The Best Classroom is the Out-of-Doors

I always thought that the best way for me to learn is hands-on, without a doubt. Since I am a RPTA major, I was surprised to see that a lot more of the classes taught should be taught outside. That reminds of a quote, I believe said by L.B. Sharp and it was something along the lines of the best classroom is the out-of-doors. The ceiling is the bright blue sky; the floor is miles of dirt and rock and the walls are boundary-less because we have what is all around us.

The Outdoor Education (O.E.) programs that we have visited do a great of doing this. These programs give kids a chance to be aware of the natural setting and how to respect it. When I shadowed Yosemite Institute, an O.E. program, I realized how much kids are willing to learn between 5th and 8th grade. And they are so smart too. Many of the kids would answer questions about geology that I had already forgotten, believe it or not.

To let kids know now about the environment will be beneficial for not only them but for the next generations to come. I am excited to teach 5th and 6th graders because I also realized that it doesn’t take much for the kids to be interested, as long as there is some activity or game to play too. I’m that the kids and the teachers will be happy with ever we give the students and great time all around.

Kayaking Surprises in Baja, California
By: Betsy Williams

When the itinerary was being made for this ECOEE 2007 everyone in the group had some part of the expedition they were the most excited for. Some were excited for Yellowstone, some for backcountry but I was excited for sea kayaking in Baja, California, for a variety of reasons. I had never spent any time in Mexico and this would be the longest span of time I had been out on the water before. The drive down to Baja, California was long and through terrain I had never seen before. The scrub bushes, cactus and valley after sweeping valley never seemed to end and I was beginning to think that the Sea of Cortez was not even a real place. At what felt like forever, Francisco, our guide, told us that the next range of mountains were actually islands! Soon after, we saw the oceans blue hue in the setting sun. Everyone piled out of the van to smell the salty air and we ate a celebration dinner at a restaurant close to our house (called “Casa Azul”- can you guess what color it was? 😊) with all our gear. I ate an order of fish tacos in honor of my dad and fell asleep listening to the clanking sound the halyards on the sailboats in the harbor.

The following day was an introduction to sea kayaking for those who had never participated before, and we went to bed early to anticipate the departure soon after sunrise the following morning. We had all the food and gear as ready as it could be, but Mother Nature seemed to have another plan for us. Francisco told us there were strong winds coming from a hurricane in the south and Santa Ana blowing from the north, which meant it would not be safe for us to depart. We left the next day and paddled about six miles before the wind picked up and we beached on Quemado, which is Spanish for “burnt”. This hopefully can paint a picture of what the area looked like- no shade of any kind.
To make a long story short, we ended up being stranded on that particular beach for the next four days, leaving us no option but to start to paddle back to where we came from once we got a break in the weather. Once that break came, we made a mad dash to a beach close to Casa Azul called La Mona and two days later, back to Casa Azul to put the boats away and clean the gear.

A favorite quote of Jeff’s comes from J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the “Lord of the Rings” series, which is “Good days are nice to have, but are not much to talk about. Bad days are not so nice to have but make for great stories”. While the trip did not go as I had envisioned, it was still a great learning experience. I had the chance to see the kind of weather that could stop a trip firsthand and I was able to learn some important decision making skills. I was reminded to always put your group first, because just because I might think I can handle a situation it does not mean that the rest of the group can. Aside from decision-making skills, I think the group had a great opportunity to grow, since we had not run into any real obstacles before this point. Plus, how many people can say they were stranded on a beach in Mexico?

A Trip of a Lifetime
-Brian

It is hard to think of all the different things that I have experienced and have seen on ECOEE. It is hard to imagine all the experiences I have shared with my instructors and with my peers. It has been a long journey that has taken us all over the West, North to South, doing things that only a handful of people get to experiences. All the people I have met, all the places I have visited, and the sights I have seen have truly made this a trip of a lifetime.

