

## Briefly

## Support offered to parents, caregivers

A discussion and support group for parents and caregivers of transition-age youth (ages 16-25) with psychiatric disabilities meets 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Yolo County Transition Age Youth Center, 825 East St., Suite 123 in Woodland.

For information, call Donna at 668-6769 or the center at 668-6765.

## Parents can get help in dealing with kids

Parents struggling with their children and wanting to help them solve their problems could find direction in a series of classes offered in Davis through Woodland Healthcare Pediatrics.

They are held once a month (no class in December) from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursdays at Woodland Healthcare's Davis medical office, 2330 W. Covell Blvd.

Academic performance is discussed this week, with tips on communicating with school staff and handling homework and 504 plans.

Organizational skills, routines and time management are discussed Nov. 8.

Each class costs \$10.

Pre-registration is required. Call 669-5570.

## Club to present intro to genealogy

The Davis Genealogy Club presents "An Evening Introduction to Genealogy" and a tour of the Genealogy Library at the Davis Senior Center, 646 A St., from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday.

Club members will share their years of research experience by describing what information is needed to begin a family tree and what local resources are available to aid in research.

Topics to be discussed include: uncovering home sources, census research, using libraries and archives, courthouse records, genealogical societies, interview techniques and sample questions, analyzing photographs, immigration records, land records, cemetery records, using maps and citing sources.

Blank pedigree charts and other forms will be provided. To learn more, call Lisa Henderson at 753-8943 or visit [www.davisgenealogy.org](http://www.davisgenealogy.org).

## Darien region of Panama is talk topic

Carol Klesow and Henry Garcia Alvarez share their story of traveling the Darien region of Panama at 10 a.m. Friday at the Davis Senior Center, 646 A St.

The two braved heat, bloodthirsty bugs, lack of roads and lack of resources to provide a seven-day "how-to" workshop to members of a local medicinal-herb-growers cooperative, who learned how to make new products and organize and set up a processing system.

Their talk includes a slide presentation of their 21-day journey.

For more information, call the Senior Center at 757-5696.

## Howl-O-Ween is for the dogs

Davis Dog Owners Group hosts a Howl-O-Ween event at Toad Hollow dog park from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Saturday at 1919 Second St. in Davis.

Dogs will compete in trickery and costumes for prizes, while a photographer snaps pictures of the pets. There will be a silent auction, animal behavior advice, a service fair and a bake sale.

The event is free and open to the public. Donations are accepted.

For more information, contact Regina Patton at 848-5045, or e-mail [davisdogpark@yahoo.com](mailto:davisdogpark@yahoo.com).

## Life on the list

## UCD grad soars like a bird, hangs with Mo the sloth while crossing off 50 goals

By Cory Golden

ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

Brett Rounsaville reached his fingers out toward Mo the sloth. Her fur felt like horse hair, only softer.

If he'd paused a moment, Brett might have wondered just how he ended up there, hundreds of miles from home, petting a sloth.

The answer is this: the list.

The list has led Brett to meet not just Mo, but scores of people he might not otherwise have shaken hands with.

It has taken him places from an Amish farm to the air above the clouds.

It also has seen him sleep on park benches and eat a lifetime's worth of peanut butter and jelly.

The list has, Brett says, forever changed how he sees the world.

Brett Rounsaville is 26, a good-looking, quick-smiling guy not shy about using exclamation points or the word "awesome" sincerely. He grew up in Fresno in a working-class family of four. He graduated in 2002 from UC Davis with a degree in environmental design.

Next, he landed a job at Disney. He designed holiday decorations, props for rides and sets for shows and television. It was a great job — the sort most people would gladly toil in, 8 to 5, until retirement.

It was also a job that, because it's as close as Disney has to freelance work, gave him the chance to take a hiatus.

So in April, Brett drew up a list of 50 things he'd like to do, from sleeping in a lighthouse (No. 3) to driving a race car (No. 29).

The first 30 ideas or so came easily enough. The rest came from openly jealous friends and co-workers, which may explain one suggestion that he pose for photos in Yellowstone, with a bear.

