Centennial Anniversary Edition

Woodsmoke
On the Cover: Mark Davenport ’10 committing to the crux move on Pinnacle Gully, Mt Washington. Taken October 10, 2009 by Andrew Mertens ’12.

Back Cover: Anna Schumaker ’09 and Andrew McCauley ’09 enjoy the Ledyard Dock.

This Page: Mt. Moosilauke Summit. Photo by Max McClorey ’11.

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I first began thinking of what to say here while sitting on a rock in the Dead Diamond River in the Second College Grant. From my perch, I could not see a single sign of people anywhere, even though I knew that Gate Camp was just around the bend in the river. It occurred to me that the DOC is just like Gate Camp—a comfortable place, full of friends, from which to go explore the world. A place to come back to when the adventure is over, to tell stories, and to plan the next one. A place that has served my friends and me just as it has served one hundred years of students before us, and will continue to serve as a place that will be there for those to come.

There have been two principle goals to this centennial year in the DOC: to celebrate the past and to reconnect alumni with the club as we move towards the future. A single edition of the Woodsmoke could not do justice to the immense history witnessed by the last hundred years. Entire books could be —and in fact have been—written about the DOC. So instead we will focus on the second goal: the bond between the students of the club today and the alumni who have gotten us to this point. We have tried to cover this year as best we can to highlight the shared experiences of all those who have been a part of the DOC.

Like the College herself, the Dartmouth Outing Club has changed and evolved over the years. Gone are the days of the Summit House and the Wing-Dings party; the orange-black-orange blazes have been replaced with the AT standard. But the important things have stayed the same — the friendships and the passion for exploration. In these pages we hope to convey the spirit and the passions of the Dartmouth Outing Club today as it moves towards the next hundred years.

Alice Bradley ’11
Editor
“I am beginning to understand what you all are doing out here…” Dr. Jim Kim said to the 40 or so students and staff gathered at the Class of ’66 Lodge to welcome the new president to the College and to the DOC.

For a year dedicated to the last 100, this year in the DOC has seen a surprising amount of new beginnings, with Dan Nelson becoming the able new director of the Outdoor Programs Office, and, of course, Dr. Kim becoming president of the college. This summer, we were lucky enough to get the chance to meet Dr. Kim and introduce him to the DOC—in our own special way.

On an unseasonably cold night in July, active members of the Club put together an all-DOC feed for the incoming president. Gathered around a fire, we ate an entirely local, summery meal and listened to four students speak about their experiences in the Club. From learning to kayak or to farm, to forming life-long friendships and appreciating the power of First-Year Trips, the speakers covered it all, giving a cross section of the DOC. When the last speaker had finished, something unexpected happened; Dr. Kim insisted on speaking himself. He proceeded not only to respond to everything that had been said, but to take it one step further, challenging us all to remember that enjoying the outdoors as we do is a privilege shared by too few people around the world.

When the program ended, and the light began to fade, everyone started walking down the hill, thinking of what a success the event had been. Dr. Kim had not only listened, but had heard. He was given a taste of the DOC and understood us enough to challenge the club in a new way. But more than that, the evening gave everyone a chance to talk about our club and its awesome impact on our lives in ways we do not normally. Some of us wondered why we waited for Dr. Kim to come along to take the time to stand up in front of fellow DOC members and say how meaningful, supportive, and even life-changing the DOC can be.

It is exactly this purpose—showcasing the DOC—that the Woodsmoke serves. In the following pages you will read testaments to this year, and the last 100 in the DOC. But if there is one thing the feed for President Kim showed us, it was this: Amongst all the Centennial celebrations, let’s not forget the impact the club is having on students right now, or the excitement of new beginnings and new challenges. As you read through this Woodsmoke, and as our Centennial year comes to a close, let us remember that the Centennial is not only the acknowledgment of the last 100 years, but also the celebration of new beginnings and new challenges, of the ongoing power of the Club, and of the exciting prospect of the next 100 years.

Tom Flynn ‘11
DOC President
It’s late morning on a Thursday. You hiked out of town earlier, and your pack is loaded with five days of food. You’ve been hiking for nearly four months and 1900 miles, so this process is nothing new. Hitch to town, take a shower, eat greasy food, stuff pack with highly processed and preservative-filled food, sleep on a grungy mattress with stale sheets in a room full of other smelly hikers, get up and keep walking. You tell yourself that the end is nearing and there are only a few more weeks to go, but it’s been so long that you don’t feel close to the finish line. It feels as far off as it did twelve state lines ago. The air is a little warm for your taste, but under the forest cover it doesn’t seem unbearable. You are already dripping with sweat so the temperature seems irrelevant; you would be sweating no matter what. As you trudge to the top of this particular peak, you see an unnatural splash of color on the bare rocks ahead. It’s a fellow hiker who has dropped his pack to rest and enjoy the view. In the next 20 seconds you: glance at the view, determine that it’s nice enough to stop and take in, contemplate that you’ve already seen hundreds of views just as pleasant, remember that you want to hike another 13 miles past this view, realize it’s getting on midday, don’t let your feet stop walking, toss a passing “hey” to the hiker who has stopped, and envy his situation not quite long enough to feel guilty about the schedule you’ve made for yourself and the fact that you feel obligated to stick to it. ‘There will always be another view,’ you say to yourself. And it’s true. The Appalachian Trail follows the ancient ridge for 2178.3 miles from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. And speckled along the way are thousands of viewpoints from which to stop for a moment, breath deep and remember why you’re out here. However, the novelty of pausing briefly to enjoy the day and the achievement of topping the challenging climb you happen to be on at the time wore off a long time ago. Now you scoff at the wooden signs that direct you 50 feet off the trail to the chainsaw-created “view.” Why would you waste the energy and time to walk off the trail just to stop? You would be halting progress and adding distance to your already long hike. No thanks. So you let yet another view go by unseen.

In the final days you spend on the Trail, the weather is clear and calm. You could have any number of striking views to take pleasure in, but the terrain is flat. All of sudden there are no mountains. The only one left is on the concluding five miles of the Trail. When you wake up at 5 a.m. on your Summit Day, the sky is grey with rain clouds. The entire climb leaves only your imagination to create a view. The wind is fierce at the top, driving precipitation painfully onto your exposed limbs and face. Your body temperature is threatening to drop every time you stop walking, even for a moment. Upon reaching the famous Katahdin sign marking the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, you forget the rain and cold for a moment. You are done. You jump over the uneven rocks that are slick with rain, and cheer over the howling wind. Photos are quickly taken with fingers numb from the biting breeze. Then you turn your back on this final “viewpoint” and head back down below tree line. You spent merely 30 seconds at the top, more time than most vistas along the way.

The whole walk back down the mountain, you rewind four and a half months of hiking in your head. You recall the people along the trail, both hikers and not, who offered you kindness. You remember the elegant simplicity of life in the wilderness, uncluttered by technology and the stresses of front country life. You recollect the satisfaction of using your body to travel thousands of miles. ‘This is what it’s all about,’ you think.
Ah, there’s nothing like waking up to a beautiful morning of the Mexican sun, Tom Flynn’s maté, and Mark Davenport’s crude jokes. Yes, Mexico—we had journeyed across the border for a short December escape from the harsh New Hampshire winter and to find love in each other’s eyes, of course. And when you’re looking for a good vacation spot, we thought, why not look for some bolts to clip too? So we ended up in the campground “La Posada” in the small town of Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon, with a rather large limestone gorge towering over us. The campground was well worth the pesos, including an in-campground restaurant run by the owner, Luis, with real Mexican enchiladas, no less.

But enough about the culture, I’m supposed to be writing about the climbing. El Potrero houses a large number of multi-pitch moderate sport climbing routes all on pretty good, although sometimes loose rock. The limestone is certainly different than our local New Hampshire granite and schist, so it’s a good change of pace. We sometimes found ourselves complaining, as sport climbers often do, about the sun being too hot or the fork-like crimps being too sharp, but when you can put seven pitches under your belt in just a few hours and get great views of ridiculous looking rock, you very quickly stop complaining. There are plenty of routes in the 5.10-5.11 range at El Potrero on good rock with fun climbing and very good bolt protection. The large-scale features including the Spires, the Mota Wall, the Space Boyz arête/corner, and the Estrellita pillar were just breathtaking, from both the top and the bottom. We also explored some of the single pitch harder routes and they yielded fantastic tufa and pocket climbing up overhanging walls. And we never even had an opportunity to touch the beautiful “Outrage Wall”, which has overhanging multi-pitch routes up to 5.13! So next time you’re looking for a sport climbing vacation in the winter, El Potrero Chico is certainly not a bad choice at all.
Above: Tom Flynn ‘11 climbing.
Below: From left to right: Ben Feintzeig ‘11, Mark Davenport ‘10 and Tom Flynn ‘11.
I stood before the brown immensity of the bear-proof dumpster with my jacket balled in my hands. The jacket had last me most of eight years; it still bore the duct tape patches corresponding to my high school chips on the shoulder. But the nights were growing cold in Tuolumne Meadows, the high country of Yosemite National Park, and the jacket was about as warm as cellophane. I consigned it, with a clang, to the deep.

My little solemnity struck at least one onlooker as odd. A polite Swedish woman asked what I was doing. We talked for a little while – she was jazzed to see real deer browsing outside her rented RV – and I wound up sharing stroganoff, wine, and conversation with her dazzlingly blonde clan. After a brief explanation of traditional climbing stroganoff, wine, and conversation with her dazzlingly blonde clan. After a brief explanation of traditional climbing, which I was engaged in, and various sundry topics, I talked for a little while – she was jazzed to see real deer browsing outside her rented RV – and I wound up sharing stroganoff, wine, and conversation with her dazzlingly blonde clan. After a brief explanation of traditional climbing, which I was engaged in, and various sundry topics, I sang an auld Irish lament to my jacket, affecting my best County Kerry tongue (every “well” a “wheel.”) Stellan, the paterfamilias, asked me if the song came from Titanic.

It was one week into my climbing trip to California’s Sierras, and I was happy for the company. Behind me lay a ticked list of classic Tuolumne moderates: from the parallel handcracks of Phobos, each as golden as toasted marshmallow, to the card-table-sized summit of Cathedral Peak, to the knobby jungle gym of On the Lamb (a note on “knobs”: these ubiquitous Tuolumne features are technically ‘pheno-crysts’ of potassium feldspar and diorite, big crystals that stuck out of a stew of slow-cooling granitic magma. My source is an eminent Dartmouth alum/climber/geologist.)

Indeed, Tuolumne had treated me well, for it is, in many ways, a yahoo’s paradise. By “yahoo,” I refer to an unpolished climber, distinguished (I hope), from the dreaded “gumby” caste. Practical example: a gumby cannot start a campfire; a yahoo burns down the forest. Also, yahoos are louder and may steal your beer. In any event, the place is made for burgeoning trad leaders. Consider the Matthes Crest, an eye-boggling fin of granite three hundred feet tall and a country mile long. It is hidden from prying eyes by miles of off-trail slogging, but upon arrival it yields an endless romp over pure knife-edge. I climbed it with the same eminent alum on an afternoon all California blue, the hooded-owl profile of Half Dome eyeing warily our traverse of that granite skyway.

What more could one ask for? A river to cool off in? Check. Great weather? Check. A community of fellow climbers? Check – with reservations. While some bums I met lived up to the kooky, courtly grandeur of other climbing areas, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore, and were a source of valuable partners, beta, beer, and lore.
separated the business from the easier, though still heinously exposed climbing above, I paused, and tried to clear the music from my head. For I have a habit of affixing songs in my head while climbing – songs with “fall” in the lyrics. “All Falls Down” by Kanye West; “Fall on Me” by R.E.M.; “Stadium Arcadium” by the Red Hot Chili Peppers (“and I’m falling/ falling too soon.”) Today, at least, I heard my favorite: Uncle Tupelo’s “Watch Me Fall.” I reached as far as I could over the roof, all my weight pasted to the rock via my two big toes, and listened to Jeff Tweedy’s gentle, whiskyfied admonishment:

“All folks find/ that their role in life/ is to fail/ at everything they try.”

I pulled the roof, and was at once unencumbered, romping ecstatically up the hanging scythe of the ridge. The morning sun struck the sheer southwest face beneath me, and the updrafts of wind seemed to catch its effulgence: great, physical gouts of light blasting up beside me, a golden furnace. At that point, a rope and partner would have changed nothing of my delight. After ninety minutes of furious climbing, I reached the top and took my repose, alone. With no one to celebrate with, I felt engorged, a glutton who had eaten too much, too fast. A tinge of wistfulness, the gentlest of melancholies, hit me. More than a tinge. I explained all this to taciturn Basil, minus the fruity parts. He seemed impressed, and suggested we hit some routes in the park. In our initial run, we were inundated in great climbs – the super-exposed Blown Away; the steep knobfest of Crying Time Again – but we were hardly the best social pairing. A nadir of sorts in our mutual terseness came at an afternoon gas station run: Basil caught me spending “beer monies” on a copy of The Economist, and registered his disgust loudly. My defense – that I’d gone barely six hours without a brew, but twelve days without news – did not wash with him, and I spent the next day resenting his insular, out-of-touch ways.

“What a guide,” I thought, resolving never again to fraternize with such troglodytes. But more days of great climbing and generous sun wore us both to amiability, and at week’s end, Basil proposed that we hit objectives in the High Sierra. “Hallelujah,” I responded, earnestly, and spent the night imagining alpine spires.

