

TODD JARRELL

Writer
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Picture:
Herald-Citizen, TN - Camille Fliss

<http://www.ajlambert.com>

SAILING AROUND THE WORLD IN A YEAR AND A HALF

Tracey LeFevre
Herald-Citizen Staff

They're *bona fide* sea dogs now, matey. But brothers Todd and Brad Jarrell didn't master the art of sailing on just any old ship on just any old voyage.

The two, whose mother, Nancy, lives here in Cookeville, recently spent 18 months sailing around the world aboard the barque *Picton Castle*, a 10-story tall, 180-foot long sailing vessel designed to resemble a clipper ship of the 1880s.

"It was an amazing experience. It was like spending a year-and-a-half in the pages of a *National Geographic* magazine," Brad said.

Although Brad had never spent the night aboard a sailing ship on the ocean until he joined the crew of the *Picton Castle*, Todd had.

Todd had been interested in 'tall' sailing ships for some time, and he became familiar with being aboard one during the Tall Ship Races in Europe in 1995.

So when Todd learned about the *Picton Castle* voyage from an ad in the back of a magazine, he told Brad about it, and the two immediately became interested in joining the ship's crew.

"Capt. Dan Moreland had gone around the world 20 years earlier on the brigand *Romance*," Todd said. "Ever since that time, his dream was to build and captain his own vessel to sail around the world. That way, others could also share his dream of keeping a dying tradition alive."

Capt. Moreland's dream was on the way to becoming a reality when he bought the *Picton Castle* in Norway in the early 1990s.

Built in England in the 1920s, the ship was originally a steam-powered cargo and fishing boat but was used as a mine sweeper during World War II and was then converted to diesel power sometime during the 1950s.

After its most recent conversion to resemble a turn-of-the-century clipper ship, about the only similarity between the *Picton Castle* now and the *Picton Castle* of the 1920s is its riveted steel hull.

All of the ship's other hardware, such as rigging, masts and even the anchor and chain, had to be made specially by hand.

Moreland, of course, approved both Todd and Brad for his crew which ranged from 25 to 40, about 40 percent of whom were women.

So the brothers, neither of whom is married, sold most of their possessions, rented their houses in Nashville and Arizona and joined the rest of the crew at the ship's home port of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

And when the *Picton Castle* set sail to circumnavigate the globe on Nov. 25, 1997, Todd began a series of recordings about the adventure which were broadcast regularly on National Public Radio.

"The roughest weather we encountered during the whole voyage was in that first week at sea when we ran into a series of gales," Todd said. "We were in 40-mph winds and 25-foot waves."

The winds were so strong, in fact, that some of the crew members who were professional sailors were even getting sea sick.

"And one of the women on the crew broke her leg trying to get to the rail to throw up that first night we were out at sea," Brad said.

Because the woman's injury required immediate medical attention, the ship was forced to turn around and sail back into port.

And soon after setting sail once again, the strong winds broke the ship's steering gear, and the crew had to go immediately to Bermuda for repairs.

But the rough start didn't last throughout the whole voyage, and Todd and Brad say that if they had the opportunity to do it all again, they wouldn't hesitate.

They also admit, however, that being a crew member wasn't an easy task.

"It took about 12 or 14 people working an average of 45 minutes just to haul up the anchor, for example," Todd said.

The crew also had to memorize the placement and use of the ship's 170 working lines that control the sails.

"But we could work them all even in the dark after just a little while," Brad said.

And he's not exaggerating. The crew was often called to hoist or lower sails at all times of the day and night.

They had to be in control at all times of more than four miles of rigging, and protecting that rigging from salt water and sun damage required that the crew apply regular coats of tar to the ropes.

Perhaps most importantly, however, was keeping someone at the helm to steer the ship at all times. "If the weather was bad enough, we'd sometimes have to harness a crew member to one of the masts and run a lifeline from him to the helmsman," Brad said.

"That's the only way to stay at the wheel without being washed overboard in a storm."

But the crew's work normally fell into quite a calm, rhythmic pattern.

"Instead of following the shipping lanes of today, we followed the trade winds just like a traditional sailing ship would have, so we would sometimes go for weeks at a time without seeing another ship," Todd said.

Because there were no alarm clocks or telephones -- or even real showers -- aboard the ship, the crew was able to fall into their rhythm really quickly, Brad said.

"The days just kind of melted away," he said. "The view of the sunset on the ocean was beautiful, and it was a scene we saw just about every day."

In fact, one of his fondest memories about the voyage, said Brad, was watching the orange ball of the setting sun drop down as if it were sitting right on top of the ocean's waters, then slowly slide below the horizon as another crew member, a professional musician, played her cello on the boat's deck.

But there were many other special places and events to remember too.

The ship's route, for instance, took the crew to the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti and Bora Bora and Pitcairn Island, where the famous mutineers from the *Bounty* went to live.

From there, the route continued through the South Pacific, and one of those islands where the ship docked was Palmerston Island.

"There are fewer than 50 people on Palmerston Island today, and they all belong to the same family," Todd said.

The island became populated in the 1800s, from the offspring of only one man, named Marsters, and his three wives.

Today, the island has 11 households but no stores, restaurants, banks or other commercial establishments.

And all of the people who live there are still named Marsters, Todd said. "They are all descendants of the man and three wives who originally populated the island."

Although the people of Palmerston Island were especially concerned about the importance of family, that characteristic was not limited to them, Brad said.

"In so many of the places we would go, the people said they thought we must be lonely traveling for so long without our families," he said. "But once they learned that Todd and I are brothers, they always thought it was neat that we chose to make this voyage together."

The two even met a man in Bali who had worked for their father, the late Bill Jarrell, at the Air Force Academy in Colorado.

"We never imagined meeting someone halfway around the world who knew our family," Todd said. "We just happened to start talking to him because we noticed that he was an American, too, and the next thing we knew, he was saying, 'You two are Bill Jarrell's boys! I knew your father!' That was a pretty emotional moment."

But the brothers have other, if not so emotional, memories.

On the raised coral atoll Aldabara, for instance, they saw giant land tortoises and leather back turtles making their annual trek from the sea to lay eggs.

They walked streets so narrow that they couldn't accommodate automobiles in Zanzibar, off the eastern African coast, and they went on safari to Tanzania.

They visited the Capetown prison where South African civil rights leader Nelson Mandela was held for 19 years.

And they saw the small island of St. Helena, where Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled.

Each stop on the voyage seemed somehow to enhance a lesson the brothers had learned somewhere else along the way.

"We weren't just tourists," Brad said. "Everywhere we went, we established a cultural exchange with the people."

Todd agreed.

"We learned some valuable lessons and made some lifelong friends, not just among the ship's crew but all the way around the world," he said.

Although the two encountered many different people and cultures, they said, the one thing about them all that was similar was their relationships among family and friends.

"People are pretty much the same everywhere you go. They just want to live their lives and be with their families and friends," Brad said. "But politics can sometimes get in the way of a lot of wonderful human relations."

The Picton Castle sailed back to its home port in Nova Scotia just last month, as the HMS Rose fired cannons in salute.

And the dock was overloaded with well-wishers and supporters, one of whom was Todd's and Brad's mother Nancy, who just couldn't resist reaching out to touch the beard Todd had grown during the voyage because he'd never had one before.

