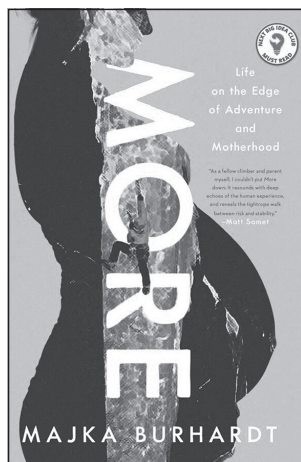


photographs. But there is always the mind's eye: We can see the Grand Canyon North Rim while the barefoot runner describes it and feel the weariness of a wilderness ranger who “wants to believe in rescue (but) the canyon is teaching me otherwise.” We glimpse the formation of the Milky Way in a glacier origin tale and spy the coyote flashing through a camp in Joshua Tree.

Choosing and editing their writers, introducing these parks and trails, the Kyus are so at home with each other and the reader, so personable and warm with their words, that already I welcome the travel book they will themselves write one day.

—*Elissa Ely*



More

By Majka Burhardt

Pegasus Books, 2023, 336 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-63936-349-0. Price: \$27.95

(hardcover).

A FEW YEARS AGO, WITH TWO KIDS UNDER AGE 2, my wife and I spent ten days at the Red River Gorge in Kentucky. We climbed every day—sometimes all day, sometimes for just an hour. There was a wonderful feeling of accomplishment: We were successfully combining parenting with the outdoors.

To be sure, there was plenty of crying, and some near-fails. At one remote crag in the Daniel Boone National Forest, we put our 4-month-old in his bouncer, roped in, then realized that he was 5 feet from a coiled rattlesnake. I somehow convinced my wife that it wasn't a big deal; we moved the bouncer a few feet away and climbed on. At another crag, we warded off a rabid chipmunk while our 1-year-old munched on snacks stashed in his chalk bag.

It was nice to hear kudos from other climbers. “Good for you for bringing the babies out!” And it felt good, in part, because we had minimal expectations. We had nothing to prove. We just wanted to combine kids and the outdoors, however it panned out.

But I can imagine how expectations might be different for a professional climber whose goal is to be a “pregnant warrior goddess.” When the New Hampshire-based mountain guide Majka Burhardt took her 4-month-old

twins on a family climbing trip to the Red River Gorge, she bristled when the umpteenth person told her that it was “great to see a mom out climbing.”

“I hate those people,” Burhardt writes in her memoir, *More*. “*No, this is not me climbing, I want to say. This is my body vibrating with every squeal [my son] makes when I am twenty, forty, eighty feet above him, willing my fingers to hold an edge, willing my abs to stick together, and willing my heart and head to even want this in the first place.*”

After spending six months planning the eight-day climbing trip, Burhardt called it quits three days in because it was just too frustrating to try to climb at her desired level *and* care for infants in a rustic cabin in remote Appalachia. The story encapsulates a broader theme from *More*, in which Burhardt’s sometimes unrealistic expectations for herself repeatedly come crashing to earth.

The climber Tommy Caldwell called this book “insightful and heartfelt.” Lynn Hill called it “vulnerable.” Matt Samet called it “searingly honest.”

I’d agree. I’d also warn that *More* is an emotional roller-coaster as Burhardt swings between despondency and elation at being a parent. It’s a memorable read, but an uncomfortable one. I often found myself having flashbacks to my own low points in fatherhood. Which is perhaps part of this book’s worth: It’s a warning for outdoorsy people who are considering parenthood to beware the bumpy road ahead.

I first heard about *More* from my wife, who heard about it via the Brown University economist Emily Oster. Oster’s best-selling books *Expecting Better* and *Cribsheet* (Penguin Press, 2013 and 2019, respectively) help demystify the baby-raising process and provide data-backed advice that we’ve taken to heart in raising our kids, so her recommendation carried a lot of weight.