We started our journey August 12, 2007, when we met here at Horn Field Campus, with a week to prepare before we would depart August 19th. Our first major stop would be Badlands National Park in South Dakota. There we got our first, of many, ranger interpretations that would help us with our own interpretations. Or next stop would be Grand Teton National, followed by Yellowstone. Both these places were beautiful. The Tetons, well, had the Teton mountain range, and Yellowstone had it all. Mountains, streams, forest, wildlife, and fresh air, what more could you ask for.

Our next part of the trip we would be spending a lot of time, in or around, Yosemite National Park. We would go through the park our first time not spending too much time there. Our goal was to get to Summit Adventures and start what would be 28 days in the Ansel Adams Wilderness. This was a long portion of the trip but in a way the most rewarding. We spent those days with just the group and learned a lot about group dynamics. After the 28 days we went back into Yosemite for the AEOE Conference. I like the conference and made a few friends. One of them, Jordan, I would meet up with at the Yosemite Institute and follow around while he taught all day. It was a great experience.

Third part of our trip was a sea-kayaking trip in Baja California. We were going to spend ten days on the water with our guide Francisco. I
was very excited to go, this being my first time in Mexico. I enjoyed the kayaking, but I really enjoyed swimming and snorkeling in the gulf. We had some wind issues that kept us from paddling as far as we wanted, but it was still a great trip.

This Last part of the trip was spent in Joshua Tree and Grand Canyon National Park. We got to do a lot of climbing in J-Tree, which I was looking forward to. The Grand Canyon, well I am not sure how or if I can describe it. It was big and amazing. It is hard to believe that with up lift and erosion, that the Colorado River carved this huge canyon.

**Reaction Reflection**  
*Josh*

For the past few months we have been traveling around and visiting camps, Outdoor Ed agencies, and seeing interpretive walks and talks. We are getting a first hand look at how these agencies work. We have also visited a couple adventure recreation providers. We went into the backcountry out of Summit Adventure in Bass Lake, Ca; we stopped by Oars and Dories, which is a whitewater rafting outfitter that leads trips down the Colorado River, through the Grand Canyon; and we went to Philmont Boy Scouts Ranch. All of these places had the same idea of giving people an adventurous experience complete with challenges that are evident in the out of doors.

I noticed that a lot of adventure recreation agencies like to have a deeper goal in mind besides simply providing people with adventure. There were some that carried a Christian theme to them and worship was sometimes done while on course. There were some that stressed the group dynamics and reflection as part of the course. There were also some that taught outdoor education during the course. I like the adventure recreation places that simply provide the experience for the participants. Oars and Dories, a Grand Canyon whitewater rafting outfitter does this. They do all the work in leading the boat down the river and leave the participants to experience the thrill and adventure of the river. I think that some of the adventure is taken away by causing people to do all this extra work and making people grumpy. This works great if your goal is to put people in a position to struggle and work extra hard so that they can learn and grow through challenge, but if simply providing adventure is the goal, then fun and adventure is what they should get.

If I were to open my own adventure program, it would be along the lines of Oars and Dories. I would try to have my staff do most of the work and let the participants enjoy their adventure rather than complain about the work.

**Wilderness Leadership**  
*Cody Haars*

Living with 14 other people in the wilderness for 28 days with no other human contact except for some passer by hikers is probably one of the memorable events in my life and probably will be for a very long time.

Every day we have a different leader who decides where we go(to an extent), how we get there, and what we do when we get there. It is a responsibility check for a lot of us. Before you can take care of a group of 14 people, you have to be able to take care of yourself, and that’s one thing I think many people are figuring out. At least I hope so.

The first experience at Wilderness Leadership was in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. It has been said by many that the Sierras have a milder climate than many ranges. It is a
good practice ground to learn to be a leader and learn the basic survival and technical skills of the backcountry. We got snowed on maybe 3 or 4 times and it was minimal each time, it slowed us down for a few days but we still got the experience. And if it was even a decent amount of snowfall, it was usually gone by the next day or so.

