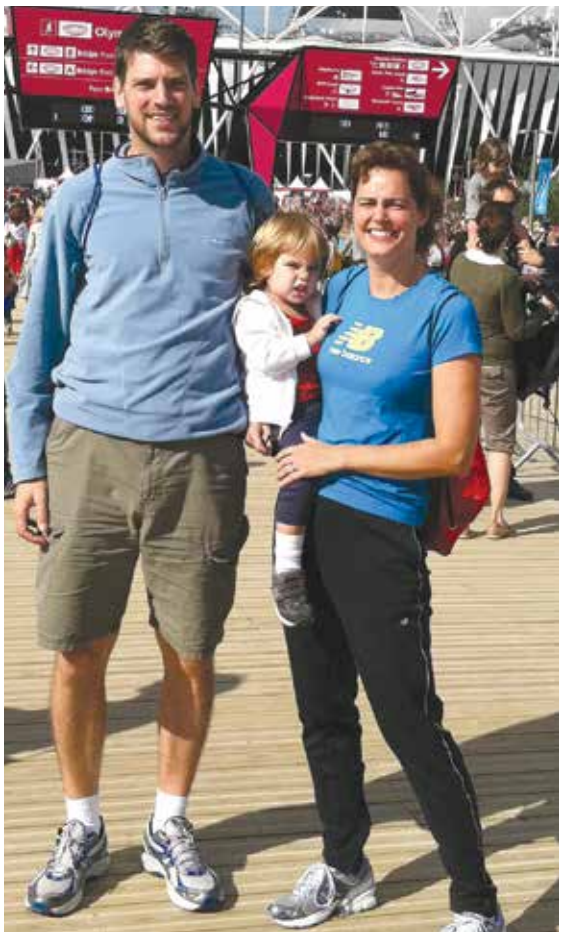
Noah and Devon Lansner

STORY BY **ALISON RILEY**

Couple inherits love of cycling and bicycle travel from parents and eagerly passes same on to their children

NOAH AND DEVON LANSNER have been Adventure Cycling members since 2001. Born and raised in Brooklyn by bicycling parents, Noah learned to balance on two wheels by riding around the playground at his elementary school. A love for learning and cycling must have stuck with him because, after multiple cross-country tours, and years of teaching, Noah is now the principal of Brooklyn Preparatory High School in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and he and his wife Devon are Adventure Cycling Life Members. Throughout high school and college, both Devon and Noah were runners, and Noah's first foray into the world of bicycle touring occurred in the summer of 1997, after his freshman year at Wesleyan. It was a Habitat for Humanity ride called the Habitat Bicycle Challenge. The idea of traversing the country had always appealed to him and a bike tour seemed like a perfect way to accomplish that goal. After the Habitat Bicycle Challenge was over, Noah knew his taste for touring had not been sated. Fast forward a few years to 2001. Noah is teaching high school, working on his master's in education. He's sitting in class, he's tired, and he feels stagnant, so he thinks, "You know what? I'm just going to get on my bike and do this." Noah joins Adventure Cycling and decides that once school is out in May, he's going to take a solo, self-contained tour from his front door in Brooklyn to Portland, Oregon. The day arrives, he's got his maps, he rides all day, and then, as he's riding around looking for his campsite, Noah realizes he's misread his map and gone 20 miles in the wrong direction, up and over a mountain. Day 1, and his only option is a seedy, over-budget motel room with no air conditioning. Feeling disheartened and hungry, Noah does what any decent bicycle tourist would — he finds an ice-cream stand and sits down to a greasy, gratifying meal before heading back to purchase his motel room. Naturally, a family starts chatting with him and offers him a place to pitch his tent on their lawn, setting the pace for what would become a 4,800-mile "phenomenal, amazing experience."



On Noah and Devon's first date, Devon, suffering from laryngitis, was unable to talk. Eager to make the date a success, Noah talked for both of them, and ended up talking mostly about his solo, cross-country journey, now five or six years behind him, and his goal of touring all 50 states by bicycle. Devon was intrigued and proposed that they do a trip of their own.

After the windiest, rainiest, coldest, and most amazing ride from New York City to Nova Scotia, and a moment on the third day on a rainy mountain pass in New Hampshire where Devon was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

hurting, miserable, and seemed like she might kill him, Noah proposed that they get married. Devon loves finding the backroads and quiet places that no one would ever visit. Those roads often lead to tiny towns with no hotels and forgotten campsites right on the water that, in the morning, when the tide is out, reveal miles and miles of desolate, rocky beach.

The next summer, they rode their bikes from New York City to Michigan for a friend's wedding and ended up cycling all the way to Minneapolis. At 41 states, Noah is close to his 50-state goal. Now with two young children (Blythe and Clay), it's harder to plan multi-day tours in faraway states like Hawaii, but when the kids get a bit older, Noah and Devon plan to take them on a few bike overnights around Upstate New York, stopping to avail themselves of mini-golf courses and ice cream — their weak spots — at every opportunity. I asked Noah why he and Devon decided to become Life Members of Adventure Cycling. He said that after two cross-country rides, and many two-week tours, bike travel will always be in their future plans. When sometimes five, or seven, or 10 years can pass between tours, knowing that they'll never miss an issue of *Adventure Cyclist* means the motivation and the reminder to "slow down, go with the flow, and be unplugged" will always be there. "It's like the first night of my solo, cross-country ride," said Noah. "You just have to relax. It will work out. Bicycle touring reminds you of that." AC

Alison Riley is Adventure Cycling's Digital Media Coordinator.

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