

99 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU DIE
How to Make Your Own Life List—and Start Achieving Your Goals

THE 2005 CORVETTE...TOPLESS!

Men's Journal

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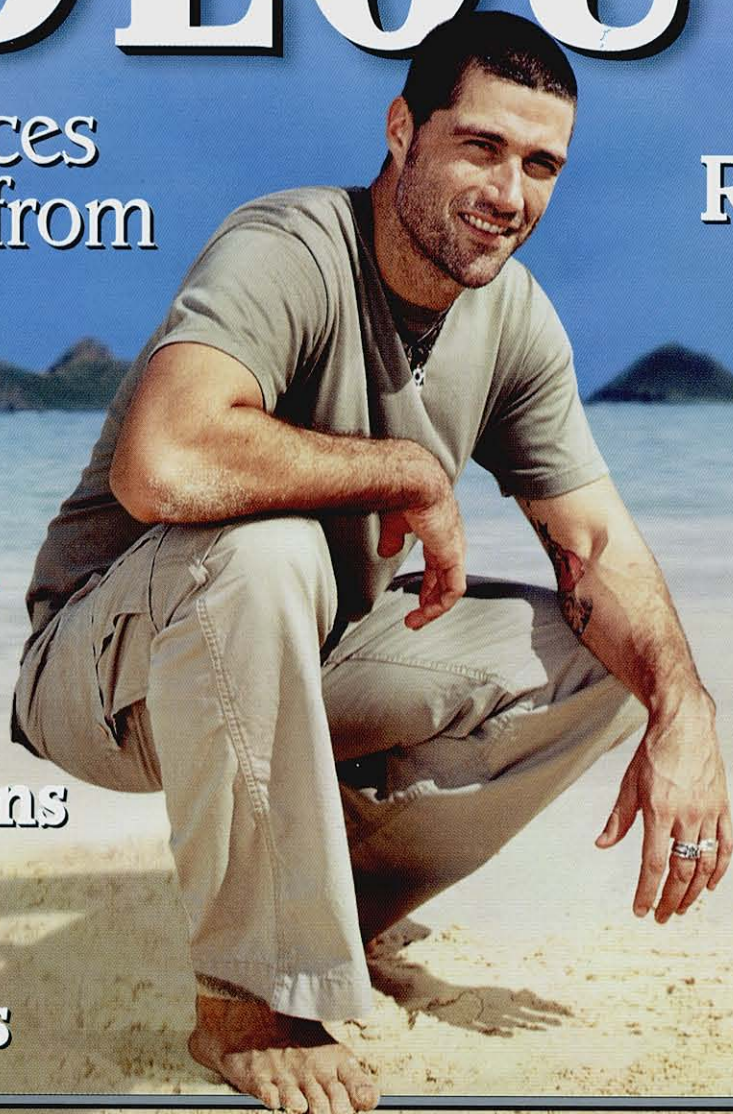
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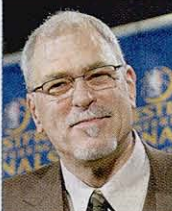
“WHEN YOUR LIFE IS ABOUT TO END, HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHETHER OR NOT YOU WON? THE WAY I LOOK AT IT: IF I FINISH MY LIFE LIST, I WON.”

challenge along with the anticipated outcome. “On the screen of my mind, I picture the event and how I will do it,” he says. “It gives me a blueprint to achieve my goals.” And achievements lead to more achievements: “When you capsize in the rapids while exploring the upper river in the Congo, which nobody had ever explored before, you end up with confidence that allows you to unlock the limitations inside you.”

Those waters in the Congo were filled with crocodiles that certainly would have feasted on Goddard if not for two factors: The currents were so rough and the river bottom so dense with jagged rocks that the crocs were deterred from venturing over. “Thank heavens,” says Goddard, “because they were man-eaters.”