The next experience for Wilderness leadership was Baja California. We kayaked in the Sea of Cortez for 10 days. We had a guide who ultimately made the calls on where to go, but we still decided how the day was planned out after the guide made his decisions.

Both were ideal situations to learn in because we are all training to be outdoor leaders. And we have two instructors to catch us when we fall. The Sierra Nevada’s had great opportunities for small group practice, because we were split up into groups of 3, instead of the groups of 6 or 12.

Wilderness Leadership has been a great class to learn without fear and/or consequences. I know I have been told by many people, many times, how lucky I am to be doing something like this. And I have believed them each time.

**News letter #5 448**

This is for all the recreation majors and minors who do not know what an Interpretative Ranger does at a National Parks. So, if you know what Interpretative Rangers do stop reading this article because it does not pertain to you. If you are wondering what Interpretative Rangers do I will tell you. Interpretative Rangers demonstrate their skills in describing, relating, displaying revealing natural, environmental and cultural resources to the topic that they are talking about. Some of the Rangers that I have seen have done horrible jobs at this and have made me want to get up and walk out of their interpretation while other Interpretative Ranger do a good job of relating the material to the audience. Good Interpretative Ranger also have a sense of humor which is key to keeping the attention of the audience. By doing these things you can make people interested in Rocks, Ravens, Wilderness, and many other ideas or you can turn them off to those ideas. I urge everyone to go out to a National Park and see what an actual Interpretative Ranger walk, talk, or guided tour looks like. By going to one of these activities you will broaden your knowledge and be able to see ideas in a new light.

Greg Rolf

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When first hearing of ECOEE, we were attracted by the potential to explore the unknown, to check a few places off the list, to see and do so much. Once on the expedition we realized there was much more to it than getting in a van and riding around the country. We realized that this expedition was designed more for the long haul than it was the momentary satisfaction. To see change in each other; see change in
ourselves— that is what we, ECOEE, strives for. Last night, after arriving back in Macomb, Jeff discussed with us whether or not this change will be permanent. That is up to us. No matter what we do the expedition will still have an impact on our lives, but the choices that lie ahead are still in our hands.

I hope that we can take the skills we learned on the road and bring them home with us. I hope that next time that one of us has to make a decision for a group that they will know what to do. Know what to do when the weather is threatening, when there are risks on the horizon, and when opportunity is knocking.

I hope that from our experience of living with a family of 15 for 3 months straight that we will get along a little better with our fellow man. That we will be the bigger man when problems arise, as they will: that is one thing we can be assured of in life. Like death and taxes, non?

But if there is one thing that I hope we take from the expedition more than anything else, it is this: That this earth is not ours. It is not our property, and that this terrestrial realm is merely a passing thought. All we own are our actions, and even that can be debatable at times. We should think of ourselves as caretakers, stewards of the earth. It has been said so many times before, but it is still our duty to preserve this world for our children’s children. A healthy respect for the natural world is what I hope that we take from our travels. We have seen so many examples of areas that were taken care of, and ones that haven’t been. We’ve seen how much power is behind the wind, how much power is inherent within the wildfires that burned so much of California, and how hard it can be without the water we need while we were in the deserts. Respect for these things and the interdependence of creation is what we need. After a trip such as ours, color us ignorant if we can’t find that kind of respect. I hope we do fare well. After all, this is our expedition.