“Temple Crag,” Basil pronounced the next morning, his voice a glottal rockslide of Brit. There was a guidebook in the glovebox – he suggested I bone up. I read the topos – route descriptions annotated with drawings of key features, cracks, ledges, etc. – until darkness. We had stopped in Bishop, a climbers’ sort of town in the Eastern Valley. More than once when I’ve aired my post-graduation plans of becoming a schoolteacher, I’ve been told to check for a position in Bishop. After all, this parched town is in striking distance of Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne, the Mecca and Medina of trad climbing; Owens River Gorge for sport climbing; and various alpine areas for climbing and skiing. I mulled these sterling qualifications as Basil and I scarfed burritos in a not-quite-dive bar off Main Street. Across the way, a young woman was hauling, bodily, the collapsing bulk of a larger man. Boyfriend? Brother? Teacher? I watched with the admiration one feels for an ant’s mini-Herculean labors, and by the time they were out of sight, my plans of tending the bright young minds of Bishop were extinguished. We bivouacked in the scrubland outside the town’s lights, far enough from the highway that Basil could organize his baggies of greenery in peace (we had stopped twice on the way to dig up his stashes, carefully located just outside the National Park’s, and thus federal government’s, jurisdiction.) I unrolled my sleeping
bag in a clear patch of hardcaked white dirt, and lay down. Dust rose around me, moon dust that settled on my bag like a layer of primer, and I looked west at ragged black saw of the High Sierra. The Milky Way positively ejaculated overhead, landing behind me, perhaps in Reno. But for the flick, rasp, and huff of Basil’s ablutions, there was utter silence, and in the interval before sleep, I thought of a Robert Frost poem I use to fortify myself from melancholy. It is called “Desert Spaces,” and I could then only recall the final stanza, but it was the stanza that mattered:

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars – on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

I woke to the brilliant yellow of the local “bee plant,” bovine mooing, and the smell of Basil’s hitherto unknown French press. About me the daylight revealed the bleached, fluted bones of a cow, and a sign warning us of the heavy penalty for trespassing in Los Angeles County watershed. We hurried out. The hike in to Temple Crag was arduous and gorgeous, awaking a nostalgia of sorts in this hiker-turned-climber. We camped at a shockingly turquoise lake, and oriented our tent to open directly, im pertinently, in the face of the Temple. This was no mere “crag,” I discovered, but a massive fortress of black rock. It rose 2500 feet out of the scree, and its harsh edges, its hue, reminded me of no less than Tolkein’s Mordor. Basil, I sensed, was equally cowed, and recited to him Yvon Chouinard’s maxim about not spending too long staring at big walls, lest you freak yourself out. Basil scoffed – coughed, really – between tokes. “What does that frog know?” We watched the looming hulk, envisioning difficulties all along its watchtowers, until darkness fell. Then we slept, and marmots scuffled blithely through the night.

We woke before dawn for an alpine start. Alpine starts are uncomfortable and unpleasant, much like cold showers and sex ed, but equally necessary and bracing. Our objective was Dark Star, a climb listed in the old guidebook as “the longest non-traverse climb in the Sierras” and conspicuously absent from the modern guide. Dawn found us pondering the first pitch, a tight, hard, right-facing corner that would be protectable only with micro-nuts, or a hammer and pitons. We had neither. While Basil dithered, I ditched my gear, ran down the talus to our tranquil turquoise camp, and grabbed the topos for another, more manageable route: the Moon Goddess Arete.

The Moon Goddess heads up one of three huge flying buttresses on the east side of the Temple. Its start was guarded by a neve slope: bullet-hard snow with dish-shaped indentations. We had two ice axes, but only one set of crampons, so I led up the neve and anchored the rope to the first band of rock. As I climbed, I stuffed my cold rock shoes between my shirt and chest, to make warm and pliable the leather, embosoming (emboobing?) myself in the process. Basil hand-over-handed up the fixed rope, his shoes slipping comically on the neve.

We moved swiftly through the majority of the route’s elevation by simul-climbing (the leader ties in short, then maintains a modicum of protective gear between himself and the follower as both ascend simultaneously; falling is verboten.) We traversed around two small gendarmes, then reached a majestic tower formation, which we skirted on its overhung north face with a series of gloriously heart-in-throat moves over the void. The final knifeblade ridge awaited us when I heard a faint buzzing. Or was it a hissing? The closest I can describe the noise is as “huzzing.” And it was growing louder as static electricity built up around me. Like waves breaking on a jetty, iron gray clouds suddenly burst over the summit ridge.

There was a notch thirty feet below us; I rigged a hasty rappel and brought us down, but it was scarcely a safe spot. By the time Basil reached me, hail had begun to thrash us, and the ice axe strapped to my back was buzzing with increasing ferocity. The first thunder boomed, loud and very close. Basil grabbed stray gear and made ready to lead onward toward the summit, two pitches distant. I was flabbergasted – “we need to get down!” I shouted over the huzz and hail. I suggested, with all my larynx, that we fix the rope and rappel as far as its seventy meters would allow, then reascend when the lightning was through. Basil, veteran of Denali, Aconcagua, Everest, et cetera, shook his head emphatically, made a Braveheart face. “Climb fast!” he screamed, and began to lead, kicking piles of hail off his slick footholds. “If I fall,” he called down, “the trauma kit’s in my pack.”
The rest was huzzing and hail and obliterating thunder. Like most people, I had given some thought to my death, and how I’d react to its arrival. I wanted Basil to pass on to my family and friends that my last words were wry, brave, and heartfelt. And yet all I could blurt was, “Tell everyone I died looking at something beautiful!”

For there below me I saw the ridge flanked by three rainbows, as brilliant and vivid and near as bowls of candy. I was dumbstruck; it may have been, and may yet be, the most gorgeous thing I’ll ever see. Meanwhile, Basil was fighting up a very slippery layback corner. He hollered down that he did not want to die, much. And like that, the storm resolved itself into blue sky.

We finished the climb in a shivering hurry. With one lingering glance at the Palisades to the southeast – already brewing an even blacker tempest – we began our descent, and arrived at camp ten hours after our predawn departure. My legs felt like sausage. Two days we spent waiting around camp for a break in the weather, but the fickle storms never resolved into stability, and on day four, we called it quits. Accompanied by Ruby, a lost dog we found hungry and skittish at the lake, we returned to Bishop (Ruby was reunited with her family.) In those final days at the lake, Basil cracked open a bit. We told stupid stories, discussed fresh avocados, debated the merits of four bowls of weed a day at altitude. My trip ended when Basil shook my wee hand in his mitt and pointed out the bus station back home.

“We should climb the Cassin Ridge,” he said, intoning the name of Denali’s mountaineering classic with appropriate reverence. “I haven’t done that one. You?” I told him I’ve never even set foot on Alaskan soil, let alone tried its greatest peak.

Yet.

Photos: Owen Cadwalader ‘08

Climbs I did I’ve listed below, with my favorites italicized. I am happy to tell future DMC pilgrims all the beta I can recall about these.

- Cathedral Peak, SE Face (5.6 or 5.7)
- Eichorn’s Pinnacle (5.4)
- South Crack (5.8, 5.5R)
- Mount Conness, W Ridge (5.6)
- Crying Time Again (5.10a)
- Truck ‘n Drive (5.9)
- Blown Away (5.9)
- Phobos (5.9++)
- Lucky Streaks (5.10c/d)
- Little Sheeba (5.10a)
- Fairview Dome, Regular Route (5.9)
- Matthes Crest, S to N (5.7)
- On the Lamb (5.9)
- Temple Crag, Moon Goddess Arete (5.8, IV)
In June 2009, twelve undergrads and eight recent grads set off for the Salmon-Challis National Forest of Idaho, and the legendary Middle Fork of the Salmon River. We came from every corner of the country; for me, the trip began with a three-day drive across the U.S. in a truck with fourteen playboats on the roof, with a Dartmouth sprinter van close behind. Whatever you might expect from twenty Ledyardites traveling to Idaho, the trip went remarkably smoothly, with only one flat tire (in a great spot to stretch our legs and take pictures of the Rockies). And we did, finally, arrive at the put-in.

Like so many Ledyardites, I feel like the world is right when I’m on the river – a week of this is as good as it gets. Among rivers, the Middle Fork stands in its own class. From the first day, the whitewater was amazing: sometimes challenging, always fun. Memorably, the first day, our group somehow didn’t see the tributary and large rock signaling the largest drop of the day, Velvet Falls. About five of us dropped into the big hole on river right. We were all fine, but had a little more respect for the river after that. A couple days later, we approached another horizon line, and decided to scout, unfortunately on the wrong side of the river. By that point, the Salmon is “big water,” and for those of us who learned to kayak in the steep creeks of New England, big water is both joy inspiring and intimidat-
ing. I made the hard ferry on that drop and rode the tongue down between two man-eating holes. That exhilaration is what has me addicted to boating.

While the river dished out big thrills, the wilderness and the friends we paddled with made the trip. In the first few days we hiked up among pine trees and scree fields, and could see snow on peaks that seemed just a leap away. In camp we cooked, ate, sat around the campfire, and sometimes huddled under our tarp to get out of the rain. A couple nights we even had hot springs, getting to know the other groups on the river who had also stopped at the warm pools. One day a creek ran next to the campsite; seeing the opportunity, we hiked our boats up and enjoyed the short steep run.

As the river volume grew, the landscape became drier, and as we approached the end of the trip, we considered bypassing the takeout and floating to the ocean. Regretfully, the outside world called us back on the seventh day, and we took off the river and went our separate ways. But I can’t wait for the next time my friends and I will leave everything behind for a while for the thrills of whitewater and the easy rhythm of river life.

*Article: Chelsea Liddell ’11,
Photo: Phil Bracikowski ’08*
The Green is a good place for beginnings; beginnings of suntans to be bleached by the upcoming winter, beginnings of DOC trips, and, with a few short words between classes, the beginnings of mine and Max’s hiking trip. And like that, the vague, enticing idea of hiking in Japan after our Language Study Abroad Program leapt toward reality.

Three months later, and Max and I are sitting at a bus stop outside of urban Tokyo at five in the morning. Our faces are full of long-awaited anticipation and excitement. The faces of the locals around us are also full of wonder, but mostly confusion at our oversized packs and hiking apparel. To be fair, our packs were filled with a week’s worth of provisions: instant ramen, smelly dried fish that made my mom squirm over Skype, and a jar of honey the size of my face. I waved goodbye to my host family, and then we were off, up, away to the Daisetuzan National Park, located at the center of Hokkaido, the most Northern island of Japan.

After navigating our way through airports, bus schedules, and camping stores, we set up camp for the first time at the foot of Asahi-dake, one of the most famous mountains in the park. As the rain pounded down around us, we victoriously pulled out our map. We had actually made it to Hokkaido, but, oh, that map changed the mood. Maps usually humble me and ground me to my surroundings, but this one was different. We had both studied the Japanese writing system and language for a year at this point, but many of the characters on the map still lacked meaning, inducing fear in place of the usual comfort. Illiteracy became a game of picture matching, the map a puzzle to solve in order to reach our destination. Our puzzle involved matching pictures on the trail signs with those on the map, attempting to overlook the consequences of mistakes. Great trail fun, really.

The next day’s ascent took us over Asahidake, the tallest mountain in Hokkaido. From our campsite, we couldn’t have known it would also take us into a storm of cold that seeped deep into our bones, and clouds that obscured the onsens, or sulfur hot springs, from our view (and I thought the smell was coming from Max up ahead of me). Hours later, enveloped in palpable fog, I almost walked straight into the summit sign. We managed to pause for a second, only to briefly part our lips into a smile at each other. There was no summit enjoyment to be had on this cloudy day. In the form of a Max-and-Suzanne-popsicle, we scrambled down the mountain.

Many cold, wind-blown kilometers later, our frozen march was interrupted by the familiar “irassyaimase,” a store clerk’s call to invite guests into his shop, ubiquitous on the streets of Tokyo. We had come upon our first mountain hut and were greeted with a bit of Japanese culture. Usually the huts sell hot meals and sleeping
spaces, much like a smaller version of the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge. Mind you, there are no access roads out here - we were hours into the wilderness. This hut clerk noticed our popsicled state, appreciated our efforts to speak his language, and brought us into the crew quarters. He helped me out of my wet, noticeably stinking socks and Max out of his equally dripping rain coat before hanging them to dry in front of a warm wood stove. We chatted together over Chocó-blocks, in a state of mutual respect. The Japanese only hike to climb mountains, and would never attempt to do so in bad weather, so the hut clerk was undoubtedly surprised at our presence that day. We were clearly gaijin, or foreigners (literally, outsiders) who were hiking the Japanese park in an American way. But our foreign style was unimportant; we received none of the inquisitive looks that were so common in Tokyo. Love for the mountains and hiking had brought this small group, who had little else in common, together. The day had been cold, but the cozy hut and our company’s warm smiles reminded me why I hike.

We made our way through the mountains in less than a week, which was cut short by a lack of water in the south side of the park. The hiking was demanding, but we were treated to many days of beautiful scenery and summit satisfaction. We stood atop mountains and looked out into seas of clouds, punctuated only by rounded, but rigid peaks. Other less cloudy days brought views of volcanic mountains trimmed with snow banks and still lakes, unlike any geography I had ever seen. Although leaving the park meant heading towards another hiking adventure, I was sad to part with such beautiful mountains, where I had felt so welcome.

Photos, Left to right:
(1) Tsurugi-dake (in the background) is a set of three summits that involve thrilling, chain-assisted traverses and ridge hiking that over jagged boulders. Despite its reputation as the most dangerous mountain in Japan, it remains among the most sought after. (2) A view of the mountains separating our campsite in Murodo from the trail to Tsurugi-dake. Murodo lies in a protective bowl surrounded by mountains 2500-3000 meters high. (3) The sacred mountain of Tateyama is also among the most sought after. On Tateyama we met families, couples, work groups, and old guys who have hiked Tateyama every year for many decades.
After a whirlwind of travel and trekking with Suzanne in Daisetsuzan, our next week took us back to the main island, Honshu, where we journeyed into the Kita Alps, a majestic range on the border of Nagano prefecture. As we had earlier realized, adventuring in Japan doesn’t necessarily imply a lack of civilization. The Kita Alps were a bustling hostel of brightly attired Japanese hikers and adventurers, and we were never alone. Our hike began with a stroll across the impressive, 610-foot tall Kurobe Dam in company of many tourists. We hiked into the sharp mountains underneath a popular ropeway, emerging, to my surprise, into a town of mountain huts. Once again, it was clear that we were in Japanese mountains in American style. We carried all of our food, shelter, and gear, while they slept in huts and ate prepared meals.

Our climbs brought us over Tateyama and Tsurugidake, two rocky peaks that jut over 3,000 meters into the sky. We boulder-hopped to the top of Tateyama, where I watched a monk pray and tell the story of the Three Sacred Mountains of Japan (Mt. Tateyama, Mt. Fuji, and Mt. Hakusan). Tsurugidake is a three-summit beast in the clouds. Several near-vertical sections include bolted chains and ladders that help even the elderly journey into the sky. The views here were sharper, with bladelike cliffs that prevented billowing clouds from spilling into the upside-down bottle cap that made up the mountain formation. As each mountaintop had a small shrine, our trip had become an exploration of the religious and cultural lifestyle of many Japanese, rather than the escape I had expected.

Japan’s sharp peaks, volcanic nature, year-round snowcaps, and convenient access made the hiking, needless to say, unlike anywhere else I’ve ever visited. I admire the way they balance conquering the wilderness, enjoying the woods, and identifying with the mountains. I was proud to let my love for hiking and the mountains take me deeper into a foreign culture, into nuances that I otherwise wouldn’t have seen. Despite hiking in our distinctly foreign style, we had the opportunity to share parts of an unspoken language – words expressed only in appreciation for beauty of the mountains.
So here I am—the first day of college, day one of being super awkward. Wait, I’m now at Dartmouth, and that means everyone’s a little awkward. As I stand on the front lawn on Robo and half-heartedly pretend to learn the Salty Dog Rag, introduce myself to random people, and fake enthusiasm as H-Croo screams with joy, I stop and wonder: What the hell am I doing here?

