

MAX KNUDSON, BUSINESS EDITOR, 237-2118

SUNDAY, FEB. 25, 1996

MAIL-ORDER FIRM

Walkabout Travel Gear is a runaway success



MAX B. KNUDSON
BUSINESS EDITOR

Walkabout — A period of wandering undertaken as a sporadic interruption of routine life while in search of spiritual cleansing. (Australian aborigine in origin.)

Brad and Gia Boyle got the idea for their home-based business, Walkabout Travel Gear, during a six-week sojourn spent, appropriately, walking about the tiny island nation of Malta.

They had logged thousands of travel miles in China, Taiwan, Honduras, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Turkey and other locations far from the madding (tourist) crowd, but they had never seen the inside of a four-star hotel nor a restaurant recommended by the Michelin guide.

Everything the peripatetic Utahns needed for their travels they carried on their backs.

Long ago, says Brad, he and his wife had become dissatisfied with the "norm of modern society, the 9 to 5 indentured servant." Instead, he said, they have spent much of their time exploring the world, albeit on a budget, since "we are incapable of holding regular jobs."

Brad's characterization of how most of us spend our working days would be offensive but for one thing: revenge is ours. Since starting their Salt Lake-based mail order catalog business, the Boyles have had little time to walk about anywhere that's more than a few feet from their phone and computer.

"I'm stuck here all the time," groans Brad, much to the delight of indentured servants everywhere.

Still, don't feel too sorry for him. Deskbound as they claim to be, the Boyles still found time last summer to get away for a walkabout in the Greek islands and the south coast of Turkey where, says Brad, they discovered the bones of (don't tell the kids) Santa Claus. (Actually, St. Nicholas, born in Patara around 4 B.C. He had a beard and gave presents to kids but likely never saw snow, let alone the North Pole.)

But it's a good thing the Boyles can still get out and stretch their legs a bit, because that's when they come up with their best ideas for useful, inexpensive and, above all, lightweight gear that makes the backpack of the adventure traveler easier to bear.

Over the years, the Boyles had acquired a wide array of such items but never in any one place. During the Malta excursion last spring, fellow travelers would note one of their items and exclaim something like, "Wow, where'd you get that? I've gotta have one."

Brad and Gia would then explain that they picked it up in a Borneo bazaar or a tiny shop on a back street in Hong Kong. The fellow trekker would sigh and go away disappointed.

After a few dozen of those encounters, they decided they would go home and go into business supplying independent travelers with gear not easily found elsewhere. If nothing else, noted Brad, "it would be better than getting regular jobs."

The result is a catalog that provides travelers such items as:

- The PUR Scout water purifier, a filter pump that they say will eliminate everything from the ubiquitous giardia bacteria (the usual suspect in cases of traveler's diarrhea) to heavy metals, insecticides and even viruses.

- The Seal Pak, a waterproof fannypack that enables you to take your passport, money and other valuable with you while, for example, snorkeling off a Honduran beach.

- Inexpensive binoculars that weigh only 4 ounces.

- The Epco Design SleepScreen, a single or double net for getting a good night's sleep outdoors or in "budget" lodgings (the Boyles prefer the word "exotic" to describe the places they stay). Brad vows it keeps out everything from tarantulas to "no-see-ums."

- DEET, described by Brad as "the mother of all insect repellants" used by the U.S. Army in tropical climates.

- Eagle Creek Endless Journey, or slightly smaller World Journey, backpacks.



Brad and Gia Boyle have had less time to walk about the globe on exotic adventures since launching their successful Salt Lake mail-order line of Walkabout Travel Gear.

- Computer compact discs for language study at home on your PC before you head out. The Boyles claim the Transparent Language system is a language learning breakthrough. Available in Spanish, French, Russian, German and Italian.

- The world's toughest eyeglass case, and it floats.

- One of the ways to save a lot of money when you are traveling on a budget is to

STOCKS

Dividends seem on the way back up

By Andrew Leckey



SUCCESSFUL INVESTING

General Motors did it. Citi corp did it. Aled Signal did it. So did Texaco, Marriott International, McGraw-Hill, Walt Disney, Norfolk Southern, Fannie Mae and Allstate.

They all boosted dividends, lifting the spirits of income investors who are disgruntled about dividend increases lagging behind earnings growth the past several years.

