

▶ **Best Basecamps**
Home For A Day Or Two

▶ **Ishi Wilderness, CA**
Still Keeping Its Secrets

▶ **Apparel Guide '99**
Pants, Socks, And Jackets

BACKPACKER

THE MAGAZINE OF WILDERNESS TRAVEL

SEPTEMBER 1999

BONUS! Anyplace Wild Guide

ADVENTURES IN ALASKA, CANADA, HAWAII, MAINE,
MINNESOTA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, UTAH, AND WASHINGTON

This Man Can Make You A Better Hiker

HE REVEALS HOW TO:

Find Water

Build Shelter

Signal For Help

Start A Fire and...

Stay Alive

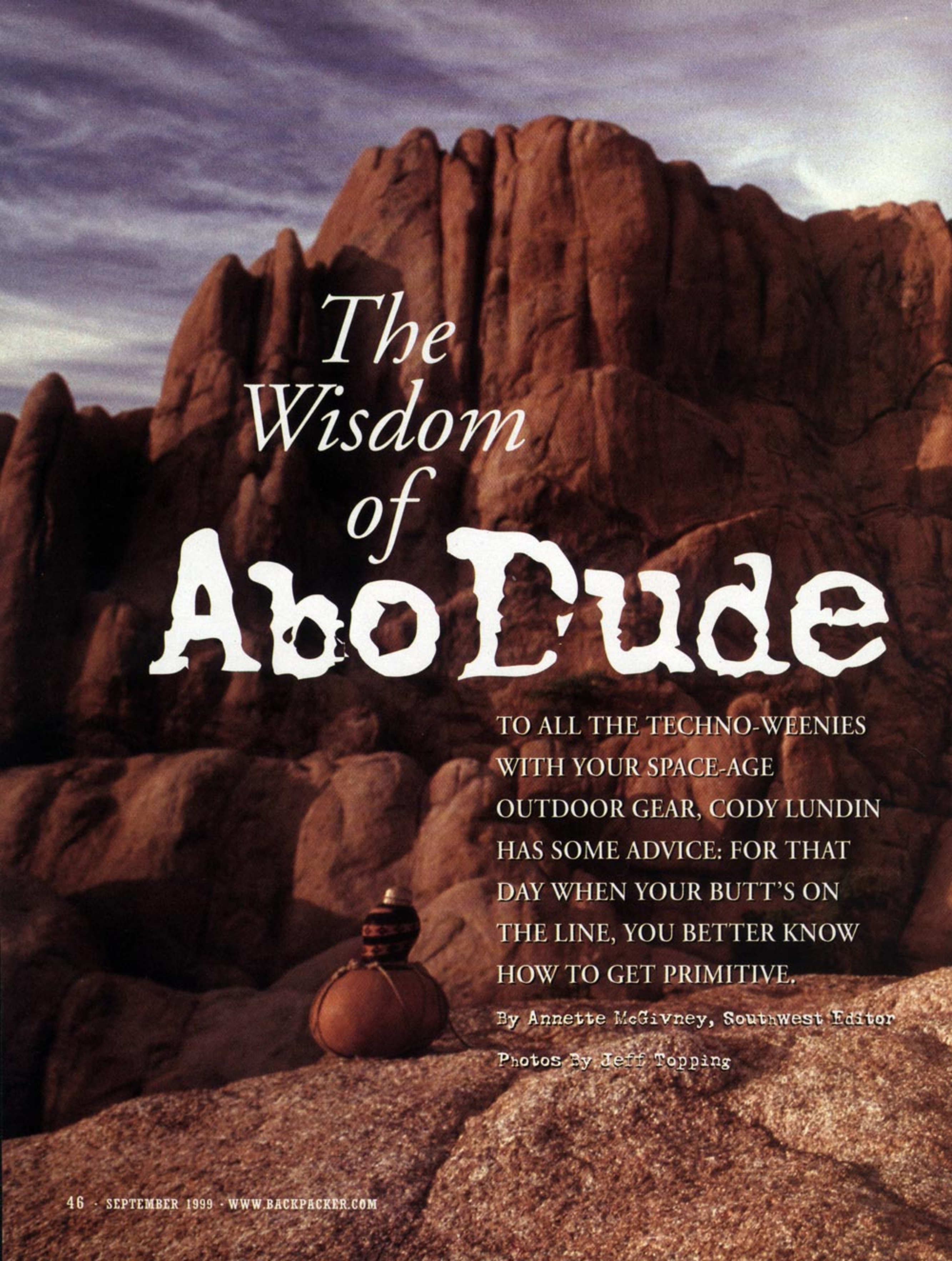
www.backpacker.com

\$3.50US \$3.95CAN

09>



Cody Lundin
Primitive Skills Instructor

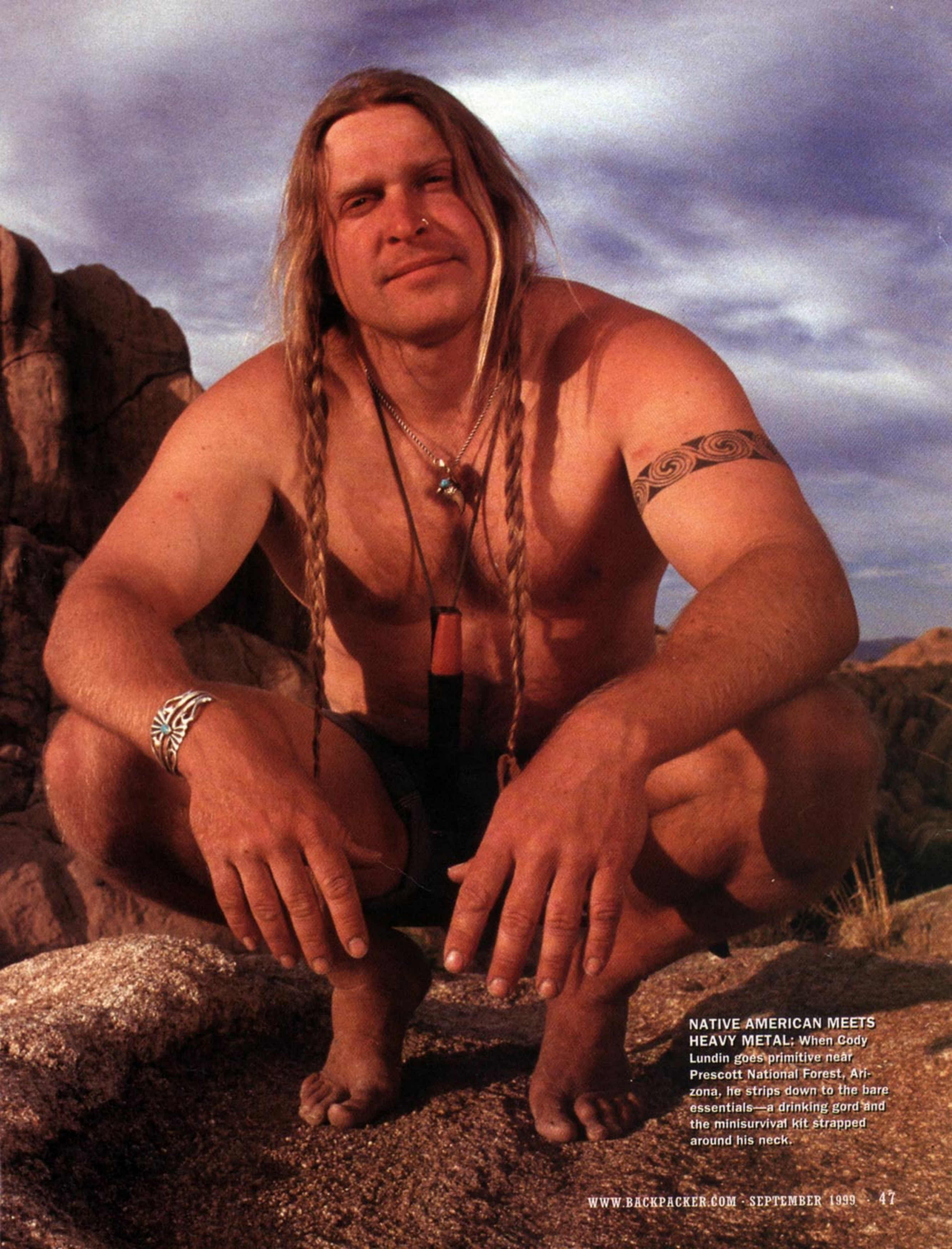


*The
Wisdom
of*
Abo Dude

TO ALL THE TECHNO-WEENIES
WITH YOUR SPACE-AGE
OUTDOOR GEAR, CODY LUNDIN
HAS SOME ADVICE: FOR THAT
DAY WHEN YOUR BUTT'S ON
THE LINE, YOU BETTER KNOW
HOW TO GET PRIMITIVE.

By Annette McGivney, Southwest Editor

Photos By Jeff Topping



NATIVE AMERICAN MEETS HEAVY METAL: When Cody Lundin goes primitive near Prescott National Forest, Arizona, he strips down to the bare essentials—a drinking gourd and the minisurvival kit strapped around his neck.



What if a bear drags away my pack or a rockslide When it's unusable—or worse, suddenly not

THIS IS FOR YOU?" THE SALES CLERK asked as I discreetly pushed the magazine toward the cash register.

Having to crouch in front of the "guns and ammo" section of the newsstand was bad enough—people pretended not to notice me leafing through magazines like *Soldier of Fortune*. Now I was being put on the spot about my suspicious behavior.

"I'm just doing research about, about..." I stuttered sheepishly as she put the camo-adorned magazine in a bag and, with furrowed brow, waited for me to complete the sentence.

