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A Peak Ahead: Stories from the Albums

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Stories from the Albums

MINNESOTA ARTIST JOHN KOENIG CALLS THE ART OF LOOKING back with nostalgia and understanding “klexos.” In his video project called *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, he writes, “To dwell on the past is to allow fresh context to trickle in over the years, and fill out the picture; to keep the memory alive, and not just as a caricature of itself.”

The Summer/Fall issue of *Appalachia* will look back on events in that way. Some stories in their own times seem ordinary or maybe just funny or sad. But years later, these events take on a new meaning. Francis Carlson, now age 97, will tell the story from his teen years, “The Great Bicycle Expedition of 1936,” in which he and some friends pedaled 600 miles from Winchester, Massachusetts to Vermont, New York State, and New Hampshire. Carlson (who now lives in Hingham, Massachusetts) recently found a draft he first wrote down in 1994. This was the event that changed the very person he became.

Erica Berry never met the uncle who ended his life in Alaska in 1985. But that tragedy molded the kind of backcountry adventurer she became. Her essay, “Lady and the Camp,” considers her goals in taking her daughter into the mountains.

Judy Benson takes a pilgrimage to a remote western national park, following an idea she had about Willa Cather.

Michael Keck’s father took him fishing in 1957. That led to a lifetime of seeking his real self in the backcountry—a persona he calls “free man past Monday.” Read the story of this transformation.

In 1967, Lloyd Ireland and his brother were teenagers living in Illinois. They wanted so much to canoe the Allagash in northern Maine, but the trip didn’t work out. Yet the “singing rivers” as Aldo Leopold called them had grabbed their imaginations. In a story that combines nostalgia with science, Ireland examines the history of four wild rivers.

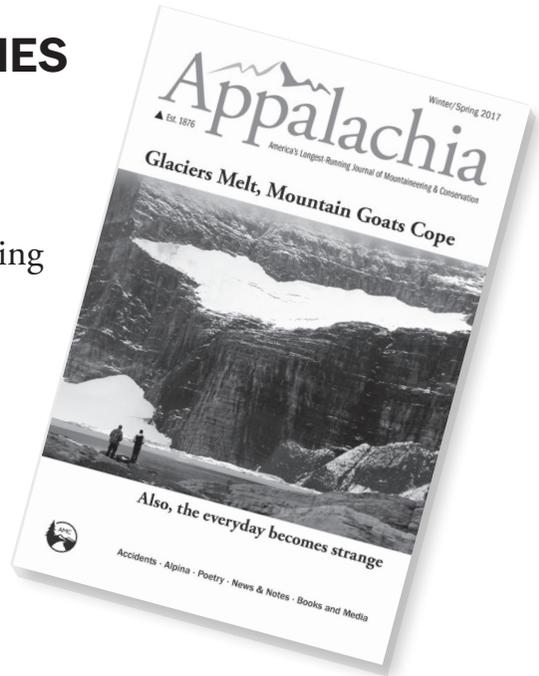
Christine Woodside

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