Please read all instructions and regulations on the reverse side of this sheet prior to the completion of this form. The 8 copies of your proposal are due in the Dean's Office on the 2nd Friday of the Block by 1:00 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Rita Zook at x6686 or email rzook@coloradocollege.edu.

DATE SUBMITTED ____________

NAME ___________________________ CLASS __ WORNER BOX __ EXT. ____________________________

ID # __________________ HOMETOWN (Not Address) ____________________________

NAME ___________________________ CLASS __ WORNER BOX __ EXT. ____________________________

ID # __________________ HOMETOWN (Not Address) ____________________________

STUDENT RESEARCH ____________ LIFE OF THE MIND ____________ CONFERENCE ____________

PROJECT TITLE

Memories From the Land of the Long White Cloud

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INTENDED USE OF FUNDS

Funds to cover living costs and some airfare for my trip through New Zealand in which I will write blogs and ultimately create a compilation of short stories describing my experiences.

PROPOSED DATE/BLOCK OF USE ____________

NAME OF FACULTY SPONSOR ____________

HAVE YOU BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF A PREVIOUS VENTURE GRANT Yes __ No /

IF SO, WHAT AMOUNT? ______ WHEN? ______ REPORT SUBMITTED? ______

TOTAL AMOUNT OF VENTURE FUNDS NOW REQUESTED ____________

ARE YOU SEEKING OTHER FUNDING FOR THIS PROPOSAL? Yes __ No /

IF YES, WHAT IS THE SOURCE? 

If this proposal is approved, I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the Dean's Office immediately if I do not pursue my project as proposed to the Dean's Advisory Committee. I further understand that all funds are to be used according to the proposal as submitted and approved by the Dean's Advisory Committee. Any changes to an approved project must be submitted to the Chair of the Committee for approval. Please note: the IRS requires that we report Venture Funds as income.

SIGNATURE ____________________________ DATE ____________________________
Overview

I am requesting funding in the amount of $1000 to aid my venture through New Zealand fourth block, Fall 2010. I will travel through New Zealand by car, starting in the far north in the city of Auckland, and ending in Dunedin. Below is a map of my intended route, subject to change; more specifics can be found in the "logistics" section of this proposal. I will write blogs on my experiences and observations while traveling, and ultimately create a compilation of about ten short stories which I will subsequently present to the campus as discussion-based lecture in January. Success in my venture will be determined by my faculty advisor Steven Hayward according to my daily blogs, final compilation of stories, and presentation on my adventure.
Why New Zealand?

When James Cook first voyaged to New Zealand in 1770 he wrote, “No country upon Earth can appear with a more urged and barren Aspect than this doth; from the Sea as far inland as the Eye can reach nothing is to be seen but the Summits of these rocky Mountains” (Cook, 133). Despite a population increase, the geologic beauty of New Zealand is unparalleled and will no doubt provide me with vivid descriptions and an uncommon, dramatic setting for my stories.

Beyond New Zealand’s sheer natural beauty, several aspects of New Zealand culture have interested me for several years, such as its famed indigenous culture and geographic isolation. Upon further research, I found there was much to be told about the conflict and collaboration of the Maori (indigenous) population and the Europeans, as well as that between the rural and urban communities. In the 1990s Maori was adopted as New Zealand’s official language, along with English. And, while Maori people only make up around 14% of the population, their sense of identity is strong and remains a critical influence in New Zealand culture. Many of their terms are incorporated into New Zealand dialect; my proposed title “Memoirs from the Land of the Long White Cloud” is derived from the popular Maori term for New Zealand. I am fascinated by other influences the longstanding Maori population has had on the current largely European population.

As the last nation to be populated, New Zealand’s culture balances between that which is modern and that which is indigenous; that which is dependent on, and that which rejects agriculture as New Zealand’s primary source of economic stability. More than half of the four million New Zealand residents live in one of its thriving cities, such as Auckland, Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington, and many of their residents are utterly unfamiliar with the nation’s rural, agriculturally reliant contingent. T.S. Eliot said that the separation between urban culture and agriculture in New Zealand is so vast that, “The farmer has been presented (in literature), for several generations, as a comic but unknown character (Fairburn, 259). Yet New Zealand is famed, rightly so, for having more sheep than people. It is still largely a “colonial” economy; agriculture claims 90% of the nation’s exports, and only 14% of New Zealanders have a bachelor’s degree. “Highly Rural Areas,” as the New Zealand Census calls them, approximate 53% of New Zealand’s land, while another third are deemed “Rural Areas with Low Urban Influence.” What is this population like? What are their traditions and what is their work? What are their feelings toward the cities? This unique balance, or perhaps struggle, between agriculture and urban life is a topic that can only be seen and investigated first hand.