Yes, the journey had been an achievement -- a memorable achievement.

And now it was time for the two brothers to get used to land once again -- Todd as a marketing representative for a Nashville television station, and Brad as an Arizona cowboy and actor.

But getting used to land again is going to be really hard.

"The rest of the world just doesn't keep the same busy pace as people in the US think they have to," Brad said.

* For more information, visit the ship's Web site at www.picton_castle.com;

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THE ALLURE OF TALL SHIPS

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Bio:

Todd Jarrell's interests in sailing, scuba diving, world music and culture have led him to writing adventures in North, South, and Central America, the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Australia, Africa, Europe, the Far East and Antarctica.

In 1997, after fifteen years in advertising, Jarrell signed on to the tall ship Picton Castle on her inaugural world circumnavigation. He recorded a vignette series for public radio during the twenty-month voyage, recounting the sea passages, fascinating people and disappearing cultures encountered. The series anthology is now published as the popular audiobook *Slow Dance with the Planet* (High Bridge).

Jarrell sailed two of Europe's Cutty Sark Tall Ships Races, and the double trans-Atlantic Tall Ships 2000/Opsail 2000, writing the five-month website journal for Tall Ships Millennium Challenge. Recently Jarrell crewed Amsterdam's tall ship Europa to Antarctica via Cape Horn. He has logged over 55,000 sea miles -- at five miles an hour.

Current projects include contributions to an upcoming book entitled *And the Great Ships Came: A Nova Scotia Anthology* (Nimbus), and *Hemispheres* articles on Antarctica and on the music scene of Nashville.

Upcoming works include an audiobook on the life of World War I hero Sgt. Alvin C. York, featuring York's previously unheard home recordings, and a five-part Antarctic series for BBC Radio 4.

When not traveling, Jarrell resides on a small farm east of Nashville, TN.

Amateur sailor tells of his global trip

by Mike Kilen: Mission & History - http://www.glr.org/about/glr_staff_bio.php3?id=117

JARRELL SHARES HIS VOYAGE AT BOOKWORKS

By CINDIE MILLER
Herald-Citizen Staff

It was an adventure that changed his life. For 20 months Todd Jarrell worked and walked and slept on a tall ship as it traversed the world. For 20 months Jarrell and his brother Brad lived and breathed in a microcosm of wind and water with their fellow crew mates aboard the *Picton Castle*, a refurbished clipper ship.

Now Jarrell is sharing that life-changing journey with others, in his audio book "Slow Dance with the Planet," out just this week. The two-cassette collection of essays chronicles Jarrell's journey as it occurred. Jarrell will be signing copies of it Saturday at BookWorks from 2-5 p.m.

"I've had to do a little bit of remastering," Jarrell said. "And Marcus Mitchell (of WCTE-TV) worked on remixing. I have to give a lot of credit to Scott Smith of WPLN, who worked as my first engineer on the tapes."

Jarrell had recorded short stories while on the ship and sent them to NPR, which broadcast them in a series. Some of the stories needed reworking, some of them didn't, but Jarrell believes they are better than the originals.

"I had to record them whenever we came to a port" he said. "I'd go to the nearest radio station and ask them if I could use their studio. They were very gracious. Then I'd send them off and live in fear until I heard they arrived in Nashville."

Many area residents have heard the stories and have expressed their awe to Jarrell in making the decision to take the trip.

"It's just a matter of letting go," he said. "I love to sail, and I was trying make my way as a writer. This gave me a reason to write."

Jarrell has worked as a copywriter and songwriter, among other ventures in his life, and the opportunity to make this voyage arrived at a time when he was ready to take the plunge. Of course, there had to be some preparations -- bills still have to be paid, for instance, and 20 months is a long time away from home. But those preparations did nothing to detain him. "I'd talked with Captain Mooreland and called my brother, Brad, and asked him if he was serious about taking this trip. He said he'd have to think about it. I told him he'd better think fast, because I'd just quit my job."

The loss of income didn't stop him, though. "I had a deal in hand for a documentary-journal, but that eventually didn't work out," he said. "Then John Edgerton suggested I meet Rebecca Baine (of Nashville NPR) and she set the process in motion."

The ports from which Jarrell sent his stories sound exotic to most of us -- Raratonga, Cook Island, Samoa, Fiji, Australia, Bali, and South Africa, to name a few. But the people he met long the way were the inspiration to keep going.

"People are all so different, but deep down, everybody worries about putting food on the table and Mom's health," he said. Apparently, finding a common ground for conversation was not so difficult, even if the languages were different.

"People would ask me if I didn't get lonely, but then when I told them my brother was traveling with me, they felt better," Jarrell said. Family is important all over the globe.

Jarrell has a manuscript which he hopes to eventually get published, but he chose to produce the taped version of his story first for several reasons. One, of course, was because they were already in progress, and he had a forum for sharing his adventure already in hand. Because of licensing legalities they had to be remixed, but he's happy with the result.

"Writing with audio is such a pleasure," he said. "Especially if you get to read it yourself. Then it comes right from your mind into your words. You can catch the ambience of a place, and the pulse of the other people's voices. For the audience, I think audio is much more vivid inside your head when you can hear the background sounds and music."

Unlike a video, which would place a picture in front of the audience, Jarrell feels the audio production will take a listener right to the place -- the ship, the marketplace, wherever he is in the story -- because of the creativity of the mind.

Jarrell's book has a handsome jacket which he designed and which features the photo of the *Picton Castle* which Captain Daniel Mooreland took. Inside, Jarrell tells of the people he met during the 20-month trip, as well as "Feasts, safaris, violent squalls and shipwrecks." Definitely a journey most of us would prefer to take vicariously.

"I met several people I'd love to visit again," he said. "There was a lady truck driver whose daughter was on the ship. She invited me to go on a big rig with her sometime. Then there was the Samoan who was going to be driving a trucking train in Australia. I'd love to go on that, too." Apparently there is some link between the modern-day "prairie schooners" and the tall ships, at least in Jarrell's mind. Both represent adventure, freedom, and new discoveries.

"This is just such a fascinating planet," he said. "I discovered kadzu in Guatemala -- Guatemala! -- They're having the same problem with it we are. And one day we saw dust on the ship, and we were 200 miles from land. The dust was from Africa. Imagine! We were getting pieces of the Sahara blown right over us!"

Adventure is addictive, and Jarrell plans to continue sailing. He's hoping to participate in the Tall Ships Race next year, and to continue pursuing a writing career. Hopefully, he can combine the best of these two worlds and "eke out a living," as he says, doing what he loves.

Isn't that, after all, what we all want?

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TODD JARRELL

The Tennessean/Associated Press

http://www.oakridger.com/stories/082099/stt_0820990104.html

NASHVILLE -- In five minutes, Todd Jarrell told his mother on the telephone, "I'm announcing my resignation."

"How do you feel?" Nancy Jarrell asked.

"I'm scared to death."

Todd Jarrell, 42, cleared his throat, walked in and announced he was sailing around the world. He would give up his job, sell his car, lease out his Mt. Juliet home, say goodbye to his Cookeville, Tenn., family for 18 months. Awestruck employees called him "everyman."

It's every man's dream.

"I am amazed at the number of people who consider this a courageous act."