"I just want to...I think I want to go to survival school."

There, I said it. I want to go to survival school.

Despite years of experience in the backcountry and hauling myself out of more than a few scary situations, survival school has been on my mind of late. All this talk about Y2K and computers going berserk has me thinking about my dependence on technology and how vulnerable that makes me—not in the city, where ATMs crashing and grocery stores running out of toilet paper are the big techno fears, but in the backcountry. Out there, Gore-Tex, factory-sealed seams, and synthetic fills keep me warm, dry, and safe, but what if something goes wrong? What if a bear drags away my pack? Or my tent and everything in it blow into a crevasse? Or an avalanche or rockslide buries my basecamp while I'm dayhiking? High-tech gear doesn't mean squat when it's unusable—or worse, suddenly not there—and you're 15 miles from the trailhead.

"It's the Y2K phenomenon on a backpacking level," according to Cody Lundin, a primitive-skills guru who hikes barefoot and carries little more than a wool blanket on extended wilderness treks. "Most backpackers today travel in a gear bubble. And when your livelihood is totally reliant on modern gear technology, the prospect of that technology failing can be pretty scary."

Lundin's words ring true for me. I'm always well outfitted on my wilderness trips, and my comfort and well-being are directly related to that expensive, high-tech gear. But what if...? Could I make it without the contents of my backpack?