Let's Talk Feelings
By Michael Evert

Whiles on ECOEE I learned many things but one thing that was the hardest for me to learn was interpretation. I can stand up in front of my peers and deliver an outdoor education lesson no problem. You just throw out some facts and do a couple activities and boom you nailed it. When it comes to interpretation, facts don’t matter. Interpretation to me is all about feelings. Can you make your audience feel a certain way about your lesson or come away with a deeper understanding? That is a really hard thing to do sometimes. I have found this out through many lessons. So, how do you make a bad interpretation good? The word I found that makes the pieces fit right together is “Relating”. You must relate your interpretation to the audience in order for them to develop a feeling towards what you are saying. Other wise, it seems you are just up there stating facts. Not always though will their feeling be the feeling you want them to come away with or express. They might completely disagree with you and that’s ok. The biggest thing I learned about interpretation is that its an art and it could take awhile to get really good at it. I will not worry to much if I’m not the best at it for I know I will always have time for practice to perfect my ways of interpretation.

Reaction Reflection
ECOEE is the trip of a lifetime being able to visit national parks, play in the ocean, laugh with friends, and see wildlife. But it’s not all fun and games; we have to do homework too! Yes, it’s true, there is work to be done, and in fact there were eighteen credit hours worth to accomplish for the semester.

Our camp, adventure recreation, outdoor education, visitor center, walks, and talk visits required a critique form to be filled out evaluating the quality and organization of the visit. Seems simple but it was time consuming, especially when we had to share laptops and keep them charged with a limited time and space to keep them charged. From this, I found myself in unusual places trying to finish my homework; lodges at national parks, in the vans at night after dinner, laundry mats, and my personal favorite bathrooms at campgrounds.

Critiques were a continual flow of work to be done because of the laptop issue and the everyday living conditions that made everything take twice as long, and so the days would fly by before I could even think to do my homework.

The visits and interpretations themselves were always enjoyable and a great way to learn techniques and organization of being able to reach the audience effectively and still remain pleasant to listen to. A memorable interpretative talk was at Yellowstone National Park with a ranger who had many years of experience giving interpretations and struck a cord with me and other students on the trip to strengthen our own skills. He had props, humor, great speaking skills, a unique voice, and great content.

The biggest part of interpretation that I learned was making it personal and relevant to the listener so after the talk was over, they could walk away with an impactful message. If it was a greater appreciation for an animal or a new angle to view the wilderness, it allowed a connection to be made and hopefully enlightened the listener.

Wilderness Leadership- RPTA 446

It is hard to say exactly how I feel about this portion of the course. Having now completed the course, it is difficult to say whether I would like to do this type of job as a career. When I look back on it, I realize that it was not as difficult as I had worked myself up for it to be in the days leading up to the backcountry expedition portion of he course. This being said it was really, really hard; the constant contact with the fourteen other members of the expedition, and the lack of contact with the rest of the world. It was once said that if another September 11th had occurred while we were gone, that we would be the last Americans in the whole world to know about it, and we were with her borders.

When I was on campus I felt a similar feeling, that a college campus if like its own little bubble, disconnected from the town in which it resides as well it state and country. This feeling pales before the feeling of disconnection which comes from twenty-eight days in the wilderness. Strange is it to say that if I add up the two backcountry expeditions, one being twenty-eight and the other being twelve, I have spent over 10% of my whole calendar year without the use of running water, electricity, or clean clothes.

This is the most important portion of ECOEE; the rest of the trip is like an extremely long field trip. One still has access to friends and family via the cell phone and wireless internet,
the world news is in papers which are available everywhere single place which the van stops, and when one needs to escape from the rest of group it is accomplished with relative ease. The Backcountry is very different, and that is what makes it great.

Sincerely,
Ryan Patrick Martin McLaughlin
“Tank”

Outdoor Educ

By: Betsy Williams

Over the course of the semester, ECOEE has had the chance to visit a lot of really unique and beautiful places- some of them even being schools. Over the course of the semester we have been able to visit Teton Outdoor Science School, Cuyamaca Outdoor Science School, L.A. County Outdoor Science School, Yellowstone Institute and Yosemite Institute. All of these schools had great facilities, talented staff and caring administration, which we were able to see through our tour firsthand. Yosemite Institute, however, showed us their program in a way that I will not soon forget. The students on ECOEE were each able to shadow an instructor during a day with a class that was there for a weeklong session. I shadowed a young woman named Betsy (how often does that happen!), who had been a teacher there for two years.

