

First, the good. In May, I travelled with Manu Keggenhoff, *YNoO* art director and co-publisher, to Ottawa for the International Regional Magazine Association conference and awards, and we returned with new hardware—five awards. Among other accolades, two contributors won big in the circulation-under-35,000 category. Rhiannon Russell received a gold award in the general-feature category for her story about a student bison-hunting trip, and Peter Mather won top honour for photographer of the year. *YNoO* contributors, including writers, photographers, and illustrators, are the backbone of this publication and I'm grateful for their ceaseless creativity, energy, and effort, award-winning or not (although it's nice to see recognition on a larger stage, as well).

Now, the bad. During the awards ceremony, I found out my friend Amanda suffered a brain bleed and was medevacked to Vancouver from Whitehorse. She passed away 10 days later, at age 33. Anyone who has lost a close friend or family member so suddenly and at a relatively young age can relate to the feelings of disbelief that accompany the grief. The only solace was seeing Amanda's Whitehorse family come together to support one another. "Life is good and also brutal," said a friend when I told her what happened. She didn't know Amanda but has suffered her share of loss recently. I think of those words often.

In this issue, I have mostly good news to share with you. Mark Kelly takes us on a visually alluring father-son road trip up a remote gravel road you've likely never travelled and maybe never heard of; Pavlina Livingstone-Sudrich tells us what Parks Canada is doing to share a more



inclusive version of the Klondike's history; and Miche Genest, our "Boreal Chef" columnist, introduces us to two families making delicious contributions to our food security. Also, do you believe in sasquatch? Either way, *YNoO* associate editor Wayne Potoroka's story about the "hirsute hominid" and sightings thereof will grip you. Oddly enough, actor and storyteller Sharon Shorty also has sasquatch on the mind lately, as Heather LeDuc explains in our arts feature.

Autumn is upon us and, aptly so, Haley Ritchie delights us with tales of dedicated berry pickers and their bountiful plunder of cranberries and blueberries. One thing she doesn't divulge, though, is where to find them. If you ask a picker where they filled their buckets, don't be surprised if they reply with "Don't-Remember Lake" or "Can't-Find-It Mountain." It's not personal and don't worry—there are more than enough berries to share amongst everyone, including bears. Keep your head up.

Amanda was an avid berry picker, applying the same zest to foraging these "jewels of the forest floor" as she did to mountain biking and trail running. This fall, when I'm scanning the red and orange and sometimes berry-blue tundra, I'll think of her, as I often do when I'm having a reflective moment in nature. Life is precious and we owe it to those we've lost to appreciate all the moments, big and small.

*Karen McColl*

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## Life is good and also brutal

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