

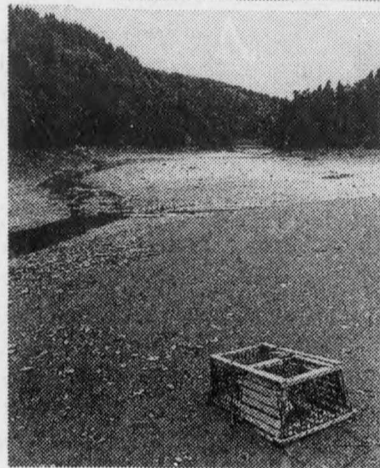
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STEPPING OUT

WITH MARK ROBICHAUD



The 7500 Kilometer Step.

This is the last installment of Stepping Out. With some regret and much satisfaction I feel that the idea has had some successes; however, some avenues that I laid out in the first issue were not explored. A maritime surf trip wasn't done because of unexpected scholastic obligations, as was a trip to a ski spot for a little pre-Christmas snowboarding. But these are the drawbacks of the article, which I won't delve into. This week I would like to say my good-byes to UNB and make some mentions on my days here.

I've learned many things here at UNB. Matter of fact, I had my first cup of coffee here in grade eight - me and Kirk Reid were here for a math competition, all the way from Rothesay Jr. High School. I hated it (the math competition and the coffee). I like to look at my scholastic career here at UNB as a series of learning stages. I guess I've maxed out this learning stage because my degree is done in December.

I tied in for the first time with the UNB Rock and Ice Climbing Club, made my first turns on a snowboard here, slammed an ice axe into a pitch, ate lots of woodlot dirt and met many great people who love the low key attitude of Fredericton.

Some of the mentionable eras I've witnessed has included the Yaqzan ugliness. I feel for this man, how he can approach the social despair of women from an unemotional status

unfathomable. He is sad in his shallowness. His greatest flaw was to remove women from the discussion of assault. The more fun eras were the Chintz days, DON'T BE AFRAID, Needham Street (The Den), The White House (which met its fate in the face of a wreaking ball) and "Well, whatever, it's glass - it breaks."

I managed to make it through two years (88-90) before the administration kicked my ass out of here. Best thing that could have happened to me. I worked for the summer, packed my backpack and headed off to Europe. Saw a little of the Dead and visited places I'd only heard of. Thumbed my way from Paris to Athens and hooked up a few jobs in Greece: picked olives, worked construction and cut marble - all to pay for the beers and butts. Upon return I traveled across Canada, fought forest fires, planted trees, worked in a bakery, hitchhiked to San Diego and rode my first waves in the Pacific ocean. After a couple of visits to Mexico and other parts of Central America, I found myself on the UI snowboard team of Whistler for a season. Three years later and lots of clicks under my feet I returned to Fredericton. I've forgotten how many times I've zipped from coast to coast (seven or eight I think). This January will be the last one for a while, it being the fourth time driving across our great (and large) nation. Vancouver here I come, to stay.

Many things brought me back to New Brunswick and UNB. I have plenty of faith in my own ingenuity, but I needed two things: legitimacy (degree) and some skills. I've captured both during my time here. My degree has taught me many things, most importantly how to question things that seem "normal" or the accepted status. And the ability to critically think. Because of my experiences here at UNB I try to view my surroundings with a more appreciative and sympathetic eye.

I'm going to apply all of the skills and perceptions I've acquired here in Fredericton to propel myself around the

