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# Currents



TRAVEL, PAGE E4  
National Folk  
Festival moves  
to Montana

## THE SIDEBAR

### Did you know?

On Feb. 17, 2009, major U.S. television stations will stop broadcasting analog signals and send only digital transmissions.



Questions and answers about the transition:

Why is this happening?

Stopping the analog broadcasts will free up a huge amount of airwaves. The government has auctioned off some of them for use by wireless broadband and cell-phone TV. There's also a drive to use some of the spectrum for a network that can be used in emergency situations by public safety officials.

Do I need a digital converter box?

If you have cable or satellite TV, only extra sets that are not hooked up will be affected. If you get TV over the air — which more than 19 million U.S. households do, according to a survey by Nielsen Co. — your TV might not work come Feb. 18. Most new TVs sold today, including flat-panel sets, have digital tuners, sometimes called "ATSC" tuners after the technical standard they use, and won't need a converter box.

Visit [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or call (888) DTV-2009.

### Celeb news

#### Naomi Campbell to appear in 'Ugly Betty' season finale

LOS ANGELES — Naomi Campbell is getting "Ugly."

The supermodel will appear in ABC's "Ugly Betty," according to actress Becki Newton. A representative for ABC confirmed that Campbell would play herself in the second season finale.

"She's going to be in our last episode, which is exciting," Newton told The Associated Press at the launch party for the new Sunglass Hut store design. "I've personally requested that I don't stand next to her because Amanda would not like to be seen with such a tall, pretty person."

Newtown, who stars as sassy receptionist Amanda Sommers on "Ugly Betty," isn't sure if she'll actually have scenes with the 37-year-old supermodel, who was arrested earlier this month on suspicion of assaulting an officer after police were called to a disturbance at Heathrow Airport in London.

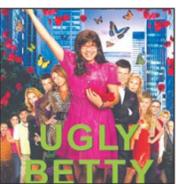
Campbell was originally announced as a guest star last year but didn't appear in the first season or the beginning of the second season, which was cut short because of the writers' strike.



### On the Net

For all your "Ugly Betty" news, visit [www.abc.go.com/primetime/ugly-betty/index](http://www.abc.go.com/primetime/ugly-betty/index).

You can also watch full-length episodes of the show.



— Free Press Staff and news services

*"It seems to me that a person regrets the things they don't do more than the things they do."*



Submitted photos

Adam Tanner (left), a Mankato West grad, and Mike Dickenson have met indigenous people displaced by the civil war in Colombia; filmed Shaman rituals; and explored the rain forest, coffee regions, hot springs, waterfalls, large cities and small villages, among other things.

# His own way

## Mankato native spends three months filming Colombia documentary

By Cathy Jones  
Special to The Free Press

So what if professional filmmakers told Adam Tanner it was impossible?

So what if he had no experience, no film school degree, no company backing, no grasp of Spanish? He wanted to do it, so he did.

A Mankato native, Tanner spent the last three months filming a documentary in Colombia. Soon he'll be on his way back home to Montana.

"I had always thought about what if I would have had a camera when I was being attacked by hobos (while riding freight trains), or hitchhiking down the coast of Australia, or through the mountains of Croatia, or walking into a remote jungle village in Indonesia where most of the people had literally never seen a white man," said Tanner, who graduated from Mankato West High School in 1994. "I thought, 'People would like to watch that stuff on TV or in the movies, right? Why not buy a camera and go traveling to a country I know nothing about?'... So here we are in Colombia, asking people what they think is the biggest problem in the world."

Tanner is working with Mike Dickenson, a friend from their time at Montana State University, who spent two years hitchhiking in Central America, South America and Cuba.

"I had a dilemma in picking a partner,"



Dickenson and Tanner went to college together at Montana State University. They're now filming a documentary in Colombia.

he said. "Who did I know that would want to go to a foreign country and face the possibility of robbery, kidnapping, other physical violence, typhoid, malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, long, bone-crunching bus rides, getting lost and dealing with extreme weather conditions while trying to film it all and still have a good time? Mike was the only person I knew that would think this was a good idea."

They knew that there had to be more to Colombia than cocaine, corruption, coffee

and a couple of guidebook-approved tourist sites. They arrived without a clear plan, knowing that the project would develop in its own way.

Problems filming have been few.

"The police and military people always want to know what we are doing, and when we tell them they just basically want to know how it is going and if we are getting what we want," he said. "We cannot

Please see DOCUMENTARY, Page E8

# 24-7 tutoring at home; More kids learning lessons online

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

**DETROIT** — With the end of the school year and term papers and final exams looming, online tutoring can sound like a parent's dream — a private tutor in the comfort of their home (or their child's dorm room), available 24-7.

No one knows how many students use online tutoring services, but enough are achieving — or trying to achieve — better grades with help from an online tutor to make it a \$3 billion to \$5 billion industry.

"I learn by looking at things," Brittany Townes, 14, of Canton, Mich., said recently. A freshman at Salem High School in Canton, Mich., she studied computers online. "It's a new look at things. You can't get the same experience just by listening to a teacher talk."

But educators caution that online tutoring is only as good as the effort students put into it. And even with a good effort, not all students are like Brittany. Some aren't going to learn without a face-to-face conver-

## Before you hire an online tutor ...

When deciding whether to use an online tutoring service, parents or guardians should consider several factors:

**The child's needs:** Some children need to catch up to their classmates; others need only occasional help as they keep pace with a class, and still others are trying to get ahead because they are capable of moving faster than their class. Not every site is a good fit for every student.

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"Experiencing an online class or tutoring can be very valuable, espe-

### The company's credentials:

Tutoring companies should be up front about their tutors' background and qualifications.

### Students' access:

Some services have tutors available only at certain times, while others have 24-7 access.

### Parental access:

Parents should get progress reports and be welcome to sit in on sessions.

### Technology:

Special software or certain system requirements may be needed to use the site.

cially as these students prepare for 21st-century jobs, but we have to be careful that — first and foremost — we're meeting their academic needs."

### Increasing demand

There is no independent measure of the growth of the online tutoring industry, but TutorVista.com

President John Stuppy said demand for services has more than doubled in the last 18 months alone.

The growth in online tutoring is fueled in part by the No Child Left Behind law, which increased emphasis on standardized testing in schools. It's also fueled by today's students being more comfortable in cyberspace than their predecessors.

But the biggest reason is probably that it is so conveniently accessible, said Ian Wissman, senior vice president of consumer marketing for Tutor.com, which has been around for about a decade and is one of the oldest and largest online tutoring sites.

"People are used to doing a whole lot of their activities online," Wissman said.

### Convenience and quality

TutorVista is typical of many online tutoring companies, in that most of its tutors are overseas. That can give some parents pause, Stuppy acknowledged. But the real issue to consider, he said, is time

and money.

Stuppy said his tutors are fluent in English and extensively trained. He added that he attracts a highly educated work force because in India, online tutors can earn twice as much as classroom teachers. But they still cost far less than American tutors. And using tutors worldwide makes it easier to offer classes 24 hours a day.

"Our goal is to make good quality tutoring affordable to the masses," Stuppy said. He said using Indian tutors helps keep costs lower.

Pricing varies by company. Tutor.com, for example, charges by the minute — 50 minutes for about \$30; TutorVista.com charges about \$100 a month for unlimited tutoring.

According to Scholastic, the venerable school information company, traditional tutors can cost \$10 for simple homework help, or \$40 to \$100 an hour for serious academic help. Costs can vary widely, depending on the company and the number of subjects and hours.