

LETTERS

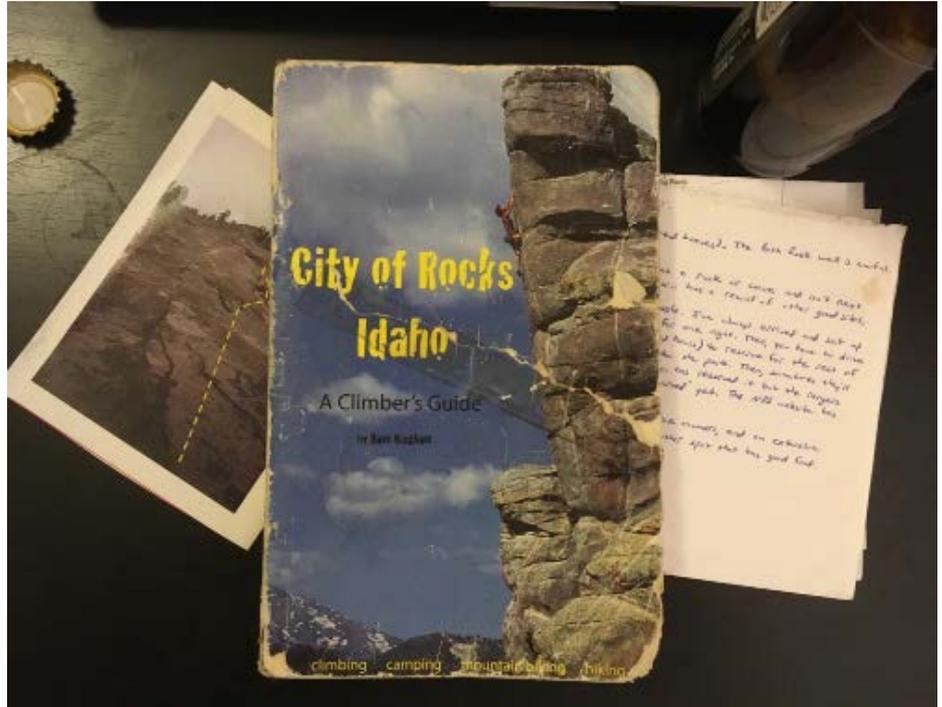
Rip Through the Cover

I READ JASON NARK'S "What We Search For" in *Alpinist* 80 about the disappearance of Matt Greene. It brought me back to my first days climbing and the people I met at Matt's local climbing gym in Wind Gap, Pennsylvania.

In the summer of 2017, I was eager for adventure and constantly seeking the approval of my mentors at the climbing gym. Which adventure could I join them on? Which trip could they help me plan? I was about to head to Idaho to watch the solar eclipse from the top of a tower in the Sawtooths (if all went according to plan). Alex and Greg, the local climbers I looked up to the most, said they had some climbing guidebooks for other areas in southern Idaho. Alex handed me a book sealed away in a plastic bag. Greg looked on, not with a sense of possession, but with a long and wistful gaze. The cover had been ripped and carefully taped back together. Neither of them owned this book. Truthfully, it still belongs to Matt Greene. But Matt hadn't been back to reclaim this book since handing it to Greg in the summer of 2013.

I never met Matt before he went missing in the high country of the Sierras in July 2013, but I feel as if he and I must have crossed paths at least once. In the beginning of 2013, I was a total amateur rock climber, wide-eyed and just entering the local climbing community. I stood in awe of the athleticism on display and the buzz of adventure in the air. I am almost sure that I saw Matt climbing at our local gym or that I heard him talking of an upcoming adventure. I am even more sure of it now that I have flipped open his guidebook, with its worn and folded corners, and read his notes in a neat but hurried scrawl.

The first thing that jumped out to me was that not only did he note when he had done a climb, he also noted the accomplishments of the people he was with: "Short but fun, Alex – clean lead 8/7/10" and "Must do! Alex – lead 8/7/10." Seeing these small accolades for his climbing partners called to mind a cheer of excitement from the belay as his friend sent a tough route. The second thing that stood out to me was the reminder scrawled in the front end of the book that referred to a specific building: "Recycle Plastic, Aluminum, and Glass here." I can



[Photo] A guidebook that Matthew Greene lent to his friend Greg, as well as some notes about things for Greg to do in the area with his family, before Greene disappeared in the Sierra Nevada in 2013. Andy Munas

picture Matt walking from campsite to campsite asking fellow climbers what to do with the recycling. Perhaps knowing that this book would end up in someone else's hands, Matt took the time to log that information.

After leafing through the contents, I scanned through a personalized page of notes that Matt left for Greg. I can imagine the casual conversation at the gym about how Greg would be visiting City of Rocks and that Matt would bring the guidebook in for him to borrow. I imagine Matt returning home and taking the additional time it required to scan back through the guidebook and give Greg those extra few personal details, noting a climb that he knew Greg would love or the hot springs that his family would enjoy.

Wherever you are, Matt, I hope it is a peaceful place with a nice breeze blowing through an alpine meadow, the tall towers of granite you loved surrounding you. And maybe someday your close friends and family will get a full picture of what happened.

It is true that I didn't know Matt at all. But I also know that I would have really liked him.

—Andy Munas, Asheville, North Carolina