Aw sh-t! I’m late. All the other ‘13s are smiling and dancing, while crazy upperclassman with rainbow colored hair and spandex cheer them on. They look like they’ve been together for years, and here I am... late. I guess the only thing to do is what they’ve already done—introduce myself in hopes of finding someone going on my trip—F-225, Rock Climbing.

The first few hours go something like this:
“Hi, I’m Chris—I’m from Atlanta. My favorite ice cream flavor is cookie dough, I like to swim, I am majoring in undecided, and I’m looking forward to snow.”

I sound interesting, right?
Wrong.

“I’m Julia. I’m from Nashville, Tennessee. I like green mint chocolate chip ice cream. I love to kayak and do community service. I plan on majoring in history and Spanish and going pre-med.”

Green mint chocolate chip? Does mint even come in colors? Does Dartmouth allow triple majors? Is it too late to transfer?

After a few, no, dozens, of introductions to people I may or may not ever see again—I finally meet my trip: F-225, rock climbing. And guess what? She’s on it.

After meeting our leaders, Meagan and Charlie, and bonding with the group over a Stinson’s barbecue, we’re on our way to the safety talk. Meagan and Charlie say it’s the worst part of trips, but we have to stay awake.

Before the safety talk can begin, each trip is asked to come up with a cheer. I subtly look away, hoping I wouldn’t have to participate, but someone comes up with the most RIDICULOUS cheer for our group—“We’re F-225. We can’t rhyme, but we sure can jive!” How embarrassing.

(I came up with that.)

Luckily, the “safety talk” ends 90 seconds in and H-
Croo performs an epic musical about trips, about Dartmouth, and about us—the class of 2013. It is, needless to say, one of the coolest things I have ever seen. And their energy is so infectious that by the end of the show we’re all dancing in the middle of Collis.
The floor is caving in. If I miss a beat, will I fall through?
As of yet, nobody has. Trips started in 1935 when upperclassmen invited incoming students on an outing before classes began. From those humble beginnings, DOC Trips has grown into a classic Dartmouth tradition—as important as “touching the fire” or playing a game of pong.
Neither of which we partake in. Obviously.
Trips is now the largest outdoor orientation program in the country with a participation rate of approximately 96% of the incoming freshmen class (and transfer students, too). Beginning in Hanover and ending at the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge, trips are five days long and run completely by students—over 300 upperclassmen support the three week long program.
And these lovely upperclassmen are the same people waking us up at 5:45AM for our first day on the trail.
Leaving Hanover, we think we have everything we might possibly need during our stint in the wilderness. That is until we are on the trail and realize we have no Cabot cheese, no bagels, and no map—the three most important parts of any DOC trip.
But it’s the people you are with that truly make the trip. Unfortunately, we leave them behind, too.
Wanting to test our endurance and summit the mountain without stopping, we surge ahead only to realize half of our group (trip leaders included) is miles behind and we may have taken a wrong turn. Fortunately, we keep our cool.
Emily starts hyperventilating into a paper bag; Albert pulls out his cell phone to check for service (Cell phones are contraband.); James cries for his mommy; Chris takes a snack break; and I run up and down the trail searching for blazes. An hour later, the rest of our trip catches up, and together we walk the next 100 yards to our campsite.
Nobody said we’re intelligent.
After an eventful night of trip bonding, we start day three ready to rock climb. We descend the mountain to the shouts of “SHABOOYA – SHA – SHA – SHA-
BOOYA” – the mantra of Klimbing Kroo 2009. With their wealth of mountaineering know-how and crazy cheers, we take to the cliffs (read: slightly higher than my dorm room ceiling) super stoked to climb.

As each person finishes their ascent, the belayer is charged with composing a cheer that the whole group must echo:

“SHAAAA BOOYA-
SHA – SHA – SHABOOYA-
ROLL CALL-
HIS NAME IS JAMES
YEAHHH
HE HAS BLACK HAIR
YEAHHH
AND HE’S GOT A LAIR
YEAHHH
CUZ HE’S A MOUNTAIN GOAT.”

I could not make this up if I tried. Julia actually said that.

And in the spirit of mountain goats, we decide to hike UP the Dartmouth Skiway to raid the next climbing trip.

(There’s a reason people usually go DOWN it.) Being the middle of summer, the Skiway has turned into a mud way. So for some reason, walking straight up it in total darkness does not appeal to many of our tripees. As we get closer and closer to the top, the tension starts to rise between one of our tripees and one of our leaders:

Tripee: “I quit. I hate this.”
Leader: “You can do it! I believe in YOU!”

An everlasting bond was formed. Despite these…ahem…challenges, by the time we arrive at the lodge, we are as close as can be. And you need to be close to people when you spend hours dancing to the musical stylings of Miley Cyrus. Right, so after a full day of dancing, slip-n-sliding, tossing the Frisbee and playing volleyball, we are ready for a nice, quiet dinner and a chance to relax with friends.

Oh no.

Not at Dartmouth.

We enter the lodge in total darkness. Sitting down at the table, I realize this is not another Nashville party. Suddenly, the lights flash on. Lodge Croo jumps from the rafters and launches into yet another musical; this time, it’s all about dinner.

Seven courses and seven songs later, we finish dinner, wash dishes, participate in yet another dance party — our enthusiasm dramatically increased by our trips — and end our night with a showing of “Schlitz goes to Washington.”

The following day we dance, dance, and dance some more. We take a bus back to Hanover, collect our contraband items and begin college — fully integrated and rightfully welcomed into the Dartmouth community.
I just don’t want to look like a 7th grade girl. That was my main concern going into Untamed Adventure’s 3-day New England adventure race. Fabric paint will make me look like a 7th grade girl. I knew what kind of scene to expect at the starting line – teams decked out in matching uniforms with the names and logos of their sponsors running up the arms, across the shoulders, down the back, around the waist, up the chest. There would probably be teams that had sponsorship logos on their poly-merino-tech underwear because they ran out of room on their jerseys. We, on the other hand, didn’t even have team t-shirts. Because I forgot to get them. So, a day before the race, my girlfriend, Jo, and I stopped by WalMart where I bought some cheap t-shirts and fabric paint. Jo assured me that we could make some extremely bad-ass uniforms with fabric paint; I was skeptical. Fabric paint does not scream “bad-ass” to me. It screams “7th grade girl.” Still, there was little to do but bring the paints and the t-shirts to a barbeque where friends, encouraged by a few beers, were sure to have helpful suggestions. This may have worked out if they were someone else’s friends. Unfortunately they were mine. “Just paint gold circles around your nipples,” Patrick suggested. “Our team name is UltraBambi,” I pointed out. “The t-shirts should probably reflect that.” Patrick shook his head. “Nah. Gold circles. Nipples. Way more intimidating.” By the end of the night we had a couple of t-shirts, one with something that looked like a beach ball and the other with what a friend described as “a dude that fell out of the sky and landed on his head.” “I told you,” Patrick insisted somewhat lugubriously, “that you should have just painted your nipples gold.” The next morning Jo pulled our collective asses out of the fire by stenciling our names on the back of thrift-store pinstripe blazers, blazers that made up in pimpness what they lacked in race-readiness. “Do you think you could manage to get the North Face and Mountain Hardware logos on the sleeve?” I asked hopefully, earning me a dirty look. Still, I was starting to feel more sanguine about the whole affair until I told my teammates that we were going for a Miami Vice look. Steph and Anson exchanged blank looks. “What is Miami Vice?” This was not the last time I would be reminded that they were evidently born during the second term of the second Bush administration. The race hotel, the Balsams Super Grand Outstanding Deluxe Resort for the Very Rich and Well-Heeled (or some similar self-deprecating name) appreciated our efforts. There were signs in the lobby that read: “Gentlemen, Jackets after Six, Please.” We were the only racers with jackets. That, I had a nagging suspicion, would prove to be our greatest triumph of the entire weekend. Given these low expectations, I was pleased when we completed race check-in and managed to plot all of our points without straining any muscles or developing blisters. Other teams might be good at the “racing” part of adventure racing, but we were handling the pre-race bureaucracy with some serious aplomb. If only it were all plotting points. The race got under way with a mountain bike leg. When I say “mountain-bike leg,” I mean that most people, in-
cluding Steph and Anson, mountain biked through mud and muck and streams, looking generally pretty tough and competent. Biking is not my forte, however, so I opted to run alongside, dragging my bike up hills, down hills, through streams, over bridges, all the while trying to give off an impression of casual ease. “I could ride my bike,” is what I tried to project with my body language. “But I have a different race strategy at this point.” Some of the teams may have been fooled. Anson was not. “Brian,” he pointed out at one point with what, in retrospect, was a good deal of patience. “You should probably ride these easy downhills.” I made up for it when we hit the roads, however. I made up for it so much that I led a pace line for a team that wasn’t even mine for the better part of a mile. Imagine my chagrin when I peeled off to discover I’d been leading the charge for people I didn’t even recognize while Anson and Steph labored on a quarter-mile back. Chalk up another one for strategy. Given these minor setbacks, I was pleased to get off the bike for the first paddling leg. Pleased, that is, until we learned that it was whitewater. “A lot of teams have already ditched,” the volunteer told us. Another team may have interpreted that to mean, “Be careful, the water’s a little tricky.” To me, it sounded suspiciously like, “You suckers are screwed.” I’m pleased to report that we proved the woman wrong in fine fashion, riding out three-foot pressure waves with a casual grace and youthful panache. For about 45 seconds. Then we sank. Anson, who was in the kayak, didn’t sink, but he did manage to take on so much water that we ruined our sat phone—a problem that would come back to haunt us later. We managed the rest of the paddling leg without incident, largely due to the fact that Steph and I portrayed the next rapid that looked at us even the littlest bit funny. Anson, who didn’t know where we’d gotten to, demonstrated some serious grace under pressure and took a nap on the bank until we showed up. A short bike-ride followed and then: the conservation project. Untamed Adventure likes to give back to the communities it races through in a series of creative ways, and every race involves some sort of conservation project. Oddly, our project was CLEAR CUTTING. Somehow “conserve” had become a synonym for “chop that mother down!” We were given a bow-saw and clippers and told to conserve everything smaller than our wrist right down to the ground. The three of us conserved vigorously for about an hour, until we’d built up a pile of conserved sweet birch and maple. Satisfied with our work, we retired to the grill, where the race directors had arranged for us to receive a ten dollar credit. This is where Steph, like Dante seven hundred years before her, lost the true path. Steph is a vegetarian. At least, she was until she saw those burgers and dogs sizzling away in their own grease. I have rarely seen anyone yield to temptation with such spectacular abandon. Steph inhaled her first burger while I was still ordering, put away a second while I was putting the ketchup on mine, and polished off a dog as I was taking my first bite. In fact, I think she finished my burger as well when I looked away for a moment to plot a point on the map. Fortified by a half-dozen pounds of recently consumed beef and pork product, we embarked on another mountain biking leg that led us to the most vexing CP to date. Most CP’s warrant a simple UTM coordinate. Some get a brief description, such as

Anson paddles a kayak behind Steph and Brian in the canoe.
Photo: Untamed New England
plotted the trekking CPS. We soaked up the warmth and the paninis for about 45 minutes, until 5AM, when we hit the road for the Crescent Range. 28 teams were in front of us at this point, and the first race cutoff was that evening at 5PM. Things looked bleak for UltraBambi. They looked bleak, that is, if you didn’t know that Steph and Anson have been modified by the US Military to stomp the living crap out of anything even resembling a hill. This was the first trekking leg, so I hadn’t yet seen what they could do on foot. We stormed up the near-vertical trail to Mt. Randolph, Steph leading the way, Anson chatting with her, both of them operating at a level of exertion I associate with drinking umbrella drinks on a veranda. I labored on behind, operating at a level of exertion I associate with mortal combat. “This is just like ski practice!” they commented cheerily. “Hurm,” I replied. “Bleah. Plughh.” Operating at this pace, we put the Crescent Range behind us in just six hours and discovered we’d pulled into 5th place, passing 23 teams somewhere out there in the wilds. We celebrated with Strawberry Shortcake ice cream from the Jefferson general store, then transitioned to the death leg. The death leg wasn’t supposed to be death. It was supposed to be a mellow paddle on the Connecticut. No rapids. No strainers. Nothing to throw us off our game. The problem was, this leg turned out to be 24 miles long and upstream. For the next seven hours we paddled and paddled and paddled some more. Ducks passed us. Ducklings passed us. Small blind insects walking along the shoreline passed us. If I had exited the boat and crabwalked all the way to the take-out I would have arrived faster. When we did arrive we were greeted with a mile-long portage. So much for the cut-off. It was, however, some small consolation to know only two teams managed to make it. As night two fell, my heart decided to go crazy. Regardless of the fact that we had just taken a sizeable rest, my heart rate stayed pegged in the low 150s and refused to come down. This proved disconcerting bordering on nerve-racking, considering the next leg was a remote bushwhack and our sat phone didn’t work. We tried everything – an hour of sleep. Some hydration. Another hour of sleep. Nothing. I didn’t want to tell the EMT on staff because I was worried he’d pull me from the race, but I didn’t want to press on because I was worried I’d fall over dead. Fortunately, my body sorted itself out by dawn. Unfortunately, about every team in the race had passed us as we sat around. Fortunately, this was another trekking leg. And you know about Steph and Anson on trekking legs. We arrived at our bikes after some long hours of heinous bushwhacking and some more hours of trails in heat normally associated with Death Valley, then set off on a long biking leg for the climbing site. Anson took over the navigation for a while, then handed it off to Steph for a bit, giving...
me a nice mental reprieve, and we arrived at the ropes without incident, although after the cut-off. An odd thing was happening in the race dynamic. Despite the fact that we had made all sorts of mistakes, that we had taken ourselves out of the race for six hours and allowed everyone to pass us, we weren’t doing too badly. Teams had been dropping for days and continued to drop, and many of the groups that passed us had made grave errors along the way. At the climb site we saw our trail mail again, and the cheers, heckles, and exclamations of our so-called friends shamed us into pushing just a little bit harder for the last day. The end was in sight – just fourteen more hours. Then the thunder, lightning, and pouring rain started. Twice we busted out the shelter and space blankets. Sleep deprivation was starting to take its toll, and we were all having lucid dreams while we biked. My voice was gone, for which Steph and Anson were probably profoundly glad. After hours of biking up muddy snowmobile roads, we failed to find CP32. Disaster. This meant that all the teams that just skipped these CPs and went straight to the finish line would beat us. In my brain there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth, but nothing to be done. We retreated to the road and ground out the remaining 40k or so to the finish line. My mom was waiting at the finish line and it was a pleasure to see her smiling face. Unsurprisingly, she was more up on the race dynamic than we were, since she’d been there since the day before, grilling everyone who came through. Shockingly, when it all shook down, we were in 2nd place in our division and 9th overall – a far more successful finish than we had hoped. Some of the teams that passed us in the night succumbed to hypothermia and had to be rescued. Some had been shortcoursed days before and we never realized. Thanks to everyone who supported us long-distance – we really did feel the love. And thanks to Anson and Steph – some night we’re going to have to sit down and watch Miami Vice.