Brett also made two rules.

Number one, he wouldn't pay for a place to stay.

And, number two, he wouldn't come home until he'd crossed off everything on his list.

Brett set out on July 4, from Philadelphia, with his list, a \$900 Amtrak train pass and a backpack.

He brought a pair of jeans, three T-shirts, a baseball hat, a camcorder, a long-sleeved shirt, one pair of shorts, a jacket. He also totes along John Steinbeck's "Travels with Charley: In Search of America," which details the journeys of the author and his poodle.

Brett carried a Mac Book Pro laptop computer. He named it "Charley."

Brett's first adventure took him to Lancaster, Pa., in hopes of completing task No. 9: Milk a cow on an Amish farm.

A baker pointed him to a market, where he met an Amish girl selling milk. She sent Brett to a girl selling vegetables, who sent him to a girl selling fruit, who sent him to a man, named Dan, who, although a little leery, said his son owned a dairy farm.

Once there, Brett, with the help of Becky the cow, did his best to squirt milk into a pail.

The family that watched him struggle at it turned out to be "mind-blowingly cool."

Before the day was over, Brett had played (and lost) at quarts, a lawn game like horseshoes, took a buggy ride, and sat with Dan and his wife and just talked a bit. At one point, they found a fallen nest and placed the baby robins back up in the tree.

Then Brett mowed the lawn to say thank you.

Brett missed the train that night. He slept on a bench.

That's been the hardest bit, finding places to stay, though he's had luck with couchsurfing.com, a site where low-low-budget travelers can find a place to crash.

When he traveled to Comic Con in San Diego (No. 26), he slept on a bench one night, then on the cold concrete outside the convention center the next. On the third night, desperate for something more comfortable, he climbed aboard a train north to Los Angeles, slept, then finished his night on a southbound train back to San Diego.

He travels on trains and buses. He catches lifts from people he meets.

"I haven't officially hitchhiked yet, but I'm looking forward to it," he says.

Hitchhiking is No. 15.

Brett acknowledges that planning is not his strong suit. He's completed one objective only to find out, days later and miles away, that he could have crossed off another nearby.

His money's running short now. He's paying for the trip with his savings, advertising on his Web site and donations.

"I also tend to incur debt," he says.

He spends about 12 hours most every day writing, updating his Web site, editing video, recording podcasts.

He expects he'll be on the road for another five or six months.

How nice people are — that's what really blows Brett away.

"Never in my most wild and optimistic imaginings could I have imagined things would go as well as they have. The longer I'm out



Doug Feist, the animal manager in the Education Department at the Cincinnati Zoo, holds a sloth for Brett Rounsaville to pet. Petting a sloth is No. 18 on Brett's list of 50 things to accomplish before he returns home.

COURTESY PHOTOS



Jim Rooney, an instructor at Highland Airports in Ridgely, Md., takes Brett hang gliding, No. 23 on his list. Bottom photo, Brett works at bee brushing. Collecting honey from a beehive is No. 33 on his list.



here, the more upset I get with the evening news, because I haven't met a single person who hasn't been nice and generous."

Brett's built a following online of about 5,000 readers. They've offered places to stay or to take him tubing down a river (No. 1).

He met a young woman at a bar in Boston, chatted for maybe 10 minutes. The next day she e-mailed him to say her father worked for the Red Sox. Before long, Brett's watching a game in Fenway Park (No. 8) from a seat behind home plate.

A man he met on a train later arranged for Brett to go hang gliding (No. 23). A tandem glider was towed above the clouds by an airplane, and for an hour Brett took in the sound of the wind in his ears and the green of Maryland spread below him.

And then there was the Miami of Ohio zoology student, who learned about Brett through a podcast.

She invited him to Ohio. The she introduced him to her professor, who introduced Brett to a zookeeper at the Cincinnati Zoo, who, in turn, introduced Brett to Mo the sloth (No. 18).