Jarrell wrote those words in a trip journal, swaying on the Picton Castle, a tall ship with enormous masts and billowing sails meant to resemble a clipper ship of the 1880s. He read the writing into a tiny recorder, sent the tapes to WPLN-FM 90, where Nashville public radio listeners eventually found themselves dreaming of an expansive world on Monday-morning commutes.

Jarrell's "audio postcards," lyrical essays lovingly told for the past 15 months, were a pleasant surprise to Jarrell and to WPLN listeners, who will hear their conclusion this month.

From sparsely-populated Pacific islands to the deserted Indian Ocean and North Atlantic storms, Jarrell says he was in a 37,000-mile "slow dance with the planet."

This wasn't a desperate man's escape from reality. Single, comfortable and having the best year ever in advertising sales, Jarrell called his life the "American dream."

The loved son of a military father, he settled in Nashville in 1993 and learned to sail tiny catamarans on Percy Priest Lake, the peace and magic of the sport easing workday pressures. The experience sparked an entry in an essay contest. The winner would join a crew in tall ship races overseas.

He won and began his affair with tall ships, two years later responding to an advertisement for the Picton Castle, the inaugural voyage of a sail-training ship whose trainees were also its sailors. The 19 months at sea would change their lives.

Men and women of all ages paid thousands to work the life of a sailor on a majestic three-masted ship, bathing with sea water, cooking with coals and relying on the wind and navigational skills honed by ancestors.

Jarrell didn't count on the flood of images it would bring him. He wasn't a writer. But when he sent back his first essay, program director Henry Fennell was impressed enough to go out on a limb.

"It looked as though we were sailing into a black hole. You could see the way the sea gathered the rain in fists."

The November 1997 departure for Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, sent a mostly green crew of 35 reeling into 30-foot waves. For days on end they fought and froze.

The duties were both tedious night watches, backbreaking jobs with riggings and greasing and dangerous sail unfurling, which scared him "spit-less" in the storm.

It was only the beginning.

Late in the night in his bunk, he massaged words, not simply flowery travel prose to describe the world's wonders but correspondence with context.

On Bora Bora, sailors getting tattooed at a parlor became a metaphor for the men and women marked by this search.

"When we return from this voyage we will all have changed. We will not be the same people who upended our lives to discover ourselves and other cultures."

Jarrell's older brother, Brad, was also on the trip. Wherever they went, one theme tied the world together, says Todd Jarrell, who returned to Cookeville in July.

In the long nights at sea on watch, the Jarrells would summon their late father, who had often supplied them with lessons of cultural tolerance. They're sure he would revel in their adventures.

Island people would marvel at their ship, which Jarrell described in his essays: "She is designed to find full freedom in neither the ocean nor the air but in the place where the elements collide. The interface of opposites."

The trip was tough. As many as 20 bunked in a common area, shared tight quarters and waited for the bathroom. Jarrell didn't shy from those challenges in his "postcards," including a blast at a "dismal" cook with an attitude problem.

"We were waiting for people to overcome their shortcomings while they wait for you to overcome yours. In short, we were family."

With Nashville listeners closely following the progress, along with Internet and magazine readers, a gathering of 2,000 formed at the trip's ending point back in Nova Scotia in June. One writer said the 570 days at sea had made them "ancients."

Jarrell had even deeper feelings.

He was in awe that sailing the world had not made the planet seem smaller but larger. "We had only made one little thread around it."

The captain had told them during the voyage: "This is not a trip you come back from."

"I think he is right."

Jarrell had found his voice on the ocean.

Now it beckons again. He wants to write full time and has already accepted a monthlong assignment reporting on tall ship races with Public Radio International. More essays of those adventures will be heard on WPLN in September.

The captain was right.

The images are still too strong. Sailing along in the darkness of the sea in a deserted Indian Ocean, spotting a satellite in the sky, he wrote that he stood at the intersection of two eras.

On that night, he told listeners:

"We see that in each other and in our hosts -- curiosity of who we once were and who we are to become."

Simply sailing

Lindsay Pride
Herald-Citizen Staff

Todd Jarrell dreamed of adventure as he read classics like *Moby Dick* while growing up in Colorado.

But for years Jarrell, who now lives in the Cookeville area, carried on a fairly ordinary existence in radio and television advertising until reading an advertisement seven years ago which ultimately changed the direction of his life.

Now, miles away from the fast pace of his previous career, the 45-year-old finds comfort and productivity in a life of adventure sailing in 'tall ships' all over the world -- and is about to set out on a long, new voyage down the western flanks of the North and South American continents.

In 1995, Jarrell saw the published notice calling upon readers to submit essays on the purpose those slow, old-fashioned, wind-driven ships have in the world of jets and nuclear-powered engines.

From 3,000 applicants, he was one of eight selected to participate in a three-week voyage in the North Sea aboard the Polish ship, Dar Młodzrzy, as part of the Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race in Europe.

Nearly 140 people were aboard the 120-meter-long, 180-foot-tall ship, whose name means "gift of youth."

"Eight of us were American, and the rest were Polish," Jarrell said. "It was an amazing experience. I didn't know anything about ships, much less in Polish."

The race is actually a contest to see which ship's crew works the best together while learning how to sail and other basic operations of the ship.

"It's really a huge amount of knowledge," he said. "The knowledge of the sea, the wave systems, the currents, the weather, the radio. It has its own language."

"It's about friendship," Jarrell said. "I don't know of another event like it in the world. The people teach you -- it's sail training. It was a major thing. It opened my eyes up to a lot of possibilities."

Although born and raised far from any sea, he now feels most at home when he's actually nowhere near home at all -- he's taken every opportunity to be on the sea since his first experience with sailing.

In 1997, Jarrell left his 15-year career in radio and television advertising to begin a new life which has taken him to more than 40 countries in recent years. "I was working at Channel 2 in Nashville when I saw the ad about the trip around the world on a square-rigged ship."

A square-rigged ship means that the sails attached to the yards are perpendicular to the keel.

Jarrell and his 49-year-old brother, Brad, called and got information on the voyage and visited Canada to see the ship, Picton Castle.

"Then we quit our jobs, leased our houses and sold our stuff," he said. "We quit our lives to go start a new one."

That trip proved to be a turning point in their lives. Having sailed only once for a few weeks, Jarrell and his brother traveled 38,500 miles in 20 months, stopping at 38 ports in 22 countries.

"It's a trip you don't get back from entirely," he said. "It was an expanding experience."

But he wasn't as glad to come home as one might expect.

"It was quite strange to come back from the world trip," he said. "By that time, you had traveled from culture to culture in 25 countries. When you came home, it wasn't like coming home. It was like going to another country."

Jarrell also had difficulty readjusting to life on land in other ways.

"Like after a long trip, it's hard to get used to the pace here," he said. "You come back to the city and everyone's in a rush. There's a deluge of horrifying news everyday. Everybody has a 90 mile-an-hour look on their face. It's a shock. It doesn't feel healthy."

"All of a sudden, the calm you found on the sea, bit by bit, grinds it off you," he said. "After a while, you just want to go to traveling."

And going traveling is exactly what Todd Jarrell did.

When he got back from that first trip, he signed up for the 1999 Cutty Sark Tall Ships race aboard a Dutch ship, Swan Fan from Makkum, and traveled from France to the Irish and Celtic Seas around Scotland and Ireland, finishing in Denmark.