You say dividends don't matter anymore? Tell that to shareholders of troubled Apple Computer, which is suspending its quarterly dividend for the first time ever and doesn't expect to renew it "in the near future." This comes at a time when dividend reductions are few and far between, thanks to strong corporate profits in most industries.

"We've had a healthy increase in dividends in early 1996 after a long period of slow growth, but it's too early to call that a trend because short-term figures are often volatile," observed Arnold Kaufman, editor of the Standard & Poor's Outlook investment letter. "In addition, during a period of declining interest rates, you must guard against chasing some of the stat companies that pay a high dividend yield but are really going where."

Total dividend paid on S&P stocks in January was up a significant 11 percent over a year ago, encouraging if not definitive indicator. A total of 205 companies increased their dividends during the month. But that's not as much earnings growth would seem

Please see MONEY on M3

LECKEY

Continued from M1

their increases may not be as dramatic. Highest dividend yields traditionally are provided by electric utilities, natural gas utilities, telephone companies and international oils.

"I expect consumer products and drug companies are going to lead the way with healthy dividend increases in 1996, thanks to their steady earnings growth," predicted Charles Carlson, market strategist with the Dow Theory Forecasts investment letter in Hammond, Ind. "Dividends often serve as a signal, so if a company really wants to make a statement about where its business is headed, it can use a dividend increase to make that statement."

Some companies are more interested than others in sending out positive vibes.

Among firms with tremendous records for regularly increasing their dividends over the years, Stromberg noted, are General Electric, Banc One, Cincinnati Financial, the Travelers Group, ALLTEL, Pepsi Co, Philip Morris, Newell, Procter & Gamble, Reader's Digest, Hubbell, Teleflex, Analysts International, Mobile, Great Lakes Chemical and Kimberly-Clark.

Coca-Cola Co., Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, ConAgra, Mobile and Exxon are also noteworthy, Kaufman said. Philip Morris, Emerson Electric and Merck are worth adding, Carlson believes.

DONOGHUE

Continued from M1

or as a defensive stopgap. Merriman uses the later approach. "Our goal of market timing is not to beat the market. It is to protect investors from large losses," says Merriman.

That makes sense. The buy-and-hold approach works great on paper but it often doesn't translate into the real world. When investors lose money, some of them panic and sell out at exactly the worst time. It's a lot harder to remain committed to the long term when you have double-digit losses staring you in the face.

Merriman uses a combination of timing systems instead of a single one. That gives him extra protection in case one of his timing systems is too early or too late.

DIVERSIFICATION AMONG FIXED INCOME GROUPS. Not all bond funds are created equal

MONEY

Continued from M1

cook your own meals. "But have you ever scraped fried fish bought from a fisherman on a Thai island from a regular mess kit?" asks Brad. If you have, you will be glad to know that the Walkabout catalog has a "Non-Stick Mess Kit."

— If you are going to take the mess kit advice, the Boyles also suggest you get the 6.9 ounce Walkabout stove, which uses CV470 fuel cannisters widely available overseas. Also, take some spices, salt, pepper and maybe a small bottle of Tabasco sauce to liven up (or disguise) your culinary adventures.

That's a small sampling of the catalog. Walkabout's best sellers include the Portabolt, a door lock that they assure keeps out everything from unwanted maids in hotels to "mysterious attempted entries" in Third-World hotels.

Also in high demand are PackTowls. Towels are not standard items in budget lodgings or on deserted beaches, and the terry cloth variety are heavy and take forever to dry. But PackTowls, they say, release 90 percent of their water when rung out and dry very quickly.

The most challenging part of starting their own business, says Brad, was becoming computer literate, and the largest capital expense was acquiring the necessary

computer gear — PC, fax, scanner and graphics software.

That's all behind them now, and Brad notes that the computer revolution has allowed people such as he and Gia to enter and succeed in home businesses that only a few years ago would have been impossible without huge capital outlays.

Although he quotes Mark Twain in the catalog — "I have never let schooling interfere with my education" — Brad holds an MBA degree from Westminster College and sounds like a Japanese auto manufacturer when he discusses "just-in-time" ordering from his suppliers that helps keep costs down.

The Walkabout Travel Gear catalog is available by calling 1-800-

852-7085 Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by writing to Walkabout, P.O. Box 58502, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-0502. The Boyles recently launched a new Walkabout division called A Safe Mission. That catalog features items especially for departing LDS missionaries. It is available at the same number and post office box.

