

# MSU students go looking for a place in the sun

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Spring Break has given us ample time to slow down, to let out all that we have been taking in and break from the patterns that have etched their designs into our days.

The head works too hard; at some point it is necessary to strike a balance. A great trail will work out the thoughts and the physique, and it may lead to a peak in terms of personal perception. The view changes where you are and where you've been.

During my spring break, the desert beckoned me. Its vast, expansive silence brought about a new, distinct awareness. I longed for my sleeping bag view to be clear, with the skies twinkling of stars and, eventually, waking to a picturesque sunrise beckoning the new day.



photo Courtesy of Ali Schultz  
*Ali Schultz, Lissa Pusey and Keith Mortensen pose for a photo at the blistering, snowy Bryce Canyon*

The journey began in the minds of its participants five weeks prior to the intended beginning, and the plans shifted greatly in the weeks leading up to break. Three days before the intended departure, we desperately searched for a third adventurer to

fill a last-minute gap in the plans. The final answer from the third person was worth millions and a thousand hours of maniacal laughter.

Thus Lissa Pusey, Keith Mortensen and myself embarked on an epic trajectory across the Southwest, on a trail that would encompass Zion, the Grand Canyon, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Durango and Moab.

There could be many themes for our spring break, says Lissa Pusey, whose Toyota is now decorated with the found remnants of our campsites, such as the recognition of ecological destruction in the name of selfishness and greed, acknowledging the U.S. as a nation of sleepwalking consumers and our only true cultural values seem to be that of capitalism, or even the differentiation between domestic animals without teeth and ourselves. Yet, the most important thing that I realized

over break was the importance of going with the flow. So often our lives do not work out as planned. Take for example, going south in pursuit of sun and finding rain.

We took a lesson from the sky as we prepared ourselves for a muddy backcountry ex-

cursion into Zion but wound up with a sudden twist in the plans, as I tumbled down a slick, rocky slope into a cactus less than 24 hours into the trip. Between the perpetual rainfall, an unexpected ER visit and a twisted ankle, the

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trip took on a new dimension from the dry comfort of the Toyota.

What followed was the quintessential road trip. We drove through Zion, to Bryce, and then through Escalante National Monument, on an unimproved road which was declared impassable when wet and continued for 40 miles to U.S. 89. We camped under the ancient sea of stars and the moonlit Grosvenors Arch as the howls of the coyotes lulled us to sleep. We camped with a view of the Vermilion Cliffs and watched the glowing sunrise over a distant canyon.

Red rocks, mud, laughter and the dashed yellow line characterize this adventure, which flowed together so sweetly. As the whirlwind tour encroached towards home, the setting sun on the western Rockies gave way to an ocean of sky littered with stars.

In retrospect: A couple of hours ago, I couldn't keep from smiling, said Keith Mortensen, the third member of the trek and future eco-terrorist. A journey

with two briefly unknown individuals has led me to believe that civilized earth is not nearly as bad as I once thought it to be (although the Glen Canyon Dam should still be removed...). The laughter, like the sunrise, would poke through every rainy day and equal the strength of a 120-ounce Bladder Buster from the Kwicky Mart. There is a small population of this world who we found in the Southwest that love us as we love them. They like muddy roads in desolate places just as we do. They like pallet bonfires and whoopee cushions and moonrise illuminated arches, and Annies Mac'n Cheese. Being a guy and road tripping with two girls is definitely a good thing (Don't fear the vagina dentata, it doesn't bite!).

Possibly the greatest part of a journey such as this is the lasting memories that seep into everyday post-break life and the tight bonds that are formed. As Pusey states with a nostalgic smile, "When trips/life/friendships flow this well, who are we to fight it?"