New Zealand is also one of the most geographically isolated countries in the world. Such circumstance has created a nation that has evolved largely uninfluenced by the rest of the world both naturally, in terms of plant and animal evolution, and culturally. Its isolated evolution has made it a uniquely interesting place to observe. Because of its young age, A.R.D. Fairburn speculates, New Zealanders have no “residue of traditional culture to redeem them from contemporary chaos” (Fairburn, 258). But this “contemporary chaos,” consisting of conflicts between urban and rural, indigenous and European populations, are similar, albeit less extreme, to the conflicts that writers such as George Orwell, Barbara Kingsolver, and Joseph Conrad grapple with. I seek to emulate these authors in their quests to illuminate cultural complexities within a given society. My particular interest lies in how New Zealand’s lack of a traditional Western framework has affected it, and how this conglomeration of both Western, Eastern, and indigenous
thought and taste manifests itself in such a small, isolated nation. I want to see these tensions with my own eyes and write about them, instead of read about them.

I will no doubt find inspiration from a different culture, but one that would be more safe to travel alone in as it is English-speaking and one of the most crime-free nations in the world. And while my plans do not entail community service or a senior thesis project, New Zealand would provide a literary canvas for which I could write and ultimately enlighten Colorado College on my discoveries. Traveling to New Zealand would engage my love for outdoors, my desire to travel, and my literary yearning to write about something entirely foreign to me.

Why a Blog?

My blog will serve not only as the link between traditional literature and modern technology, but also as a means to publicize and document my experience for the public to read. My blog will in some ways resemble Captain Cook’s daily entries in his journal during his three journeys to New Zealand in the 1770s. Cook observed “variable winds. Cloudy weather” as well as “great ingenuity and good workmanship” from the natives (Cook, 146, 93). These are only the beginnings of hundreds of entries that enlightened Europe of a forsaken part of the world. I will discuss Cook’s enduring observations such as “gentle” and “fresh” breezes, as well as ever-changing New Zealand cities, culture, people, style, activities, and economy in an online blog accessible to anyone who is interested. While my blogs will be far less wide-spread and influential, my role remains to same: to voyage to a foreign land and bring my new knowledge back to my homeland through stories of what I learned and saw.

The purpose of the blog is two-fold: to report my “findings” to the world back home, and to serve as a journal in which I document my experiences that I will refer to once I return home for my short stories.

Why Short Stories?

In The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature, Lydia Wevers argues that short stories are the literature of choice in New Zealand, and, more than the novel, have been the form in which colonial and post-colonial literature have “worked themselves out” (Wevers, 203). This preference is due, according to Mark Williams, both to the continued force of Frank Sargeson, a famous New Zealand short story writer, and the smallness and of the literate population; a short story is, by definition, shorter than a novel and therefore more likely to be read by a larger percentage of the population. My goal is not to “work out” the aforementioned conflict between colonialism and post-colonialism, or to engage a New Zealand audience, but instead to comment on it from an American perspective. While I am interested in re-telling stories from the people of New Zealand, my compilation of short stories will all have the general theme of an American, a foreigner, observing the culture and landscape of New Zealand. These stories will recount my experiences and my newfound knowledge of New Zealand as truthfully but as literarily and artfully as possible, with the ultimate goal that I may be able to publish several. Finally, writing short stories would be immensely relevant to my Creative Writing major, and would help me further hone my writing skills and create a foundation off of which I can base future writing.
Logistics/Route

I plan to rent a car to travel through New Zealand for the entirety of fourth block, leaving November 28th and returning December 20th. In the rural areas I will camp; in the cities I will stay in hostels and with family friends. While the board will not be able to fund the full cost of my venture, the grant would cover all my living costs in New Zealand, as well as some of my airfare. My route is detailed below.

My tentative route is as follows (capital letters indicate their location on the above map): from Auckland I will drive to Dargaville (A), a farming community where I have family friends. From Dargaville I will drive to Rotorua (B), where over a third of the population is Maori and is known as the heartland of Maoridome in New Zealand. Next I will drive to Wbкатane (C) and camp in one of the most stunning places in New Zealand. While tourism is an important growth industry for Wbкатane, it also relies heavily on workers in the pulp and paper mill industry. From Wbкатane I will drive to Lake Taupo (D), a place known for its beauty as well as its excellent farming due to an 186 AD volcanic eruption. From Lake Taupo I will drive to New Zealand's capital, Wellington (E), where I will stay in a hostile and observe one of the first places to be settled by Europeans in the 1700s. Next I will travel to Queenstown (F), which presents a mix between the city of Queenstown and nearby Fiordland National Park, one of the most rural, rugged locations in New Zealand. Finally, I will drive to Dunedin, stay for probably two nights, and then fly out.

Budget

Food (three meals a day at $8 a meal for three weeks) ......................... $504
Round Trip Airfare (including tax).................................................$1638
Gas (traveling 2000 miles)......................................................... $350
Rental Car Costs................................................................. $400
Lodging (when I stay in hostels)............................................... $100

Total Cost---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- $2,992

Venture Grant Request: $1000 (remaining $1992 to be covered by me)

This experience would help me grow as a person and a writer, as well as provide an interesting account of New Zealand culture, thus encouraging CC students to write about their own travels. Both New Zealand's unparalleled geographic beauty and its unique culture would serve as excellent writing topics. After all writing is, if nothing else, a way to document what we have learned and seen, and I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to do so in a such a culturally complex and beautiful place. Thank you for considering my proposal.

October 29th 2010
Bibliography

Map taken from Google Maps