"I was there as a journalist, but I ended up sewing sails every day," he said. "I went to write, but I also went to work."

He was writing for several magazines and for Nashville Public Radio at the time and had previously written *Slow Dance With The Planet*, an audio-book based on his trip around the world which won an Associated Press award for 'Best Production' and an award from AudioFile Magazine for "excellence in narrative voice and style."

Then Tall Ships Challenge 2000 came along and while he was still writing for various magazines and a syndicated news column in Canada, Jarrell was also part of the paid crew aboard "Eye of the Wind" on a trip from England to Spain to Bermuda to the United States to Amsterdam.

"Eye of the Wind" is a ship many non-seaman might recognize as the ship from the movies, *Blue Lagoon* and *White Squall*.

"On that race," he said, "I met Capt. Klaas Gaastra, the Dutch skipper of a ship called 'Europa.'" That square-rigged ship built in 1911 is one of the oldest ships in the world, according to Jarrell who had heard a rumor that 'Europa' was going to Antarctica and asked Capt. Gaastra if he could go along as part of the paid crew.

On that trip, Jarrell split ship duties with seven other deck hands, each working a minimum of 10 to 14 hours a day through "Force 10" storms with 60 mile-per-hour winds.

He explains that in comparison, a "Force 12" storm is a hurricane.

"The winds blew out the sails and broke telephone-pole-thick yards," he said. "We also ran into an iceberg one night. It was an adventure."

On that trip, the crew traveled around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America, which is referred to as the "Everest of Sail."

"Historically, crews might spend two months trying to get around Cape Horn. Some would lose about 90 percent of their crew. It's estimated that about 800 ships have gone down there."

"It's not more dangerous (than life on land), but it's a very straightforward existence. Your daily existence boils down to 'This is where we're headed, and this is how we're going to get there.'"

"It's a life completely different from life here," he said. "It's linear and straightforward. There's now phone, no television. No news, no newspapers."

"At some point it doesn't matter what time it is or what day of the week it is," he said. "You get to know people very well. Some you don't like much, some become lifelong friends. It's a purposeful thing."

"When it's good, it's incredibly good," he said. "The things you see -- the natural phenomena -- the sunsets, the places you visit, the friends you make."

"You work on watch twice a day helping steer a ship swaying beneath the stars with the moon coming up -- *what's not to like?*"

"You sleep twice a day, so it's like having two days in one day. It's like having two opportunities to make the best of each day."

The trip the Jarrell brothers are about to embark on is in honor of the closing of the Cape Horners' Association, a group of sea captains whose voyages have taken them 'round the fearsome Cape many times.

"We're rounding the Horn in honor of these men. They're incredible guys. They have lived very hard lives."

Jarrell explained that during a meeting of the Cape Horn'ers' Association in Denmark, he listened to stories of old sea captains who used to sail around Cape Horn. "It was fascinating to hear their stories," he said. "I've lived that now."

His trip leaves from the West Coast as part of the Tall Ship Challenge organized by the American Sail Training Association.

He'll leave from San Francisco next Wednesday, sailing to Los Angeles and then to San Diego. After that, the crew will travel around Cape Horn, first sailing about a month to Easter Island, then six weeks to Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands then to South Georgia and then back to Tierra del Fuego.

"The captain is quite assertive," he said. "He likes to go places other people aren't going."

Beyond the adventure of the sea, Todd Jarrell finds that he has gained a bigger appreciation of the world through the simple life of sailing.

"In my original essay I wrote that the ships introduced the world to itself," he said. "In the beginning the world was like a child. Ships had carried the world's food, philosophies and religion. It was how the world found itself.

"People came to this country on ships," he said. "There's a common thread of ancestry for everybody. People by and large see the ships as icons for the time."

And within the new appreciation for life, Jarrell now takes pleasure in the "simple things."

"Chocolate is golden on a sailing ship. You really appreciate simple things. You find that most of the things you beat yourself up about in this world don't really matter. You get used to living small. There's a real freedom in that.

"Someone once told me that sailing around the world is a voyage of self-discovery with self-reliance as a by-product," said Jarrell.

"I've found that to be true."

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WCTE-TV TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTARY ON SELLS'

SOUTH AFRICAN IVORY EXPEDITION

By DONNA CASTLE
Special to the Herald-Citizen

When Cookevillian Todd Jarrell, an international radio/television producer and writer, proposed to WCTE-TV Station Manager Becky Magura that he follow wood sculptor Brad Sells to South Africa to produce a documentary, she thought, "How in the world can we do a project like this halfway around the world?"

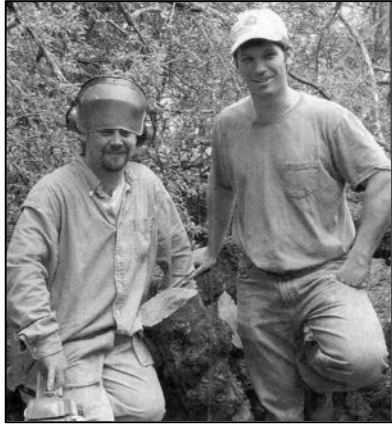
But the idea of documenting Sells' journey came to life when Magura produced a half-hour special program on Sells for local broadcast in January.

During the taping, Sells mentioned to Magura that his plan to travel to South Africa to find the exotic wood pink ivory (*berchemia zeyheri*) was indeed underway. He would leave at the end of February.

"Why go all the way to South Africa to work with this native wood?" she asked. He explained that the problem was that pink ivory could not be shipped out of the country in raw form, and that he would have to rough sculpt the pieces there.

Magura immediately sought out Jarrell, who has written extensively about his travels, to produce the documentary he had proposed -- "The Ivory Tree: A Sculptural Journey." It was a wonderful opportunity, she thought, to produce a program that not only fulfilled WCTE's local mission but had national appeal as well.

"This half-hour program will follow the creation of Tennessee artist Brad Sells' flowing sculptures from the big sky of South Africa to the bright lights of SOFA, Chicago's internationally acclaimed Sculptural Objects and Functional Art show," she said.



"Cameras would follow Sells' travels into the African bush with his Cookeville assistant, Iatt, and a guide native to South Africa," said Jarrell, explaining his treatment of the documentary. "Working with rural farmers and consulting scholars, the crew would not only search for the location of the wood, but try to investigate the cultural history and identity of the famed pink ivory wood, royal wood of the Zulu nation."

(Picture: "Tree Safari: A Sculptural Journey" at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18. It tells the story of Upper Cumberland artist Brad Sells as he travels to Africa in search of a rare wood to use for his sculptures, and it was produced by WCTE's Emmy Award-winning Todd Jarrell. Pictured from left are woodcutters Steven Flatt and Brad Sells. Herald-Citizen, Sunday, 15 March, 2009, pg. B05).

Having a producer in place, Magura hoped that a staff member of WCTE would be able to shoot the program. Several members of WCTE's production team expressed an interest; however, time was running out, and the opportunity to secure a person with a passport slipped past.

Fortunately, Jarrell had worked with an independent professional videographer from London on his past sailing expedition and contacted him. Rob Hawthorne, a British videographer, agreed to travel to South Africa to shoot the documentary.

When this unique partnership -- a national artist, a world traveling journalist and a PBS affiliate -- had been formed, there was more work to be done.