Photo: Untamed New England
Right after our sophomore summer ended, the four of us (Michael Fields, Becca Vogel, Jon Wills, and Jing Jing Zhang) went on a weeklong backpacking trip in Iceland, paid for in part by the Schlitz Adventure Fund.

Becca: We flew to the airport in Akureyri. Our first hike was along the highway, into town.
Jing Jing: Oh yeah, urban backpacking.
Jon: A term used to describe the awkward feeling of walking through cities with frame packs, with sleeping bags falling out every couple of minutes.
Michael: On the bus ride from Akureyri to Myvatn, Jon told us that the word “Myvatn” was Icelandic for gnat. We were all slightly worried but then forgot about it after not seeing a bug for four days. Then for the next three days the gnats owned us.
Becca: We got off the bus at Reykjalid, a town just east of Lake Myvatn. The plan was to hike south to Askja. But it was early September, and we learned that the return bus from Askja had just stopped running for the season. So there would be no guaranteed return trip.
Michael: I think changing the details on the fly was a pretty bold move. We decided to do six day hikes instead of one six-day trek.
Jon: The first day we climbed Hlíðarfjall. It was fairly steep.
Jing Jing fell a lot on the way down, but we never managed to get it on film. We have a lot of footage of Jing Jing walking slowly down the mountain. And always, a second after I turned off the camera, she’d fall.
Michael: The view from the top of the first mountain, basically looking over all the stuff we’d be hiking the next week, was pretty awesome.
Jon: We had Annie’s mac and cheese for dinner that night. And just about every other night.
Jing Jing: Mmmmm.
Becca: The nights were pretty cold, usually low 0s. Aside from us, there was only one other group we met that was tent-camping, and they’d been backpacking and biking around Europe for six months.
Jon: Becca has funny sleeping habits: needs her space when awake, likes spooning when she’s asleep. Wakes up, pushes, falls asleep, spoons.
Jing Jing: One morning we tried to recreate the Lion King opening sequence and failed. Moral was high.
Michael: We made a lot of Oregon Trail references. An untied shoelace was a broken axle. Moral ranged from very low (i.e. stove not working, no food, cold and tired) to high. But mostly it was high.
Jon: Each day we summited mountains, looked into volcano
craters...
Michael: Crossed lava fields and ridges, jumped into geothermal hot springs...
Jon: And ice cold lakes!
Jing Jing: That was just you, Jon.
Michael: And my face.
Becca: Each day we set out in a different direction, hiking on different kinds of terrain. The lava fields looked like a different planet.
Jon: It looked like the Land Before Time –
Michael: – meets Mordor.
Becca: We saw lots of sheep, and cows, ponies, and swans. And we saw a gyrefalcon!
Michael: I’m not sure that I can necessarily distinguish between birds of prey at that distance.
Jon: I got you covered on that.
Becca: Yeah, Jon can talk to animals. He’s the only one who could get the sheep to bah back.
Jing Jing: Oooh, remember the sulfur vents? There was steam rising from the ground.
Jon: The water tasted like sulfur.
Michael: No, it just smelled bad. It tasted fine if you held your breath. Until you started breathing again.
Jing Jing: I really liked that last mountain, at the north of the lake. The one where you all tackled me.
Becca: Get down Mrs. President!
Michael: You must have seen that coming. You panned the camera sooo slowly.
Jon: My favorite part of the trip was the dynamic of our four senses of humor. We made Jing Jing cry every day. Other than that, watching the storm coming at us across the lake was really cool.
Michael: We did not get hit by rain for a week, but multiple times we saw rainstorms in places we were the day before or were going the next day. We could see them coming at us, but we always managed to get out of the way in time….
Becca: I liked the Dimmuborgir lava fields. It was like fairyland, with purple alpine flowers and awesome volcanic rock formations – spires and caves and arches.
Michael: The Krafla loop was my favorite, especially being on that ridge on the way back. There were incredible views, and we were exhausted but we’d already done all that work to get up there.
Jon: That was a 20-mile day.
Becca: We had a couple of very long hikes. But morale was high. We laughed uncontrollably at least twice a day.
I had never heard of Mt. Langley until Noah discovered it during our pre-trip research for a spring of climbing and skiing in the Sierras. At 14,025 feet and with an eastern-facing couloir to ski, the same aspect we would be skiing on Whitney, Langley seemed like the perfect warm up for the only slightly taller peak a few miles north. From the Lone Pine Ranger Station we scan the mountains in front of us with Noah’s binoculars, trying to determine exactly which peak is Langley. Half hidden behind other mountains rising straight from the desert into misty clouds, it is not the most eye-catching summit around. All we can see is a good amount of snow in the general vicinity and, with promising weather reports, we decide to continue with our original plan: spend five days at a basecamp near Langley, skiing that mountain and anything that looks good around it.
The next morning we drive up Tuttle Creek as far as the rocky dirt road will let us before threatening to do some serious damage to Noah's car. This is the start of the canyon we must follow for seven or eight miles up to the base of Langley. We're still in the desert as we pack our bags with everything we need for the next few days- warm clothes, food, stove, tent, skis, ice axes, crampons, avy gear- our packs are heavy. With skis on our backs, we continue on foot up the dirt road until it dies into a trail, until the trail dies into nothing but a shrubby, sandy hillside. We quickly realize that the left side of Tuttle creek would have been the better choice for our approach: a well-maintained trail is clearly visible across from us. Right now we're struggling to make much progress, taking the "two steps forward, one step back" approach, skis catching in trees we have to duck under. Noah is in his telemark boots already- they make a strange contrast with the sand we're walking on. I take a picture of him with the desert in the background. We laugh when we look at his expression- his halfhearted smile is screaming, "why are we doing this?" With the canyon too steep to cross, we trudge on, slowly making progress towards our goal.

It appears as though we will have to cross the creek at some point, until I spot what looks like a stone house on the ridge between the left split and the right split of Tuttle Creek. This gives us some hope that by contouring around the canyon it will be possible to reach the left-hand fork. Earlier it looked like we would be blocked by steep rocks at the point where the house is. With the stone house as our goal, we continue up and around the canyon, arriving at the house in the early evening just as the first flakes of snow are starting to fall. It doesn't seem worthwhile to push on in the remaining light when we're at a shelter, so we decide to spend a night in this strange house. It's a very spacious room, with a solid roof and a fireplace. Its main downfall seems to be the numerous open windows and doors- rather impractical for good protection from the elements. Upon investigation, we discover what could be described as a religious theme to the place. On one side of the room is a large, pink cross chalked on the wall, and prayers are scrawled in other places. The cement table takes on more of an alter feel, and beside the fireplace is a note that could be interpreted either as an "I've found new direction in my life" letter or a suicide note. This place is creepy, but a roof is a roof, so we decide to stay.

In the morning we wake up covered in snow- so much for shelter. Only one corner of the house is left snow free, so we move everything we own to that corner and get ready for the next stretch of our trek. At this point there's no trail on either side of the creek. The snow on the ground is frustratingly patchy- not enough for skins, but plenty for the occasional posthole. We pick up a cairned path, slowly weave our way through rocks and shrubs dusted in snow. By midday, we're finally at snow! Enough snow to skin! It's a happy moment to get our skis off of our packs and onto our boot. We're officially out of the desert. The whole trip suddenly makes a lot more sense. The canyon we're following is all rock on the right side. Might there be climbing here, too? We leave that investigation until later and skin up the creek until the trees become sparse and we can finally see the summit we are after.

In the beautiful afternoon sun, we find a campsite beneath some boulders, near the creek for water and out of any potential avalanche paths. It's warm enough now that Noah is shirtless as we dig out a flat spot for the tent and then go to explore the path we'll be following on our summit attempt the next day. We pick out a skin path through rock fall, until we're at the base of the couloir that leads to the summit. For the first time we can see most of our ski descent down from Langley- a long, beautiful line. For now we ski back to our base camp, coming to a stop at the side of our tent, a very satisfying feeling.
I’m woken the next day by Noah’s greeting: “morning pardner.” At this hour, my motivation is very low. It’s dark and cold out, and sleep sounds so pleasant, but I know it will be worthwhile to wake up. And Noah is moving, so I have to as well. We eat pop-tarts for breakfast in our sleeping bags, ready our packs by headlamp light. Noah has his skis on and has disappeared down the hill to get water before I’m ready. In the next couple months we’ll discover that this will be a continuing trend- Noah is always ready before me when we’re skiing, and when we’re climbing, it’s just the opposite. A few turns down iced snow bring me to the side of the creek for water, and then we put skins on for our trek to the summit. It is still nighttime as we follow our skin tracks from yesterday, picking through the same rockfall, lost in our own thoughts and the monotony of one foot in front of the other. We get to the end of our tracks, at a wide plateau, and start up the summit couloir just as the sun breaks over the hills to the east. The morning light is invigorating. I’m finally feeling awake as the snow brightens and the vastness of the desert below us comes into view. Conditions are perfect right now- no clouds, no wind. We could not have asked for a better morning. Day is quickly fully upon us as we ascend farther and farther. As the gully steepens, we put our skis on our packs and continue bootpacking up the mountain, alternating breaking trail. From the bottom, the summit looked quite close, but the distance between the top and us seems to increase as we climb. Up here the air is not so still, and eventually the wind is howling with such force that Noah shouts for us to pull over to the side of the gully, where we ditch our skis, which were effectively becoming sails. We make the final push up to the top of the gully, and then turn right to the true summit. The top is flat and rocky, and we scramble across to the farthest edge. Finally we can see the Western sierras, snow covered peaks that seem to continue forever, most of them below us at this point. Looking in this direction, we finally feel like we’re in the mountains. It’s horrifically windy and cold because of it, but still cloudless. We stay on the summit long enough for a few photos and some crampon adjustments, and then we head back down to our skis. Although summitting was our goal, the descent is what we’re really here for, not to mention the reason we hiked more than a few extra pounds into base camp. Back at our skis, we dig out a small platform on which to switch out of crampons, and then begin our long ride down. Noah’s in the lead, and I wait for him to signal to me to follow. The start is steep, and the snow is semi-sticky and catches at my skis, but it feels wonderful to be moving so fast down what took us hours to climb. We’ve come a long ways- the gully gradually widens as we descend, and the snow only gets better. By the end of the couloir, my legs are aching. We ski back to camp, with the sun still far above the horizon. After lunch, we hang our wet clothes and skins to dry on an improvised clothesline. Tired and happy, we lie half naked on rocks in the sun, enjoying doing nothing for the moment. No one around for miles, sunning ourselves in snow covered mountains- this is luxury. There’s no place I’d rather be right now.
At the bottom, warmth of red sunrise calms the heart,
Casting softness across sharp-edged stepping stones.
The approach occurs in silence, mind meditating
On familiar motions, the regular contortions,
Keeping your hips inward, your arms taut.
Remembrance of misplaced feet, the sliding—
Falling forms a cloud of memory blurred at the edges,
But droplets of apprehension dribble away steadily.
This is the way it feels to hang from your own two hands
Beyond the treetops, below a wall of sheer granite.

Stone touches skin first,
And the coolness surprises you.
It always surprises you,
This unfeeling stone.
The rope taut at your crotch,
You whiten your hands with chalk.
Fingers gripping rough handholds, the wall begins to pulse.
Your toes float from the ground, then find traction again.
In order to drive up on subtle steps.

You glide for a time, peaceful and confident,
Reaching, grabbing, then crimping and pulling.
Your feet push, balance, extend, relax again.
The rope slithers between stone bulges in the route below,
Following you willingly.
But then the wall is blank.
Fingers grope frantically,
But they find nothing.
The wall heats,
Writhe,
Shift.
And your wrists burn,
Ankles twitch,
Muscles quiver,
Veins expand,
Arteries fill,
Eyes stare,
And the wall heaves,
In the air, you become weightless and float.

This is the way it feels
To fall from your own two hands
Beyond the treetops,
In front of you
A wall of sheer granite.

As you fall through the air, every hidden handhold reaches heavy relief, and you realize, for a moment, invisible cracks that could have pushed rubber-coated toes upward. Leaves rush upward behind you, soft and soothing, and the rock seems cold and unflinching once again. You pass a bolt in the wall, through which your rope slides, slowly tightening, then quickly.
It tugs,
You swing,
And rocket toward the wall.
Your feet land hard,
But you are caught.

Your heartbeat thumps heavier now, drumming
Heat through tense shoulders and cheeks.
Hanging against your tightened rope,
You notice intricate woven patterns of green and blue,
And once again begin to trust hardened fingertips.
You whiten your hands with chalk.
Fingers gripping the rough handholds, the wall begins to pulse.
This is the way it feels to hang from your own two hands
Beyond the treetops, on a wall of sheer granite.
Sunrises and Sunsets in the Tetons
Andrew McCauley ’09

Full Days. In school we sleep six hours a night if we are lucky. Six hours of sleep leaves us with 18 hours awake. Time spent showering, eating, checking blitz, taking notes and finishing problem sets. But when we are lucky we can spend those 18 hours committed to ourselves, to accomplishing something dangerous, challenging, terrifying, and absolutely beautiful. That is what alpine climbing and mountaineering is to me, and that is how I love to spend every one of my 18 hours.

The Tetons rise more than 7,000 vertical feet from the valley floor below, so hiking to the base of climbs involves three to four thousand feet of vertical. To put this in perspective, consider that the hike from Pinkham Notch to the summit of Mount Washington covers about forty two hundred vertical feet. These savage approaches create the full days of climbing we came to expect in the Tetons, and convince most others to stay home.

