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Around the world in 25 days

CARLTON PROCTOR • CPROCTOR@PNJ.COM • APRIL 7, 2008

Pensacola attorney Rainey C. Booth is about to embark on an adventure of a lifetime. He and partner Zoe Littlepage won a spot in GreatEscape2008, a fund-raising project that pits teams against each other on a global scavenger hunt that will take them around the world in 25 days.

The Booth-Littlepage team is scheduled to depart this week for San Francisco, where the competition will begin on Friday.

Booth recently answered questions about his upcoming adventure and the fund-raising efforts undertaken to benefit such charities as Doctors Without Borders and UNICEF.

Q: How did you hear about this GreatEscape2008 fund-raising project, and when did you first become involved with it?

A: My partner Zoe Littlepage and I read about the GreatEscape2008 global adventure in USA Today in November 2007. We filled out an application and went through the interview process in late November and December. We found out that we were selected in December 2007.

Q: You won a spot to compete in the Global Scavenger Hunt. What was the competition like and what did it take on you and your partner's part to win?

A: The selection process is secret, so we have no real insight as to why we were chosen.

Q: You'll be going literally around the world during this competition — from San Francisco west and back to Toronto. It starts Friday; How many days will the competition last?

A: A total of 25 days from beginning to end.

Q: The goal of this adventure is to raise money for various charities, including Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF and other non-profit groups that aid developing countries. How will you actually raise the money and who will distribute it to these charities?

A: There are corporate sponsors such as High Sierra (a company specializing in gear for outdoor sports) who contribute money to the charity and help generally fund the competition. In addition, each team had to raise \$40,000 for the charity. We reached out to friends, family and colleagues for donations. Indeed, many Pensacola law firms supported us with generous contributions, including Levin, Papantonio; Aylstock, Witkin and Sasser; and Jim Corrigan. In fact, lawyers from both sides of the Bar (plaintiffs and defense lawyers) sent us money for the charity. We have raised and submitted to GreatEscapes Foundation more than \$43,000. The goal is for the charity to raise \$1 million this year through this event.

Q: Is this event actually a "race," and will you be competing against other teams or just yourselves?

A: The event is not a race; it is better described as a global scavenger hunt. There are 20 teams that compete against each other for points. Each day, at a joint briefing session, the teams are provided a list of scavenges, puzzles, riddles and competitions to complete that day in a specific allotted time. Each scavenge or puzzle is assigned a number of points.



RAINEY C. BOOTH

OCCUPATION: Partner, Michles & Booth, P.A., Pensacola.

GRADUATE: Washington & Lee University; J.D. from University of Florida.

FORMED FIRM: May 2001.

MEMBER: American Bar Association, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, and the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers.

Completing the scavenge gains that team the allocated amount of points.

There are more possible challenges on each day's list than could actually be completed by any team. So part of the event's strategy is deciding which challenges to undertake for that day — with the goal of achieving maximum points for the team. At the end of the entire GreatEscapes2008 event, the team with the most points will receive the "World's Greatest Travelers" award as well as some prizes.

Q: How do you pack for something like this, not knowing whether you're going to be in a hot climate or cold, in the mountains or on the seashore?

A: I am packing as little as possible since we will be on the move so much. Most of the clothes that I am taking with me can be hand-washed and will dry easily. We have been advised to pack shirts, sweatshirts and rain jackets so that we can put on extra layers for the colder places.

Q: You must love to travel. What are some of your favorite places and countries you've visited?

A: I have to travel a lot for my work so I am very used to living out of a suitcase. But business travel is not nearly as fun as travel for pleasure. My favorite places are Greece and the Caribbean. I especially love the Greek islands.

The great thing about this trip is that it will most likely take me to places in the world that I would not have chosen to visit on my own. GreatEscapes2008 promises to take the competitors to remote and rarely visited locations. We have also been told that we will likely visit some of the villages where GreatEscapes charity is doing some of its micro-financing work so that we can meet the people who will be most benefited by the money raised.