The endeavor would require a significant amount of money before the dream of making the documentary about Sells could be realized. Magura went to work along with Jarrell and Sells to develop a support team that would be interested in bankrolling the first phase of this expedition.

Some of those who signed on to help with funds were Dr. Walter Derryberry; Dr. Sullivan and Rhonda Smith; Dr. Danny and Diana Strange; Rich Street of Aristol Inc.; Carolyn Morrison; Dr. Jim and Mickie Akenson; Derek and Diana Baranowski; Lindsey Scurlock; Brian Pugh; Jere Hargrove; Judy Jennings; Donna Simpson and Steve Chapman; Barbara Reynolds and George Barnard; and Sam and Shelia Barnes.

Sells, Flatt and Jarrell left Cookeville at the end of February and returned last week. Things went well for Sells in roughing out the pieces to bring back, as well as for Jarrell.

"We've shot extensive footage in the bush as well as with Brad in the makeshift studio here," Jarrell said during the trip. "The local people have been great, and the shots we are getting are just exquisite."

According to Sells, pink ivory is a very exotic, sought-after wood native to South Africa.

"It's just one of those woods that has a lot of character and a brilliant pink color," he said. "I've seen beautiful pieces, and I've always wanted to work with it in its rawest form."

The WCTE-TV documentary, "The Ivory Tree: A Sculptural Journey," will be completed in winter 2005. Once the videotape is brought back, Jarrell and Magura, along with other members of the WCTE

production team, will work on taping additional footage. Finally, the more than 30 hours of raw footage will have to be viewed before the final editing phase of the project begins.

Also, while in South Africa, Todd traveled Cape Town to produce and shoot a story with Cookevillian Ryan Dalton about his work with homeless children there. The name of this half-hour documentary is "A Change of Heart: Ryan Dalton's Cape Town."

"There is still a need for funds," Magura said, "because some of the post production for 'The Ivory Tree: A Sculptural Journey' will be very expensive. Although WCTE-TV has received a grant to go through the second phase of the digital transition of the tower, we have not purchased any new editing equipment for a number of years. Some of the post production will have to be done in Nashville for this reason."

Anyone interested in contributing to this project may contact Magura at (931)528-2222, ext. 11.

Published March 19, 2004 4:04 PM CST : Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

JARRELL WINS NATIONAL AWARDS STORIES ON METH, MORRIS GARNER KUDOS FOR COOKEVILLE MAN

Jill Thomas
Herald-Citizen Staff

COOKEVILLE -- Cookevillian Todd Jarrell left advertising eight years ago to see the world.

Since then he has sailed around the globe, written a book about his adventures, written over 80 pieces for magazines including the National Geographic and reported news stories for BBC and CBS radio as well as for National Public Radio.

But it is his work closer to home that has resulted in national awards for the advertising man turned reporter.

Jarrell recently received two national awards for excellence in 2005 from Public Radio News Directors Incorporated (PRNDI) for stories he did about the Cookeville area for WPLN, Nashville's Public Radio station.

He was awarded First Place for Best Series for his five-part *In Meth's Grip*, and First Place for the Best Soft Feature *Winston Morris: Tuba U4*, an interview with the musician who has been a guiding force for Tennessee Tech's tuba ensemble.

The meth series aired over five days featuring interviews from many of the Upper Cumberland's legal, law enforcement, medical, and treatment professionals as well as from several meth addicts.

Jarrell dates his love of travel and searching out news stories, along with his love of Putnam County, from childhood.

"We moved all the time when I was a kid. I was an army brat," Jarrell said. "But my mother (Nancy Travis Jarrell) grew up in Putnam County and I came here every summer when I was growing up."

In 1997 Jarrell and his brother Brad took off on a two year stint as crew members on the Picton Castle, a square-rigged "tall ship" setting out on its inaugural voyage around the world. The trip took 20 months.

"I came back, stayed for two weeks, and then headed out on a windjammer called the Swan Fan Makkum for another trip.

"I've always wanted to travel and see the world, meet the people who populate this ball in space," Jarrell said. "I'm cursed with a curiosity about the world and really want to be out in it. What makes a place is its people."

Writing about his travels provides Jarrell with the means to continue his travels. Writing news stories evolves naturally from his curiosity about people.

"And NPR is a great outlet for stories. Anita Bugg, the news director at WPLN in Nashville is as sharp and dedicated as you can get. She has always encouraged my stories and is great to work with," he said.

Jarrell's work is expanding all the time. This spring he put together a one-hour prime time special for ABC Television News that was filmed at Tennessee Tech and has been nominated for both an EMMY and Associated Press awards.

Presently he is producing a television documentary entitled *Black Wood, Red ivory: An African Tree Safari* which is following Cookeville artist Brad Sells as he tracks down exotic African hardwoods for his sculptures.

In the fall Jarrell hopes to pack his suitcase again and head out for some time in Nepal.

"That's an area that fascinates me. I want to see if I can find out what those people are like."

Are there places Jarrell has visited that he wants to see again?

"Every place!" he laughed.

"I'd like to go back to everywhere I've ever stopped. When you go somewhere and never get off the tour bus you're just sightseeing, you're not really traveling."

Public Radio News Directors Incorporated is a non-profit, national organization that encourages the professional development of public radio journalists.

According to its website PRNDI is committed to the highest standards of journalistic ethics and excellence. Its Code of Ethics encourages journalists to stand apart from the pressure of politics and commerce when informing listeners, seeking truth, and reporting the news.

The PRNDI awards are the result of the only national contest to honor local reporting.

Other stations competing with WPLN in Nashville for PRNDI awards were from Pittsburgh, Pa; Newark, N.J.; Charlotte, N.C.; Spokane, Wash.; Birmingham, Ala; Bowling Green, Ky.; Winston-Salem, N.C.; Amherst, Mass.; Arizona; Harrisburg, Pa.; Fort Myers, Fla; and others.

To listen to Todd Jarrell's story *In Meth's Grip* go to <www.wpln.org/news/methlabs>;

Published September 09, 2005 12:52 PM CDT: Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

SCULPTURE SAFARI

By MARGARET SHUSTER
Herald-Citizen Staff

COOKEVILLE -- What started as an artist's quest for a rare African wood is now a completed documentary and is WCTE's first international project, one which might get the small PBS station and a group of creative Cookevillians national recognition.

"Tree Safari: A Sculptural Journey" follows wood artist Brad Sells of Cookeville on a journey to South Africa to obtain the exotic wood pink ivory (*berchemia zeyheri*). The show then tracks Sells' progress with the wood when he returns home, finally receives the shipment and uses it to prepare an exhibit for SOFA, Chicago's famous Sculptural Objects and Functional Art show.

Joining him on the adventure are local writer/producer Todd Jarrell and British videographer Rob Hawthorne, along with Sells' assistant, Steven Flatt.

The half-hour program will have its first public screening 5 p.m. Tuesday at the Leslie Town Centre, with a chance to meet and talk with Sells and Jarrell beginning at 4:30 and following the film.

According to Sells, pink ivory is a very exotic, sought-after wood native to South Africa.

"It's just one of those woods that has a lot of character and a brilliant pink color," he said. "I've seen beautiful pieces and I've always wanted to work with it in its rawest form. Now I've realized this dream."

Why go to Africa instead of having the wood shipped here?

"I can't get the woods the way I want them in a green state, a fresh state (when they're shipped here)," said Sells. "It has to be refined if it's shipped here."