In the Tetons I had five days of climbing; the rest were spent recovering from one trip or planning the next. And of those five days, I only watched the sun set from camp once. They were all big days—18 hours, easy. On our first day of climbing, Parker and I climbed Symmetry Spire via the Durrance Ridge (5.6), an eight-pitch climb that would take us all day. We began our approach from Jenny Lake at 6:00 am, before the first shuttle boat, and would spend most of the day watching the boats cross the blue water thousands of feet below. And then we would again watch a still lake as we continued climbing well after the shuttles had stopped ferrying tourists. We topped out as the sun set, and descended in the dark, wishing we hadn’t run out of water six hours earlier. Peter and Jake were waiting in

range with numerous Dartmouth first ascents and features named for the College on the Hill, that August it had the perfect balance of technical rock climbing and backcountry approaches to push our experience beyond Canon, Cathedral and other traditional climbing in the East.

In the summer of 2008 five of us met in Western Wyoming at the base of the Teton Range for several weeks of climbing in one of the most beautiful strings of mountains on the continent. Jake Feintzeig ’09, Parker Reed ’09, Peter Shellito ’09, Tom Flynn ’11 and I all arrived early in August, having left our summer jobs. Our trip was supported by money from the DMC expedition fund to experience mountains that have been critical to the Dartmouth climbing experience since the first DMC summer camps there with Jack Durrance ’36. A

In the summer of 2008 five of us met in Western Wyoming at the base of the Teton Range for several weeks of climbing in one of the most beautiful strings of mountains on the continent.
their sleeping bags when we returned at midnight to the parking lot, they had returned from Exum Ridge (5.7), a highway of guides and their clients. Tired and beat, I celebrated our safe return with the Pringles I found for dinner before crashing for the night.

Opportunities for long, “miserable” outdoor experiences can be found anywhere. The DOC supports the fifty mile hike to Moosilauke from campus twice a year, but the exposure of alpine terrain will keep you on your toes for the whole thing. The steep rock of the Tetons, which creates their dazzling majesty, also creates the sense of pure exposure you find in those hills. When planning a trip to Mount Owen, Jake sought advice from a Jenny Lake Ranger, a man as grizzled and strong as the peaks themselves. Speaking of Jake’s intended route, Serendipity Arête (5.7), the man’s eyes glazed over, and he spoke softly of “big air,” the serious exposure typical of high ridgelines carved out by glaciers and mountain weather. In mountaineering, most injuries come with the descent, because navigating down thousands of feet of vertical terrain while tired, hungry and thirsty exposes the climber to the mountains worst while at his weakest.

On our next big day, the descent would prove the most challenging for both parties, while Jake and Tom climbed Serendipity on Owen and Parker and I climbed Mt. Moran via the CMC (5.4). Our climb up the peak was long, we had been moving since before dawn, and arrived on the sandstone talus of the summit shortly after noon. We then began the challenging fourth class down climb back to the notch where our climb began that morning. Fourth class terrain does not offer the technical challenge of steeper rock walls, but it does offer the exposure, and one misstep, or loose rock can be fatal. For five hours we slowly descended the steep gulley, rappelling past some sections, and climbing back up to untangle ropes, until we reached the bottom. Jake and Tom had a similar descent, full of complicated route finding down the West Ledges, the easiest route from the summit of Owen back into Valhalla canyon. Parker and I did not return to our camp until 11:30 that evening, when we had hoped to be returning to the parking lot. Jake and Tom hitchhiked back to camp.

Camp was always our break. On off days we could sit and watch the peaks from across the plain, with little else but buffalo to interrupt the scene. Too tired to move and too cheap to spend much time in Jackson, we could rest by our fire pit, enjoying a few beers and planning our next goal for the trip.

From the time Jake and I left the car, until the time we were well below tree line on our last trip into the mountains, we spoke of nothing but the goal at hand, route finding, and pace. We spent two days completing the Cathedral Traverse, which included Mt. Teewinot and two peaks Jake had already climbed, Owen and the Grand. After a day and a half of deliberating and seeking out Beta from numerous sources, we decided to go for it. The weather looked good, and Jake was confident his knowledge of the West Ledges and descent from the grand would get us through. Because we needed two days, we would have to bring
overnight gear, and spent the better part of the evening beforehand stripping our gear to the bare essentials. How many calories would we need? Would I really need a sleeping pad? How cold could it get at night? In the end we spent the night out with less equipment than either one of us had before, and probably brought too much. But if you spend all day on the move, there isn’t much reason for luxuries in camp.

On the second day we woke to a spectacular sunrise over Teewinot, enjoyed a cold breakfast bagel, and were on our way with two more pitches of climbing before several hundred feet of scrambling brought us to the base of the Grand. Access to the routes on the North side of the peak is difficult, requiring traverses threatened by frequent rock fall or a long approach from Owen or Valhalla canyon, so the uncommonly good climbing sees very little traffic. Seeking the highest quality climbing Jake has chosen a route that will begin up the North Ridge, then traverse left to the Italian Cracks and top out on the Direct North Face, the whole thing 5.8 or easier. Climbing on the north side of the high peak proved exceedingly cold, which we had not previously experienced in Wyoming. Passing ice along the way, we made good progress and soon were only two pitches from the summit. Those last two pitches proved the most challenging either of us would climb in the Tetons. First we had to climb a loose dihedral into a finger tips traverse with a bulge at your waist, so you could not see the feet you were forced to use. Finally a friction traverse across slab brought us to the end of technical pitches, and only a few hundred feet of scrambling from the summit. Hours later, finally back below tree line, we were able to take a deep breath and appreciate the experience we were leaving. Two full days of travel through technical terrain, surrounded by glaciers rock, and not much else, and only a few more miles of gentle trail back to the parking lot.

In the Tetons we were able to experience the limits of our own capabilities; we could push ourselves physically and mentally in a setting of unrivaled beauty. A full day in that range never relents, from the approach to the climb and the final, trying descent. Spending a long day, sunrise to sunset, in the mountains will leave you exhausted, dehydrated, and full of satisfaction.
Above: Parker and Andrew, on the summit of Mt. Moran, with the Grand in the background.
Below: The Topo Andrew and Jake used on the Cathedral traverse.
In the summer of 2009, we, Scottie Alexander '11 and Andrew Palmer '10, received Schlitz and Expedition Fund money to spend the summer in Europe climbing. After more than year of planning we left for Germany where we bought a car and began three months of rock climbing. We spent about two weeks there before heading south to France for a month, then left for Spain – where we lived in a parking lot– for another two weeks, only to return “home” to France for the remaining month of the trip. The day before we flew back to the States, we became tourists and hung out in Paris. The following is the story of one experience among many that we hope will provide some insight into the motivation that fueled our trip.
The reason we went to France was to see the Mona Lisa. Yes, the Mona Lisa. And there we were, inside the Louvre, looking at the inverted glass pyramid at the entrance to the museum, about to go inside. Yet, in that moment, we realized that we weren’t going in. We stood at the threshold of the exhibit, fully committed to purchasing a ticket and going to go see this famous work of art, and we decided not to. We were so close to such a unique experience, and we turned it down. Why? Because we went to France to see the Mona Lisa, and we had already seen it.

First and foremost, we are climbers. Our museums are the cliffs and our art is the movement upon them. The Mona Lisa, more than a painting, represents a seminal and awe-inspiring work, and for sport climbers, the Massif de Céuse sits upon an analogous pedestal in terms of its history, beauty, and status within the climbing world.

Before we left for Europe, we read the reviews, histories, and opinion pieces about the cliff, much the same way an art student might research a piece in order to build an informed appreciation for the work, and to be able to understand the context and intricacies of it. We gorged ourselves on photos of the cliff and movies of the various climbs, and in our minds, built an aura around the place no less captivating than the aura that surrounds da Vinci’s most famous painting. We waited for months, training for endless hours, in anticipation of what was to come. Our excitement was palpable; we were giddy. We traveled thousands of miles and spent thousands of dollars to see and experience this one object. And then there we were, arriving at 1 am in total darkness and waking up to the sight of what was literally the cliff of our dreams. The most amazing part: it was everything that we had hoped it would be.

What we realized when we stood inside the Louvre debating whether or not to go to see the Mona Lisa was that if we were to go and see it, every aspect of the painting that made it the renowned and beautiful piece that it is would have been lost upon us. We know next to nothing about art, nevermind the Mona Lisa. We could have gazed upon the imprints of the individual brushstrokes of such a singular and famous work, and yet it would be as if we were listening to poetry being recited in a language we didn’t understand. The rhythm of the words, like the base physical appearance of the painting, would have been enjoyable, but every other factor that made the piece what it is would have been beyond reach. One can look, but to truly ‘see’ requires understanding.

In much the same fashion, to expect any artist or non-climber to look at Céuse and see anything more than a multi-hued limestone wall would be unreasonable. An analogy could be drawn to learning to read; once learned, one cannot see a word without reading it. When climbers see a cliff, it is impossible not to see the various routes and features and to draw connections to the climbers that climbed them and the stories they created. We cannot read art; those who have not climbed cannot read climbing.

Beyond our simple lack of expertise lay a deeper reason for not entering the Louvre. Over the course of our travels in Europe we had developed a “group mentality”, a feeling that was never talked about or explicitly understood. This mindset directed how we acted, where we went, and what we did. It was sort of an intangible force, a feeling that guided us throughout the summer. To have entered the museum that day to look at works of art we couldn’t fully appreciate because that’s just what you do in Paris would have somehow been at odds with that mentality. We weren’t being ourselves in the Louvre. Being ourselves was sitting outside, taking in the sights of a new city, admiring the buildings, watching the people, and eating off-brand frosted flakes out of a cut-in-half soda bottle with spoons made from the cardboard cereal box. Being ourselves was finding the Mona Lisa. Being ourselves was finding it outside of the Louvre.
It seems like a pretty short time ago that I first started visiting ruins of old D.O.C. cabins as waylays on my fall outings. I vividly remember walking out to the old Harris cabin site while hunting partridge on a beautiful fall day. The foliage was in its prime, the partridge were at the peak of their 11 year cycle, I was skipping class, and the biggest worry I had in mind was the possibility that I'd run out of shells before I ran out of birds to miss. I knew of a cabin site out on Moose Mountain through some D.O.C. lore, though exactly how I'm not quite sure, and decided to wander in its direction.

When I arrived in the clearing the first thing I noticed was the old swimming hole, an oddly large pool in these upper reaches of Mink Brook which had mostly filled with leafy debris. The pool held half a dozen small trout, trapped from moving up or downstream by the low flow of a dry fall. It was their darting about that had drawn my attention in the first place. I pulled out the hand line and hare’s ear flies I often leave in my vest pocket and caught one just to stare in wonderment at the blaze of colors that is a wild brook trout.

With the fish exercised I turned my attention to the ruins in the clearing. The front of Harris cabin had collapsed two winters before and had become an operating base for a host of porcupines which were slowly shuffling out of sight. The back kitchen area was still standing, supported by pillars of porcupine droppings and trash pile bracing. The logs were growing fungi of a variety which is apparently immune to Earl’s special cabin juice, an abandoned flycatcher’s nest was nestled into the cracks of the chimney, and saplings were springing out of the clearing as the forest was doing its best to tidy up and reclaim the site. Above all the mess, proudly asserting that these sorry ruins were in fact D.O.C. property, was the club emblem, high on the chimney. This was a special place, and worth a pause in my hunt.

Later that fall, 2004, I proposed a reconstruction project for Harris Cabin to the then new Outdoor Programs Director Andy Harvard in the form of a forty page proposal, which included pictures, budget numbers, and my timetable for the job. The whole project was going to cost $58,448.62, exactly, would be constructed entirely with volunteer labor, and was to be ready for rental in the fall of 2006, two years later. The proposal included a ranting manifesto about the merits of cabin building and a scolding diatribe about the shamefully long pause since the last D.O.C. cabin had been built, but also some more coherent parts. A fairly elaborate plan was hatched to build the facility in two phases, connecting two complementary buildings to reduce the risk quanta of the project. A small cabin would be built the first year, which included the kitchen and a sleeping loft, and a large, single-room meeting hall would be added on the second year. Overall, the proposal was excessively optimistic, almost to the absurd, but convincing in its detail. Everything I had thought of right down to furring strips and screws was priced and included in quantities almost sufficient for a small tarpaper shack.

It’s since become clear that Andy Harvard didn’t actually believe the details of the crap I was feeding him. Rather, because I was so convinced of its truth and delusionally dedicated to making it happen, he agreed to support me in navigating the myriad obstacles between this idea and a physical cabin. With his nod, the brief pause in my partridge hunt became a four year odyssey. The date of my matriculation, or at the least beginning of my major in the Dartmouth Outing Club, had arrived.

High on life and my new endeavor, I immediately began seeking special people. People who would understand the inexplicable feelings that ultimately made so many of us avoid high paying summer jobs to instead labor among the black flies, in mountains of drawknife shavings, sawdust, and scrap lumber, sleeping among the owls and the stars. To my surprise, these people existed at Dartmouth and included some of the most talented and intellectual individuals I’ve ever met. From here on, two weeks after submitting my proposal, the “I” in this project became a “we.”

One of the first things we realized was that the nicely laid plan which had been conceived in isolation was going to have to change. The site had a history of misuse, was within the zoning setback of a stream, was right next to the Appalachian Trail, had no road access thanks to some beavers, was situated in “prime bear habitat,” and, according to local legend, was a prime UFO landing site. Though we knew the concerns had to be addressed, red tape is pretty sticky and we quickly found ourselves stuck in a tape ball. The onslaught of stakeholders was like a wall being put up between us and our goal. Each hurdle resulted in a re-design, but each re-design strengthened our resolve. We
relished incorporating ever grander and more intricate features at every iteration; attempting, like proper college students, to subtly defeat the spirit of the rules while satisfying their letter. Our interactions became more adversarial and new, more descriptive words were employed to describe some authority figures. Clarity and perspective on these trials came while hunting a few hundred yards from the site. Falling into a brush pile that had looked like a perfect spot to find a rabbit, I found myself briefly perched atop something warm, furry, and black which made a deep, guttural growl as I scurried to retrace my steps out of “prime bear habitat.” A thought occurred. Maybe those stakeholders weren’t all wrong. Perhaps they weren’t even part of an evil conspiracy trying to stop us. Might they have had some valid points? And so I collected myself, apologized to the bear for so rude a January awakening, and wandered off with a deeper understanding. Addressing concerns, even poorly worded, excessively antagonistic, and sometimes utterly ridiculous ones, is just part of being thorough; nothing personal.

Winter continued as we scoured books on log building techniques to shorten the dark nights in cozy nooks of Robinson Hall. Town permitting, meetings with administrators, and log orders filled the days as we did our best to avoid class. Trips went out to transport cement to the site and clean up the remains; burying snowmobiles, destroying saw chains, and numbing fingers. We attempted to burn the debris and doubts were raised about my manhood as I repeatedly failed to burn anything but the kerosene I had brought. A lovely and efficient girl named Norah, who apparently didn’t notice, helped out for just enough trips to catch my attention before letting her true motivations be known. We built a model, thanks to Richard and Allie, and drafted a series of drawings. The two-stage design was abandoned because it was incompatible with zoning and a “go big or go home” design (close to the one we now know) was adopted.

