

## "A Motley Crew"

by Timothy J. Muise

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We arrived at the access trail to Morey Pond at about midday. Unpacking the bus was pretty uneventful considering we had three days worth of camping gear and supplies for fifteen hooligans. They called us "behavioral problems" and assembled us together in this Project Adventure class.

The temperature was in the low twenties, not bad for January 15th, and once we had our U.S. army cross country skis strapped on, with our heavy packs balanced on our backs, we headed down the grade to the pond. I broke trail through about a foot of fresh powdery snow as we made our way down to the campsite which was about six miles deep into the woods. When we arrived at the Morey Pond campsite I, as the class leader, delegated responsibility. A fire needed to be made and the water hole needed to be chopped in the ice. Teams needed to be assembled to set up the six-man tents we packed in. Food stores needed to be stowed and equipment needed to be repaired. The cold weather plays hell on old gear.

Once the camp was set up we elected the cooks for the evening. We enjoyed Dinty Moore beef stew and boiled elbow pasta. Quite delicious after a six mile ski. For dessert me and a couple of close friends enjoyed three joints of fine sensimilia and then returned to the campfire pit. Our instructor, one of the finest human beings I ever met, read us "The Cremation of Sam McGee". We then debriefed the day and were asked to head off to get rest as we had a big day ahead of us tomorrow. I had other plans.

Before leaving my house I filled two plastic bottles, about a quart each, with Seagrams VO whiskey. Now to me this stuff tasted like gasoline, but it was all I could muster from the ole man's liquor cabinet. Nancy, Eric, Bob and I strolled off into the dark woods about 100 yards and started our own firepit. We mixed the VO with hot chocolate and the unorthodox mixture actually hit the spot at the time. We smoked a few more spliffs, ate some toasted marshmallows, and laughed loudly at each others jokes. It was wonderful. The joy of youth.

At about midnight we all headed for our tents. When I arrived at mine I got one of the biggest surprises of my life. Jennifer ~~Shimada~~ had zipped her sleeping bag together with mine. She was awake and waiting for me. She was a friend, my dory building partner, but had been nothing more than that before this. I undressed and lit my lighter to find my way into my sleeping bag. Jen had only a thermal top on, that was it! She looked beautiful in the light of my Bic. The rest of that scene is a story for another time, but we stayed up all night and when we woke in the morning I was no longer a virgin.

I felt more alive than ever in the morning. I was on no sleep but felt stronger and more energized than ever before. We had a nice breakfast of bacon and eggs, which I enjoyed with Jen on my lap, and then prepared our skis for the short trip to the base of Mt. Kearsarge. At the base we stowed our skis and made emergency packs to take up in case of accident. We all wore Sorel boots with new treads, and we would need them as the trail up the mountain was a very slippery slope. It took this rag-tag bunch about four hours to reach the summit. The wind up there was howling and it was very cold, but there was a small

cement weather instrument building atop the summit. Bob and I got on the leeward side and smoked the obligatory fat joint. I looked out over the miles of forest and felt like the king of the world, as a matter of fact I was the king of the world at that time.

The hike down the mountain was short. Its a lot easier going down that snow covered trail than it is going up. We skied back to camp and made some great American chopped suey. We ate our fill and me and the gang, Jen was with us this time, headed off into the woods to enjoy a bit more of mother nature's finest. Other subgroups in the band of misfits did the same, and that nights debriefing was spirited and electric. We shared our pride at having conquered tha mountain. Beacuse it was there....., as the old saying goes. We were all kings and queeens. Jen and I stayed up all night again. It was heaven. I was a man of the best sort: a king, a God!

The bus ride back to Gloucester brought the first sleep I had in three days. Jen lay in my arms as we rested peacefully on insulite pads on the floor. We unpacked at the schools headquarters and planned for the nights keg party at Babson Reservoir. The whole crew showed up. Every person that was on that amazing trip was in attendance. The beer was frigid but the fire was warm. Our hearts were full. That class of misfits accomplished amazing things together. We rowed dories from Gloucester to Newburyport. We rowed around Cape Ann sleeping on Straightsmith Island and Ram Island. Most importantly we supported each other emotionally. We had each others backs even if the school system did not. If you messed with one "PA" kid you messed with them all! I still have bonds today to those folks. The instructor visits me and buys the newspaper for me. The next year i saved a girls life at Mount Kearsarge. She still writes looking for me to save her again. Those types of bonds matter. Those people made me a king. I miss that kingdom so much. I will have it again! The view from the summit of Mount Kearsarge shines bright in my minds eye and resonates in my heart. It has saved me on many a cold and bleak day in prison.

Dedicated to Jim Schoel  
Teacher, friend, fine human being.

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January							February							March							April							May							June						
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July							August							September							October							November							December						
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