

# About me

My Family spent a few summers in the Rockies when I was a child. We had a cabin in Rocky Mountain National Park, just out side of Estes Park. Those were magical times of innocence and discovery. I remember being able to follow my brother from the cabin to almost anywhere with only a casual remark from my parents, "be careful, and home for dinner". We barely heard the words as we ran for the boulders and trees that scattered the mountainside. Over the years, I had completely forgotten the majesty of the peaks and valley. But all of that changed in 93.

Since my return to the Rocky Mountains in 1993, I have followed a vertical path. By vertical, I am referring to a passion for rock climbing. I was introduced to the vertical world in the spring of 1993 just before my life-changing trip to Colorado. I say life changing because I became so inspired by the rediscovery of the mountains and my passion for the feeling I had while climbing. I gained a sense self-confidence through my climbing that I had never known before. That confidence has remained with me and aided my life in all aspects. I walk in the clouds when I climb, and that is a moment when nothing else really matters.

To this day, I still climb. I consider climbing one of the three 3 passions in my life. The first of which is my wife, Stacey, and my children, Isabel and Max. My second passion is climbing, and third , making flutes.

The first time I heard the beautiful and haunting sounds of the Native American Flute was in August of 1993. I was in a gift shop in Estes Park. It was my last day in Colorado and I was out of money. I had to have a copy of that CD so I asked the person behind the counter what she was listening to. She explained that it was Canyon Trilogy by R. Carlos Nakai. As we left the mountains, I couldn't get the songs out of my mind. I bought a copy the very day we returned home to Kansas City. I still have the CD.

In May of 2003, I was at Smith Rock, Oregon on a climbing trip. One evening, on my way back to the camp site, I passed by a campfire. Someone was playing a Native American Flute by their fire. I could tell he was not a professional musician, but the music he played was simply beautiful. After returned to my tent, I could still hear him playing. The wind in the trees, the songs of the flute and sounds of the wildlife in the night, made that night magical.

When I returned home, I purchased a flute kit so I could make my own flute. I was surprised that my first attempt actually worked. It wasn't a studio quality flute, but a flute just the same. I gave it to a close friend of mine who was leaving Kansas City to travel the world. A week after parting with my first flute, I bought another one from Billy Spear with Wild Wood Flutes in Oregon. I was so impressed and inspired with this flute, that I decided to learn the art of flute making.

For my birthday, my wife gave me a product she found on the internet. It contained an instructional video and a to scale drawing of the internal framework of a flute. That gift, combined with numerous inquisitive emails to Billy Spear of Wild Wood Flutes and Ed Hrebec of Spirit of The Woods Flutes, helped me with my interpretation of the Traditional Native American Flute.

I have found the creation of Native American Flutes to be a challenging and rewarding passion. My flutes are made by hand in combination with some power tools. I do not use a lathe to round or shape my flutes. I believe this helps retain the hand made look and feel. Each flute is created from a select piece of wood based on appearance and the quality of the grain. I strive for perfection in my designs.

## Philosophy of Custom Work

When I create a flute, several things take place in my mind before I touch any materials. First, I try to find a wood suitable for the person requesting the flute. Is the flute more for display and show, for rugged use like backpacking and camping, or is it for performing. Once this is determined, I can select the Key, length of the flute, accents and totem if none are requested in the order.

I enjoy offering people the ability to create something unique to their tastes. Since each flute is made by hand, no two are alike. From the shape of the barrel to the shape of the mouthpiece, each and every one is unique unto itself. Each Totem is created in the same manner. Though their shapes may be similar, they will never be identical. Feel confident that owning a CloudWalker flute means owning a one of a kind work of musical art.