Spring turned into summer of 2005 with no permits. The flycatchers returned to their nook in the chimney, and we began construction by peeling the first hundred and sixty logs from the Second College Grant offsite at the Organic Farm. A series of work trips put in a bridge to access the site and a field trip allowed us to see the beauty and rewards of full scribe work firsthand at Bob Peter’s worksite, settling us on building that way. More importantly, we took the opportunity to learn the important things: like the coefficient of friction between freshly peeled white pine logs and boots (practically zero), the best way to fell a hung tree (dynamite), and what happens when you dig in the rain (mud—lots of mud). As summer drew to a close and the zoning misunderstandings with the town dragged on, we practiced building a log sauna, put in a foundation capable of supporting several building configurations, and put the site to sleep for the winter with just one log laid. More than a hundred people had been involved and we hadn’t even started yet.

That winter permits rolled in, a crew was hired for 2006, the site was stacked high with logs, and things were finally ready to go. The crew assembled in June, a tent city was erected, and so it began. Drawshave, Scribe, Score, Cut, Stack. Repeat. The shavings flew, chainsaws roared, and the burn pile smoldered through wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow of sawdust while the walls grew and JP’s homemade log clock rotated from “Work” to “Sleep” to “Eat” and back to “Work” again. We learned from a few stitches to respect the hazards of the great utility knife and from our sore backs that green hemlock weighs a frickin’ ton. The accident-prone got their ATV privileges revoked, eating contests became hotly competitive, I was forbidden to grocery shop unsupervised, and inside jokes began to form. In just a few weeks, a group was formed that may never be reassembled, a series of jokes was created that simply cannot be explained, and a summer was underway that will never be forgotten.

As alums visited and shared stories of their own crews, we
came to realize that working on a crew is an experience of a special type that can never be precisely recreated, explained, or fully shared. The moments exist only for those who were there, in the rain and dirt, at the end of those long days in the woods. And so we yearned and listened, yearning to become a part of each other’s crews but being forced to resign in the simple contentment of knowing we all described the same intangible feeling.

In the blink of an eye, the nesting birds had once again fledged from the chimney, our summer crew was another component of D.O.C. lore, and it became clear that those who oppose the Dartmouth quarter system are right. Summer was over and despite our most valiant efforts, ten weeks and six people is not nearly enough time to build a cabin of such exaggerated measurements. The project ground to a halt just above the second floor and transitioned into its first overtime.

Everyone who visited was impressed by our perceived failure and a consensus formed that the building should be protected before winter. Sean Mann agreed to press on into fall, leading the translation of the summer crew’s raw desires and grandiose design additions into reality. A crew was assembled and immediately resumed piling logs, enlarging scrap piles, building friendships, and tucking away memories. Ever good with timing, I rejoined after finals just in time for the crowning achievement of their work. The great log truss, which spans the main room, had been built on the ground, just below its ultimate place of service, but it might have well have still been in the Grant. The truss was cut of fresh, wet, green spruce, braced by “pond-dried” hemlock, and weighed more than my truck. The chain pull on our skyline rated out at two tons of lift and couldn’t budge it. We were back to the drawing board for the sort of work that still makes the engineer in me giddy.

All other work on the site ceased as a stout forty foot log was raised vertically in the middle of the cabin. Cables were stayed and tackle was added as the crew hopped-to like sailors rigging the mast aboard the “good ship Harris”. The truss was braced and hitched. Safety lines were added. Pulleys and tackle were added to lifting devices of every flavor. Preparations were slow and methodical. The hazards were obvious, and not something our hard hats were going to protect us from. After three days, the time we nervously awaited had come. With the calculations, plans, and equipment triple checked, safety lines tensioned, and fourteen thousand pounds of mechanical lifting capacity taking up load, one end of the truss began to inch skyward. Gravity gave its all and the system creaked, strained, and groaned as it took the load—fluttering hearts and testing nerves for minutes that stretched into hours. Finally, to my amazement, the truss hung freely, levitating in space; then crept higher and higher. The progress was slow and the atmosphere tense, but just as darkness descended the scribe joints were cut, the truss settled into place, and everyone collapsed in an exhausted sigh of relief.

This test past, urgency returned to close the building in before winter. Rory pulled out all the stops in his people-gathering and volunteers showed up in droves. For a magical week, as many as forty people scurried around the cabin. Purlins were raised and roof boards installed at a rate never before seen until, long after dark, on the last night before the crew dispersed to the corners of the world, under spotlights, the tarp was stretched and the cabin was closed in, safe from the New England winter.

The winters aren’t really that long, though, and the flycatchers soon returned to their place presiding over the site, this time among the purlins. Crewmembers likewise returned to the task, now under a new paradigm. This time there would be no specific Harris crew, but rather all summer D.O.C. hires would rotate through shifts at the Harris site, the farm, the other cabins, and on the D.O.C.’s many trails. As director of this program, my attention was distracted from the Harris site, but new leaders emerged. Crewmembers donned harnesses as rafters, insulation, plywood, tar-paper, and metal roofing sailed onto the roof. Window openings were cut and light poured into the building. Walls were filled in and floors were insulated. Sixty tons of rock and mortar was painstakingly piled onto the chimney. Stairs were built, the site was leveled, and a fine suburban lawn was planted. All the while, the crew formed their own identity and imparted their own character to the building in the form of chimney love seats, added lofts, and secret compartments. The progress was incredible, but the passing of time and the pace of the schedule we’d made was even faster.

Four more weeks. That was the time horizon for completion throughout the project...a euphemism for a length of time close to infinity—or at least beyond our ability to plan. After the first summer, schedule detail trailed off about that far into the future. The fourth week’s schedule usually incorporated a work plan such
as “Finish Cabin. Decorate.” The cabin looked like a building now though, and we began to sense the final stretch. Sean came back that winter to put in the final “four weeks,” leading a ten week crew which installed the woodstoves, put in the floors, added cabinets and counters, built beautiful railings from local hemlock, and firmly solidified Sean’s place as the keystone of this building project. Summer crew ’08 rotated through as well for its six week go at the “four more weeks” work, building and filling a woodshed, constructing a privy, adding bunks and sleeping lofts, installing a pantry, and beginning the monumental task of cleaning up the mess we made building the place. These crews no point or another, for a total of fifty weeks, the project took two years longer than planned and cost more than four times as much. None of us anticipated what a tremendous undertaking we had gotten ourselves into. Not less than fifty Dartmouthians from seven different classes worked on the project as full time crew members. Hundreds more volunteered for periods ranging from minutes to weeks. Mistakes were made, waste was incurred, and my arrogance was regularly humbled. Yet the finished product is leaps and bounds better built than originally proposed. A skill set has been revived in the D.O.C. that the current students are eager to use again, an archive of new tools has been acquired, and a true liberal arts education was provided to a generation of D.O.C.’ers. Only 11 stitches and a few dozen band-aids were required, the generosity of the Class of 1966 replenished many of the funds used to build the building, the flycatchers still nest on the site, and, in the year since its opening, more than 1500 people, including the college president, have used the place. For those of us lucky enough to have worked on it, we’ve built something that we may well be able to show to our grandchildren.
Not many people can say that before age twenty-five.

That a blundering sophomore project proposal, long on passion but short on reality, could turn into something this successful is something each member of the D.O.C. can hold proudly. It is a testimony not to my foolish proposal, nor to any particular person or event in this saga. Rather, this journey is a testimony to a whole organization composed of people too numerous to thank: crew members and volunteers who spent thousands upon thousands of hours on the site, alumni who through their past exploits inspired us and set precedents for us to follow, donors who enabled this experience with their generosity, and those members of the college staff who allowed students to learn by taking responsibility for themselves and their learning. I don’t mean to say that everyone involved saw eye to eye all the time or that we didn’t ever have setbacks, but every component of our beloved organization ultimately worked for this project, and it could not have been accomplished otherwise. The building that resulted is a tribute to the legacy and ideals of the oldest, strongest, and proudest college outing club in the world. I cannot express in words how grateful I am to have been allowed to be a part of that.

Now as I slowly end my tenure as a student, I realize the visions created by the dreamers in this project cannot be completely fulfilled in a college career, even my extended one. I still want those who come after us to make this building the centerpiece of the trail system which covers Moose Mountain, connect it by ski trail to Hanover, incorporate it into First-Year Trips, break a little sweat cutting enough firewood to heat it, and perhaps even add a caretaker who will cook me a hot meal after my grandkids tow me in on a sled. But you know, I’m not an undergrad anymore. I’m an alum; if a slow one to leave. I’m no longer in charge of the crews or this building. I passed that torch to Phil who passed it to Andrew, who soon will pass it to someone else. The details of this vision may never be fulfilled, yet I am not worried.

Photo: Phil Bracikowski ‘08
I just walked out to the ’66 Lodge today while thinking about this article, five years and 14 days since I first set foot on that ground. It wasn’t quite so sunny, the foliage was past its prime, and the partridge are at a low in their cycle. But I still exercised a few birds and pulled out my hand line to catch a trout before turning my attention to some carefully piled wood in the center of the clearing. This time I climbed up onto the second floor porch and sat, just taking in the scene and remembering. It was the first time I’ve just sat at the site in more than five years. Ten blissfully nostalgic minutes passed as it became clear why I am not worried about the visions listed above. The next batch of students will fulfill my vision perfectly. They will make sure this building and the whole of the D.O.C.’s resources are used exactly the way I want them to. Their way.

Then I climbed down and the nostalgic clarity in my mind left as it raced to thinking about the projects still to be done—the little stuff no one but those who worked there know about. Stuff that will trouble us builders until we check it off. I grasped again for that torch I’ve already passed along. I’m not ready to go. Just one more work trip, and the place will be done. Really. I promise. Who wants to sign up?
Mountain Biking Comes to Dartmouth

Tom Collier '11
I arrived at Dartmouth two years ago excited about everything: new friends, classes, new experiences. Up until that point mountain biking had been a dominant part of my life. Freshmen fall it was pushed into the background. I was too busy getting used to classes and meeting new people. This was made easier by the apparent lack of riding going on. Towards the end of the term though, I met another rider who was really excited to hear that I was from Hanover and knew the trails in the area. We went on a few very cold rides at the end of fall term and my excitement regarding mountain biking had returned. That same biker encouraged me to join him on Ledyard Spring Break. I took him up on the offer and found that, while kayaking was not my sport, being involved with a club of people interested in outdoor sports in the same way as me was hugely enjoyable. I began to long for a similar group of mountain bikers to exist. A group with which I could discuss trails, recount past trips, and go on new rides.

I mentioned this desire and was encouraged by some Ledyardites to start a Mountain Biking Club. I took this idea and ran with it. Months later the dormant Cycling Club had been revived as the Mountain Biking Club and I was beginning to lead trips. It took almost a year for it gain momentum, but it seems as though it is finally coming to life in a big way. Simply connecting a rider new to town with the club is enough to give them friends to ride with and trails to ride. I have been astonished by the number of riders I have met at Dartmouth. Some were riding on their own and others had not ridden since coming here because they could not find people to ride and were only able to find a couple mediocre trails. The other group that has begun riding in Hanover are those from the west who come with the notion that the hills of New Hampshire could never compare to the mountains of Oregon or Colorado and that the trails would probably be so poor as to make bringing a mountain bike to campus not worth the effort. It only took a few of these riders to give it a try and then report back to everyone else on the charm and character of New England trails that makes them some of my favorite trails to ride in the country. The perception that riding in the east cannot compare to the west is shifting, and the number of people riding on campus and loving it has been increasing constantly.

The new visibility of the club has also led some students to begin mountain biking. Some come from the other DOC clubs, while some have never gone on a DOC-run trip before. One by one, through all of these ways, the number of
mountain bikers around Dartmouth has increased and it is now a rare ride that I embark on solo. The mountain biking environment I had wished for freshmen year now exists. Now a day without a semi-organized ride is a rarity, and no longer do desperate blitzes for riding companionship go unanswered. With a wide range of trail difficulties, Boston Lot behind DHMC is arguably the most popular trail system around Hanover. One can find everything from technical rock gardens and tall drops to easy rolling double track only a few minutes from the Green. North of campus, Oak Hill, a wintertime Nordic ski area, has recently opened its trails to mountain biking. Flowing single-track branch off the wide ski trails creating a spider web of opportunities for the slightly more advance cyclists. Finally, at the base of Gile Mountain, seven miles into Vermont the Blue Ribbon trail leaves from the base of the fire tower. While the ride out to the trailhead and up the mountain is exhausting even for the most fit of riders, the view from the top of the tower and winding track down the mountain prove worth the long trip.

As the membership of the Mountain Biking club has expanded, opportunities to travel to other classic New England riding areas have grown dramatically. Scouting rides to Sugarbush, VT and Waterbury, VT found great locations and great terrain for future trips in addition to our trips to Kingdom Trails in East Burke, VT. With the tremendous new interest in mountain biking at Dartmouth, we are looking at expanding the bike workroom to include student mechanics, improving the rental mountain bikes, and maybe even a spring break trip.

Photos:
Previous Page, Left: Tom Collier ‘11 freeriding.
Previous Page, Right: Michal Jablonski ’09 (left) and Anson Moxness ’11 ride a bridge at Kingdom Trails in East Burke, VT. Photo by Max McClorey ‘11.
Above: Anson Moxness drops into Sidewinder at Kingdom Trails in East Burke, VT. Photo by Max McClorey.
Enter the large room of Collis Commonground last night, I felt anticipation thrumming in the small crowd as we all sat down for the newest ‘ski porn’ movie brought to campus by the Dartmouth Winter Sports Club. The next hour, filled with shots of mouthwateringly deep powder and beautiful Alaskan mountains, left us all with the desperate craving for snow.

Whether it’s climbing, kayaking, or skiing, these big name film productions represent what’s out there; we can watch boaters in Ecuador or climbers in South Africa and know that someday we could also explore those gorgeous rivers or cliffs. I felt inspired by the movie as I entered the brisk October night. I’d have strapped on my skis right then if the nearest snow had been more than an inch deep (though these days that’s not enough to stop the most hardcore of Dartmouth skiers). Although I had enjoyed the film, I felt a little letdown by one glaring absence; in a movie featuring the tip-top of the sport, the skiers were all men. Sure, there’d been one woman… she’d appeared for approximately 30 seconds at the very beginning.

