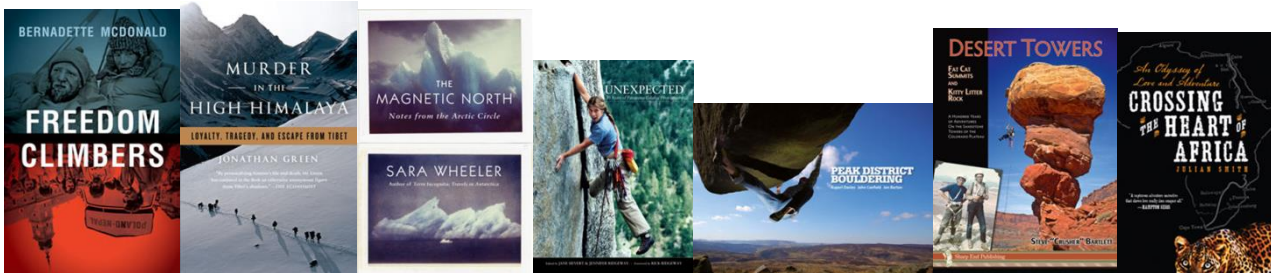


2011 BANFF MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL BOOK COMPETITION WINNERS



GRAND PRIZE

Phyllis and Don Munday Award \$2,000, Sponsored by the Alpine Club of Canada

FREEDOM CLIMBERS

Bernadette McDonald, Rocky Mountain Books (Canada, 2011)

Freedom Climbers weaves a passionate and literary tale of adventure, politics, suffering, death and ultimately, inspiration. This is the story of a group of extraordinary Polish adventurers who emerged from under the blanket of oppression following World War II to become the world's leading Himalayan climbers. Although they lived in a dreary, war-ravaged landscape, with seemingly no hope of creating a meaningful life, these curious, motivated and skilled mountaineers created their own free-market economy under the very noses of their Communist bosses, and climbed their way to liberation.

“When Bernadette McDonald began researching one of the most extraordinary episodes in the history of modern mountaineering — the story of Polish climbing in the Himalayas between the 1970s and the 1990s — she faced a maze of obscure sources weaving a tale with no obvious beginning or end. Out of that miasma she has produced one of the most captivating books on the subject of mountaineering to have appeared in recent years: a vigorous, vivid, and deeply sensitive portrait of a time as remarkable for the characters that defined it as for what they achieved in the mountains. In its portrait of Poland's greatest generation of alpinists, Freedom Climbers raises a series of huge questions about why we climb, and about how the act of climbing affects other people in our lives and throughout the climbing community. Do certain events lead us to climbing? To what extent are we in control of our desire to climb? How much are we prepared to risk when we climb? What are we prepared to sacrifice when we accept those risks? And at what point do we decide that we've risked enough? Since the answers to these questions are neither obvious nor easy, committed climbers everywhere have much to learn from this bold, tragic, ultimately magnificent story.”

2011 Jury Member David Pickford

BEST BOOK – MOUNTAIN AND WILDERNESS LITERATURE

Jon Whyte Award \$1,000, Sponsored by The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

MURDER IN THE HIGH HIMALAYA

Jonathan Green, Public Affairs (USA, 2011)

This is the unforgettable account of the brutal killing of Kelsang Namtso, a 17-year-old Tibetan nun fleeing to India, by Chinese border guards. Witnessed by dozens of Western climbers, Kelsang's death sparked an international debate over China's savage oppression of Tibet. Adventure reporter Jonathan Green has gained rare entrance into this shadow-land at the rooftop of the world.