I was not sure what to expect by being a shadow, especially when the kids arrived for the first time. I didn’t want to say much because I was not entirely sure how the program was run and did not want to confuse them right off the bat. I stuck with Betsy for the first hour while we were moving the kids from place to place in Yosemite Valley, but after a little while I became more comfortable and started talking with some of the kids about school, sports, their life and telling them a little about mine. They all were convinced I was a teacher and was lying about being in college, which was funny. At a stop where Betsy planned to talk about water purification, she turned to me and said “This Betsy spent 28 days in the mountains, so let her tell you about how to purify water”. After the kids stopped “oohing” and “ahhing” about this new information, I told them an outline of what I knew about the purification process and how important it is to drink plenty of water. While it was a surprise to be able to teach, I found myself enjoying the experience. The kids were very receptive and I was able to teach several more times throughout the day.

When it came time for me to leave at the end of the day, the kids were all really upset that I was not going to be back the next day. I felt bad leaving them to go back and wait for my other classmates to finish up their days as shadows.

While I know I am never going to see any of those kids again it is still fun to think that I taught them things that hopefully they will retain for at least a few weeks. I am glad ECOEE gave me this experience to not only see the school and ask questions, but have a have a firsthand look into a day at Yosemite Institute.
There are many different skills out there can help you become a better leader. Someone can take a National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) course to help gain some hiking skills, someone can work at Oars/Dories as a guide down the Grand Canyon to learn skills in rafting, or work on your people skills by working at that Philmont Boy Scout Ranch. Another way to learn these and more is to take a ten-day sea-kayaking course in, Baja California, with Francisco. Those ten days will last a lifetime.

I was once told that one of the most basic skills to know is how to hike. With most adventure activities or backcountry expeditions, you are hiking already or if something goes wrong, you might end up hiking. For example, if you are kayaking on a river, dock your kayak for lunch, and your boat floats away, for one reason or another, you are going to have to hike. With learning sea kayaking skills also comes the responsibility of knowing basic hiking skills.

You will also be able to learn how to be a vocal leader on the water. I learned, that if you have a group of 12 kayaks that you have to be vocal when communicating, because it is hard for everyone to hear you. It is hard for other people to hear you when the wind is blowing and the waves are crashing against other boats. I also was able to practice my paddling skills like my turns and paddling backwards. You can never practice the basic paddling skills enough.

Participating in a sea kayaking expedition also lets you work on your people skills. When paddling in a large group you have to be able to work and get along with everyone. So everyday there were opportunities to better your communication with in the group and opportunities to work on bettering the group dynamics. There is so much going on that involves working as group and coordinating the group.

What I was able to walk away with knowing is that hiking is a basic skill that is a must, being on the water can help improve your communication and paddling skills, and that it also can help you work on your people skills.

Brian

Reaction Reflection

-Josh

Throughout the semester, each of us has had an interpretive topic to teach. I was teaching about forest fires. At first I had trouble knowing the difference between outdoor education and interpretation but I began to learn the difference. When giving an outdoor education lesson, you need to deliver facts to your audience that supports the overall theme of your subject. When giving an interpretation, you need to not only give facts, but try to get your audience to think about your lesson after your lesson. You
hope that people will want to change their behavior after hearing our lesson.

When I gave my first fire lesson, I was hoping that people will understand the fire has a natural role in most, if not all, of the western forests. Many people today still believe that forest fires are bad and need to be put out immediately when started either naturally or not. Some people may think this because of the damage it causes financially to homes and businesses, while others think fire is bad because it is burning all of the trees. Both seem to make sense, but those who think that fire is bad by nature, do not understand the benefits of fires.