That's why I have decided to go in search of a wilderness survival school, and how I have come to share a campfire, started more with primitive skill than with kindling, with Lundin. He runs the Prescott, Arizona-based Aboriginal Living Skills School (ALSS), and plans to teach me the survival basics—skills all backcountry travelers once knew but "have lost over the centuries"—during an intensive weekend-long field session.

I'm skeptical, of course. Aside from the ultraright-wing, militia-sympathizing stigma associated with many survival schools, there's the Y2K-tainted question of whether such training is just plain bogus and rooted in fear mongering. What could an experienced backpacker not already know?



Cody Says:

"Where there's smoke, there's fire."

Skills To Live By

Starting A Fire

Building a campfire for the heck of it isn't environmentally sound, but in an emergency a small fire can save your life. Hypothermia, remember? Build a tepee from the outside in. Use fuel sticks no bigger around than your thumb, spaced symmetrically 1/2 inch apart. Add larger wood in below-freezing conditions. Place kindling—twigs, from pencil-lead thin to the thickness of a drinking straw—between the fuel sticks and haphazardly inside the tepee. Scatter fine, extremely dry tinder inside the tepee. Tinder can be bark from birch, juniper, or cedar; inner bark of any tree; dry moss; pine needles; cattail down; a termite nest; sunflower pith; even dry grass. If it's raining, put tinder material in your shirt to help it dry quickly. Create an arch underneath the tinder where you can place the flame to start the fire. "Know the exact spot where you're going to place the match," says Cody Lundin.

buries my basecamp? High-tech gear doesn't mean squat there—and you're 15 miles from the trailhead.