The world of outdoor “extreme” sports is male dominated. There’s no avoiding that fact. I climb, mountain bike, and telemark ski and in every case I am in the extreme minority as a woman. Sometimes I find this lack of estrogen frustrating but personally, I’ve never found it intimidating. In fact, all the guys are usually really supportive and stoked to have a girl out there.

Like when I was buying a new mountain bike this summer, a friend mentioned that all I needed to do was “walk into a bike shop as a girl” and I’d get plenty of helpful attention. Or when I asked about the Winter Sports Club backcountry skiing spring break trip, someone mentioned that I was the only girl interested and encouraged me to join the “sausage-fest.” Some people might see less benign connotations in these examples but I’ve found it all to be nothing but genuine.

Unfortunately however, a lot of women don’t find it that easy. I spend a lot of time in our campus climbing gym where I’ve seen many girls’ faces as they end up sitting on the mats watching the shirtless guys climb up the burlier wall rather than try their ‘embarrassing’ easier routes again. Like that women who had mastered a graceful ski turn but couldn’t keep up with the guys when they started dropping cliffs or that girl who froze while kayaking since she didn’t want to be too wimpy and complain about the cold to the group of guys.

The macho attitude of many of these sports often creates an intimidating barrier to all beginners and, as I’ve found, especially women. When I was a freshman, there were several senior girls who were involved with the DOC, very good at climbing, kayaking, etc and also confident enough to get out with the guys. I was extremely lucky to know these strong women as they showed me what was possible.

It was with all this in mind that this year, some other women and I brought back to life an old sub-club of the DOC. The revived club, Women in the Wilderness, hadn’t been active for about 10 years but this fall it is back on the budget and taking out weekly trips.
The Women’s Climbing Group, an unofficial partner to the Mountaineering Club, had been fairly active the last year. This sparked interest in creating an even stronger environment in which women could enter the world of outdoors sports without the feeling of male dominance. Currently, Women in the Wilderness runs only rock climbing trips but we hope to expand it eventually to kayaking, hiking, biking and skiing as well. Our goal is to get more women outside and feeling confident. There are thousands of girls out there who can keep up with the guys, and with that sort of inspiration no one should feel intimidated.

The ski movies missed out. Guess we’ll have to show them how it’s done ladies.
DOC Photo Contest
Summer 2009

In order, top to bottom on each page:
1. Lauren Lesser ‘10 getting ready to go dog mushing during Winter Grant Weekend. Photo by Molly Grear ‘11.
4. Xavier Engle on the Big Branch. Photo by Nick Gottlieb ‘11.
5. Laurie Woodman ‘11 on Mt Moosilauke. Photo by Max McClorey ‘11.
On Tuesday, December 14th, 1909, a group of students gathered in 4 South Fayerweather to draft the first constitution of the Dartmouth Outing Club.

In the past one hundred years, the DOC has become a crucial part of the college on the hill and the lives of many Dartmouth students.

The following pages describe the events which have comprised the year-long celebration known as the ‘DOC Centennial.’
For one beautifully sunny Saturday this past spring, Hanover's usually peaceful, pedestrian Green was taken over by hordes of strange, flannel- and Carhartt-clad people wielding dangerous metal objects. The thunk of axe blades sinking into H-chops and the keening song of bucksaws ripping through white pine filled the air. Woodsmen's Weekend was back in town.

Although Dartmouth typically hosts the intercollegiate competition once every three years, after the 2007 meet the College on the Hill was allowed to host the competition in 2009 to coincide with the DOC's centennial. This 63rd Woodsmen's Weekend featured more than 100 undergraduate competitors representing 27 teams from eleven schools. Dartmouth Alumni sent more than 100 lumberjacks and lumberjills to compete on four teams, from Put Blodgett ’53 to Phil Bracikowski ’08.

The competition opened on a cloudless Friday morning at the Organic Farm. First up were the canoeing events, where competitors raced on the Connecticut in the singles, doubles, and portage events. Dartmouth’s teams performed particularly well on the water, thanks largely to several coaching sessions with expert paddler Put Blodgett in the weeks leading up to the meet. Lauren Lesser ’10 and Women’s Captain Alix Perez-Lawrence ’10 won their doubles race, and Phil Wagner ’09 and David Nutt ’09 took second in doubles for the men.

In the afternoon the competitors moved back to dry land, competing in several events on the farm’s fields on the banks of the river. The team crosscut and bow saw competitions were conducted on brand-new, solid oak sawhorses constructed especially for the event. Cheering on these relays were a crowd of students and other spectators that grew throughout the day.

After the team sawing events, the athletes broke off to compete in doubles’ and triples’ events, testing their skills in log decking, barrel splitting, and firebuilding, in which a pair from each team uses a block of cedar, a book of matches, a knife, and a hatchet in a race to make a can of water boil over. Dartmouth’s women’s team was represented in the firebuild by Lesser and Perez-Lawrence. This dynamic duo, friends and teammates since their freshman year, looked like a well-oiled machine, splitting the cedar, lighting and building the fire, and blowing on it until their can fairly erupted, all to the raucous cheers of their gathered Dartmouth teammates. Their strong effort was rewarded with a third-place finish overall.

The first day of competition ended with the packboard relay, wherein a 40-lb sandbag is lashed to
a stripped-down backpack and then handed off like a baton in a footrace. Dartmouth’s men’s team won by a few seconds for their only team gold medal of the meet, while their female counterparts came in third, a strong showing overall for the Big Green. As the day came to a close and the sun set over the Connecticut, all the teams gathered for a banquet under some tents below the farmhouse, retiring early to rest up for the last day of competition.

Dawn on Saturday saw a crisp blue sky and the Green already covered with Dartmouth woodsmen setting up for the events of the day. The morning would be taken mostly with individual events, such as the obstacle course, fly cast, axe throw, and birling, where woodsmen battle to stay atop a floating log. Held in a pool designed by Nutt and constructed from hay bales, several tarps, ratchet straps, and sheer ingenuity, birling was a fan favorite all day long. Nutt performed particularly well in the event, coming in a close second to a much more experienced lumberjack from Finger Lakes Community College.

Dartmouth’s women’s team fared particularly well in the singles events on Saturday, with Courtney Talmadge ’09 winning the fly cast, Emily Kyker-Snowman ’11 placing second in the chain throw, and Sarah Parkinson ’09 taking second in the single buck, aka the “misery whip,” the most physically challenging solo event. The men’s side did not capture as many podium finishes as the women, but Phil Wagner ’09 did take first in the chain throw and the men placed well in other events.

The final team event of the meet was the much-anticipated H-chop competition, in which three woodsmen from each team chop one log each out from beneath their feet one after the other in a relay. The choppers, arranged in spokes on the paths of the Green, hacked away to wild cheering from a large crowd of spectators as woodchips flew and axes flashed in the bright sun. Dartmouth’s men’s under-50 alumni team turned in an impressive performance in the H-chop, almost beating the undergraduates.
After the team competition ended, the STIHL Timbersports Challenge began. An all-star mini-meet of sorts, the STIHL Challenge pits the top woodsmen from each school against each other in H-chop, V-chop, single buck, and chainsawing. In recognition of the growing strength of women’s teams in general and the Dartmouth women in particular, STIHL agreed for the first time to host a women’s Challenge as well, where Dartmouth was represented by Perez-Lawrence. Perez-Lawrence stunned the other, larger competitors with an impressive showing and a particularly strong run in the chainsawing event. I was lucky enough to be chosen to compete for the men’s team and, while I didn’t win any of the events, I was ecstatic to be able to compete for my school in front of so many of my dear friends.

No discussion of the Spring Meet would be complete without mention of the Herculean efforts needed to run the event. Meet Directors Perez-Lawrence, Lesser, and Max Bogren ’10 put in innumerable hours, supported by the rest of the undergraduates and a host of alumni as well. Phil Bracikowski ’08, Laura Kamfonik ’08, David Hooke ’84, and Jim “Pork Roll” Taylor ’74 were especially helpful. Roll, as he is affectionately referred to by just about everyone, provided essential guidance for the whole meet, from the helping with the design of the crosscut saw-horses to volunteering as head judge.

Of all of the events of the weekend, however, none better illustrated the true spirit of the Woodsman’s Weekend better than the banquet on Saturday night. The DOC House on Occum Pond was filled with chubbers, lumberjacks and lumberjills of all ages, enjoying each others’ company and the strength of the bonds that bind us as members of the DOC. It was truly inspiring to see the friendships that had held fast over thirty years after graduation, perhaps best illustrated by the over-50 women’s alumni team, who almost all competed together as undergraduates and were reunited for the Spring Meet. The evening’s revelries offered hope to this graduating senior that, though my teammates and I may roam the girdled earth far and wide in the next few years, we’re sure to be back at Dartmouth for the 75th annual Woodsmen’s Weekend in 2021. See you then.

The Author, Luke Mann-O’Halloran ’09 in the chainsaw competition. Photo by Phil Bracikowski ’08.
The DOC Centennial 100-Mile Hike went off as planned on May 23, 24 and 25. Around 25 Dartmouth students and alums did portions of the hike, with many others providing safety, driving and cooking support. The three-day route consisted of 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail between VT Rte 12 and Glenciff, with an additional 30 miles, twice around and over Mt. Moosilauke. This 100 mile route along the AT symbolizes 100 years of the DOC not only in its length, but also because it is in good condition. Cabin and Trail, one of the sub-clubs of the DOC, works hard to maintain this section of the AT, just as all DOC leaders have worked hard to improve the DOC in the past 100 years. As Bernie Waugh ’74 wrote to friends after applauding the efforts of the seven students that finished the hike, “I must say other classes have a lot to live up to! A few of these folks looked like they could easily go on another 50! The next century of the DOC is off to a strong start.”

The following seven people deserve special congrats for finishing the whole darn walk: Ruth McGovern, Alice Bradley, Kurt Kostyu, Ben Waller, Nancy Dietman, Matt Smith, and Nina Brekelmans. What a feat! All are members of the Class of 2012, except Alice who is a 2011. Many others hikers completed significant sections of the hike, including alums Bernie Waugh ’74, Laura Kamfonik ’08 and Carol VanDyke ‘78. Many thanks to Prof. Dick Bernie ’66 who staffed the midday water sta-

We spent our first night in the Class of ’66 lodge. What a wonderful place to rest after 30 miles of hiking! Around the dinner table we told stories of our favorite hiking adventures and then devoured a scrumptious meal cooked by Elizabeth Kamai ’12.
Erika Flowers, Nina Brekelmans, and Ruth McGovern chow down and play cards at Great Bear cabin after a long and arduous second day of hiking. Volunteers, Steph and Elizabeth, stand by tending to their tired friends.

Mt. Moosilauke from South Ridge. What a great day to be cavorting about the summit!

Happy and a tid bit tired on Moosilauke: Alice Bradley, Ben Waller, Lexi Pappas, and Matt Smith.

Thanks to Carol VanDyke for all of the great photos! And a big thank you to all of the 100- mile hike participants and volunteers: your strength, selflessness, persistence, care, and good cheer throughout the weekend represented the DOC at its finest.

Happily yours in the out of doors,

Steph Crocker ’12 and Bernie Waugh ‘74
On the evening of July 11th, 2009, the Lodge was packed. People young and old had come from all over the country for one purpose: to wish the Lodge a happy 70th birthday. These people - ranging from current students to those who remember the summit house - shared one very important thing in common: a deep connection to the Lodge. Former Lodge Crewlings made up the bulk of those in attendance, but everybody there had certainly spent a lot of time at the Lodge!

The evening started, as any Lodge event should, with a fantastic dinner. As platters and bowls got passed around, people reconnected with old friends and met new ones. After dinner, the crowd gathered around as the desk area was dedicated to Everett Blake for years of service calling contra dances during Freshman Trips. That was followed by dancing and, of course, the Salty Dog Rag. Eventually, people settled down and sat around the mantle for stories, songs, and a guest appearance by the one and only Jean Baptiste. Plate after plate of warm cookies came from the kitchen, keeping everybody full and happy. That is, after all, what the Lodge is known for.
Nestled at 2,500 feet on the town line between Warren and Benton, the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge stands it’s vigil as Dartmouth’s “Entrance to the White Mountains”, as it has for the past seventy years. Built from large spruce logs harvested on the mountain itself, larger than many east-coasters have seen in their lifetime, the Ravine Lodge has resided through the endless cycles of the seasons and the harsh environment whose battering forces have exposed the mature rock core within, turning these once colossal mountains into still impressive remnants of their formal selves.

Beneath this biologic and geologic transience lies the fact that it has nurtured and provided respite to generations of Dartmouth students, allowing both removal from the chaos and competing demands of a rigorous academic schedule, and immersion in the basic need for the seemingly mutually exclusive states of both solitude and community.

The Ravine Lodge is more than just a building in the woods where dinner is served family style and dancing shakes the floor of the main room while a crackling fire in the large stone hearth impossibly attempts to heat a soaring open space. It is more than a place where people get their rest before or after hiking to the treeless summit where they gaze upon the infinite view over the Connecticut River Valley to the west and the rugged White Mountains to the east. It is more than a marvel of traditional building techniques, showcasing the talents and knowledge of Ross McKenney who, as the Dartmouth Outing Club woodcraft advisor, undertook the Herculean task of building such a monumental structure in such a remote location, dealing with the transient labor of local Warren men and Dartmouth students during the year in which New England saw it’s most devastating hurricane.

For most Dartmouth students and alumni, the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge is not a just place. It is an experience.

Although different for every person, no tradition has more identified the role of the Lodge in the lives of the Dartmouth family than the first-year orientation trips run by the Dartmouth Outing Club. In some form or another, since the Lodge’s completion in 1939, dancing, singing, dinner, and storytelling have been a culminating experience of these four-day trips where young students develop friendships that provide support through the early days of school and often develop into lifelong relationships. Students arrive at the Lodge and are immediately immersed in the fun side of Dartmouth tradition. Ask any current or past Dartmouth student about this experience, and most will recount with glee the crew’s crazy operatic serving
of dinner and the green eggs and ham served at breakfast in honor of Dr. Seuss, a one-time Dartmouth student.

Mt. Moosilauke and the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge exemplify to these freshmen the accessible possibilities of the Dartmouth experience beyond the classroom. It is at this time of intense emotional energy, where these students are immersed in this natural environment and surrounded by dozens, even hundreds, of new faces that the impact of the Ravine Lodge becomes indelible. For many of these students, (and this is many, as the freshman trip participation rate is now over 95% and has been for years), Mt. Moosilauke becomes the place where they realize that they are about to embark on more than just a continuation of their academic education, but a life-changing experience.

In a way that resembles the lives of those for whom it has provided sanctuary throughout its years, the life of the Lodge itself has both prospered and floundered and recently has entered a time of maturity.

