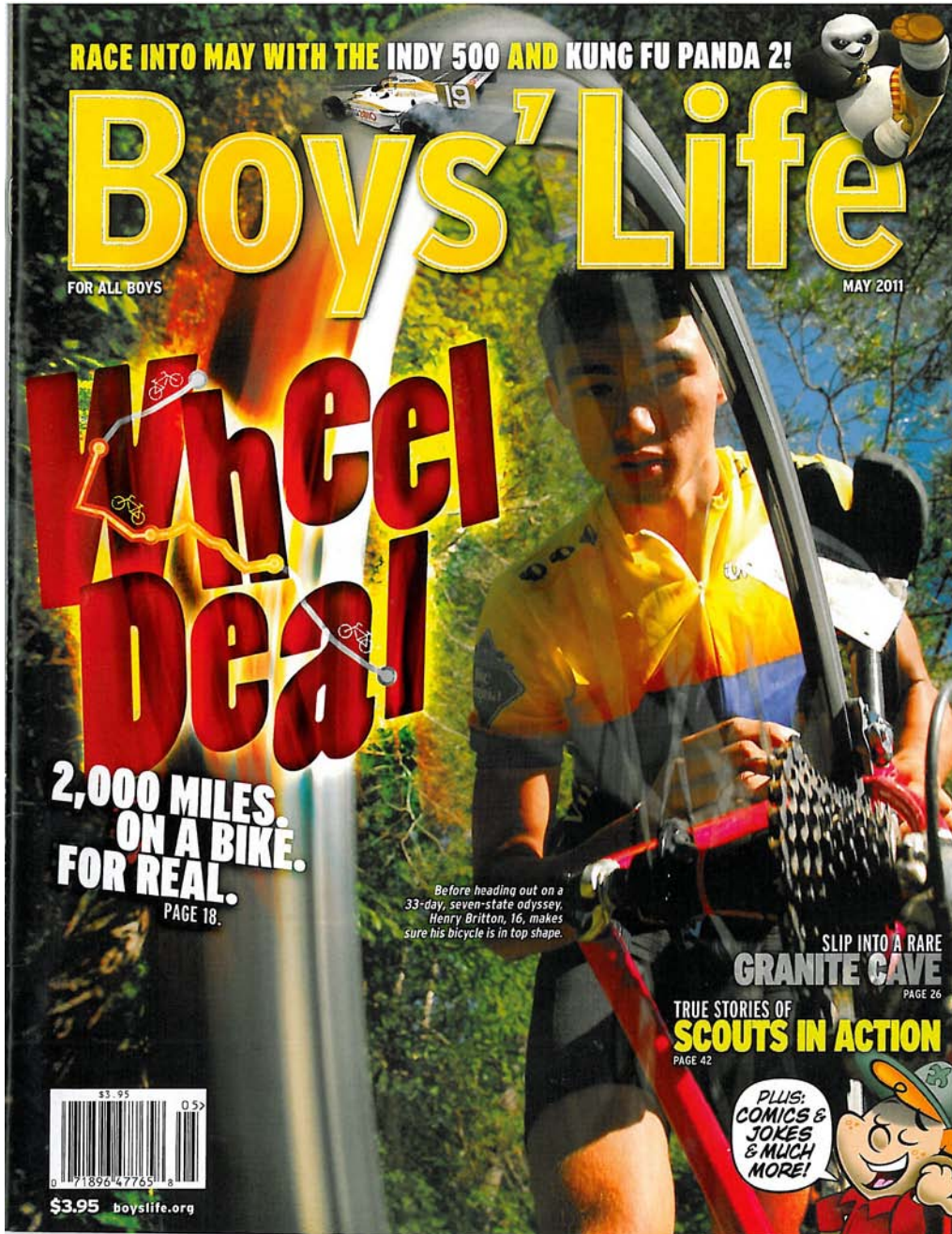


Boys' Life

Ask the Gear Guy

May 2011



ASK THE GEAR GUY

BEFORE YOU BUY, ASK THE GUY. B.L.'S OWN GEAR GUY IS HERE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT GUY GEAR AND GADGETS. Find the Gear Guy at boyslife.org



Q. I'M SHOPPING FOR A TENT AND AM CONFUSED BY THE WAY THE TENTS ARE LABELED FOR WEIGHT. MOST SEEM TO LIST TWO WEIGHTS, A TRAIL WEIGHT AND A PACKED WEIGHT. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

—Confused Carl,

Missoula, Mont.

A. I'll be happy to weigh in on this one. There is no industry standard on how tent manufacturers need to weigh and label their tents. So, consider the weight on a label as a rough estimate. **Packed Weight** (I've also seen it listed as Packaged Weight) refers to everything that comes with the tent when you buy it. That includes stuff sacks, stakes, maybe even a repair kit and a manual. Obviously you won't want to bring all of that on the trail with you, so then you look at the **Trail Weight** (sometimes also listed as Minimum Weight). The thing is, the Trail Weight usually includes just the tent, rainfly and poles. No stakes. No ground cloth. So the Trail Weight isn't all that accurate, either. Others list a **Fastpack Weight**, which includes just the rainfly and poles. All of the above is a long-winded way to say the actual weight will be somewhere between Packed Weight and Trail Weight.



Q. I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND A GOOD PAIR OF CONVERTIBLE SYNTHETIC PANTS FOR HIKING/BACKPACKING. COULD YOU POINT ME TO WHERE I SHOULD LOOK? I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T COST MORE THAN \$45 TO \$50.

—Pantless Paul, Olney, Md.

A. We have just the pants you are looking for, Paul. The official **BSA Centennial Switchbacks** have it all: moisture-wicking and quick-drying nylon construction, UPF sun protection, lots of cargo pockets and other extras. The legs zip off to make perfect hiking shorts, and the price is right in your wheelhouse: \$49.99. Find them at your local Scout shop or at boyslife.org/links/scoutstuff



GREG MARELY

STUFF WE LIKE

Batter Blaster

(About \$5, boyslife.org/links/batterblaster)

If you love pancakes as much as Gear Guy does, then you'll love Batter Blaster, the easiest pancake option we've ever used for camp cooking. It's organic pancake and waffle batter inside a pressurized can. Just press the top and out shoots the batter. It's super easy to make perfectly round and fluffy pancakes. One can makes about 28 four-inch pancakes. I've used it at home for Saturday morning breakfasts and brought it along on several camping trips. You do have to keep it refrigerated, so it might not be a good choice for backcountry trips.

FIND MORE GEAR GUY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PLUS A LOT MORE GEAR! - IN THE 'OUTDOORS & GEAR' SECTION OF BOYSLIFE.ORG