"A lot," says Lundin. This modern-day aborigine (his e-mail moniker is "abo dude") assures me there are Stone-Age techniques and "doing more with less" wisdom that can be lifesaving, even liberating, for today's backpackers. I found some consolation in the fact that his brochure clearly states, "ALSS adventures are not Rambo-style courses." Good, because I'm not interested in being GI Jane or a cave woman. I just want to be a better prepared backpacker.

Finding the right survival-skills teacher is more involved than looking for the "Wilderness Survival Schools" listing in the Yellow Pages. The term "wilderness survival," after all, is highly ambiguous and associated with an array of outdoor pursuits.

Searching for "wilderness survival" on the Internet yields Web sites dealing with everything from New-Age meditation to storing five year's worth of food to military combat manuals on CD-ROM. The search is further complicated by Y2K-related fears that have fueled a survivalist cottage industry catering to people—many keenly interested in arming themselves—preparing to live off the grid. (For more tips on finding the right school, see "Survival Schools" on page 150.)

After wading through all the paramilitary hype, two large wilderness survival schools stood out: Boulder Outdoor Survival School (BOSS) based in Boulder, Colorado, and Tom Brown's Tracker School in Asbury, New Jersey. Both schools harken back to ancient Native American lifestyles and teach primitive skills, such as starting a fire with a bow drill, foraging for food, and making stone tools.

BOSS was the brainchild of Larry Dean Olsen, who decided to teach primitive-living skills ("no kit nor any premanufactured items") in the '60s after authoring the book, *Outdoor Survival Skills*. Similarly, Brown's biography, *The Tracker*, which details his apprenticeship in the New Jersey Pine Barrens under an Apache medicine man, gave rise to the Tracker wilderness survival school in 1978. (For more on Brown, see "Secrets To Survival," October 1992). Today, both schools employ staffs of knowledgeable instructors, offer a variety of courses, and have slick public relations/advertising agencies representing them. According to



Cody Says:

"When the chips are down, ration your sweat, not your water."

Skills To Live By Finding Water

Staying well hydrated is essential to maintaining physical and mental function, so drink at least a gallon of water per day, and even more in hot environs. Carry iodine to purify water, but if you're in a survival mode and can't treat the water, drink it anyway. Better to chance getting sick than risk not living to worry about it. If your supply runs out, climb to a hilltop and look for signs of water, especially in the early morning when the water table is at its highest, reflections of pools are easier to spot, and birds and insects often swarm wet areas. Don't overlook dew; early morning moisture on leaves can be soaked up with a bandanna and wrung into a container. Vegetation that indicates water includes cottonwood trees (roots can go 40 to 60 feet down, so you might not be able to dig far enough), willows, cattails, velvet ash, sycamore, mesquite, and bermudagrass.

A solar tree still (pictured above) is easy to make. Tie a plastic bag around a group of heavily vegetated tree or bush branches that are exposed to direct sunlight. Rig the bag so that all moisture from the leaves will run down into a weighted lower corner. This yields about 2 to 3 tablespoons in average desert conditions. If you're lucky, you may fare better with an Indian well dug in a sandy wash that drains the area during rain. The hole should be 1 to 2 feet deep and preferably on the outer bend of the wash. It could take up to an hour for water to seep into the hole if it's down there. This method also can be used in coastal regions where no fresh water is in the vicinity. Dig the hole on the inland side of sand dunes. Several wells will improve your odds, and if all you get is mud, wring it out in a bandanna to extract the moisture. When in cold environs, be sure to melt snow before consuming it, because ingesting too much cold stuff can lead to hypothermia.



During cushy "modern" excursions, Lundin allows himself a few conveniences—matches, bagels, and, thank goodness, clothes—that aren't kosher on a "primitive trip."