“Several of this year's book finalists deal with conflicting truths and question our moral responsibilities. In Murder in the High Himalaya, Jonathan Green takes us beyond the sometimes-incestuous navel gazing of the mountaineering world and into the global political arena where we must confront the atrocities and human rights abuses perpetrated by the Chinese authorities against Tibetans. He investigates what happened in 2006 at the Cho Oyu Advanced Base Camp when climbers witnessed the killing of a 17-year old nun as the Chinese border patrol shot at a large group of Tibetans trying to escape into Nepal. In telling the parallel stories of two of the climbers, Sergiu Matei and Luis Benitez, who chose to speak out about the incident, and of Dolma Palkyi, the brave girl who had to leave her friend Kelsang Namtso dying in the snow, the author exposes the dire straits of Tibetans as they fight for their survival as a people. Green's compelling book is a crucial reminder that we must not remain silent.”

2011 Jury Member Baiba Morrow

BEST BOOK – ADVENTURE TRAVEL

\$1,000, Sponsored by Banff's Bison Courtyard

THE MAGNETIC NORTH

Sara Wheeler, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (USA, 2011)

Inspired by the spiraling shape of a reindeer-horn bangle, author Sara Wheeler travels counter clockwise around the North Pole, marking the transformations of what once seemed an unchangeable landscape. She smashes through the Arctic Ocean with the crew of a Russian icebreaker, shadows the endless Trans-Alaska Pipeline, herds reindeer with the Lapps, and visits the deceptively peaceful lands of the Gulag. *The Magnetic North* is a singular, deeply personal portrait of a region growing daily in global importance.

"In the 1996 book *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama famously declared, 'Landscapes are culture before they are nature, constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock.' Fifteen years later, Sara Wheeler's *The Magnetic North* examines both the power of geographic myths and the urgent necessity of environmental and human realities. As Wheeler journeys along the Arctic Circle, she evokes complex layers of cultural dreams, historical conflicts, threatened ecosystems, and struggling indigenous peoples. Above all, she determines, 'The Arctic is an image of the real world in all its degradation and beauty, and it is intimately connected to us.' The result is not only a deeply significant exploration of the meanings of wild places, it is also a work of literature, with prose so finely crafted and so crystalline that a reader feels as if she sees, behind the words on the page, the luminous silences of greater, inexpressible mysteries — like gaps forming and closing amid thin, bright clouds."

2011 Jury Member Katie Ives

BEST BOOK – MOUNTAIN IMAGE

\$1,000, Sponsored by RAB

UNEXPECTED: THIRTY YEARS OF PATAGONIA CATALOG PHOTOGRAPHY

Jennifer Ridgeway, Jane Sievert, Patagonia (USA, 2010)

Unique for a business enterprise, Patagonia's catalog devotes half its space to editorial content — environmental and sport essays and extraordinary photographs of wild places and active pursuits. Jane Sievert and Jennifer Ridgeway, Patagonia's current and founding photo editor, respectively, have been calling, and culling, the shots for three decades. This is their compendium of the 100-plus most compelling photos the company has published, and a celebration of wilderness and outdoor-sport photography as an art and a practice.

"Unexpected: Thirty Years of Patagonia Catalog Photography stood out for its wide-ranging collection of well-prepared and well-edited images. Images from numerous photographers, times, and places are finely integrated and not over-processed, as is now so common. The result is a compelling collection of mountain and adventure photography that invites repeated readings. Instead of the expected images of pretty people modeling Patagonia clothing, these are the 'unexpected' images of what people do and how they live in the mountains. For those who live or spend time in the mountains, these people are our friends, our neighbours, or the guy or gal we run into on the trail or the climb or the ski hill. They are us. Living their philosophy more than most, Patagonia opened up their catalogues to outside submissions, rather than commissioned images, and allowed some of these wilder photos to be published; a testament to the fact that they have their finger on the pulse of the outdoors community. It only took a few pages to get hooked on the images and stories of adventure and a solid connection to nature that they tell. This is the kind of book that you would want to have on your coffee table. The images are funny, beautifully printed, inspiring, wacky and wild."