It turned out that Burhardt is based at ground zero for many *Appalachia* readers, in the White Mountains. She and her husband, Peter Doucette, are professional climbers and mountain guides who essentially live part-time on the walls of Cathedral Ledge and Cannon Cliff. Burhardt is also the founder of a nonprofit called Legado that works with indigenous communities to help protect isolated and biodiverse mountain ecosystems.

At age 39, Burhardt decided she wanted to start a family with Doucette. They had twins, and over the next five years Burhardt kept meticulous journals about the joys and struggles of trying to find a balance between love for her children and her passion for the outdoors. Those journals turned into *More*, which starts with this telling line: “Becoming a mom has been the loneliest thing I have ever done.”

Burhardt doesn't hold back in revealing her simmering resentment about the constraints she felt in motherhood. She resents her husband for guiding clients in the mountains while she cares for their babies. When she spends a day guiding clients, she resents that she must stop midway up a cliff to breast pump. She resents that she can't hike or climb with the regularity that she used to. When her husband goes away for his birthday, Burhardt writes bitterly, "He's in New York State climbing with his best friend. Just him. No babies." At one point she simply confesses, "I am a resenter."

At the same time, Burhardt gushes about being a mother. "This basic, animalistic connection has given more peace and certainty in my life and my soul than anything I've ever done," she writes. This is a book of contradictions and ambivalence to which I think many parents can relate. When I'm with my kids, I dream of climbing. When I'm climbing, I feel the tug of my kids. When I try to combine the two, it's sometimes an exercise in frustration.

Oster called this book "raw" and "almost uncomfortably relatable." In an interview she did with Burhardt for her newsletter, Oster noted that the first few years of raising kids is "typically the low point in the data for people's marriages." But when looking back, Oster said, many parents tend to "round the edges" and think more fondly of those times than was the reality.

Burhardt responded that this is the point of her book: To keep the edges sharp and not forget the challenges of parenting—because to do so would be to lie about the experience.

"Why are we being led astray with all of these wives' tales versus what's really happening?" Burhardt asked. "We'll not be able to solve for this, and take care of people and love them and nurture them on this journey, unless we're willing to say that sometimes it feels that hard. So I'll fall on the sword. I'll be the person being like, it can feel this hard, and I can do it in a public way."

—*Stephen Kurczy*



A Fine Line

By Graham Zimmerman

Mountaineers Books, 2023, 224 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-68051-590-9. Price: \$19.95 (softcover).

IN THE COASTAL MASSACHUSETTS TOWN OF Newburyport, sharing a building with a Metro-Rock climbing gym, there's a renowned woodworker named Mark Richey. And wouldn't you know? Richey is also a world-class mountaineer who has twice won the *Piolet d'Or*, considered the gold medal of alpinism.

Richey won the 2012 *Piolet D'Or*, or the "Golden Axe," for his ascent, with Steve Swenson and Freddie Wilkinson, of Saser Kangri II, a 7,518-meter peak in the Karakoram range of India. He won it again in 2020 for nabbing the first ascent of the 7,041-meter Link Sar in Pakistan with Swenson, Chris Wright, and Graham Zimmerman.

During that latter expedition, a 15-foot-high avalanche nearly hit Richey's base camp. Higher up on lead, Zimmerman took a massive fall that left him dangling over a 10,000-foot abyss. In the end, it was Richey who cast off "into a sea of floating, vertical snow" to become the first person atop the summit of Link Sar, as I learned from Zimmerman's new book, *A Fine Line*.

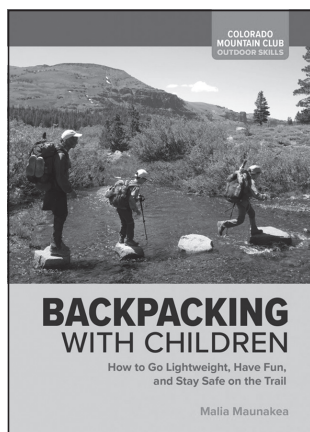
Such factoids about alpinism and how it connects to my world in New England were what I most enjoyed about Zimmerman's book, which essentially reads like a "best hits" collection of this young man's mountain adventures from Alaska to the Himalaya. (Zimmerman is in his mid 30s.) Along the way, he's often nibbling dark chocolate and sipping strong coffee.