BOSS President Josh Bernstein, enrollment at his school has increased 400 percent in the past four years. Brown experienced similar exponential growth, and both say Y2K paranoia had little to do with it. In fact, Bernstein says, the rush has been made up of "well-traveled outdoorspeople."

Despite the success and mass marketing of the two popular schools, neither has ventured from its original focus of teaching primitive techniques for wilderness survival. "Traditional living and survival skills immerse you into nature, forc-

ing you to adapt to the local resources and environmental conditions," explains Bernstein. "There's an awakening inside you that says, 'I've made fire like this before. And, I am a part of the natural world.'" I know several BOSS alumni who say they experienced life-altering revelations during the school's arduous field courses. I'm not looking for spiritual awakening, though. I just want to know what to do if my pack sails off the side of a mountain.

Which is what has brought me to Cody Lundin. Like many founders of small, regional survival schools around the country, he's a protégé of one of the big two. After completing a 14-day BOSS field course, he joined the school's instructor staff. In 1991, he struck out on his own and founded the Aboriginal Living Skills School. Among his clients are Arizona's Prescott College, an international disaster-relief agency, and the central Arizona Yavapai Apache tribe, who hired Lundin to teach the tribe's youth about their disappearing heritage in primitive skills.

What makes Lundin's school different from BOSS and the Tracker School, which teach solely primitive skills, is that he also teaches "modern survival skills." "Primitive skills help get you in tune with and live in the environment. Modern survival has to do with getting out of a bad situation alive," he told me. "About 75 percent of what I teach is modern survival because that's what people want. They have practical, valid concerns and want to know how to get out of a pinch."

Lundin doesn't abandon primitive skills. During my telephone research, I learned that he teaches what could be called "street smarts" once commonly practiced by prehistoric people—things like finding water by digging an "Indian well" and knowing the vegetation that indicates water is near (see "Finding Water" on page 49). On the other hand, if it's cold and raining and you're near hypothermic, Lundin says rigging a tarp out of a space blanket ("plastic is awesome") is better than spending an hour building an anthropologically correct lean-to out of forest debris.

Exactly the kind of survival skills, and attitude, I was seeking.

I also liked Lundin's proven history and clientele list, but the deciding factor to go with his outfit was that he

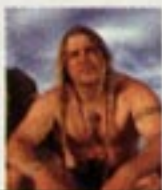


Cody Says:

"Think like a squirrel."

Skills To Live By Building Shelter

Your primary shelter is clothing, so play it safe on excursions from camp and take a jacket and hat. On every trip, pack a synthetic or wool next-to-skin layer, an insulating middle layer, and a waterproof exterior shell jacket. If you need to rig a secondary shelter in the form of a lean-to, use man-made materials whenever possible. "It's much easier and quicker to build a lean-to with a space blanket or a tube tent with trash bags hung over a rope (see photo above) than with debris," says Lundin. The reflective side of a space blanket will divert the sun's rays in the desert and retain body heat in cold conditions. If you must use natural materials to build a shelter, make the walls thick and angled to shed water and provide insulation. The simplest shelter is a lean-to constructed against a tree trunk or rock. Soak up the heat radiating from a tree canopy, big rock, or another person. You can also make a lean-to suitable for sleeping by layering debris over a fallen log. See "Pockets of Weather" (*Wild Things*, August) for tips on where to place your shelter to warm up or cool off.



Digging up grubs for dinner and catching fish with your hands are what most people think when wilderness survival is mentioned, but Lundin says these things aren't core.

lives and teaches in the Arizona desert where I do most of my hiking. Getting stranded in the desert is a different ball game from, say, being lost in the dense forests of New England, and I wanted someone who knows how to tackle my waterless, cactus-filled turf.

Despite his credentials and the fact that he's a successful entrepreneur, Lundin, 32, isn't your typical CEO. When he jumps out of his Jeep to begin our hike, his long blonde hair frames his face in two braids. A bandanna covers the top of his head, he sports a

nose ring and tattoos, and he's barefoot. Heavy metal meets ancient Native American.