"It's absolutely amazing what having a clear set of goals does for you," Brett says. "If I were to stop someone on the street and tell them I'm from California and I'm traveling around the country, they'd say, 'That's nice.'"

"But when I tell them I have this list of 50 things and I'm not going home until they're done, they're like, 'That's amazing! How can I help? Do you need a place to sleep tonight?' The more I think about it, the more amazed I am."

Brett says he's already as close to some of his new friends as to any he's ever had.

Take Dan the Amish farmer. He's called to check on Brett — and to let him know that the robins from the nest all made it.

It seems that Brett's list taps into some wistful, collective wanderlust in people he meets.

"Everybody says either, 'That's incredible. I wish I could do it.' Or they say, 'You're so brave, I could never do it.'"

Brett's parents, Tom, a city inspector, and Eileen, who runs an upholstery business, couldn't afford long, extravagant vacations. Instead, they made smaller trips around California with Brett and his sister Jessica in tow.

Eileen admits she was a little worried about her son's safety when he explained the list.

"But I figured if anybody could do it, he could," she says. "He can talk to anyone. When he's in a room, people just gather around him. And when he sets his mind to do it, he does it."

These days, Tom grumbles when he gets home from work and there isn't a new story from Brett waiting on the computer.

And Eileen, she's been thinking about that motorcycle trip cross country, the one she and Tom have always talked about.

Brett's bosses at Disney have called. There's a \$1.2 billion expansion of the California Adventure park planned. But Brett says he'll be back only when his list is finished.

"I don't want to be that guy who didn't do what he said he was going to do."

Truth is, he's considering not going back at all.

Instead he might throw himself into a bicycle accessory business he started with friends from UCD.

"I've learned something amazing about how much you can accomplish if you don't sit still."

Next stop: Toronto.

"I have a chance at getting onto a talk show there," Brett says. "A couple of other things from the list are possible, too. Like fly fishing. And riding a cow. No, no, it was ostrich riding, that's what it was."

As he says this, Brett's on a cell phone. Now and then, beyond his voice, you can hear the train he's riding on calling out at crossings.

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## The list

Here is Brett Rounsaville's list of 50 things he wants to accomplish on his trip. He has already completed those with a check.

- ✓ 1. Tube down a river
2. Ride a horse through a covered bridge
3. Sleep in a lighthouse
4. Learn survival skills
5. Enter a hot dog eating contest
6. Walk to the top of the Empire State Building
7. See a live taping of "The Daily Show," "The Colbert Report" and/or "SNL"
- ✓ 8. See a game at Fenway Park
- ✓ 9. Milk a cow on an Amish farm
10. Wade through a cranberry bog
11. Go into a coal mine
12. Take part in a Civil War re-enactment
13. Race dirt bikes
14. Make moonshine
15. Hitchhike
16. Learn to sail
17. Try my hand at kiteboarding
- ✓ 18. Pet a sloth
19. Help out on a plantation
20. Learn to run a three-card monte game
21. Tell Donald Trump "You're fired."
22. Be a guest on a talk show
- ✓ 23. Hang glide
24. Be part of a stage illusion
25. Be in a movie
- ✓ 26. Experience Comic Con
27. Go on a lobster boat
28. Scuba dive in the Atlantic
29. Drive a race car
- ✓ 30. Go to an obscure small-town festival
31. River kayak
32. Geocache in all 48 contiguous states
- ✓ 33. Collect honey from a beehive
34. Scale the lowest highest point in a state
35. Visit Arkansas Crater of diamonds state park and find a diamond
36. Ride the fastest roller coaster in the country
- ✓ 37. Go through a hedge maze
- ✓ 38. Catch a firefly
39. Motorcycle rally
40. Ride a cow
41. Go sandboarding
42. Ride an ostrich
43. Create a crop circle
44. Go fly fishing
45. Take a fan boat ride with gators
46. See a movie at the Alamo Draft House
47. Tour the Crayola Factory
- ✓ 48. Visit Ben and Jerry's Flavor Graveyard
- ✓ 49. See a Freak Show
50. Hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon