

# PREMIER

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## Hudson graduate writes backpacking manual for 'idiots'

Own misadventures fuel material aimed at everyone from novice to experienced. Author to do two local talks

**By Bob Downing**  
Beacon Journal staff writer

Jason Stevenson has turned his own backpacking mishaps into his first book.

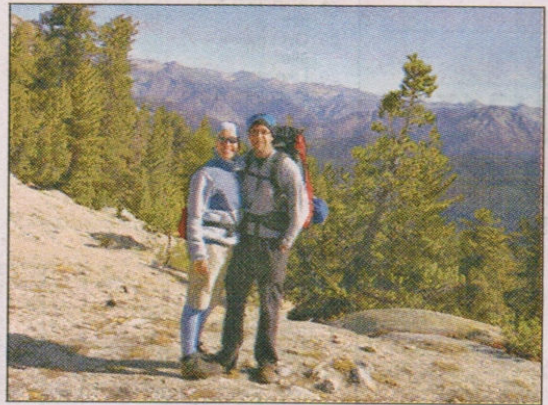
Stevenson, 31, who grew up and attended schools in Hudson, is the author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Backpacking and Hiking* (Alpha, \$16.95).

The 344-page book is filled with

useful information for beginners and experienced hikers. It covers everything, including getting started, gear, footwear, clothing, food, fitness, water, first aid, hygiene, outdoor survival, wildlife and hazards. There is even a chapter on hiking with significant others.

In an interview, Stevenson said he hopes his how-to book will help others avoid getting lost, being caught unprepared for bad weather, breaking in new gear on the trail, taking a shortcut with bad consequences and running out of daylight.

Those are among the



Author Jason Stevenson (right) and his wife, Jackie Rohrer, in the Sierra Nevada mountains in 2009.

misadventures that Stevenson, who now hails from Lancaster, Pa., has experienced on the trail over the years.

He and his wife, Jackie Rohrer, formerly of Bath Township and now doing her medical residency, both carry maps. They bring all pertinent maps, not just some. That change

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## Backpack

Stevenson suggests head lamp for hikers

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came after they got lost in New Mexico's San Juan Wilderness and ended up following a game trail, not the hiking trail they wanted.

On a trip to New Hampshire's White Mountains, they got a late start for what they expected to be an easy eight-mile hike back to their vehicle. They opted for a

shortcut that ended up adding seven miles to their trek. It also required repeated stream crossings. They reached the car at 10 p.m. in the dark.

That's why Stevenson suggests that hikers add a light-weight head lamp to the 10 must-carry-with-you items.

He and Jackie set off on an October backpacking trip on Mount Rainier in Washington. They flew out, bringing limited outdoor gear. They set off in a drizzle. As they climbed the mountain, the rain turned to snow. Soon it was a blizzard with 5 inches on the ground and more falling. They had a sleeping pad and a sleeping bag good for zero degrees that Jackie got.

Jason got the bag good to 30 degrees and no pad. He had a very cold night, he recalled.

Stevenson got his start on family camping trips and with Hudson-based Boy Scout Troop 333 at Camp Manatoc in northern Summit County.

He graduated from Hudson High School in 1996 and from Harvard University with a degree in history in 2000. He got a master's degree at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, where he studied British Navy battleships in World War II.

He worked as a consultant in Boston and as a writer in Washington, D.C. He joined *Outside* magazine as an assistant editor for two years and *Backpacker*

magazine, where he was an associate editor for two years.

His editing stints had him living in Santa Fe, Boulder and Allentown, Pa., which put him close to backpacking trails. Now he is a freelance writer.

His personal favorite trail is the Bondcliff Trail in the White Mountains. He also favors Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and the West Rim Trail in north-central Pennsylvania.

Stevenson will speak at 7 p.m. Friday at Appalachian Outfitters in Boston Township and at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Learned Owl Book Shop in Hudson.

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