If Lundin were standing at a city crosswalk and my mother was sitting in her car at the stoplight, she would nervously lock her doors. But it takes only a few minutes of hiking with Lundin to realize that the derelictlike appearance of abo dude is a direct result of his all-consuming passion for wilderness survival.

"This is a lifestyle for me, not just a way to make a living," he says, his thick-padded feet rolling over sharp volcanic rocks and shuffling around prickly pear as we head toward central Arizona's Verde River. He never wears shoes, not even in the snow ("Don't want my feet to get soft"), and I can't help but wince with his every step. "I'm very passionate about doing more with less. That's what primitive living is all about," Lundin adds.

During these cushy "modern" excursions, though, he allows himself a few conveniences—Nalgene water bottles, matches, bagels, and, thank goodness, clothes—that aren't kosher on a "primitive trip." While I lug my backpack, he carries everything in a fanny pack.

Once we get to the river and set up camp (Lundin merely unfurls his wool blanket), we sit down in the sand. Lundin pulls out a clipboard, draws a bull's-eye, and says, "Everything we talk about over the next few days is in the center of this bull's-eye. It's core knowledge about how to keep your body alive." He taps with a marker near the perimeter of the bull's-eye. "Out here is making moccasins and birch bark canoes. Modern backpackers don't need to know that. But whether I'm Donald Trump or a Tarahumaran bushman, if I'm stuck in a survival situation and I don't know these skills in the center—finding water, starting a fire, finding shelter, making a survival kit, planning ahead, signaling for help—then I'm not going to be on planet Earth much longer." He points again to the center. "This is a very small amount of material to know about living in the wilderness."

Like eating bugs? Digging up grubs for dinner and catching fish with your bare hands are probably what most people think when wilderness survival is mentioned, but Lundin says these things aren't core. According to the "rule of threes," you can live 3 hours without warmth in cold conditions, three days without water, but "at least three weeks without food. It's not a

(Continued on page 124)



Cody Says:

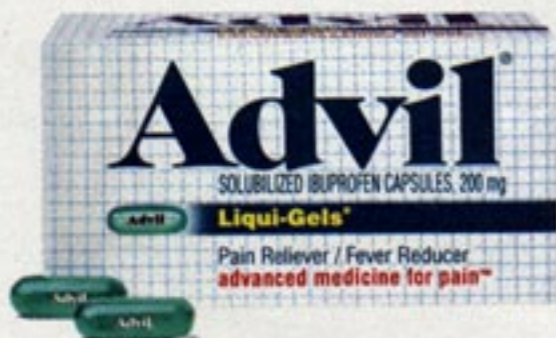
"Be as obnoxious as possible."

Skills To Live By Signaling

If you left your itinerary with a responsible adult, someone will be looking for you when you don't return. Help them find you by using the three basic types of signals: mirror, ground to air, and sound. A commercial signal mirror with a sighting hole is one of the best ways to attract the attention of overflying aircraft because it can be seen 50 miles away. Plastic mirrors don't work nearly as well. A CD-ROM disc makes a great makeshift signal mirror, plus it has a sighting hole. Go to an open area, preferably on a high point like a hilltop, and using the sighting hole, shine the reflected light in the pilot's face. (Use a tree or bluff, not a real plane, when practicing.)

You can also attract the attention of aircraft by laying your space blanket on the ground, reflective side up. Or make a big X on the ground (universal sign of distress) with gear or by digging an embankment in snow. A hot coal bed piled with green vegetation will make white smoke that's easier for rescuers to see. Three fires in a triangle can be seen from 30 miles away. Also, don't forget about sound signals. Sound out SOS by blowing three short, three long, then three short whistles. If rescuers are near, bang on pots and pans.

**FASTER
AND
STRONGER
ON
TOUGH
PAIN
THAN
EXTRA
STRENGTH
TYLENOL®**



**ADVANCED
MEDICINE FOR PAIN™**

Use only as directed. Contains ibuprofen.
©1999 Whitehall-Robins, Madison, NJ.
Liqui-Gels® is a trademark of R.P. Scherer Corp.



