

The Sagebrush - A & E (3/5/02)

## UNR student to travel the world in 22 days

By Abbi Holtom

Being a world traveler means more than getting on line and booking an eco-tour with a guide certified in first aid, river rafting and rock climbing. It means living out of a backpack for months at a time, wearing the same pair of underwear for an undisclosed number of days and "spit" showering.

Chris Moore, a 23-year-old University of Nevada student, knows all about world travel. He's been to almost 30 countries, lived in China for two years while working on a travel guide, worked for the United Nations, hiked over 500 miles from France to Spain following the Pilgrimage of St. James, eaten scorpions and snakes for lunch and performed in a Chinese rock band. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. This young globetrotter, who's dual majoring in International Affairs and Spanish, is ready to take his adventures to the next level.

Moore, whose done some travel writing for various publications, decided after receiving a press release from travelwriters.com on GreatEscape2002: The Global Scavenger Hunt, that he was ready for a "blind date with the world." His adventures have taken him to all parts of the globe, beginning with Tijuana, Mexico and he saw GreatEscape2002 as the perfect way to mesh the supreme adrenaline rush with the excitement of world travel and help be part of a \$1 million fundraising goal.

"I'm not afraid of too much," Moore said. "I like danger and that's part of the reason I want to travel. "I'd love to become a war correspondent or a National Geographic Resident Explorer one day. Hopefully this will give me some credibility to get there."

The brainchild of William D. Chalmers, author of the travel book, "A Blind Date with the World" and also a winner of an around-the-world race, this scavenger hunt around the globe tests the wit, stamina and brains of all involved.

"The thing I'm most worried about is falling asleep," Moore said. "We only have a certain amount of time to finish all the tasks and then you have to go back to the hotel."

Covering anywhere from 10 to 20 countries in 22 days, Moore and his travel partner, Melissa Skweres of St. Paul Minnesota, will race against the clock and 24 other teams of explorers. They won't know where they're heading next, what to expect or what crazy stunts they're going to have to pull once they get there. The teams begin in Los Angeles and board a 747 bound for Asia. Not until they are on the plane do they know exactly where they are heading or what their objectives will be. At each destination the teams will receive sealed envelopes containing a list of travel riddles, cultural clues and cryptic messages that when solved and completed, will lead them to lost cities, cultural festivals, bustling bazaars, ancient ruins, exotic eateries and finally to the coveted prize purse and recognition of being the winner of GreatEscape2002. Contestants have to prove they've completed the assigned tasks by meeting requirements sent forth by the organizers.

"On their website it says something like take a picture of yourself playing soccer on the great wall of China and then send it e-mail from a net café in Nepal," Moore said.

Some of the examples of "scavenges" that the contestants have to compete in are riding a four-legged beast around one of the Seven Wonders of the World wearing a traditional Arab galabyia and headdress purchased in Khan al-Khalili, or having to find the market that sells so-called "Blue Gold." The contest is

designed to encourage interaction and cultural experiences.

Although the contestants will fly to the mainland countries and stay in hotels pre-booked along the way, by the time they have completed their 22-day trek around the globe, they will have flown, ridden, biked, paddled and walked over a million miles.

The light at the end of the tunnel is over \$100,000 in prize money and the satisfaction of knowing that they were part of helping to raise over \$1 million for goodwill organizations like UNICEF, Doctors Without Borders and the Sept. 11th Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund.

Don't be deceived. They won't exactly be roughing it all the way. The participants pay close to \$10,000 each to participate and much of the travel arrangements are made for them. Moore is currently working on raising the money for his trip through sponsorship efforts. After all, how many 23-year-old Nevada students have the skill or the opportunity to participate in something like this.

Moore chose this way of travel for many reasons. "Being part of this gives me credibility and press coverage that I'll need if I want to make this my career, plus it's for a great cause," Moore said. The part Moore is most excited about is interacting with other cultures.

"Because we have a destination each day, we are going to have to interact with people from each country," Moore said. "It's a mind expanding kind of trip that challenges you each step of the way." Unlike "Survivor" or other voyeuristic type action travel shows, the difference with Great Escapes is that it's real people, like Moore, doing what they do best: traveling around the world.

He plans on catching up on all his schoolwork now so that he can take three weeks off at the beginning of April for the around-the-world adventure.

"I'm busy writing papers right now so that I can get ahead," Moore said.

GreatEscapes2002 is still looking for contestants. Those who think they have what it takes to beat out Moore and the 24 other teams can find out more information at [www.GreatEscapes2002.com](http://www.GreatEscapes2002.com).