Strangers In Strange Lands

by Rick Outzen



Local Attorneys Go On Global Scavenger Hunt

How adventurous are you? Could you find the Khan al-Kahlili in Cairo, Egypt, buy a traditional Arab headdress and then talk someone into letting you ride a camel around the Great Pyramid? How about sneaking into a private showing at the Cannes Film Festival and getting a photo with one of the celebrities? Or saying a prayer in one of the sacred Hiranya Varna Mahabihar houses in Kathmandu that is guarded by holy rodents?

Local attorney Rainey Booth and his partner Zoe Littlepage are about to find out how adventurous they are as they compete in the Great Escape 2008 Global Scavenger Hunt for the "The World's Greatest Travelers" crown.

For 23 days, Booth and Littlepage will travel to 13 countries and four continents as they compete against teams from around the world. They will not only become immersed in the cultures of all the places they visit, but also will help raise \$1 million for such charities as Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF and non-profits that provide micro-financing opportunities to some of the poorest villages in the world.

"We read about this event in USA Today and were surprised that we were picked," Booth says in an interview on "IN Your Head Radio," on 1620 AM. "It's a great, great cause, and I think it will be exciting to go around the world."

The Great Escape 2008 Global Scavenger Hunt starts April 11 in San Francisco, circumvents the globe and ends on May 3, nearly 40,000 miles away, in Toronto, Canada.

"That's about all we know. They have told us very little, but just enough," Booth says. "We know we start in San Francisco. We know we will go to China at one point because we had to get visas to travel to China. Shy of that, we know little else. They gave us a list of 60 countries where we might travel."

This global scavenger hunt is the brainchild of world traveler and author Bill Chalmers. In April 2002, National Geographic Traveler magazine named Chalmers the "World's Greatest Traveler." He is the author the best-selling travel book "A Blind Date With The World."

"In 1989, I competed in a race around the world using only public transportation," Chalmers says in a phone interview from cold, snowy British Columbia. "I was lucky enough to win that race in 16 days. I really enjoyed it and always wanted to do something like it again."

"Ten years later, I was trekking through Nepal with friends and was struck by some enlightenment. I realized that if I couldn't compete in such an event again, then the next best thing was to live vicariously through others racing around the world. We held our first global scavenger hunt that next year."

This year will be the fourth global scavenger hunt. There are 18 teams participating from Great Britain, Canada and the United States. They were chosen from hundreds of applicants.

"I do have to say, No,' to a lot of people," Chalmer says. "It hurts me to do so but, unless you've been around the block a few times, I feel I would be creating travel malpractice if I took someone on this trip who was a snowbird and only traveled to Florida every year and then dropped them off in India for three days. I may never see them again."

There are more than 500 total scavenger tasks for this year's event. Contestants will be given a list at each stop and given three or four days to complete them. Points are assigned for each task. At the end of the 23-day competition, the team with the most points is declared "The World's Greatest Travelers."

"There is safety net for the teams," Chalmers says. "We do have a hotel for them. When we give them the list of scavenges, the first thing I tell them is that they can't do all the things on the list. It's up to the teams to figure out which ones they can do. We give them three or four days to work on the list."

The scavenger hunts are varied and require the teams to become immersed in the cultures of the communities that they are in.

"I don't ask them to do bungee jumping, stunts or things like that," Chalmers says. "Instead, we ask them to taste unique foods, find unique cultures and get involved in local festivals."

When asked about what are some of the possible scavenges, Chalmers is evasive, not wanting to give away his secrets. He does offer a few hypothetical tasks.

"If we were in Japan, I might ask the men to dress like one of the old emperors and have the girls made up as geisha girls," he says. "We might have them find a specific item. There are several temples that have a tooth of Buddha hanging in them. We could have them find one in a specific temple in Sri Lanka. The trick would be that they have to ride a four-legged beast to find it. The tasks are really unique because we want people to participant in the local cultures and really trust strangers in strange lands."

It is that element of the event that attracts Booth the most.

"Their concept is that you will go to places you wouldn't have chosen to go on your own," Booth says. "You learn by having to do it, so you're forced to interact with the world, which is something I haven't always done when I've traveled."