**I'm allowed only half a single paper
make two), so my fire better ignite**

The Wisdom Of Abo Dude

(Continued from page 54)

priority in a short-term survival situation," he explains. That's why you should be more concerned about hypothermia, "the number one killer in the bush." Clothing is your basic form of shelter, he notes. "Beyond that, you can improvise with items you have in your survival kit, such as trash bags for rain protection and a space blanket for a tarp. Keeping a small fire going is also critical."

Central to Lundin's approach to modern survival is his homemade survival kit. Weighing just under 4 pounds and small enough to fit easily in a fanny pack, the kit contains multiple-use items that will help any hiker stay warm, hydrated, and able to signal for help (see "Survival Kit" at right.) He recommends that fully equipped backpackers carry the fanny pack kit separate and wear it at all times.

After the bull's-eye lecture, Lundin puts me to work, and the rest of the two days fly by as I practice various skills. Call it a survival fire drill.

"Your body needs to feel what it's like to build a still," says Lundin as I try to rig a plastic bag over a clump of tree branches (see "Finding Water" on page 49). "If you don't get hands-on experience with these skills during a survival course, you might as well just read a book on the subject and save your money."

Under Lundin's constant watch and advice, I spend nearly an hour gathering fuel for a small tepee-style fire. I'm allowed only half a single paper match (I peeled it apart at the center to make two), so my fire better ignite easily, otherwise I'm going to freeze. "Some of your kindling is too big. You're going to need smaller twigs," he instructs, looking at my piles of wood.

After my fuel supply gets Lundin's seal of approval, I build the tepee. Lundin has me remodel it several times: once so the fuel wood is more closely and evenly spaced, and then to make my fire configuration a little more haphazard. "Fire likes chaos," he says.

Finally, it's showtime. I nervously strike the split match and stick the feeble flicker beneath my arched tinder platform. Poof! The tepee ignites as if it were doused with gasoline. I am amazed. Of all the fires I've built over the years, I've never started one without huffing and puffing to keep it

going. And it's always taken more than one match. I thought I knew how to build a proper fire, but clearly, I didn't (see "Starting A Fire" on page 48).

Next, Lundin, a self-described "pyro," has me create fire starters. I slather a cotton ball in petroleum jelly, then pull it apart and light the dry center. This ingenious brand of "techno-tinder" burns for 5 minutes. But equally impressive is the Stone-Age-era tinder bundle: a palm-size bird's nest of juniper bark, the center filled with finely ground bark. The bundle burns twice as long as the cotton ball, and, as Lundin points out, it's portable, "like a fireplace you can hold in your hand."

Nothing is left to chance. I even practice using the sighting hole on a signal mirror (see "Signaling" on page 54). "You don't want to be lost the first time you try to signal for help," says Lundin as I squint and try to line up the sighting hole with a point up toward a mountain-top. It takes me a few attempts, but I finally hit my distant target with a glint of reflected light.

Although I already know some of the things Lundin covers—for example, layering clothing and carrying plenty of water—discussing them in the context of survival reinforces their importance. Other random bits of survival wisdom, such as how to craft a whistle out of scrap metal and use a condom as an emergency canteen (I stood in the river and filled one with at least a liter of water), I never would have learned without taking Lundin's class.

After my days with Lundin, I'm thankful when a backpacking trip goes smoothly and I don't have to use the skills he taught me. And I may never have to, but knowing I possess the knowledge puts me more at ease in remote wilderness areas, especially when my 2-year-old son comes along.

Considering the hundreds of dollars I spend each year on "just in case" insurance policies, the quality wilderness survival training I got from Lundin was a bargain. Practicing the skills in the field engraved them in my memory. I'll still pack a stove, but if something goes wrong with it, I know I can start a fire quickly to warm myself. I've learned where to look for water in seemingly dry locations. I have the life-sustaining essentials in the survival kit around my waist. The desert will not do me in, even if my technologically advanced gear fails.

match (I peeled it apart at the center to easily, otherwise I'm going to freeze.



Cody Says:

"God created Baggies and duct tape on the eighth day."