BEST GUIDE BOOK

\$1,000, Sponsored by Bison Belong

PEAK DISTRICT BOULDERING

Rupert Davies, John Coe field, Jon Barton, Vertebrate Publishing (UK, 2011)

The most comprehensive guidebook ever published on bouldering in the Peak District National Park in the United Kingdom, this guide features more than 3,300 boulder problems on more than 70 gritstone and limestone crags, both major and minor. Catering to boulderers of all abilities, there are over 2,150 boulder problems below Font 7a, and over 1,150 problems at Font 7a and above.

"Peak District Bouldering is a visual treat. Filled with crisp, uncomplicated information, the book combines appealing art and design with practical maps and diagrams. This new bouldering tome jumps out of the confines of the traditional

guidebook box by blending aesthetics with practicality — form and function. It has the beta. It has the maps. It has the photos. But, it also has that sexy metro style with its unique shape, strong imagery and clean layout. Clearly a winner! The result is a feast for the eyes and whether you are a novice boulderer or a world class climber, it nurtures the adventurous spirit in all of us.”

BEST BOOK – MOUNTAINEERING HISTORY

The James Monroe Thorington Award \$750, Sponsored by the UIAA

DESERT TOWERS

Steve Bartlett, Sharp End Publishing (USA, 2010)

The colourful rock towers of the Colorado Plateau, once deemed un-climbable, present unique challenges to aspiring climbers. Desert Towers documents the history of climbing on these unique formations, with first-ascent photographs going back 100 years, many never seen in print before, and two dozen contributed essays by the pioneering desert climbers of the last 50 years.

“Glossy commercial images dominate representations of climbing in much of today’s media, reflecting the place-less hyper reality of modern Western culture. In contrast, Steve ‘Crusher’ Bartlett’s Desert Towers provides a much-needed restoration of adventures within their geographic, natural and historical context. Recalling an era when there were no guidebooks, this book captures the challenges of movement in a landscape that allows no easy passage, and the elemental sensation of ‘hanging in space, from the flimsiest of supports in the wildest of places.’ Its collection of personal and historical narratives, old articles, and photos echoes with a wild polyphony of desert voices, representing the generations of climbers and Native Americans who have loved — and also disputed over — the delicate spires of the western US. At times, we gaze awestruck at towers that seem more like light than stone. Or else we find ourselves immersed in the stories of legendary figures who come to seem like friends. By the end of the book, we feel moved to seek out, once more, the enchantment of our own close-by and day-lit worlds.”

2011 Jury Member Katie Ives

SPECIAL JURY MENTION

CROSSING THE HEART OF AFRICA

Julian Smith, HarperCollins (USA, 2010)

At the end of the 19th century, the legendary British explorer Ewart Grogan became the first man to walk across the length of Africa. Amazingly, he did it to win the hand of the woman he loved. In 2007, Julian Smith was inspired to repeat the journey to win his own girlfriend’s heart. In Crossing the Heart of Africa Smith entwines his story with Grogan’s in this irresistible tale of love and adventure.

“How far would you go for love? When in 1898, Ewart Grogan embarked on an 8,000 kilometre traverse of Africa; he was trying to impress a doubting prospective father-in-law. More than a century later, Julian Smith eagerly sets off in the footsteps of this long-forgotten British explorer, with musings and doubts about his own impending marriage occupying his thoughts. The lively retelling of his predecessor’s journey, peppered with quotes from Grogan’s book, From the Cape to Cairo: The First Traverse of Africa from South to North, draws the reader into the troubling side of the Golden Age of Exploration when white man was determined to conquer ‘the dark continent.’ With guidebooks and internet cafés now showing the modern traveller the way, Smith admits his own experiences pale in comparison. Still, his astute observations of Africa today in Crossing the Heart of Africa reveal the crippling legacy of colonialism, and the enduring disparities of power and poverty, violence and beauty. The days of cannibal attacks may be long gone, but sadly there is still plenty of ‘malaria, misery, and mosquitoes.’”

2011 Jury Member Baiba Morrow
