

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prepare for Adulthood – Head to the Wilderness!
Adventure travel provides valuable life-long lessons

MILWAUKEE, WI -- Local author Jon Helminiak says rugged international and wilderness experiences are a critical part of education and character development. “They might even be more important than college, when it comes to preparing young people for adulthood,” says Helminiak.

During his college years, Helminiak led numerous youth expeditions, including month-long summer trips for the Camp Manito-wish YMCA, a wilderness camp located in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Helminiak vividly recalls leading a canoe expedition of four teens into the Canadian wilderness. “Back home, we’d just be high school and college kids. Out here, we were explorers. We could become exhausted, or be cold, wet, and miserable.” said Helminiak. “The wilderness is the supreme teacher of mental and physical toughness, and anyone who enters it for extended periods knows that misery and ecstasy are often the same thing.”

During the outing, a raging river toppled one of the canoes, instilling fear in the paddlers. But that experience also provided the group with valuable life lessons that remain with them today as they approach middle age. Phil Gould, now 44, vividly remembers the canoe trip. “At 17 years old, you feel extreme independence, like you’re invincible. Then, when you face nature, you realize you’re not invincible.” Gould said he bonded with all the guys on the trip and learned that they needed to work together as a team to survive.

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Peter Erdmann looks back fondly at the lessons he learned through adventure travel, and specifically his canoe trip with Helminiak. “When you’re out there, you realize you’re

1,000 miles from civilization and no one knows where you are. One of the beauties of that type of travel is you have ample time to contemplate, to think about things and gain a perspective of who you are and where you're going in the world." Erdmann, a successful businessman in West Palm Beach, Florida says everyday he uses the skills he learned. "You learn teamwork and reliance on other people, being there for other people, problem solving and doing what you say." Today, Erdmann says he approaches all negotiations calmly, realizing "nothing is as intimidating as a raging river."

Helminiak has enriched his own life with travel to more than 58 different countries. His adventure travel memoir, *Nothing Routine* released in April, 2006 details the experiences of the Canadian Wilderness expedition, along with travels to such diverse locales as Vietnam, Africa, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, and the Philippines.

Nothing Routine is receiving accolades. "This is an extraordinary work by a writer whose greatest talent is providing intimate, personal glimpses into locations, experiences and people, and in the process discovers a powerful and poignant inner landscape. By placing himself in different environments, whether inspiring or harrowing, but always truly visceral, one can see the inner and outer worlds meeting, with the author truly having been changed by the experience. Not since Paul Theroux and Peter Matthiessen have I come across a writer who is so able to infuse his words with such warm power. I couldn't recommend this work more for these reasons," said K.J. Wetherholt, Producer/Writer/Director and Chairman of Manitou Films, LLC, New York and London.

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Helminiak encourages parents to expose their children to adventure travel. He hopes to start a non-profit organization to subsidize travel for youth and families who otherwise

could not afford such trips. “The lessons overseas, and in the wilderness, are as valuable as those taught in a traditional classroom,” says Helminiak.

Nothing Routine is available at all four Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops: Brookfield, Mequon, Milwaukee, and Shorewood, and also through the publisher at <http://www.rockpublishing.com/noroutine.htm>. Read more about Jon Helminiak at <http://www.adventurequestproductions.com>

Helminiak is the former assistant chancellor for development and alumni relations at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He also served as assistant director at Camp Manitowish YMCA in Boulder Junction, WI. He’s also an instrument-rated pilot, a certified open water scuba diver, and professional photographer. He graduated from UW-Madison in 1979.

Note to editors: Slides are available.

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