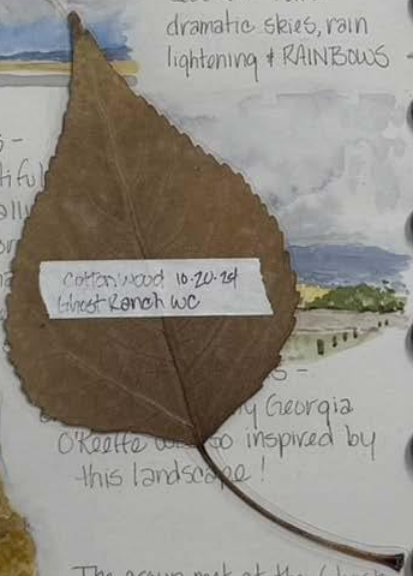

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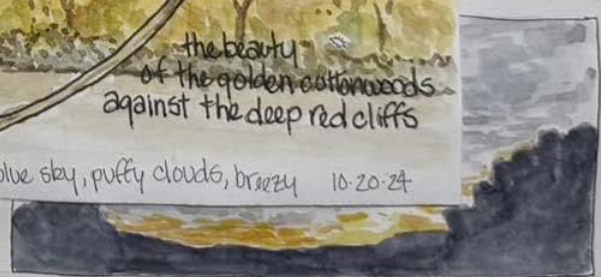


GETTING O

Text and images by Jona

Organization is the key to serenity while camping. Don't worry—I'm not about to go all Marie Kondo on you. But I learned long ago that carrying my gear in discreet, purpose-dedicated containers made both pitching and striking camp faster and more enjoyable, maximizing time for relaxation as well as minimizing time spent exposed to inclement weather before I could get under shelter and get the kettle on. It also makes cleaning up afterwards—and storage at home—much, much easier.

I got my first hint of this early in my backpacking days when I moved up from a surplus GI rucksack, with all my gear simply stuffed inside, to a Camp Trails external frame pack with side and back pockets and a divided main bag. I no longer had to spew stuff all over the ground when I needed a water bottle or flashlight or snack. When I took up sea kayaking, organization assumed a more vital role—proper weight distribution is critical in a 17-foot long, 24-inch wide seagoing craft.

In a vehicle weight distributio
more important that or e
the ability to store equipment
securely cinched down. A 30-
by a collision even at a sedate
instantly achieves 400 pounds
toward the back of your head
community we have an axiom
and protective clothing: "All
four-wheeled overlanding wo
gear strapped down, all the ti
it—you need containers that
from a ratchet strap.

For these reasons and more it
gear in sturdy containers. Fro
especially in price: in this sel
of $30 to over $500. I tested