To have the wood "refined," or cut down to the rough sculptural forms Sells needed for his sculptures, would require that he go to Africa and do it himself. The wood is also very expensive -- about \$250 for a small block -- and Sells said he can get it cheaper by going to the source.

When several collectors expressed interest in partially funding Sells' quest for the wood, the idea began to take shape. Sells was working with WCTE Station Manager Becky Magura in early 2004 on another program for local broadcast when he mentioned the trip to her. She promptly contacted Todd Jarrell, who has written extensively about his own travels, to produce a documentary of Sells' pending journey.

"It was a wonderful opportunity, she thought, to produce a program that not only fulfilled WCTE's local mission, but also had national appeal as well," said Donna Castle, WCTE's program/promotion director.

The program reflects the many obstacles Sells and crew had to overcome to get the wood from Africa in near-raw form to the finished pieces that would be shown in Chicago.

"Brad had to meet with Zulu tribesmen before he could acquire any of the wood to sculpt," said Castle. "He traveled by truck into the African bush in search of dying trees to transform into works of art."

Timing was a definite issue.

"The first week was very stressful -- we had very little wood," said Sells. "We discovered what's known as Africa time, which isn't like the time in this country. One source finally called us two days before we left and said he could meet us, but it was too late. But we found other sources of wood -- some very good sources."

Sells' shipment of the pink ivory and five other African hardwoods was late arriving in Cookeville, leaving him only five weeks to get all the pieces ready for show.

"Because it took so long to get the container back, we had about a third of the time we really needed to prepare for that show," said Sells, who worked many long nights to complete his pieces for the show.

But there's a happy ending. Jarrell and Magura accompanied him to the SOFA exhibit in Chicago and documented some of the critics' and spectators' rave reviews of Sells' work.

After the program airs locally, it will be offered to PBS for use by other stations throughout the country.

"We will be submitting to PBS network's home office to see if they'll pick it up as a national feed, and if for some reason they don't, we have other avenues for getting it on PBS," said Magura. "We certainly think it's worthy of a national feed."

Added Jarrell, "It was a really aggressive move for WCTE to send a camera team to Africa and bring photographers in from England and hire a very expensive post house in Nashville to bring the production this kind of quality look. This is like anything you'd see on Discovery or PBS."

"Tree Safari: A Sculptural Journey," a co-production of WCTE and Jarrell, was made possible by the financial support of several individuals from the Upper Cumberland, a grant from the Tennessee Arts Commission and a generous donation from Averitt, with local underwriting secured through SunTrust.

The soundtrack for the documentary is performed by Ethan Ballinger and his band, Little Sarah's Orchestra. Individuals may order copies of the program by sending \$19.89, payable by check, money order or charge card, to WCTE, P.O. Box 2040, Cookeville, TN 38502, or by calling 1-800-282-9293.

Published January 15, 2006 2:18 PM CST : Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

JARRELL FOUND FILM PROJECT 'IRRESISTIBLE'

By Anne Cathey

COOKEVILLE: Cookevillian Todd Jarrell served as producer for the WCTE documentary "Tree Safari, A Sculptural Journey." Jarrell is an international radio-television producer and writer who has written extensively about his travels. He chose to follow Sells on his travels to Africa and Chicago because the story appealed to him as "irresistible".

"Brad brought the idea up to me and said he was going to do this, and I thought this would make a great show. I mentioned it to Becky and it was a lot to consider. The more she thought about it, though, she said, 'Here is a guy who is a world-class artist. He's really one of the top 10 or 15 wood sculptors on the planet. To not take advantage of something like this would be a pity.'"

From concept to completion, the entire project took a little more than two years to complete. Jarrell went back into the studio in November 2005 to wad through hours of tape to condense into a 27-minute documentary.

Challenge was to keep it informative, exciting:

"At the end of the day we had about 34 hours of tape we had to cut down to 26 minutes and 46 seconds," said Jarrell.

Choosing what to put into the feature was no small task, either.

"There were several hundred cuts here. That's the hard part because we have so much great footage, such as the wildlife and so many great things the African traditional healers said. It's really painful to make some of these cuts.

I always try and write one sentence about what this program is about, and anything that doesn't fit in the sentence has to go. It's difficult because you have to make the feature visually exciting while keeping in important information," said Jarrell.

Jarell said another challenge was trying to keep the feature educational while also making it artful and a travel journal while trying to marry the idea of the importance of the wood to the Zulu people.

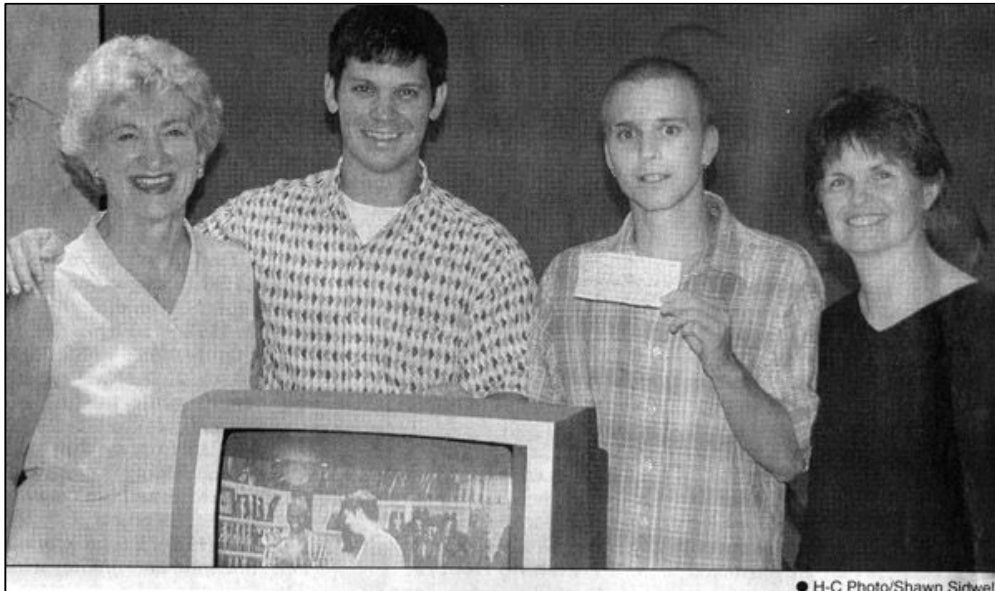
"The wood is important to these people. It is real medicine and it is bonafide to them. They're not witch doctors, they're traditional healer," he said.

To Jarrell, no stranger to international travel, the project was a natural for him to cover.

"I just thought it was a unique story. Brad does unique work. He was going to a remote and interesting part of the world to find rare and beautiful woods to finish out in a unique way and show in out in one of the biggest gallery shows in North America.

"It wasn't one thing in particular that lured me to the project, it was a combination of many thing. To me it was an irresistible combination of integrated topics I thought would make a really nice story," he said.

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



A HELPING HAND: Proceeds from a wood sculpture by Cookeville artist Brad Sells auctioned at the recent Bryan Symphony Gala here are split between the Tennessee tech orchestra and the work of a young Cookevillian, Ryan Dalton, who is helping homeless children in South Africa. From left are Nina Lunn, representing the symphony association; Brad, Rayn and Becky Magura, station manager at Cookeville's WCTE-TV public television station, where documentaries are being produced featuring Sells and his work and another on Ryan Dalton in South Africa. Todd Jarrell of Cookeville is producer of the films, both taped in part on location in South Africa. Broadcast dates have not been set.

Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN, Sunday, 4 July 2004.

A RISING STAR

JARRELL WINS AWARD AT MIDSOUTH EMMYS

[Margaret Shuster](#)

Herald-Citizen Staff

Sunday, Feb 03, 2008

Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea Todd Jarrell discusses his filmmaking career and his recent Rising Star Award, shown in the foreground.



COOKEVILLE -- Independent filmmaker Todd Jarrell of Cookeville was honored with the Rising Star Award at the 22nd Annual Midsouth Emmy Awards, held Jan. 26 at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville.

The Rising Star Award is presented by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (the organization that presents Emmys) in conjunction with the Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Commission. Unlike an Emmy award, the Rising Star Award is not given based on just one work by the

recipient.

"We look at pretty much the same criteria that we would use for Emmy awards, except the difference here is that this is a person who is anticipated to make a great impression on broadcasting, someone who is expected to become a leader, someone who is expected to become a star," said Geneva Brignolo, executive director of the Nashville/Midsouth Chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Jarrell began writing and filmmaking in 1998 after quitting his 15-year career in television advertising to join the crew of a tall ship for a round-the-world voyage, from which sprung a public radio series and audio book titled "Slow Dance with the Planet."

After producing a prime-time special called "Meth in Tennessee" for WKRN in Nashville, which was nominated for a community service Emmy, Jarrell went on to produce his first documentary film, "Change of Heart," examining Ryan Dalton's mission work with the street children of Cape Town, South Africa.

Jarrell's next two projects, "Tree Safari: A Sculptural Journey," which follows Cookeville's nationally renowned wood sculptor Brad Sells to South Africa on a quest for exotic wood, and "Crank: Darkness on the Edge of Town," which portrays the Upper Cumberland's struggle to control methamphetamine, were recently syndicated nationally by American Public Television for distribution among PBS stations nationwide and are also featured in the latest PBS Home Video and Educational Video catalogs.

"Everything that I could possibly have wanted to happen for these shows has happened," said Jarrell. "I'm thrilled."

Becky Magura, general manager of WCTE-TV, along with the WCTE staff, nominated Jarrell for the Rising Star Award.

"He's a phenomenal writer and producer, and he's had tremendous experience already in radio and magazine, but he had not tackled that storytelling in video until he did the documentary on Ryan Dalton. His capability and honing his craft of storytelling has grown tremendously over the last two years."

Said Jarrell, "It's sort of funny at my age getting a Rising Star Award, but it's a whole new career for me

that really started years ago when I started traveling. I enjoyed writing, storytelling has always been a big part of my family, and there are various ways of doing that. This is just another form of telling a story and finding what you think is interesting and trying to make it interesting to other people as you see it, or informative or important. It's a real nice honor."

Because Jarrell had to be in Bangkok, Thailand, for his brother's wedding on awards night, Magura accepted on his behalf.

"It's a wonderful award for him," said Magura. "It's equally exciting for the staff of WCTE, and I think it really says a lot about our area in Cookeville and the Upper Cumberland and the kind of talent that we have right here."

Added Jarrell, "I hope it was nice recognition for WCTE as well, because they've certainly given me opportunities that other stations wouldn't have."

Not one to rest on his laurels, Jarrell is already busy producing three more projects: "Tree Safari: The Koa Connection," which follows Sells to Hawaii, this time in search of koa wood; "Tuba U: Basso Profundo," which tracks the influence of TTU tuba professor R. Winston Morris on tuba music worldwide; and "Smoke of the Dragon," a celebration of the motorcycle culture on a particularly curvy Appalachian highway.


Jarrell is currently seeking funding for his next two projects on the horizon, a program about Alvin C. York and a six-episode series about Brad Sells and his worldwide quest for exotic woods.

"I think what he does best is tell the stories of the people and the talent and the region that we live in in a way that is true," said Magura.

Added Brignolo, "Independent filmmaking is a very challenging career, and Todd has risen to that challenge. I have no doubt that Todd will continue to win awards and make a real difference."

To learn more about the Midsouth Emmys or to view the streaming video, visit the Web site, www.emmyonline.org/nashville.

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kinnes

Reception to honor Jarrell

The public is invited to a reception WCTE-TV will host at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday to honor filmmaker Todd Jarrell, shown above, who recently won the 2007 Prevention for a Safer Society (PASS) Award from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and the 2007 Rising Star Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (the organization that presents Emmys) in conjunction with the Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Commission. The reception will be held in the Executive Dining Room of the First Tennessee Bank Building, 345 S. Jefferson Ave., Cookeville. For more information, call WCTE at (931) 528-2222.

Herald – Citizen newspaper, Cookeville, TN:
Wed., 16 April 2008, pg. 8.

JARRELL RECEIVING ACCOLADES FOR DRUG BIOPIC

‘CRANK’

Author: Elizabeth Ayres Herald-Citizen Staff
Date: December 11, 2008
Publication: Herald-Citizen (Cookeville, TN)

COOKEVILLE -- Citizens of the Upper Cumberland are most likely familiar with Todd Jarrell and his work in documentaries. His poignant film-making has even captured the area's detrimental, concentrated problem with methamphetamine addiction. And his work to reveal the seedy, drug-afflicted underbelly of an otherwise picturesque town in his film "Crank: Darkness on the Edge of Town" has earned Jarrell a Nancy Dickerson Whitehead Award, which honors journalists and filmmakers for their work in drug awareness and prevention, and an Emmy nomination as well.

"Broadcast and Print Journalism are the two categories (of the Nancy Dickerson Whitehead Awards),": Jarrell said, "media are entered by the production entity. All stories revolve around drug and alcohol issues...The award event/luncheon was held in the America Society building in New York on Park Avenue."

"Crank: Darkness on the Edge of Town" was a community effort, with Jarrell at the wheel for the artistic elements.

"WCTE's Becky Magura and I proposed the program to Cookeville Police Chief Bob Terry and then-district attorney Bill Gibson," Jarrell said. "We received monies as sub-recipients of a federal corps grant through them, and with this seed money we approached ITVS, the Independent Television Service in San Francisco, for further funding. I raised the final monies with underwriting from Vanderbilt Medical Center and the Memorial Foundation.



"Beyond fundraising I – as with all my projects – researched and wrote the script, shot the video, interviewed all subjects, found historical footage, directed, produced, supervised the post-production and delivered the film for national distribution. 'Crank: Darkness on the Edge of Town' was taken nationally by American Public Television and premiered in primetime on WGBH Boston in November 2007."

"Rather than a business partner, she is my life partner of the last six years and the person who is my first and best critical editor," he said.

"I was asked well before the program to be prepared to speak about the impetus and the making of the program; what I was not prepared to do was follow Stahl, Diane Sawyer and Peggy Noonan of the Wall Street Journal to the podium – all very poised professionals to

say the least," Jarrell said, "Campbell Brown was the award presenter. At the reception before the lunch they were all very nice and asked really pertinent questions about the program and its making. To be included in that room as a peer in producing content on such a serious topic was truly humbling."