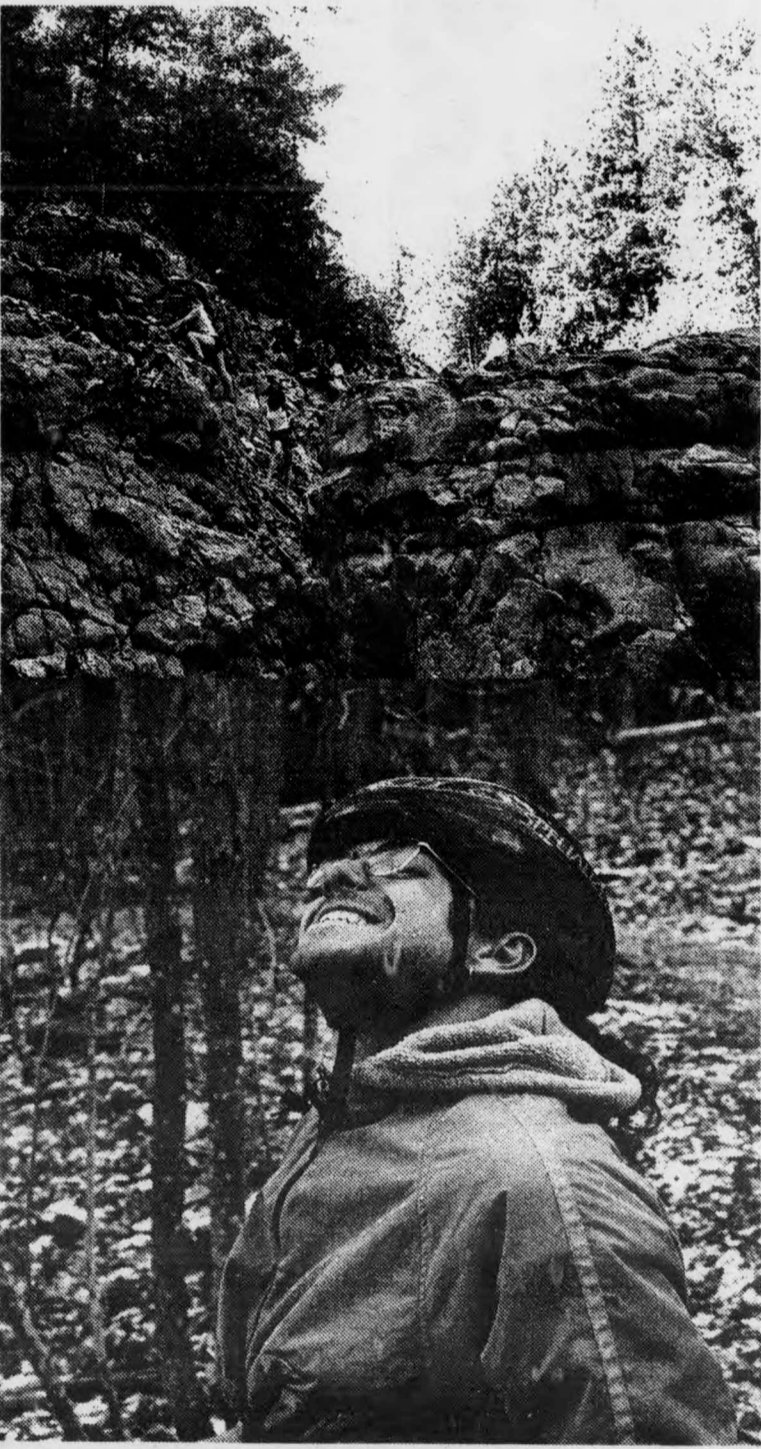
world. My short term plan includes getting some capital together, doing some freelance writing and buying a sail boat. Forty feet of freedom. I think that with the knowledge I've gained here I will be able to spend several years circumnavigating our globe, work, write, photograph and explore. Who knows? I don't, and that is what truly fuels my fires - the splendor and vibrancy of our world, much of which is unknown to me. Why sail? I want to experience the free flowing nature of our world by being a part of it; wind, water and wonder.

So this is it for Stepping Out. I hope some people got a kick out of the article and maybe a few ideas of what the Maritimes has to offer us. This is a unique place, full of beautiful people, spectacular places and good times to be had by all. Please try and put something back for every good thing you get out of our home.

Thanks go to everyone who helped me with the article: Janice my editor, Steph the most photographed person

in the column, all the people who took the time to give Stepping Out a read, and everyone at *The Brunswickan* for their support and encouragement.

Cheers, Mark.
PS. Be kind.



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