

# Travel

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE JANUARY 16, 2011 |

**MONTREAL**

## On the prowl for bargains, off the rack

**By Patricia Harris**  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

It's about the bragging rights. My husband, David Lyon, and I have been visiting Montreal for almost 30 years and have just finished our second guidebook to the city. I know which boulangerie makes the best almond croissant, the best viewing spot for the fireworks from La Ronde amusement park, and even where and when to find free on-street parking.

But I never really felt like an insider until I bagged a bargain on rue Chabanel.

Located on the north side of the city, far from any tourist attractions, rue Chabanel is the Main Street of the Montreal garment industry, the largest and most influential in Canada. Its nondescript, mid-century, medium-rise buildings used to be filled with manufacturers — even with garment stitch rooms. These days the street is dominated by importers and fashion distributors. The showrooms and remaining workrooms open to the public on what sometimes seems a random schedule, but Saturdays are usually best. I hit rue Chabanel on a Saturday in October and have not had so much fun shopping since the original Filene's Basement closed in 2007.

Mind you, it's a bit more work. The merchandise is spread throughout eight blocks of showrooms and taken some



# PACK THEN PLAY

Xbox, cribbage board, iPod, e-book — and slapshot

BY SHIRA SPRINGER | GLOBE STAFF

**B**oston Bruins forward Milan Lucic takes pride in packing light for road trips. He grabs a laptop case from his bedroom closet and calls it his “main travel bag,” filling it with a toothbrush, toiletries, shorts, T-shirt, underwear, and socks. He usually leaves his computer

son, as well as a recently-completed five-game, 10-day trip that started in Sunrise, Fla., and finished in Toronto.

The Bruins will log more than 45,000 airline miles this season, albeit on chartered flights. And equipment managers will lug roughly 50 bags filled with game uniforms, skates,



searching out. The lowest-priced goods are sometimes displayed on the sidewalk and it's not uncommon to see husbands sitting in parked cars, reading the newspaper and drinking coffee while the wife and kids peruse the racks. There are some bargains in menswear — especially in leather coats — but most of the merchandise is for women and virtually all the active shoppers are female.

As a general rule, the better stuff is in the showrooms, and the quality improves as you proceed west on the street and the building numbers rise. But don't expect retail bells and whistles. The fluorescent lights are hardly flattering and even the best showrooms may have just one free-for-all changing room, if any. Women begin arriving in small groups around 9 a.m., pick a

**SHOPPING, Page M5**

at home.

Yet, when asked for packing advice, Lucic said, "Don't be

afraid to take more than you need." He learned that lesson the hard way.

"I used to only take my suit, so all I'd have for the hotel was my underwear," said Lucic. "The guys would be like, 'Let's meet up in a room' and I'd be the only guy sitting there in my underwear. No shirt, no dress shirt, just my underwear. That was kind of awkward."

The National Hockey League season provides ample opportunity for teachable travel moments from forgotten passports to, well, delicately put, overripe dress shirts.

This season, the Bruins will take 27 road trips and cross international borders 18 times. That includes the 10-day trip to Prague that started the team's 82-game regular sea-

pads, ticks, and practice gear wherever the team goes.

The players generally keep it simple, pack light, and leave such items as chargers and iPod speakers in their carry-on bags between trips. They try to stick to a routine, even if that translates to last-minute packing.

"I have it down to where everything is ready to go all of

**PACKING, Page M4**

**Defenseman Johnny Boychuk, top, and forward Milan Lucic, make packing for road trips a routine.**

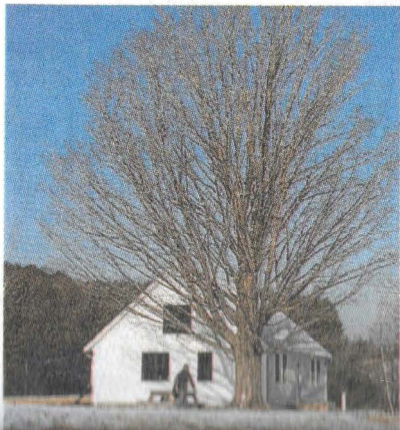


PHOTOS BY JIM DAVIS/GLOBE STAFF

## INSIDE

Volcano a red-hot resource in a troubled **Democratic Republic of Congo. M3**

## EXPLORE NEW ENGLAND



## ALASKA

# Alone on the tundra, ready to ride Arctic rivers

By Molly Loomis  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

### ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE

REFUGE — Kirk Sweetsir landed his Cessna at the Gwich'in outpost of Arctic Village, promptly at 9:30 a.m. He had arrived to fly our group of four to Last Lake, deep in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the starting point for our two-week, late summer hiking and packrafting expedition.

The concept of one-person, packable rafts has been around a long time, but over the past decade this niche sport has revived with the advent of lighter but incredibly durable fabrics. Packrafts have gained a cultish following in places such as Alaska. For our purposes, packrafting



would enable us to cover significantly more ground as well as experience the Arctic from the land and the water.