Survival Kit

Make Your Own Backcountry Insurance Policy

For just a few bucks, you can build a "Lundin special" that'll get you out of all kinds of trouble. Fold everything neatly, pack efficiently, and the whole 3 pound 14 ounce kit and caboodle will fit inside a standard fanny pack. The survival kit is intended to supplement the regular contents of a hiker's pack. It should be worn at all times and separate from the backpack. Don't leave camp without it. Here's what you'll need:

- One each of gallon- and quart-size zipper-lock bags for holding water and building stills; the bags should have wide mouths so you can skim for water and reach into crevices.
- Tincture of iodine to disinfect water; use five drops per quart.
- 2 condoms to use as canteens.
- Plastic drinking tube (3 feet long) for drinking from stills or crevices.
- Orange flagging tape to mark your route or write a message.
- Dental floss (100 feet); a tough string for many uses.
- Duct tape (3 feet); get the strongest variety available.
- Mini flashlight with spare bulb.
- Extra flashlight batteries with date marked; replace every 12 months.
- Magnesium block with striking insert; carry a minimum of three means of starting a fire.
- Cigarette lighter; get a bright color so you won't lose it.
- Strike-anywhere matches dipped in paraffin.
- Firestarters; cotton balls saturated with petroleum jelly and stuffed in a

film container pack the smallest, but you can also use chips or other dry, fatty foods or even dryer lint coated with paraffin.

- Magnifying glass for signaling and fire starting.
- Glass signal mirror with sighting hole and a whistle.
- Light space blanket for shelter and signaling.
- Heavy-duty space blanket with grommets and reflective side for shelter and signaling.
- Three heavy-duty, plastic leaf bags; use as a rainsuit, shelter, tube tent, tarp, or for collecting rainwater.
- Military parachute cord (50 feet), 550-pound test.
- Extra knife; should be all-purpose with a fixed, double-edged, carbon-steel blade that can throw a spark.
- Brightly colored bandanna; doubles as a pot holder, hat, and water filter.
- Basic first-aid kit; contains wound dressing, moleskin, antibiotic ointment, and other items.
- Topo map and compass.

—Annette McGivney

get a wild experience

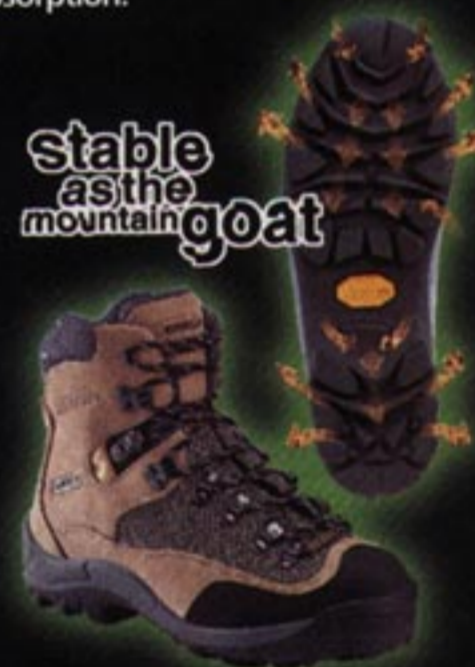
Vibram

Stimulated by a desire for innovation, the Trezeta collection introduces Natural Tracks, the new line of mountain and outdoor boots with exclusive Vibram soles reproducing the paws of a bear and mountain goat.



Jorasse Model:
Bear paw sole

The crampon compatible Jorasse features the bear's print that, thanks to its special tread design, guarantees maximum stability and rigidity. The sole combines rubber and polyurethane to give it excellent shock absorption.



Rocky Mountain Model:
Mountain goat hoof sole

The Rocky Mountain, inspired by the mountain goat, features a sole pattern that insures perfect control of the foot and a tenacious grip on all types of terrain. Trezeta incorporates Heel Stop (patent pending) to keep your feet from slipping during steep descents, creating less friction, and reducing the chance of blisters.

TREZETA

HIGH
PERFORMANCE
BOOTS

{natural
tracks}

vibram

GORE-TEX

TREZETA AMERICA INC. LTD
1155 Fifth Street Extended Suite D
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902
tel. 804-984-6384 • fax 804-984-6386
trezetausa@aol.com