The challenge for me is how to get the audience to feel something. Telling stories that support your facts go a long way in taking the extra step. I could tell the audience that fire is god but when I show a picture of elk licking the nitrogen-rich, freshly burnt ground, they can understand and actually see that fire can be beneficial. Or if I show a picture of a forest on fire and then show another picture 30 years later of the same forest with new trees, the audience can begin to see the bigger picture. The big picture is always the idea when giving an interpretation and when you can relate the topic and show the bigger picture, people are more likely to feel emotion to the topic and change their thoughts or behavior regarding the topic.

Travel Workshop
-Cody Haars

Being on the road for 3 months with a group of 15 forces you to work together or start working together at least. When you each have your own chore (cooking, cleaning, putting up tents, vans and trailer cleanup, and other), you have to learn to work as a team and cannot rely on yourself to do everything. You have to do your part in the group to keep it running smoothly or otherwise it will break down and need repairs just like a machine.

We hit up many wonderful spots in our travels. Probably more than some will be able to see throughout their entire lives. We covered the major western half of the United States and even halfway down the Mexican peninsula of Baja California. But we spent around half of our time in the beautiful state of California.

California has desert, mountain, marine, and forest and much more. We were getting snowed on in the mountains on one day and just a couple weeks later were baking in the desert. We visited Yosemite National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, Malibu, San Diego, Los Angeles, the filming location of the great outdoors, where we fought a forest fire until the fire department arrived and some other great places in which I will never forget.

My favorite part of our travels would probably have to be (besides the people) the bathroom acting as our computer lab because it has outlets, and I would end up meeting people from near my home town or someone that knew somebody I knew back home.

These three months we’ve been on the road, we have gotten pretty close (whether some people wanted to or not) and we have become a little family that we can all share our traveling experiences with for the rest of our lives.

Newsletter # 6 450
-Greg

I am writing this on the last leg of our journey. Everyone is happy that we will soon be with friends, family, and have an oven that is not have Dutch for a first name. Looking back at the first week of ECOEE I noticed that we were all itching to leave the corn and soy fields of Illinois and head out west.

In one day we were in a desert, a coniferous forest, mountain range, and plains. It is sad when I think back at all the places and people that we have visited as a group and how much we have all really learned about each other, but most of all how much we have learned about ourselves. My personality has not changed, but my behavior and the way I look at situation has
changed for the better. Brian Rittenhouse told me, “with learning comes change.” I now know that this is true. I have learned more than I can imagine. I now look at people and do not pass judgment; I look forward to the smallest rewards such as a smile; have learned that the outside environment is one of the best class rooms. These are just a few of the things that have changed for me while I was on ECOEE.

We have been to the Grand Teton, Sierra Nevada, Baja California, Los Angeles, San Diego, Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the desert of the American Southwest. ECOEE you can’t, “beat it!”

Everyday million of Americans go on vacation or travel somewhere around the world. This statistic is not exactly true but I wanted you to get a sense of how big the traveling industry is today. Now, why would talking about traveling tie into ECOEE? On ECOEE, one out of our six classes is a travel workshop class. Within this class we have various jobs and tasks we must accomplish/complete in order to fulfill our semester duties. These tasks range from being facilitator of the day, chores and journal. The facilitator of the day is the person who calls the shots for the day and leads everyone on our always-new adventure. I found this duty to be very helpful on making decision and working on your leadership traits. When you are not the FOD (facilitator of the day) you are assigned a chore that you will be in charge of throughout the day. I realized for the day to run great everyone must be on top of their chore and willing to help out others when help is needed. The chores run anywhere from head chef to your day off. Some of the chores are harder then others making sure you are always paying attention. Never is there a day when nothing is going on. Since everyday is always a new adventure an experienced gained, we keep a journal to write everything down. I was skeptical at first about writing a journal because I am not to big on writing and I don’t really like journals. Though after a couple of entries I realized how valuable one of these journals things could be. It gives me a chance to write down what I learned today or how the day looked in my eyes. Once ECOEE is all done and over, I will have a notebook full of days that I can now look back on. Those are just a couple of tasks needed to fulfill our semester duties and I found out that in order to complete these thoroughly everyone must have great expedition/travel behavior throughout the entire trip. I believe that is exactly what we did because I wouldn’t trade this trip for anything else or anyone else. This grand travel has been an adventure and an experience I will never forget.