A Fine Line traces Zimmerman's evolution from budding mountaineer to sponsored athlete to battle-hardened alpinist who embraces the theme of a "100-year-plan," or the idea that climbers should make decisions with the goal of living to 100 years rather than about just summiting the next peak. Richey, who was 61 years old when he topped Link Sar, is someone who reflects that 100-year mentality.

Zimmerman threads a needle here. When embracing such an inherently dangerous activity as high-altitude mountaineering, is there any reasonable balance between risk and reward, bravery and brazenness? Can the choice to embark on a peak such as Link Sar—with all its avalanches, rockfalls, and unseen ice slabs—ever rationally fit into anyone's 100-year-plan?

Luck plays a major role in who lives and dies, Zimmerman admits. “I found myself looking at the partners with whom I had climbed and whom I considered part of my generation in the American climbing scene,” he writes. “Some had moved on from attempting hard routes in the mountains, but even more had died while trying to find their limits within them.”

—Stephen Kurczy



Backpacking with Children

By Malia Maunakea

Colorado Mountain Club, 2023, Price: \$22.95.

ISBN: 978-1-937052-87-4. 224 pages (softcover).

MALIA MAUNAKEA AND HER HUSBAND TOOK their children on their first overnight backpacking trip at ages 6 and 2 1/2. Their toddler was just able to walk 1.5 miles to their campsite. By the time the kids were 9 and 6, the family backpacked the 170-mile Tahoe Rim Trail.

Maunakea brings the wisdom and tears from those miles to her book, *Backpacking with Children*, which is geared toward helping neophyte hikers hit the trails with children. A lot of this book is filled with common sense advice—“milk chocolate melts quite easily in warmer temperatures,” FYI—but common sense can be in short supply when kids are crying and you’re trying to pack and plan a multiday trip for multiple people. So it doesn’t hurt to hear Maunakea’s tips.

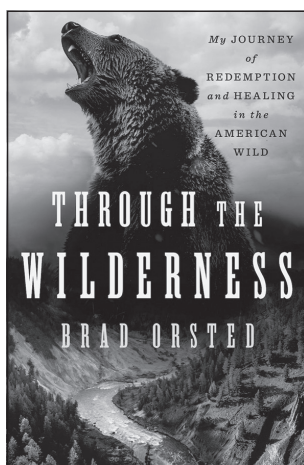
Among this book’s useful advice:

- Get a food dehydrator to make trail snacks.
- Let the kids pick their own flavor of hydration tablets for their water bottles.
- Bring umbrellas.
- “Make it sound like there isn’t an option to quit.” Also be aware of bailout options.
- Kids should limit their bags to 10 percent of their body weight, according to the American Occupational Therapy Association. Other doctors say it’s fine for up to 20 percent body weight.

- Kids under 3 can generally hike as far as 2 miles, ages 4 to 7 can hike as far as 4 miles, and by age 8 a child can hike as far as 10 miles a day. For pacing, plan on 0.5 mph to 1 mph.
- For every hour of hiking, take a 15-minute rest or a longer meal break.
- Consider a reward system, like offering a jelly bean for every mile hiked and taking away a jelly bean for bad tent behavior.
- Don't be afraid to camp while potty training. If a child has a nighttime accident, just turn the sleeping bag inside out. "The next morning, put the sleeping bag out in the sun so it can dry."

For those who might feel overwhelmed with the idea of taking children hiking or camping, this book can help lower that barrier. Bringing kids into the wild "opens up the opportunity for a special kind of magic," Maunakea says, as adults get to see the world through children's eyes. Away from tech, children and families can build interpersonal connections. Kids get to be kids in the woods while also learning trail skills. And it's cheap fun once you make the initial gear investment.