Not every task involves fun. Chalmers shares that one of the most memorable and meaningful tasks was having all the teams donate half a day to work in a refugee center.

"All the teams spent four hours working in a refugee center during our stay in that country," he recalls. "For some folks it changed their lives. It was life altering for them and was unique and heartfelt because they got to get to know the missionaries and those they help."

The Great Escape 2008 Global Scavenger Hunt is more than just an adventure. The goal for this year's event is to raise \$1 million for international charities.

"This event is designed to be a travel-thon, a sort of travel version of a walkathon," Chalmer explains. "Teams are asked to recruit sponsors. Some sponsors pay a set amount per country visited. One team has a pledge for \$1 for every mile traveled which will raise close to \$40,000 by the time we finish the event."

Several local law firms are sponsoring Booth and Littlepage.

"The Pensacola legal community has an excellent record of giving back to the community," Booth says. "The Levin & Papantonio Family Foundation is one of our big supporters. We have a wonderful legal community that not only tries to give back locally, but also thinks more globally."

"The Great Escape 2008 Global Scavenger Hunt is a fun event," Chalmers promises. "Maybe in five or 10 years we will have the ultimate travel competition, sort of like the Paris to Dakar race. But this event is really about helping people."

"The concept of micro-financing really excited me," Booth admits. "One example we were given was \$1,000 was used to buy a poor village a jeep and its fuel. That doesn't seem like much, but it let the village sell its products to towns 50 miles away.

"It's those types of contributions that can have a tremendous impact on people's lives and truly make this event worthwhile."

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GREAT ESCAPE 2008

What: Global Scavenger Hunt starting from San Francisco to Toronto--the long way!

When: April 11- May 3

Who: 18 teams of two, including local team of Rainey Booth and Zoe Littlepage.

Prize: "The World's Greatest Travelers" Crown

More details: www.globalscavengerhunt.com



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(Car Chase)

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A&E: Pensacola Lawyer Competes for "World's Greatest Traveler"

[by Walker Holmes](#)

PRESS RELEASE

Local Pensacola lawyer Rainey Booth won a spot to compete in an around-the-world scavenger hunt that will take him and his team partner, Zoe Littlepage, to 13 countries on 4 continents in 23 days.

GreatEscape2008: The Global Scavenger Hunt is not just all fun. It's all to raise more than \$1 million for charity, such as Noble Peace Prize-winning Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF and charities that provide micro-financing loans to the poorest villages in the world.

The competition for the prize of being crowned the Worlds Greatest Traveler kicks off in April and once it starts at each destination, teams receive sealed envelopes containing a list of scavenger challenges, travel riddles, cultural clues and cryptic passages, which will lead them to lost cities, sacred sites, cultural festivals, bustling bazaars, ancient ruins, exotic eateries and eventually to prizes.

By the time Booth returns to Pensacola he will have flown, walked, bicycled, boated and ridden camels, elephants, ox-carts, feluccas, dhows and rickshaws over a million miles! This is why Outside magazine has called the Global Scavenger Hunt..."one of the most amazing trips in the world!"

Some of the challenges that Booth may face:

***He may be asked to ride a four-legged beast around one of the Seven Wonders of the World wearing a traditional Arab headdress purchased in Khan al-Khalili. (He'll have to shop in Cairo's ancient Grand Bazaar before riding a camel at the Pyramids).

***At a World Heritage Site with over 50 temples, he may visit the one where rodents roam freely and will have to explain why? (In Kathmandu, the sacred Hiranya Varna Mahabihar houses the living guardian of Vishnu and is guarded by holy rodents).

***He may sing Feelings at a Ginza district karaoke bar with at least four other local patrons: tuning up his pipes with new friends in glitzy Tokyo!)

***In the City of Waters, he may be required to partake in a traditional Turkish delight and take a bath in a public bathhouse in Turkey.

The competition is the brainchild of William D. Chalmers, international travel speaker, author of the travel book A Blind Date With The World and the previous winner of an around-the-world race.

As Chalmers puts it, "this competition emphasizes the Indiana Jones spirit of adventure coupled with total cultural immersion as the Teams are required to use their wits and resourcefulness at every turn."

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