

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

Alumna plans to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro

Rebecca Smith
Features Editor

An Elon University alumna said she hopes to change the world as she climbs Mount Kilimanjaro from June 24 to July 3. Camden Schwantes is participating in the Ultimate Travel Company's charity challenge in support of Action Aid.

Schwantes said Action Aid's vision and mission is to create a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life with dignity. The group wants to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice. Action Aid uses the money to give impoverished families seeds, tools, education, medication, health care and to teach them new skills and trades to help them earn a decent wage.

"It has to be one of the least controversial charities I could support," Schwantes said. "There is no government to take a side of, no moral or ethical issues and no religious or cultural limits. Simply, giving people the chance to survive, to do more than that, to live. They don't impose solutions, but rather work with communities to help encourage and strengthen the existing efforts."

Schwantes needs to raise about \$6,000 for her summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. She is raising money through donations from friends, families and strangers, collecting items from friends to sell on eBay, finding local businesses to sponsor her summit and saving her own money.

"Though I'm fortunate to have friends and family who have donated to my cause at www.myactionaid.org.uk/Canden/mount-kilimanjaro-trek,"

Schwantes said. "I'm aware that you cannot always rely on the kindness of others. I will have to work hard for this, but I will also be benefitting from the experience."

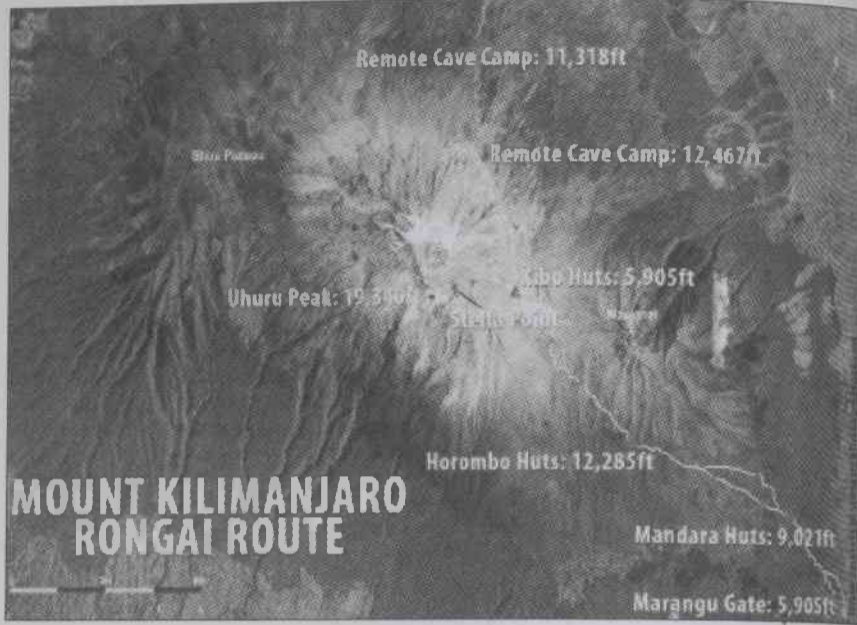
For eight days she will be attempting to summit Mount Kilimanjaro via the Rongai Route in Tanzania. Schwantes is using the connections her job gives her to train for the summit, including a personal trainer. She has planned many upcoming treks around the United Kingdom to prepare for this.

Schwantes graduated from Elon in 2006. During her years at Elon she worked with Habitat for Humanity, The Pendulum, Delta Delta Delta, Classical Studies Club, was an Elon 101 TA, an Orientation Leader, helped lead two Hurricane Katrina relief trips and studied abroad in London.

"I was very involved in community service and outreach while at Elon University," Schwantes said. "However, once in the real world I found it hard to find the time and I was not satisfied just offering money. Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro had always been on my bucket list and I decided last year I would combine this life goal with a mission to help others."

Schwantes is also participating in the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge — hiking three peaks in 12 hours — and taking various day hikes to summit the three tallest peaks in the United Kingdom: Ben, Nevis and Scafell Pike. She also plans to spend a weekend hiking in the Brecon Beacons of Wales in order to prepare for climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

"I fell in love with London during my spring semester sophomore year at Elon, when I decided to accompany my teaching fellow roommate on her required semester abroad," Schwantes



SARAH COSTELLO | Graphics Editor

said. "I moved here as soon as possible after graduation. I am now currently working full-time as a receptionist at a local gym that allows me to save and take time off for traveling."