—Stephen Kurczy



Through the Wilderness

By Brad Orsted

St. Martin's Press, 2023, Price: \$29.00.

ISBN: 978-1-250-28469-3. 256 pages (hardcover).

IN 2010, A 1-YEAR-OLD MYSTERIOUSLY DIED AT her grandmother's home in Indiana. The grandmother gave conflicting statements as to what happened, then stopped speaking altogether. The infant's parents were tormented by the unexplained death.

In 2015, a hunter shot a grizzly bear in Yellowstone National Park, leaving behind three cubs. (As a protected endangered species, grizzlies are illegal to hunt.) Two of the cubs miraculously survived that winter, and the next, until they were euthanized by state wildlife officials in 2018 for ranging too close to populated areas.

What links these stories is Brad Orsted. He was the father of the baby girl. And he was the filmographer who documented the cubs' lives. His new memoir, *Through the Wilderness: My Journey of Redemption and Healing in the American Wild*, weaves these threads into a sobering narrative of tragedy, loss, and pain in which Orsted rediscovers his own reason for living through the cold power of the wild.

When his daughter died, Orsted could not help but wonder if he bore fault for letting her stay with his verbally and physically abusive mother who was prone to epileptic seizures. "Do you still feel guilty—like you played a dangerous game of trust with your mother—delivering Marley to her death?" a therapist asks him. Orsted turns to antidepressants and alcohol. He daydreams of killing his mother, and himself. He is put under suicide watch in a Michigan hospital.

Then comes a chance to restart. In 2012, Orsted's wife was offered a job at the educational nonprofit Yellowstone Association in Gardner, Montana. When they arrived, a ranger welcomed them to the ranks of "true one-percenters"—that percent of the public that will ever live in a national park. But depression follows. During a class to become a certified interpretive guide in Yellowstone, Orsted daydreams of throwing himself from a 300-hundred-foot-high waterfall. He imagines how a grizzly attack would be a "poetic and fitting" end for himself.

Then, on a solo walk through a park meadow, Orsted stumbles upon an adult grizzly, and his life is upturned. "The bear raised its head and articulated its lips like it was tasting the air and stomped both of its back feet on the ground one after the other while exhaling," Orsted writes. After a moment, the bear lumbered away, leaving Orsted feeling delirious, laughing and crying "until I made snot bubbles." The grizzly had chased away his suicidal fantasies. "I felt lucky to be alive for the first time in two years."

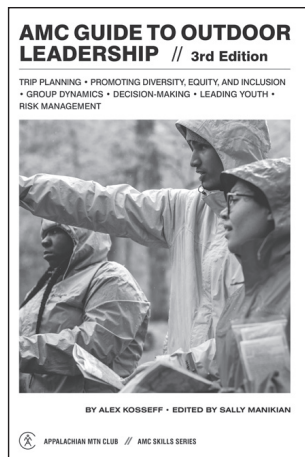
Tracking and photographing mountain lions, wolves, and grizzlies gave his life new meaning. He became a professional guide. He befriended the Yellowstone-based naturalist and *Nat Geo Wild* television host Casey Anderson and learned to film wild animals, which led to him co-directing the PBS documentary *The Beast of Our Time: Climate Change & Grizzly Bears*, narrated by Jeff Bridges and produced by the nonprofit Save the Yellowstone Grizzly. But when the state euthanizes his beloved grizzly orphans, Orsted is thrown back on the precipice of depression.

This is a book that should especially resonate with *Appalachia* readers who enjoyed the journal's Winter/Spring 2023 issue, "Encounters with Animals,"

whose stories also centered on the power of the wild to shock our senses. In that issue, Katie Baptist wrote of a life-changing face-to-face with a bear and her cub in Northern California, which brought Baptist an “inner knowing.”