Walkabout also has a large Web site (30-40 pages) on the Internet. In addition to products, it outlines various adventure-trip itineraries, including such information as weather, currency exchanges and travel tips. Its Internet site may be visited at [http://www.xmission.com/\(tilde\)walkgear/walk.htm](http://www.xmission.com/(tilde)walkgear/walk.htm)

Capitol Glass bought by Atlanta company

Capitol Glass, 3515 S. 300 West, has been acquired by AFGD in Atlanta, a division of AFG Industries.

Capitol Glass was a privately held company started in 1948 as a residential and automotive reglaze shop by Doug Brown Sr. AFGD purchased the company's outstanding shares.

As a result of the acquisition, AFGD Inc. is the largest glass fabricator/distributor in North America with 47 operations in the United States and Canada.

Capitol is the largest fabricator/distributor of architectural glass and aluminum products in the Intermountain Area.

You Pay Nothing
0 INTEREST
NO PAYMENTS
until
SEPTEMBER!
On in-store purchases of \$299 or more! '96*

NEW AT OfficeMax!

InstallMaxSM

On-site Computer Installation & Upgrades Available In Your Home Or Office

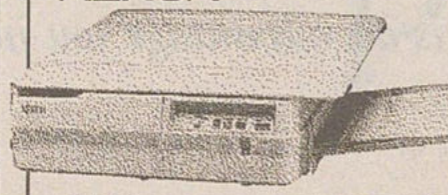
- Installation by certified technicians
- Convenient scheduled appointments
- Basic installation...\$79.00

MAXASSURANCE

EXTENDED WARRANTIES

- One year on electronics, 100% coverage
- 3 full years of on-site service for computers
- 90 day telephone software support

XEROX

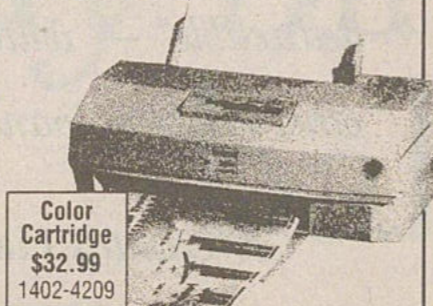


Model #5222

6R333 Toner \$78.26 0202-4785

Letter Or Legal Size Copies Xerox Personal Copier

EPSON



Color Cartridge \$32.99 1402-4209

Free Color Software by Mail Epson Stylus Color IIs Printer

PRICE BREAK!

List Price \$461.00

1402-3987

Model # AX3520

1403-1068

OfficeMax[®]

100MHz Pentium[®] Processor

16MB RAM!

Multimedia Computer

- 100MHz Pentium[®] Processor
- 16MB RAM (expandable to 72MB)
- 1.0GB (1000MB) hard drive
- Quad speed CD-ROM
- 14.4K fax/modem
- Answering machine with speakerphone
- Includes computer & software valued up to \$800 including Windows 95, monitor sold separately

\$1799⁰⁰

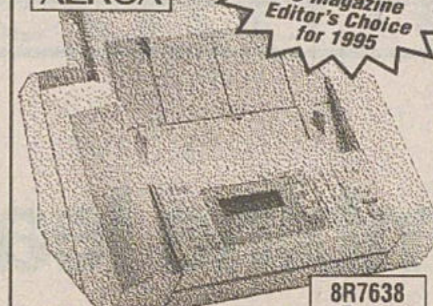
2020 15" monitor (13.5" viewable) \$349.00 1405-0894



Packard Bell

The Intel Inside[®] & Pentium[®] Processor Logos are trademarks of Intel Corporation.

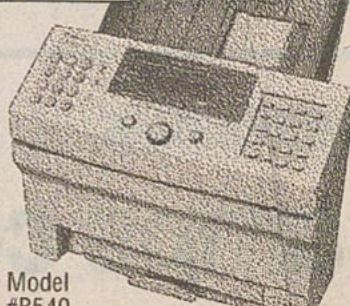
XEROX



Five-In-One Machine Xerox WorkCenter 250

8R7638 Toner \$39.99 0201-2422

Canon



Model #B540

BubbleJet Printing Canon Fax Machine

\$X3 Toner \$39.00