Traveling is a huge aspect of Schwantes' life. After moving to London, she moved to South Korea to teach English before returning to London and finishing graduate school. She will be attempting to summit Mount Kilimanjaro this summer, participating on an archaeological dig in Israel this fall and then will return to South Korea to spend another year teaching English.

"On a freelance basis I do epigraphy, the study of Latin inscriptions, which concludes what I call my summer of adventure," Schwantes said.

Schwantes said she enjoys hiking, camping and fresh air. But she said, she will be challenged by her summit. She avoids public bathrooms, is afraid of the dark, most wildlife, loathes the cold, almost always wears makeup, dislikes heights and takes the elevator to get to her best friend's room on the first floor of her apartment building.

"I am not sure what makes me think I'll even remotely enjoy eight days climbing an African mountain with people I don't know, sleeping in the cold in tents," Schwantes said. "But enjoying it isn't the point. It's a challenge. Hurling myself out of my comfort zone, spending months training and fundraising and finally a week of trekking up the world's tallest free-standing mountain."

Local artist finds new life for recyclable materials

Adrian Boggs creates furniture for one of first sustainable furnishing companies

Sarah Beth Costello
Graphics Editor

In a culture dominated by consumerism and influenced by competing companies urging the masses to throw out the old and upgrade to the newest products sustainability and responsibility often takes a back seat.

Adrian Boggs, founder of Practice Design Build, is working to change current habits and encourage the local community to invest in lasting products. As a designer, artist and furnisher Boggs creates pieces that serve as functional items made from discarded materials and waste. Dumpster-diving and garbage-gathering have become the main sources of inspiration behind Boggs' work. Boggs' company designs and constructs interior items for clients, working within their budgets while creating long-lasting products.

"There's nothing really new about sustainability," Boggs said. "It's becoming more common, but there are many different ways to make things sustainable."

Practice Design Build is one of the first custom sustainable furnishing companies in the



Artist Adrian Boggs uses recycled and discarded materials to make furniture in Greensboro, N.C.

Triad. Working with materials that would normally go to waste is one of Boggs' trademarks. Boggs' creates furnishings from leftover scraps, wheat board (a material made from the chaff seed hulls and stems of leftover wheat) and even reclaimed waste streams, an industrial term for a stream of garbage left over in manufacturing processes.

"When Practice Design Build provides sustainable furnishings to clients, we're replacing demand on typical industry with goods that are sustainable," Boggs, 38, said.

"Practice is a small company and I like working here, helping the local economy."

Though sustainable products are often more expensive, Boggs said costs will begin to lower as the demand for better-made products increases. Searching for less expensive materials also enables Boggs to decrease the costs of his items. Though this often requires research, visits to various hardware stores and even occasional dives into dumpsters, producing affordable and well-made products is important to the

integrity of Boggs' work.

"When I use waste materials I'm keeping waste out of landfills in Alamance County," Boggs said. "I think that the work I'm doing sets a precedent and helps people understand, be creative and find uses for what we've been calling garbage."

Boggs said creating furnishings out of garbage and scraps requires a level of creativity that gives every furnishing a level of uniqueness. Whether crafting a chair, bench or coffee table, Boggs wants to encourage interactivity between the user and the product.

As a graduate student at UNC Greensboro, Boggs interned at a furniture company in High Point. He noticed the company was throwing away small pieces and scraps that were useless in the manufacturing process and asked to take them home where he began experimenting.

"One of pieces was a 'proof of concept,'" Boggs said. "The other one was my master's thesis work. These were strong examples of what can be done with garbage and wood waste."

These two pieces are currently exhibited at the Center for Visual Artists gallery in the Greensboro Cultural Center until Feb. 19. Boggs' exhibited pieces include a table and bench constructed out of Baltic birch plywood.

Boggs returned to school later in life and was the oldest student in the program. But his experience as an industrial fabricator, woodworking and construction contributed to his success while at UNC G. Now an adjunct professor of advanced materialism methods at the campus, Boggs continues to infuse students with his love for design and construction while encouraging them to pursue more sustainable options.

Boggs argues living sustainably will not eliminate overflowing landfills, garbage streams, pollutions and excessive waste. The answer, he said, is in personal responsibility.

"We have landfills overflowing with good materials that get thrown away," Boggs said. "I think it's a trap. We have a responsibility to ourselves to be honest with what we use to identify ourselves."