Reaction Reflection
-Natalie j

The days on ECOEE went by pretty quick and if I didn’t take a look around every now and then, I might have missed something beautiful, the trees in particular kept my attention. As we drove from place to place I had the responsibility to teach my classmates about trees and shrubs for the area and having spent my summer working at a tree nursery I already had an appreciation for plant life, but having the privilege to discover new and unusual plant life out west was one of my highlights on ECOEE.

From the lodge pole pines in Yellowstone
to the Joshua Trees in the Mojave Desert, each one carried characteristics that were absolutely necessary for their survival. Instead of a cactus having leaves they were substituted by needles to make sure moisture is not lost in the hot sun, while the Giant Sequoias grew shallow roots to access surface water and spread out in long distances around the tree. I learned various scientific facts that always impressed me and had a way of making me wonder about their existence on earth and how they’ve adapted to the land.

Driving in the vans was prime time to gaze out the window and watch the plant life gradually change as we made our way across the landscape at different elevations. It was a subtle change but sooner than later branches and leaves morphed and although this was a small minor part of ECOEE it was important to me and gave the subtle reminder that nowhere on earth is the same.

I thought back to previous road trips that I had taken and realized I had traveled through them blindly, not wondering about the nature or culture. Being ignorant is not an option for me anymore. I’ve learned to ask questions and seek out answers on my own through various resources because if I stop, the world will go on without me.

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On My Way
-Dale Maxson

I sit here on the front porch of Horn Field Campuses Lodge, listening to the music that I left behind 3 months ago—a wonderful studio production called “Ray Sings, Basie Swings.” Music has always been a major part of my life; especially proven so during ECOEE. We had some major musical talent with us this semester; there was not a person without something to contribute. Even Jeff could be caught tapping his feet occasionally. But now that I am back to “the real world,” how will I view music, after all our travels?

If music is one person’s way of expressing themselves, then I feel that the world owes it to them to strive to listen. That is a general belief that has shaped my life in many ways. Music, paintings, sculptures, literature, or the culmination of all: motion pictures—They are all ways that people harness their creativity to express or interpret a notion. Across the West we saw a great variety of expressions.

In Lander, Wyoming we saw the galleries full of black and white pictures of the Grand Tetons—people trying to be Ansel Adams. In Baja California we heard the country music of Mexico nearly every day that we spent in town—the beaten up ‘72 Ford pickups rolling down the dusty roads with oom-pa-pa tubas and whirling accordions flowing out of the rolled down/non-existing windows. In the Grand Canyon we saw the artists putting in their bid on the Native American styles—in their case they had a disclaimer noting that they were not crafted by Native Americans. It was sad to see that, in the case of the Grand Canyon and Lander, artists had to cater to the tastes of the general public. I would much rather see what the artist wants to create, as opposed to what they are paid to create. I suppose sometimes they can be one in the same. Example: Sistine Chapel.

It is not for me to judge their works, but simply to observe and take note. There must be something to be learned from it. Again the
question comes to mind…how will I view the arts, now that I’ve seen and heard so much from so many different types of people?

A Note From The Publications & Promotions Committee:

We would like to thank you for supporting ECOEE. This experience will no doubt stay with us for the rest of our lives, and without your contribution the experience would not have been the same. We hope that you were able to enjoy the expedition vicariously through us, but we hope even more that you get out there and enjoy this world for yourself. There is so much to do and see, and so many great people out there to enjoy it with; why wait until a later day?