But Todd Jarrell's awards circuit is not through yet. He just picked up a Midsouth Regional Emmy nomination for Topical Documentation for Writing. These awards are dedicating to awarding the best in local news, public television and music. Winners will be announced Jan. 24.

"Meth in Tennessee,' a program I co-produced for Nashville's WKRN (ABC) was nominated for both regional and national Emmys for Community Service (2006-2007)," Jarrell said.

“Last January, I was awarded the Rising Star Award presented by the Emmys for the Tennessee Film Entertainment & Music Commission. This is a body of work award.”

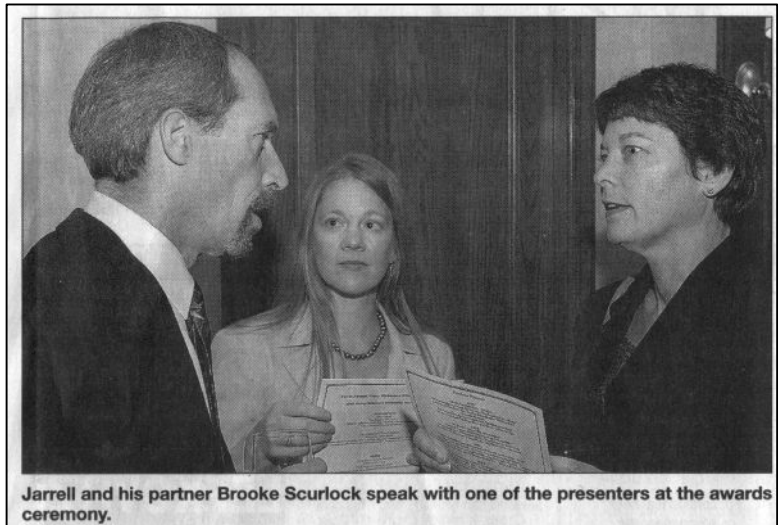
At the moment, Jarrell is currently finishing work on his latest project, “TUBA U: Basso Profundo,” following the career of Winston Morris and his Tennessee Tech Tuba Ensemble.

The program has been accepted by PBS for a national prime-time slot. He is also editing the second of his “Tree Safari” series, “The Koa Connection,” which was filmed in Tennessee, New York and Hawaii and features local sculptor Brad Sells. In the future, Jarrell will make time for documentary projects on sailing Cape Horn aboard the tall ship Europa, on the Ollie Otter public safety campaign and on the life of Alvin C. York.

“Though I’d written extensively for print and radio, the opportunity to work in television came from Becky Magura at WCTE-TV,” Jarrell said.

“Her trust in me as a producer has been a gift, and we are all truly fortunate to have a local PBS station in our community that has the power to put the poignant, rich and varied stories of the Upper Cumberland out onto the national stage.”

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



22 QUESTIONS WITH... TODD JARRELL

Sunday, Jan 04, 2009: Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN



Todd Jarrell doing some editing at WCTE.
Herald-Citizen, Cookeville - Photo/Camille Fliss-Mayberry

Name: Todd Jarrell

Hometown: Colorado Springs, Colo.

Now living in: Cookeville

Family: Partner Brooke Scurlock; mother Nancy Jarrell; sister Travis; and brothers Buddy and Brad.

First job: Newspaper route.

Current occupation (and since when): In 1997, I began deepwater sailing and traveling the world, writing stories for magazines, newsprint and public radio, eventually gravitating to directing, shooting and producing public television documentaries in 2004.

What I love about my job: Around the world there are beautiful places and sumptuous foods, but always, most special are the people with whom I am allowed to meet and spend time, learning about their lives and the world in which they live which, however different, can be surprisingly similar to my own.

Part of my job I could do without: Endlessly raising production funding and typing interminable interview transcripts.

What drew me to this occupation was: Travel. After sailing round the world I realized that, rather than smaller, it had only become exponentially larger to me with so much more to see and do. I felt compelled to just keep getting "out there."

Dream job: Staff writer for National Geographic.

When I'm not working I'm: Talking/thinking/planning work.

I'm most proud of: My partner Brooke, my mother and siblings and four Emmy nominations.

Something most people don't know about me: For several years, I was a professional musician. I still own three full sets of drums.

Favorite movie: "Casablanca" and "The Great Escape." (*I added a sub-question:*)

Favorite books: "Peter the Great" by Robert K. Massie, "West with the Night" by Beryl Markum and selections by Tom McGuane or Jim Harrison.

Favorite food: Currently, any self-respecting creme brulee and the incredible tacos at the little trailer kitchen outside the Tienda Latina market just over the railroad tracks on North Washington.

My hero (and why): Pepe Le Pew. Such masterful aplomb and suave self-assurance in the face of all evidence to the contrary is strangely admirable.

As a child, I thought I'd grow up to be: Staff writer for National Geographic (or a double-aught spy).

What I watch on TV: "House," PBS' "News Hour," "NOVA," "FRONTLINE" and "Frasier."

Favorite childhood memory: Family camping in the Colorado Rockies and summers at my grandfather's farm in Springfield.

If I could do it all over again I'd: Start tomorrow. Who wouldn't want another chance to do more, see more and meet more fascinating people?

I'd love to meet: Writer Samuel Clemens and satirist Will Rogers for a lengthy, beachside champagne brunch.

Advice I'd pass on to future generations: Travel the world, challenge your preconceptions and daily thank your lucky stars that everyone is *not* just like you.

STEM CENTER HOSTS PREMIERE OF 'TREE SAFARI: THE KOA CONNECTION'

The Koa Connection focuses on Cookeville's own world-class wood artist Brad Sells, pictured here on location in Hawaii, and the search for exotic woods for his unique sculptures. The film will be distributed nationally by American Public Television. Photo/TTU



TTU -- The Cookeville premiere of "TREE SAFARI: The Koa Connection," a documentary co-produced by Todd Jarrell and WCTE-TV, will debut at the Millard Oakley STEM Center on the Tennessee Tech University campus at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 23.

Combining art and eco-travel, TREE SAFARI: The Koa Connection, focuses on Cookeville's own world-class wood artist Brad Sells and the search for exotic woods for his unique sculptures. The film will be distributed nationally by American Public Television.

Filmed on location in Tennessee, Hawaii and New York City, the half-hour program follows Sells from his studio in Cookeville to the forested volcanic slopes of Hawaii in a quest for koa wood, revered for its density, tone and color.

This is the second Tree Safari film by local, award-winning producer Todd Jarrell. The first documentary in the series, TREE SAFARI: A Sculptural Journey, followed Sells as he traveled to South Africa in search of pink ivory trees. The film was distributed nationally on PBS and won both the "Telly" and "Aurora" awards.

Both Jarrell and Sells will be on hand to answer questions at the STEM Center premiere.

"This should be a great event and I very much welcome the opportunity to present my work and the accomplishments of WCTE," said Jarrell.

The evening will begin with a reception in the lobby of the STEM Center and will be followed by the screening of the half-hour documentary in the 240-seat auditorium.

The STEM Center is located at 155 W. 7th St., corner of 7th and Stadium Drive, on the TTU campus. Enter and park on the north side of the facility (behind Ray Morris Hall/Oakley STEM Center). Visit tntech.edu/stem for directions and information. While the event is free, reservations are required. For reservations and information, contact WCTE at 528-2222, ext. 229.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 11/15/2010