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July 2, 2007

Denver-based adventurer to drive around world

Taking the world by road

Caramie Schnell
Vail CO, Colorado
February 14, 2007

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In the name of adventure, and against the advice of friends and family, Denver resident Steve Bouey quit his job in August and cashed out his 401K. Bouey and best friend Steve Shoppman set out on an adventure this week that if all goes well, will last roughly two years and take them around the world.

"I consider it a reinvestment," Bouey said. "It's not like I cashed out and came to Vegas to bet on black."

The Denver-based men are partners in an independent media company called The World By Road. They've spent the last two years planning and organizing an expedition focused on showcasing the diversity of people and cultures around the world.

"We've both traveled extensively," Shoppman said, "and we had amazing experiences, but as we traveled it always seemed selfish - we didn't change anyone's lives but our own. So we came up with this idea to spread what we're doing and get people more interested in the world and world issues. Only 20 percent of Americans have valid passports and of them, less than half use them in a given year."

Shoppman and Bouey want to change that statistic, by showing people the world from a different view - through their own lens rather than CNN's.



Steve Shoppman shows how jam-packed one of the two trucks he and Steve Bouey are driving around the world in is as they make a stop in Avon on Monday on their way to Los Angeles to start their World By Road tour.

Dominique Taylor/Vail Daily

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The Web site clearly lays out the value of the expedition: "We cannot expect this journey to change the world, but in the end, if we can increase interest in adventure and exploration and inspire others to develop a greater understanding of the world, then we have achieved our goal."

In short, the two are driving two Toyota trucks more than 80,000 miles, visiting 90-plus countries, six continents, and two hemispheres in the process. Their goal is simple. See and present as much of the world as they can from a perspective that other people can more easily relate to. Their medium for this is, not surprisingly, the World Wide Web. The two Steves will be chronicling their adventure through their Web site, www.theworldbyroad.com, which will feature blogs, live journals, high definition video feeds, photo galleries podcasts and interactive web forums.

The pair drove through Vail on Monday night en route to Los Angeles via Las Vegas. Once in L.A. the two will repack the trucks and ship them in a freighter to Sydney, Australia. Six people plan to meet up with the men and the trucks in Australia, where the expedition will officially begin. Along with a videographer from Florida, a sea boat captain/salvage diver from Louisiana, a geologist from Minnesota, and a never-ever-traveled 21-year-old from New Mexico, the two will meet up with Eagle-Vail resident Kira Horvath. Currently Horvath is a photographer for the Vail Daily but she's trading in her gig at the paper to see the world.

It's an opportunity she couldn't let pass her by, she said.

Horvath moved to the valley in October for the job at the Daily. Just a few weeks ago, she discovered the World By Road crew on the Internet.

"It started with MySpace," she said.

Last year Horvath spent four months traveling through Africa shooting photos. Her original plan, she said, had been to save money last summer and leave for an around the world trip come December. She put her trip off, she said, because she was nervous about doing such an extensive trip alone. When she stumbled upon The World By Road's story, she was immediately intrigued.

"It was amazing that these guys were not only planning this, but that they were here (in Colorado.) That night I couldn't sleep, I dreamt about the trip the whole night."

Measuring success with miles

The next morning Horvath filled out the "Join the trip" application on the Web site. Later that same day Shoppman called Horvath and set up a time to meet. He was heading to Aspen a few days later when the two met in Eagle to talk about the trip.

"This happened two-and-a-half weeks ago, at the end of January," she said. Within a week, Horvath gave notice at work and purchased a \$400 one-way ticket to Australia.

"It was scary and nervewracking," she said. "I just got (to Vail), but opportunities like this you can't pass up. I couldn't imagine saying no ... This has been my dream forever, since I was a little kid."

Horvath first pursued photography with the idea that the profession would help her see the world, she said.

In the past Horvath has tried to contact humanitarian organizations in hopes of lending her skills. It's not surprising that it's the humanitarian, environmental and aid organizations that Horvath is most excited about working with. The group has plans to interact with organizations like Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, USAID and the Tropical Rainforest Coalition.

"I've always wanted to do photography on an international level and lend my skills to something bigger than me," she said. "We'll be going to an orphanage in Vietnam for kids affected by Agent Orange and helping kids affected by the AIDS epidemic in Africa."

Horvath has been repeating her motto for as long as she can remember, she said.

"My level of success isn't measured by how much money I have in the bank, but by how much of the world I get to see," she said.

Daily Staff Writer Caramie Schnell can be reached at cschnell@vaildaily.com.

Steve Shoppman, left and Steve Bouey, right, make a stop in Avon after leaving Denver Monday for the start of their World by Road tour with the two Toyota trucks they will be using to drive around the world, covering ninety six countries to promote cultural awareness. The hood of the white truck shows the route their tour will take.

Dominique Taylor/Vail Daily



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