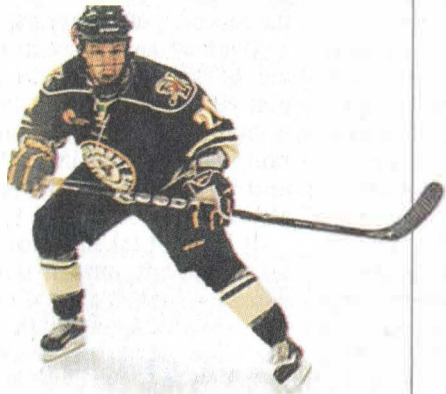
Void of trails and days from civilization, our 150-mile route promised the kind of adventure and beauty our crew of experienced outdoors people craved. With this winter marking the 50th anniversary of the refuge's designation, we wanted to better understand this place famous for its scenery, wildlife, native heritage, and oil reserves.

A 45-minute flight dropped us on a landing strip a mile south of Last Lake. Ringed by towering gray peaks and ancient moraines overgrown with blueberry bushes, Last Lake was an appropri-

**ALASKA, Page M2**



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PHOTOS BY MOE WITSCHARD FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

In the Jago River Valley, the author crossing a glacial stream and at a campsite with her husband, Andy Tyson, left, and Heather Witschard.

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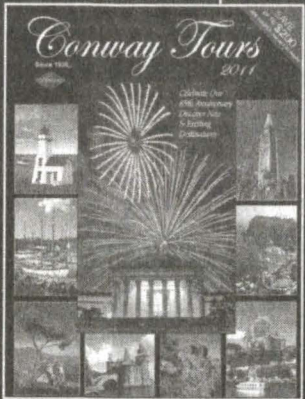
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FEB. 11

REYKJAVIK, Iceland

**Museum Night:** To tempt residents (and tourists) out of hibernation and into the

weather, it's easy to forget it's summer below the equator. Australians will celebrate their warm season with a massive music festival that hits several large cities

BERGEN, Norway

**Bergenfest:** The rainy seaside city of Bergen, which has produced a shocking amount of good music over the past dec-

Events can be canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online. Christopher Muther can be reached at [muther@globe.com](mailto:muther@globe.com).

# Shrinking glaciers, bold grizzlies, thrilling rapids

## ▶ ALASKA

Continued from Page M1

ate place to begin the trip. It served as a base for the 1956 Sheenjek Expedition (named for the 200-mile-long river), which provided much of the scientific evidence used in the designation of ANWR in 1960.

While my husband, Andy, and I searched the lake's shore for remnants of the historical expedition, friends Heather and Moe climbed the pyramidal peak behind camp and spotted five Northern hawk owls. The stress of days of travel and logistics to reach this place was falling away.

Much of the attraction of our route was its diversity of ecosystems and our first few days hiking up the Sheenjek were no exception. Within half a day we had gained enough latitude to leave tree line and forests of black spruce behind.

Whenever possible we would walk on exposed sections of the Sheenjek's cobbled riverbed. When the river forced us back on shore, we slopped our way through muskegs (a kind of bog or swamp) pocked with tussocks, grassy mounds the size and shape of a human head and difficult to stand on. When we tired of this, we moved onto dry, higher ground carpeted with tundra.

From a distance the tundra can appear boring. But like much of the Arctic, its complexity is de-

ceiving. It takes patience and close examination to appreciate the sophistication of its intricate patchwork of plants and lichens.

Many people associate ANWR with the massive migration of the Porcupine caribou herd (also named for a river) as it moves off one calving ground on the Coastal Plain, seeking refuge in the mountains from bloodthirsty mosquitoes. We were too late for that, but it was strange that even after several days we had yet to see any wildlife. ANWR is home, also, to moose, grizzly bears, wolves, Dall sheep, wolverines, porcupines, and many others. We had all commented on their absence, even of signs such as scat, tracks, or fur. But finally it seemed our luck was turning.

"It's a moose!" shouted Heather, waving her trekking pole at a flash of brown fur crashing through the willows.

Except it wasn't a moose.

The animal doubled back toward us at a gallop. It was a grizzly. It stopped 15 feet away, snarling. Instinct pushed us back but logic kicked in. We scrambled to face it, yelling for all we were worth. Finally, it turned and ran into the willows. We pushed out to the riverbed, grateful we were a foursome.

Eventually, we started up an unnamed drainage that would take us to the Continental Divide and over the crest of the Brooks Range. It had been over a week since we had heard a plane or the sound of any other humans.

Higher and higher we hiked, gradually leaving behind the verdant river valley and moving into



MOE WITSCHARD (ABOVE) AND ANDY TYSON, BOTH FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The author and her husband, Andy, left, cross a creek in the Sheenjek River valley. Below, she inflates her packraft with a nylon bag, readying for launch into the Jago River.