Orsted also finds a kind of “inner-knowing” through his encounters. He snowshoes with bison. He watches grizzly hunt elk. He witnesses a newborn elk calf get swept to its death down the Yellowstone River, then sees the mother frantically pound her hooves on the riverbank and let out “a series of heartbreaking, unanswered calls for her baby. I knew her pain and cried in unison until she was forced to rejoin the herd and keep moving. There were lessons in the wild, and some were very cruel, but Mother Nature was honest, and that was something that had been missing in my life for a long time.”

—Stephen Kurczy



AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership, 3rd Edition

By Alex Kosseff; edited by Sally Manikian

*Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 2023, 320
pages.*

ISBN: 978-1-62842-151-4. Price: \$21.95 (softcover).

I HAVE NO FORMAL OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING. I am not certified in Wilderness First Aid or any other emergency response procedures. I have never participated in outdoor rescues.

In many ways, I am the ideal reader for the new edition of the *AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership*, according to editor Sally Manikian. Because I am an avid hiker. I lead informal trips into the mountains with friends. I adopted an alpine trail on Mount Washington. I take trail maintenance courses with the Appalachian Mountain Club. And I have even looked into outdoor leadership training, just never gotten around to it.

I am also someone interested in, and often challenged by, recent and ongoing debates around inclusion and diversity in outdoors culture, which Manikian confronts head-on in the third edition of the *AMC Guide*, which is utilized throughout the AMC’s Mountain Leadership School. Based on critical feedback from about a half-dozen outdoors leaders and volunteers, this edition adds new voices, new sidebars, entirely new chapters, comprehensive

rewrites of existing chapters, and criticism on some of author Alex Kosseff's original text.

This edition also comes amid a larger initiative within the AMC as it addresses and revises its policies on diversity and inclusion. The AMC *Outdoors Bulletin*—which is essentially the nonprofit's public voice—has stated that “AMC staff, participants, and guests have reported experiencing bias and racism—both implicit and explicit—in our organization's recent history.”

In her new introduction, Manikian (who also serves on the *Appalachia* Committee) writes that “recognizing the systemic issue of who is prioritized as an ‘expert’ is the first step in developing new outdoor leadership voices.”

“Whereas outdoor leadership often evokes a vision of an expensively clad white man on top of a mountain, and that vision has defined standards for decades if not centuries, slowly but surely that is changing,” Manikian writes elsewhere in the book. “The humility of a commitment to lifelong learning is a step forward from the patriarchal, racist, classist standard of the ‘expert’ outdoorsman.”

Manikian offers ways that outdoors leaders can be part of the solution. A new section on “inclusive language,” for example, advises on how to “recognize and remove microaggressions from your vocabulary.” It cautions against asking “othering” questions such as “Is this your first time?” and “Where are you from?” Both questions reflect an underlying assumption that the person is out of place or an “other,” not belonging in the same social class as the questioner.

A new chapter on stewardship includes a sidebar from Sarah Howard, a graduate student at the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, who discusses traditional ecological knowledge, or the ways that indigenous people have learned to interact with and steward their environment. The chapter expands on Leave No Trace principles, as well as touches on the sometimes sticky balance between working to reduce human impact and being inclusive.

“In the subject of recreational stewardship and ethics, access to and inclusion in the outdoors relies on underlying assumptions that are informed by dominant cultural narratives and reinforced by unconscious bias regarding who should be allowed to have access to these spaces,” Manikian writes.

Another largely new chapter, “Leadership Approaches,” now includes a sidebar from Sarah Audsley, who is Korean American and who formerly worked as a co-leader of adventure trips for teens. “Today, I can clearly see how gender dynamics and assumed gendered roles influenced my work in the backcountry as part of a paired male-female co-leadership team,” Audsley

writes. She questions why she was always assigned to cook while her male co-leader took on traditional masculine roles around usage of radio, compass, and map. “An open dialogue between co-leaders about the shared responsibility to model best practices in the backcountry while not perpetuating male-female binary of gendered roles is an essential part of preparing for any trip,” Audsley advises.

This edition has also cut text. An entire chapter called Leading Youth was removed, on the reasoning that outdoor youth leadership had become too big a topic to adequately address in a single chapter. In the opening chapter, Manikian also rewrote a story about an outing club’s misadventure in the White Mountains so as to deemphasize the gender of the hikers and rescuers.

“I felt like it was important to move away from the narrative of men rescuing women,” Manikian told me in an interview to discuss her updates. “When I first read this story, I left less with lessons about leadership decisions and felt more of a lingering question of whether I belonged in the outdoors because the story just reinforced the strong, capable, male rescuer and the unprepared female leaders, which is one of the very many problematic stereotypes about who belongs in the outdoors.”

“While not perfect,” she continued, “I do think this editorial choice is an example of how painstakingly structuring learning to be inclusive ensures not only that the outdoors are inclusive but that the actual part of the story—examples of poor decision-making—is the take-home lesson instead of a feeling about who actually belongs.”

Given how such concepts as “unconscious bias” and “systemic racism” have become political flashpoints, Manikian said, “one of the toughest parts” of this edition was how to keep the updated text accessible to readers of all stripes.

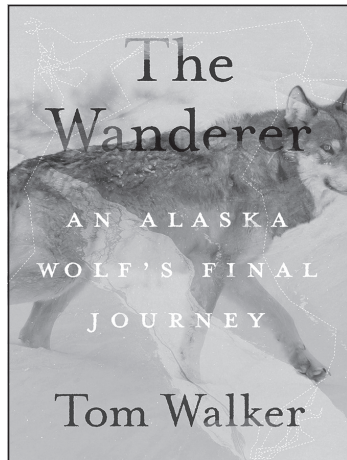
“Because of my upbringing as the daughter of an activist mother, advocating for the rights of my disabled siblings, I believed and experienced from a really early age that dominant white culture is designed to marginalize by elevating a particular identity as the right identity,” Manikian said. “I tend to focus on gender, but there are a multitude of identities that do not fit the standard norm that the dominant culture is designed around.”

She went on: “In the process of editing the text, I did a lot of the drafting and updating, and there was then peer-reviewed editing from AMC leadership staff and the volunteer community. They could help me see what language resonated, what language worked, and what was so inflammatory that the message didn’t get carried across.”

Manikian herself has been part of the AMC's diversification. She was the first (and only) woman to hold the position of AMC backcountry resource conservation manager. She broke ground with the Randolph Mountain Club, too as the first full-time female winter hut caretaker at its Gray Knob cabin. Manikian called this edition an improvement "toward inclusivity in the outdoors." Her name on the title page brings gender diversity. But she noted that this is still a text by two white people telling everybody else how to behave in the outdoors.

"This isn't a perfect text," Manikian said. "Future editions can be even better. But I think this is a step in a true direction."

—Stephen Kurczy



The Wanderer: An Alaskan Wolf's Final Journey

By Tom Walker

Mountaineers Books, 2023. 176 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-68051-613-5. Price: \$18.95 (paperback).

A wolf is kept fed by its feet.

—Russian proverb

READING *THE WANDERER* BY TOM WALKER IS like walking behind a master wildlife photographer (which the author happens to be) and peering through one of his long-range telephoto lenses. It's like coming upon a captain's flight log (which the author happens to have been) with dates, mileage, weather conditions and unique observations. It's like taking a tour with a wilderness guide (which, by now you can guess, the author was) who tells you the history and meaning of anything and everything he walks past. Follow this man.

In Alaska, where Tom has lived for over 50 years, tracking wolves is also a way to track the health of the general ecosystem; healthy predators mean healthy prey. As part of the Yukon-Charley Wolf Study in east central Alaska's border with Canada, biologists in late 2010 placed a GPS collar on a 2-year old, 103-pound wolf "with perfect teeth." He became, to them, number 258 because "common names such as Blackie or George are anathema to biologists."