Among the scores of other things he checked off over the years are learning jujitsu, milking a poisonous snake (he got bitten in the process), and lighting a match with a .22 caliber rifle. “To be honest, the reaction I get from some people is, ‘Goddard, don’t you ever relax and have fun?’ They don’t realize that nothing is more fun than having these adventures.”

MY LIFE LIST



PHIL JACKSON
Basketball Coach

- Write the Great American Novel
- Motorcycle around New Zealand’s South Island
- Live to see a great-grandchild

By the 1970s Goddard was a well-known life list proselytizer, traveling to school auditoriums in Southern California and preaching the gospel to wide-eyed kids. When he showed up at West Covina High School, near Los Angeles, David

Rogers, currently a professor of geological en-

✓ OWN A FERRARI

gineering at the University of Missouri, was one of the receptive audience members. Back in the spring of 1970, in that darkened assembly hall, the 16-year-old Rogers found himself mesmerized by a film that Goddard shot while climbing the world’s highest waterfall, 3,212-foot Angel Falls in Venezuela.

Inspired by Goddard, Rogers made his own life list: 126 items long, including climbing the east face of Mount Whitney in winter, hiking from Jerusalem to Jericho (to retrace the steps of Jesus), and running the Colorado River.

Now 51, Rogers has completed 91 challenges from his list of 126 written nearly four decades ago. “I don’t even know who I’d be without the life list,” he says. “We all have the potential to do amazing things. But you have to create a flight plan for your life. You won’t follow it exactly. But without it you’ll never get close to where you want to go.”

As Rogers’s own life proves, you don’t need to be rich to do this. On his modest professor’s salary, he has completed numerous adventures, such as climbing Mount Fuji and rowing his own boat through the Grand Canyon. “But I haven’t climbed Mount Everest, and I won’t,” says Rogers. “It simply costs too much.”

Ever resourceful, he used a stint in the military to help him complete some items, such as catapulting off an aircraft carrier in a jet and trapping back on. He knocked off those two during a brief tour of duty on the U.S.S. Enterprise in the Pacific.

Rogers’s stint as a naval intelligence officer provided

MY LIFE LIST



TONY HAWK
skateboarder

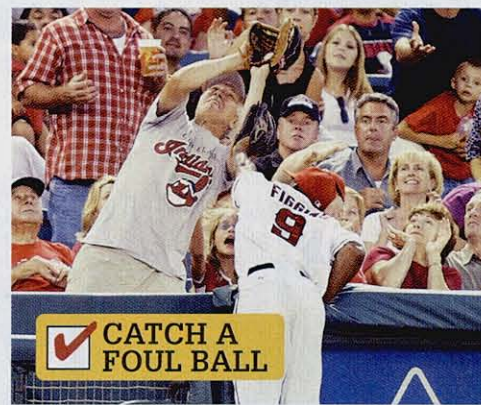
- Do a frontside varial geytivist revert
- Learn to ride a motorcycle with confidence
- Build more public skate parks in low-income areas
- Experience weightlessness

him with an opportunity to do amazing things that were not exactly at the top of his colleague’s to-do lists. “My peers told me that I was crazy for volunteering to go on a trip to China,” he remembers, adding that he considered rafting the upper Yangtze (too perilous, as it turned out), but he did explore the Taroko Gorge in Taiwan and walked a chunk of the Great Wall. “And when they needed someone to go to Peru, I volunteered — so that I could explore Machu Picchu. It was on my list.”

PART OF MAKING A LIFE list is opening yourself up

to difficult tasks — in fact, they *ought* to be things that scare you a little. A life list is not just about achieving your goals, it is also about overcoming your fears. If there are no challenges that make you queasy, then it’s not a great life list.

Those with the best lists encounter adversity all along the



way — and they don’t always overcome it. Goddard, for example, saw his kayaking partner get swept to his death in rough African waters. Keoghan endured bouts of intense claustrophobia in subterranean Mexican caves. And Rogers describes his proposed 1,200-mile trip [continued on page 124]

