

GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from

WILD GUYde Adventures, LLC

Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer, 2012)

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Nourishment for the soul, from the outdoor world

For this issue, I would like to share a few inspirational snapshots. Here is a mixture of poetry, client quotes, and caption experiences that, taken together, might give you a glimpse into why I love my job!

*The easy path in the lowlands hath little of grand or new,
But a toilsome ascent leads on to a wide and glorious view;
Peopled and warm is the valley, lonely and chill the height,
But the peak that is nearer the storm cloud is nearer the stars of light* (Unknown)

“**What are those!?**” (On a river trip on a remote section of the Potomac River in West Virginia with a youth group from New Jersey, an excited teenager points frantically at some large creatures up at the river’s bend); The *WILD GUYde* (ever attuned to the idiosyncrasies of the natural world): “**Those would be COWS.**”

God of the high hills, lead me up from the valley roads, up from the lower levels. I seem to be hemmed in by cliffs of disappointment and failure, of doubt and disillusionment. Help me to struggle upward until those crags are beneath me and I stand on the higher levels of achievement and confidence. Amen (D.W.P.)

I sought a winding forest trail as lonely as could be
And listened in the silence that seemed greater than the sea.
The great waves pressed around me like caresses strong and fine,
A bitter sorrow was released, new happiness was mine.
All loneliness had vanished and I felt both calm and free;
How strange was this phenomenon that brought new life to me!
I bowed my head in reverence, for then I understood
That God has spoken to me through the silence of the wood (Avis Turner French)

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An excited and slightly overweight 11 year old on his first underground trip: “**I totally dominated that cave!**”
The **WILD GUYde** (wise and appropriately humble): “**Not so -- no one ever conquers a cave, or a mountain peak, or a river. It is our own fears and limitations, our lack of courage, our unwillingness to serve or show compassion, our own apathy or avoidance of responsibility – these are the real enemies that we come here to conquer...**”

Here are some “word photos” of clients and friends on recent trips who have inspired me:

- The dad who discovered that who he was with his son on a climbing day (an affirmer, a protector) could be a picture of who he wanted to be as a father at home.
- John, the 13-year old who led his Mom and me out of the cave by being observant, learning navigation skills, and practicing courage.
- The young woman who, after climbing with us and her family as a high schooler, decided on a college major in recreation and adventure leadership.
- Ann, the 68 year old beginning rock climber...
- After it was all over, I affirmed Keith, the big caver, for keeping his cool while being haul-rescued out of a hole; he replied, “**Didn’t seem much use getting all agitated and excited...**”

*About mountains, it is useless to argue, you have either been up or you haven’t;
The view from half way is nobody’s view. The best flowers are mostly at the top
Under a ledge, nourished by the wind. A sense of smell is of less importance
Than a sense of balance, walking on the clouds through holes in which you can see the earth
Like a rich man through the eye of a needle. The mind has its own level to find. (R.S. Thomas)*

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