**CALL OF THE WILD**  
 Make your own unburdened Arctic trek (and on dry land) at

boulders. We packed up our rafts and kept walking.

We quickly spotted more animals, including three dead caribou

## If you go . . .

### How to get there

Most people fly from the Lower 48 to Fairbanks, then take a regularly scheduled small plane to a village on either Wright Air (907-474-0502, [www.wrightair.net](http://www.wrightair.net)) or Era (800-866-8394, [www.flyera.com](http://www.flyera.com)).

If your destination is inside the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (rather than starting from a village), take a chartered flight with one of the numerous bush plane operators listed on the US Fish and Wildlife Service website <http://arctic.fws.gov/airtaxi.htm>. Prices vary depending on departure point and destination and the size of your party.

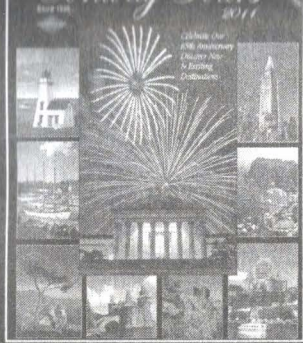
### What to do

The USFWS website <http://arctic.fws.gov/recguide.htm> provides a list of approved guiding companies permitted to operate in ANWR.

gress. As a result, Area 1002 has become ground zero for the Arctic drilling debate.

At a small butte called Bitty, the Jago's gradient at last mellowed. We inflated our boats and launched in the muddied water.

The thrill of bouncing over rapids with a 50-pound pack tied to the boat's bow was a delightful change of pace. Try as I might, a



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Higher and higher we hiked, gradually leaving behind the verdant river valley and moving into the high alpine, then the rock and ice zone where smears of ice clung to impossibly steep slopes. The contrast between the topographical maps indicating where glaciers ran and the reality was striking. Most of the glaciers were anorexic images of their former selves, a stark reminder that the Arctic is warming at a rate double the global average.

Finally we made it to the pass where we stepped from one side of the Continental Divide to the other. At the toe of the glacier below, the initial ribbons of the Jago River were visible — our watery trail out to the Beaufort Sea. We made our way down the exposed glacier's ice and through the moonscape of the moraine. If all went according to plan we would be floating in our packrafts the next day.

After a day of hiking downstream we arrived at a wide valley where the Jago fingers out, and another tributary joins its flow. The water was raging. After



#### CALL OF THE WILD

Make your own unburdened Arctic trek (and on dry land) at [www.boston.com/travel](http://www.boston.com/travel).

a few attempts at crossing we decided to wait until morning for the water to go down. But it rained all night and morning brought more of the same:

"Slow," I shouted to Andy. Dark muddy water pushed against my thighs. My feet skated over the river bottom.

"Go back," I yelled to Andy, who was at the head of our river-crossing conga line. "There's too much water."

Friends who know the area had cautioned that an August trip might leave us high and dry for packrafting and we would have to hike more than we hoped. But the Brooks Range had received unprecedented amounts of precipitation in July and the continuous rain since we had crossed the Continental Divide two days earlier wasn't helping. The Jago had turned into a fast and furious churn of Class IV rapids, alive with the clatter of

boulders. We packed up our rafts and kept walking.

We quickly spotted more animals on the Jago than during our entire time on the Sheenjek. We watched as a caribou calf, buoyed by her hollow hair, swam right across the same river that had stymied us. Later we sat mesmerized by a pack of five wolves. Another day it was a grizzly scratching his back on a rock, then a pair of wolves stalking caribou.

The Coastal Plain's soupy fog felt a long way from the sunny shores of Last Lake. As Andy cooked spaghetti over a small fire, I watched five caribou grazing. We were camped at Area 1002's boundary line, a 1.5 million-acre region on ANWR's Coastal Plain that was established in 1980 through the Alaskan National Interest Land Conservation Act. Not only is Area 1002 one of the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd, which Gwich'in and Inupiat natives rely on for subsistence, it is also home to an estimated 10.4 billion barrels of oil, which could be accessed by an act of Con-

ing on departure point and destination and the size of your party.

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The thrill of bouncing over rapids with a 50-pound pack tied to the boat's bow was a delightful change of pace. Try as I might, a significant amount of hiking time is always spent looking down. I welcomed the opportunity paddling provided to scan the surroundings.

Slowly, the Jago began morphing into a braided delta, the pulse of its current growing fainter. The sea was getting closer and each night we pitched our tents closer together, mindful of the possibility of polar bears.

Our final day was spent crossing the Beaufort Sea to the Inupiat village of Kaktovik. After eight days of nearly continuous rain, temperatures in the 30s, and howling wind, we were blessed with sunshine.

It had not taken us long to learn that without the downpours the Arctic's brightest moments — spotting an Arctic tern returning to Antarctica or double rainbows in a midnight sky — would not have been as bright.

*Molly Loomis can be reached at [www.mollyloomis.com](http://www.mollyloomis.com).*

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