

Coulter Bay, Grand Tetons, fleeting moment

On your bicycle, backpack, canoe or any journey, there's always that special "moment" that pops out of nowhere. It flashes in front of you much like an ephemeral lightning bolt out of the heavens. It strikes your eyes, your senses, your feelings and your emotions. Sometimes it makes you cry. Sometimes it makes you laugh. Occasionally it makes you frown. At other times, it makes you contemplate your life.

Photography by Frosty Wooldridge

On our bicycle journey through the Grand Tetons, Wyoming this summer, we stopped for ice cream at the Coulter Bay grocery—right on the lake. Tons of people from around the world tumbled past us. Riding down the main street, the jagged Tetons rush upward toward the sky in a magical dance with the universe. Their gray rock peaks collided with aspirin-white snowfields that gave way to stunning blue skies.

We leaned our loaded touring bikes against the building. We filled our water bottles from the fountain on the side of the edifice inviting you to reuse your containers and not buy more plastic bottled water. A Park Ranger walked past. Strangers drove by with kayaks, canoes, bicycles, backpacks and an array of sporting equipment.

"Let's get a couple of ice cream cones," said Don. "My treat...what flavor do you want?"

"Strawberry," I said as I sat on a bench. He vanished through the grocery store doors.

Sitting there, I looked to my side to see parents talking to their kids as the kids sat on a bench eating their ice cream cones, cookies and doughnuts. Cute little girls just starting

out with their lives. Their parents brought them to the Tetons to give them a touch of the grandeurs of nature. I remember my own parents did the same for my siblings when I was nine years old. I sat on the same bench with an ice cream cone.

Watching them rattled me as to how fast life slips past our rear view mirrors. At some point, those little kids would be sitting in my age group. With the picture of those kids at my side, and the feelings that rushed over me, I grabbed my camera to capture the moment. Childhood, ice cream cones, laughter, friends, joy and becoming a human being.

Quickly, I snapped the picture before they all jumped up to go to their parents' cars. Quickly, they vanished into the future on their own journeys. But for one moment, they warmed my heart. They inspired me with their enthusiasm. They buffered me from the vagaries of life.

How about you? How many special 'moments' have you encountered in your touring travels? Who inspired you? What animal delighted you? What situation will you remember with a photograph? It's all part of adventure across this wondrous planet out there in the ink black of space.

"If the roar of a wave crashes beyond your campsite, you might call that adventure. When coyotes howl outside your tent—that may be adventure. While you're sweating like a horse in a climb over a 12,000-foot pass, that's adventure. When a howling headwind presses your lips against your teeth, you're facing a mighty adventure. If you're pushing through a howling rainstorm, you're soaked in adventure. But that's not what makes an adventure. It's your willingness to struggle through it, to present yourself at the doorstep of Nature. That creates the experience. No more greater joy can come from life than to live inside the 'moment' of an adventure. It may be a momentary 'high', a stranger that changes your life, an animal that delights you or frightens you, a struggle where you triumphed, or even failed, yet you braved the challenge. Those

moments present you uncommon experiences that give your life eternal expectation. That's adventure!" FHW

Frosty Wooldridge, Grand Tetons, on tour, summer 2016.

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