RGANIZED

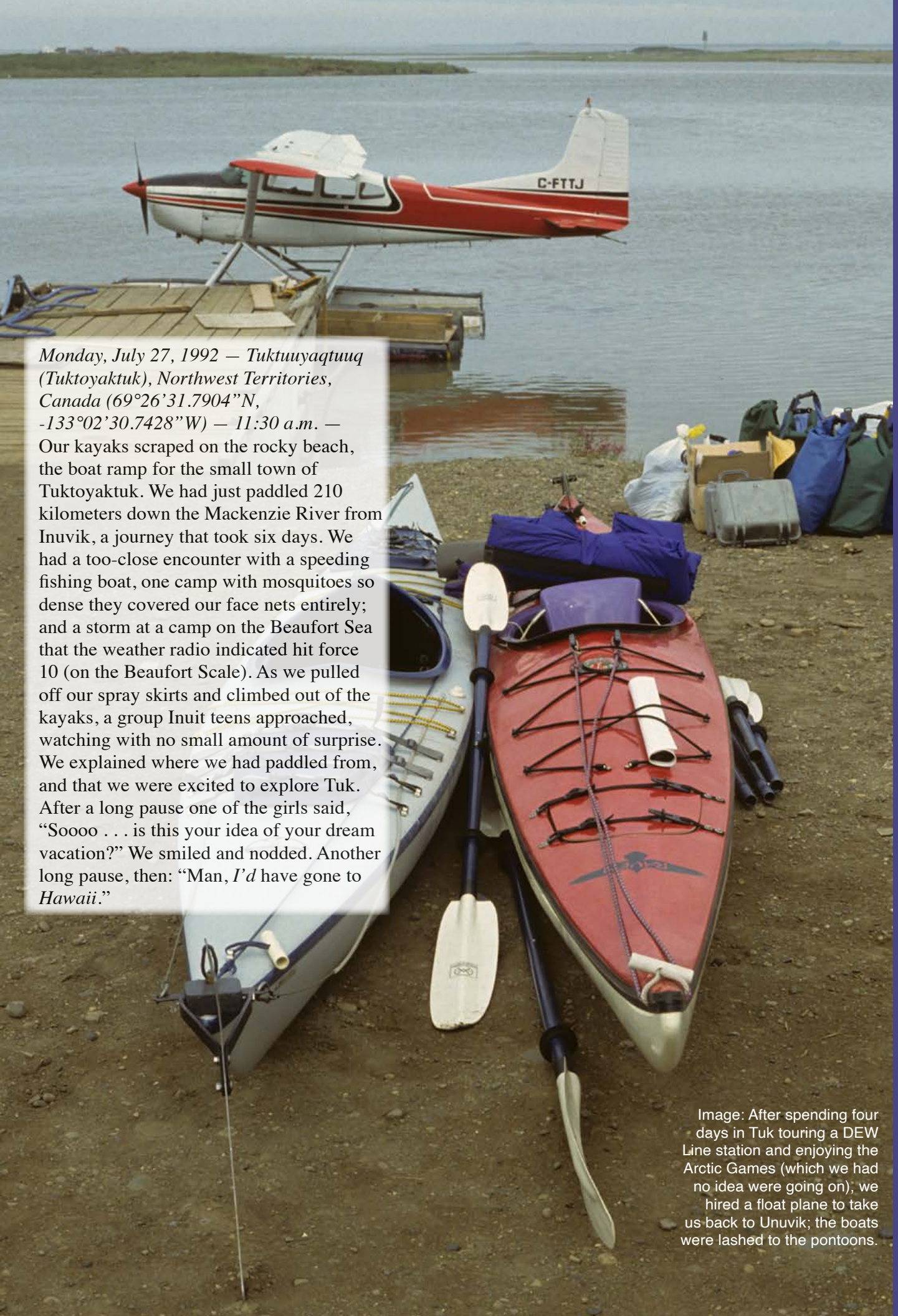
athan Hanson

on is important too; however, ven the organization is in containers that can be -pound box of gear, launched e speed of 20 miles per hour, s of kinetic energy as it arcs . In the adventure motorcycle n about wearing a helmet the gear, all the time." In the rld that translates to, "All the me." Bungee cords won't cut can withstand serious pressure

's good to transport your m there the choices burgeon, ection from the neighborhood these cases under real-world

conditions and with real-world parameters. I could have, but didn't drop them from a height while loaded because I've never dropped a loaded cargo case. I didn't subject them to a blast from a fire hose because I've never, ever had my camp assaulted by someone with a fire hose—all I need to know is if I can leave the case out in the rain (the exception was the case designed to ride on a roof rack). I wanted to see how the size and configuration of each would work in different vehicles. I wanted to see how convenient each was to load and unload, and to carry and secure in a vehicle. I measured the volume-to-weight ratio (lb/cubic foot), and calculated the volumetric efficiency (the ratio of interior volume to external dimensions) of each—very important in the confined space of a vehicle's cargo area. Are varying sizes of the case available? Is the case strong enough to use as a step? How conveniently does it store at home? Price was a factor, of course, and I calculated cost per cubic foot of storage for each (listed next to the price), but also value and potential lifespan.

Crossing a stream at the beginning of the climb up the eastern escarpment of the Great Rift Valley, Nguruman, Kenya. Our small group was ground-truthing a potential overland tourist route for the Maasai communities in the region, from Nguruman to the Maasai Mara National Reserve. (-01°48'31.9464"S, 036°02'44.5740"E).
Photo, Jonathan Hanson



Monday, July 27, 1992 — Tuktuuyaqtuuq (Tuktoyaktuk), Northwest Territories, Canada (69°26'31.7904"N, -133°02'30.7428"W) — 11:30 a.m. — Our kayaks scraped on the rocky beach, the boat ramp for the small town of Tuktoyaktuk. We had just paddled 210 kilometers down the Mackenzie River from Inuvik, a journey that took six days. We had a too-close encounter with a speeding fishing boat, one camp with mosquitoes so dense they covered our face nets entirely; and a storm at a camp on the Beaufort Sea that the weather radio indicated hit force 10 (on the Beaufort Scale). As we pulled off our spray skirts and climbed out of the kayaks, a group Inuit teens approached, watching with no small amount of surprise. We explained where we had paddled from, and that we were excited to explore Tuk. After a long pause one of the girls said, "Soooo . . . is this your idea of your dream vacation?" We smiled and nodded. Another long pause, then: "Man, *I'd* have gone to *Hawaii*."

Image: After spending four days in Tuk touring a DEW Line station and enjoying the Arctic Games (which we had no idea were going on), we hired a float plane to take us back to Unuvik; the boats were lashed to the pontoons.

If you enjoyed these sample pages, consider subscribing or purchasing indivual issues at:

http://www.ExploringOverland.com/explorationquarterly

"A map tells you where you've been, where you are, and where you're going — in a sense it's three tenses in one."
– Peter Greenaway