At the time of its building, as a replacement for a fire-destroyed Ravine Camp, the Lodge served as a hub for the winter exploits of Dartmouth students. In fact, in 1949, not far from where the lodge sits on the east side of the Baker (Asquamchumaukee) River valley, a number of trails were cut and a rope-tow was installed. (The old wooden trail map can still be seen hanging in the main room.) Winter operations eventually ceased by the 1950’s however, as heating the building seemed increasingly impractical and more local ski options became available closer to Hanover. By the 1960’s the lodge underwent a period of dormancy and was hardly used, even in the summer.

As with all good things, attention was refocused on the Ravine Lodge and the Dartmouth property at Moosilauke and by the 1970’s efforts went into re-vitalizing the property as the Benton, Bicentennial, McKenney and Class of 1965 bunkhouses were completed. Now, as it has been for many years, the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge is open from mid-May through mid-October. Although pivotal in the lives of many Dartmouth students, the Ravine Lodge is completely open to the public and guests from all walks of life dine and vacation there.

For some students, the First-Year Trip nostalgically represents the majority of their connection to the Lodge. But for many students and alumni, those who have worked there, the Ravine Lodge takes on a much larger role in their Dartmouth experience.

Trail crews comprised of students that who on the cabins on and around the mountain and the Dartmouth properties, as well as researchers working for professors have spent their summers living at the Ravine Lodge. Every year, the spring, summer and fall crews who keep the Lodge running and cook and serve all the meals are staffed entirely by Dartmouth students and recent graduates. These temporary residents meet alums who worked at the Summit House years ago, and locals who came during summer camp to the Ravine Lodge in decades past. And they have witnessed guests, who upon entering the building are momentarily stunned into silence as they realize they have entered a truly unique place. These lucky crews, myself included, have had the opportunity to watch the
mountain as it transforms from a frozen landscape to one of lush verdant green. We have seen the trillium poke through the snow. We have awoken to the rush of the Asquamchumaukee River and the clanking of big rocks as the rains and snowmelt continually change the shape of the mountain. As summer lengthens, we have seen the late evening sun dip over the ridge behind South Peak and we have risen early to watch the golden light of the early morning creep up Gorge Brook Ravine while the Lodge still huddles in the shade. As fall progresses, we have marveled in the resplendent tunnel of yellow, orange and red that the access road has become and we huddle by the fire as the frost spreads its tendrils over the windows.

Most importantly however, we have shared these experiences. Like hundreds of students before us, and for hundreds yet to come, the Ravine Lodge has fostered our love of the outdoors and, has fostered lifelong friendships and relationships. For a few such as myself, the time spent at the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge has dictated a course of life. It was as my time as manager there, where immersed in the beautiful ever-changing environment, I became inspired to pick up a camera and try to capture the special places and moments on the mountain. I quickly fell in love with photography, which became my passion and profession and which has recently culminated in the publishing of my photographic homage to the mountain, my new book entitled *Moosilauke: Portrait of a Mountain*.

Every year the Ravine Lodge hosts at least a few weddings and it is not unusual for Moosilauke to be the place where that most important question is asked, “will you marry me?” In my particular case, I was lucky enough to receive the response “yes!” My wife and I treasure our memories of working at the Lodge, and we were excited to begin our journey through the rest of life together at this most special place.

Regardless of what amount of time one spent at the Ravine Lodge, ask any current or former Dartmouth student, and you’ll be hard-pressed to find one that does not have positive memories of their time there. And if they, or you, do not...well it’s about time you head on up there and see what the fuss is all about.

*Editor’s note: Eli’s book, Moosilauke: Portrait of a Mountain includes the photography included in this article. It is available at his website : www.burakianphotography.com.*
Who in their right mind would try to

Hike the **Entire** Appalachian Trail

*in a Day?*

On Saturday October 10th, 2009, the Dartmouth Outing Club hiked well over 2000 miles of the 2,176-mile Appalachian Trail. In celebration of DOC Centennial, hundreds of students, alumni, faculty, staff, friends and family took to the trail. The event was the closest any group has ever come to hiking the entire trail in a day.

The idea sounded crazy at first, but in the true spirit of the DOC, the club took on this bold challenge. Over the course of 17 months many students worked to set up a website, contact alumni and publicize the event. Just one week before the day of the hike, covering the trail looked impossible, with 35% of it still unclaimed. But thanks to a huge last-minute push by alumni and a bunch of dedicated students—who willing to drive from Hanover to Virginia to hike—we managed to cover nearly all the unclaimed sections of trail.

It was a powerful feeling for the hikers on that Saturday to know that as they were hiking, they were sharing the experience with nearly a thousand other DOC-affiliated hikers. That alone was worth all the effort put into organizing the hike. The enthusiasm and companionship is evident in the hundreds of photos and trip reports that were sent in as proof of the many hikes completed safely and happily in the name of the DOC.

Though we didn’t quite complete the trail, the true success story was the collaboration between students and alumni. The level of enthusiasm witnessed by the students involved in planning the event was unprecedented in our time here at Dartmouth. What an outstanding effort from a little college in New Hampshire!

--Matt Dahlhausen ‘11 and Athena Aicher ‘11

AT in a Day Co-Directors
Yes We Can!
Peter Kingsley ‘94

In honor of the DOC’s first hundred years
Of hiking and climbing and overcoming fears,
Some students decided to go for the gold,
To do something novel, amazing and bold.

The DOC realized that never before,
Despite the thru-hikers and guidebooks and more,
Had the AT been hiked in a single day
From Georgia to Maine, all the way.

For months and months they schemed and dreamed
To accomplish a goal that sometimes seemed
To them a nearly impossible task:
The AT in a day. “But how?” you might ask.

For Athena and Matt and all the rest,
This impossible mission was the ultimate test.
They enlisted the aid of their closest friends,
And of friends of friends of friends of friends.

A few miles of AT each person would hike,
On mountains, in valleys - wherever they like.
A logo for pictures to DOCument
And show the world where each person went.

To get enough hikers, they sent out the call
To students and families, alumni and all.
To those who signed up they sent a great thanks,
But as the big day came closer, the map still had blanks.

Now the time has come to act.
I know we can do it, and that’s a fact!
We’re scrambling to cover the last few sections,
We’re setting up shuttles and giving directions.

A final plea by word of mouth
For the last few hikers to help us down south.
And all of those students going down in a van
Must believe in their hearts, “Yes we can! Yes we can!”

In order to document the enormous feat of hiking the AT in a Day, we asked participants to send us a trip report and a photo of them on the trail holding the AT in a Day logo. Below are some of our favorite bits of people’s trip reports. To read more, go to the DOC’s wiki page on the event: doc.dartmouth.edu/wiki/Appalachian_Trail_in_a_Day

“I had no more moose encounters and saw only a few other hikers throughout the morning. Tim reported about the thru-hikers in the shelter already. The overly gregarious fellow was excited to hear that we were the Glastonbury representatives for the AT in a Day adventure. I asked if many thru-hikers knew of it, and he said, ‘Oh yea, it’s been the buzz on the trail for a month.’”
CT: Lelia Mellen ‘86

“Ordinarily, looking out from the top of Wildcat, one can look across the valley and view Mount Washington from the east, getting the best views of Tuckerman and Huntington ravine. This was the planned backdrop for our AT in a Day picture. Today: a blank wall of white on all sides. We did the best we could. There was a kiosk near the top shack stating that we were on the Appalachian trail: 306 miles to Katahdin, 1834 to Springer.”
NH: Alex Streeter ’03, Mark Alvarez ‘68

“I believe it was the DOC that first inspired me to plan a thru-hike of the AT, a 30 year goal finally realized with my son in 2007. The DOC goes on today inspiring in it’s students a passion and love of the outdoors, and teaches them to coexist there comfortably, a skill that lasts a lifetime.”
ME: Mark R. Lena ‘78, DMS ‘81
“Planning for this excursion literally began the day I first heard that the Dartmouth Outing Club (DOC) had decided to hike the Appalachian Trail in a day of all things, in commemoration of its 100th Anniversary. It was just the sort of bold undertaking I would expect to materialize out of the fanatical minds of the Outing Club. I had been an active member and board member of the Cabin and Trail division for the four years I attended Dartmouth in the early 70’s and could very easily interpret this as that ‘voice crying to me out of the wilderness’, drawing me in to accept the challenge. My strongest and truest Dartmouth memories are all rooted in the Outing Club. Here was a chance for me to relive some of that joy and contribute to what I saw as a great cause.”

ME: Bob Rooke ’74

“The forest cover never broke, the clouds never broke, and luckily neither did either of us. Buried deep, but still there, is that kernel planted back in the days of the Ski Team’s Sunday hikes, and the unmistakable urge was to set a fast pace and maintain it. We made good time; perhaps not stopping often enough to admire or take enough pictures, but we had a wonderful and memorable day. All the while we were noticing how the fog accentuated the color of the dogwood foliage, and marveling at the majesty of the multi-story forest and the open nature of the trail, we were thinking of all the other people out on the trail in common cause, some of whom we call friends, some of whom we don’t know, and Dan, who we didn’t know before, but now consider a friend. It was also a time to remember how lucky we were to spend all that time out in the woods training with the Ski Team, working on Freshman Trips, or just plain hiking during our time at Dartmouth.”

GA: Tom Horton ’85 and Sarah Millham ’85
New Hampshire Governor’s Declaration

Congratulating and commending the Dartmouth Outing Club for 100 years of service to the natural environment in New Hampshire and across the nation.

WHEREAS, December 14, 2009 marks the Centennial of the founding of the Dartmouth Outing Club at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, the oldest and largest collegiate outing club in the nation, by Fred Harris, Dartmouth Class of 1911.

WHEREAS, the members of the Dartmouth Outing Club and its various sub-clubs: Cabin and Trail, Ledyard Canoe Club, Dartmouth Mountaineering Club, Winter Sports Club, Ski Patrol, Bait and Bullet, Mountain Biking Club and the Environmental Studies Division, have continually served Dartmouth College and northern New England by caring for over 100 miles of hiking trails including over 70 miles of the Appalachian Trail, from Route 12 in Woodstock, Vermont, to Route 112 in Woodstock, New Hampshire, as well as maintaining cabins and shelters, and teaching wilderness skills, sports, and safety to students and community members;

WHEREAS, the Environmental Studies Division of the DOC, founded in 1969, has continually promoted environmental stewardship and sustainability by establishing the Dartmouth organic farm where students can learn the techniques involved in sustainable agriculture, constructing a carbon-neutral greenhouse, testifying before Congress regarding the Alaska Lands Act in the spring of 1977, and promoting sustainable practices across campus and beyond;

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2009, fifteen Dartmouth College students in the DOC’s vegetable oil- and solar-powered Big Green Bus began its fifth annual cross-country trip, traveling 11,300 miles, promoting environmental awareness and action;

WHEREAS, the Dartmouth Outing Club has consistently focused on student leadership, being student run and student guided, providing its young members with opportunities to hold real responsibilities and mature into visionary adults by tackling challenging tasks, such as organizing a freshman trips program that is the largest of its kind in the world, constructing shelters and cabins like the Class of ’66 lodge, and directing the sub-clubs that together allow students to learn about, appreciate, and experience the wilderness year-round;

WHEREAS, DOC members have gone on to serve the public in many capacities at the local, regional, state and national levels, applying their skills and knowledge to tackling political, social, and environmental challenges of the past one-hundred years;

WHEREAS, throughout 2009, the Dartmouth Outing Club, together with current members and alumni, acknowledge a year of Centennial Celebrations for the organization through a 100-mile hike of Outing Club trails, a River-fest on the Connecticut River, the 63rd annual Woodsmen’s Weekend, and a one-day hike of over 2,000 miles of the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, by students and alumni simultaneously on different trail sections;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, John Lynch, the Governor of New Hampshire, congratulate the Dartmouth Outing Club, in Hanover, New Hampshire, for its 100 years of service to the United States and its wilderness and commend its commitment to further student leadership, growth and environmental stewardship in the future.
111th CONGRESS
1st Session
H. RES. 776

Congratulating the Dartmouth Outing Club of Hanover, New Hampshire, for 100 years of service to the United States and its wilderness.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
September 24, 2009

Mr. HODES (for himself and Mr. CAPUANO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

RESOLUTION

Congratulating the Dartmouth Outing Club of Hanover, New Hampshire, for 100 years of service to the United States and its wilderness.

Whereas, December 14, 2009, marks the centennial of the founding of the Dartmouth Outing Club (DOC) at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire;

Whereas the DOC, the oldest and largest collegiate outing club in the Nation, was founded by Fred Harris, Dartmouth Class of 1911;

Whereas the DOC has continually promoted environmental stewardship through student leadership;

Whereas the DOC has promoted environmental stewardship by caring for over 100 miles of hiking trails, including over 70 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail from Route 12 in Woodstock, Vermont, to Route 112 in Woodstock, New Hampshire, as well as maintaining cabins and shelters and teaching wilderness skills, sports, and safety to students and community members;

Whereas the DOC is a student-run club and has consistently focused on student leadership by providing students with the opportunity to lead by carrying out projects which have included constructing the Class of ’66 Lodge, organizing the largest freshman trips program in the world, and directing sub-clubs that together allow students to learn about, appreciate, and experience the natural environment year-round;

Whereas in 1969 the DOC founded the Environmental Studies Division, which has continually promoted environmental sustainability and conservation;

Whereas the Environmental Studies Division of the DOC has displayed national leadership in environmental conservation by testifying before Congress regarding the Alaska Lands Act in the spring of 1977, establishing the Dartmouth Organic Farm, and constructing a carbon-neutral greenhouse;

Whereas the DOC has promoted sustainability by having Dartmouth students buy and re-engineer a passenger bus into the DOC’s Big Green Bus, powered by vegetable oil and solar energy;

Whereas on June 16, 2009, 15 Dartmouth College students began the Big Green Bus’ fifth annual cross-country trip, traveling 11,300 miles to promote environmental awareness and action; and

Whereas throughout 2009, the Dartmouth Outing Club, along with current members and alumni of Dartmouth College, took part in Centennial Celebrations for the organization by participating in a 100-mile hike of Outing Club trails, a Riverfest on the Connecticut River, the 63rd annual Woodsmen’s Weekend, and a hike of the entire Appalachian National Scenic Trail from Georgia to Maine by students and alumni simultaneously in different sections:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives congratulates the Dartmouth Outing Club of Hanover, New Hampshire, for 100 years of service to the United States and its wilderness, and commends the Club’s ongoing commitment to further environmental stewardship and student leadership.
“By taking the initiative in this matter Dartmouth might well become the originator of a branch of college organized sport hiterto undeveloped by American Colleges.”

- Fred Harris '11