

Paper clip for house CNN NEWS

BOSTON, Massachusetts (AP) -- Kyle MacDonald had a red paper clip and a dream: Could he use the community power of the Internet to barter(exchange) that paper clip for something better, and trade that thing for something else -- and so on and so on until he had a house?

After a cross-continental(大陸の) trading trek(旅行) involving a fish-shaped pen, a town named Yahk and the Web's astonishing ability to bestow(利用する) celebrity(有名人), MacDonald is getting close. He's up to one year's free rent on a house in Phoenix.

Not a bad return on an investment of one red paper clip. Yet MacDonald, 26, vows(誓う) to keep going until he crosses the doorstep of his very own home, wherever that might be. "It's totally great, I'm not going to lie," he said by phone from Montreal, where he and his girlfriend, Dominique Dupuis, live with two roommates. "But I'm still trading for that house. It's this obsessive(取り憑かれたような) thing."

The story begins last July.

MacDonald had spent years backpacking(バックパックで旅行する), delivering pizzas(ピザ) and working other part-time jobs, suiting his *jack-of-all-trades*(何でも屋), restless(落ち着きのない) nature. He paid his \$300 share of the rent by occasionally promoting products at trade shows.

But he yearned for(欲しがる) one piece of settled-down adulthood: a house, which he knew he could not afford. It's clear, however, that MacDonald has a knack(要領) for promotion. Asked what he had talked up at all those trade shows, MacDonald slipped right into his spiel(大げさな演説) for the employer, TableShox.com. "You ever sat at a wobbly(グラグラする) table at a restaurant?" he said.

Beyond a gift for advertising table stabilizers(安定脚), he's a geography (地理学) mania(マニア), keeps a blog(ウェブログ) and writes short stories. Random interactions with strangers and the rich kitsch(芸術、文学などの駄作) of North Americana provide his favorite material. Put it all together, and you have the outline of MacDonald's quest(探求).

He advertised it in the barter(exchange) section of Craigslist.org, the Web site *teeming with*(—でいっぱいである) city-specific listings for everything from *job openings*(仕事口) to apartment rentals. At first, MacDonald said merely that he wanted something bigger or better for his red paper clip. No mention of a house -- he feared seeming flaky(ひどく変わった).

While he was visiting his hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia, two women gave him a fish-shaped pen for the paper clip. Later that day, MacDonald headed to Seattle to catch a ballgame and a flight home. Before the airport, though, he stopped to see Annie Robbins, an artist who had just *stumbled upon*(偶然出くわす) the Craigslist barter section. She admired its anticonsumerist(大量消費に反対の) vibe(雰囲気), she said, so she answered MacDonald's posting "on a lark(as a jork)." MacDonald left her home the proud owner of a small ceramic doorknob with a smiley face(ニコニコバッジ), made by the son of an artist Robbins knows.

Next up was Shawn Sparks, who was packing up to move from Amherst, Massachusetts, to Alexandria, Virginia. Sparks, 35, is a huge fan of Craigslist barterers, having acquired his 1993 Chevy Blazer in a trade for a used laptop. Sparks offered MacDonald a Coleman camping stove. Sparks had two, and didn't want to lug(苦勞して運ぶ) both on his move. And he needed a new knob for his espresso machine. Done. The men celebrated with a barbecue at Sparks' house.

MacDonald gave the camping stove to a Marine sergeant(米海兵隊の下士官) at Camp Pendleton, California, getting a generator(発電機) in return. East again, MacDonald swapped (exchanged) the generator for an "instant party package" -- an empty beer keg(ビール樽), a neon Budweiser sign and a promise to fill the keg -- offered by a young man in Queens, New York City. The beer package went to a Montreal disc jockey, in exchange for a snowmobile.

Here's where the project's grassroots(草の根的な、一般大衆的な) purity may have gotten compromised. MacDonald's blog, <http://oneredpaperclip.blogspot.com>, was attracting attention, and MacDonald was invited onto Canadian television. Our wandering man was asked if there was anywhere he wouldn't go to trade the snowmobile. An obscure place came to mind, so he spit it out: Yahk, a small town in the Canadian Rockies.

Some publicity-seeking(売名の徒) followed. A snowmobiling magazine offered an expense-paid trip to Yahk in exchange for the snowmobile. The trip went to Bruno Taillefer, Quebec, manager for the supply company Cintas Corp. He got headquarters to let him give MacDonald a 1995 Cintas van that he had been planning to sell.

MacDonald gave the van -- stripped of Cintas logos -- to a musician. In turn, the musician, who works at a Toronto recording studio, arranged a recording contract, with studio time and a promise to pitch(売り込む) the finished product to music executives. MacDonald handed the contract to Jody Gnant, a singer in Phoenix who owns a duplex(二戸建て).

And that is how Kyle MacDonald has turned a paper clip into a year of shelter in the desert.

Where it goes now, who knows. He says he has offers from Hollywood studios to turn his story into a film. But he pledges(誓う) not to accept gifts or overly unbalanced trades(取引) that would undermine(台無しにする) the peer-to-peer joy that he says has animated(生気を与える) his journey. Asked what he has learned from all this, he responded:

"If you say you're going to do something and you start to do it, and people enjoy it or respect it or are entertained by it, people will step up and help you."(910)