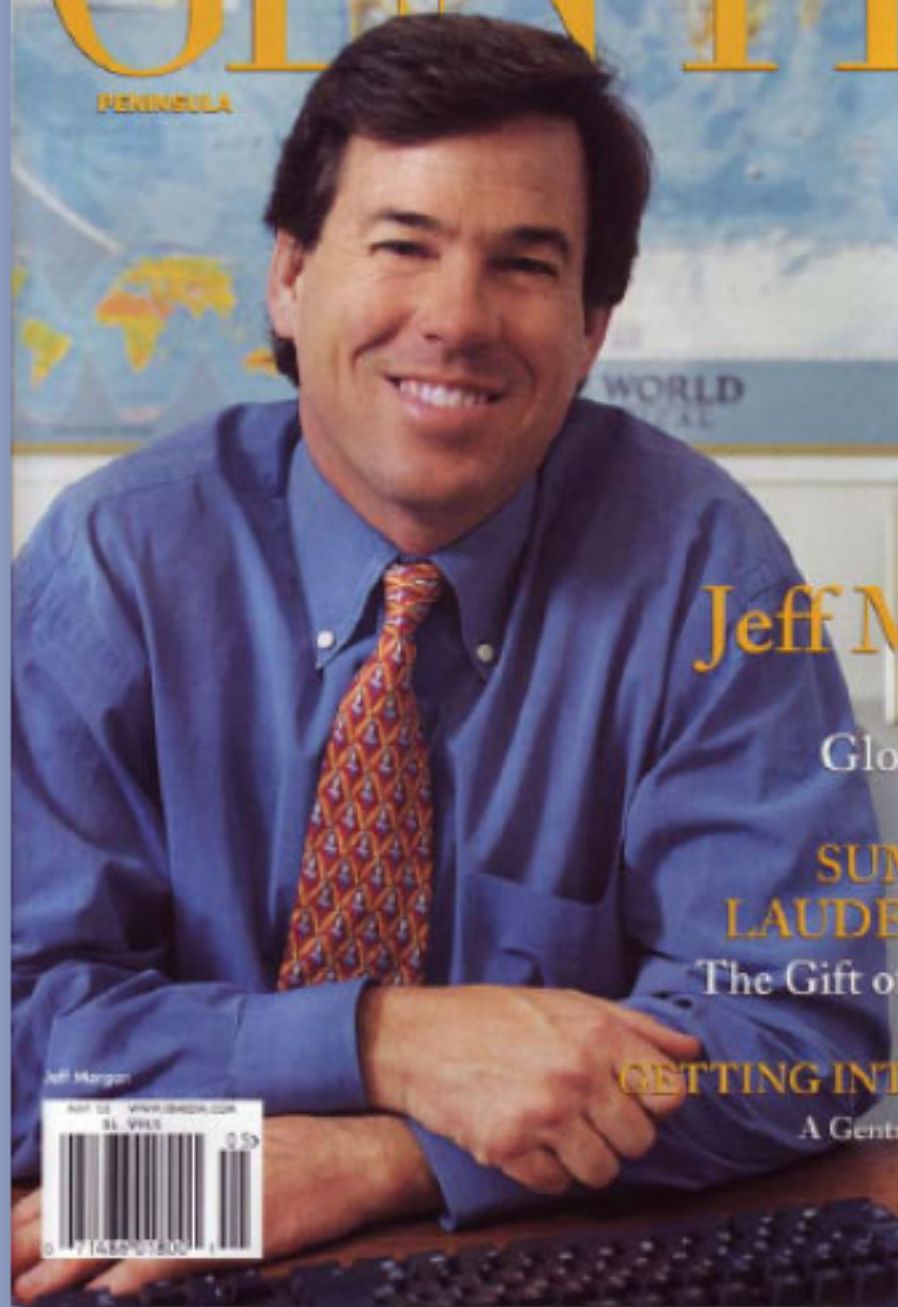


GENTRY

PENINSULA

MAY



Jeff Morgan

Saving Our
Global Heritage

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The Gift of a Guide Dog

GETTING INTO COLLEGE

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Jeff Morgan



Saving Our Global Heritage

Ancient ruins in Iraq, historic villages in China, national parks in Guatemala—Menlo Park's Jeff Morgan is on a mission to save them and more through the work of his four-year-old Global Heritage Fund. Gentry caught up with Morgan to discuss the dream that has attracted some investors from the biggest names in Silicon Valley and Hollywood.

BY BILL WORKMAN ■ PORTRAITS BY MARGOT HARTFORD

With the deadly insurgency bordering on civil war that's now raging in Iraq, it's difficult to imagine that beleaguered Middle East nation becoming a tourist mecca any time soon. But vision and optimism are qualities Jeff Morgan of Menlo Park has in abundance. They are driving the mission of this 43-year-old former software sales and marketing executive to save ancient ruins in Iraq and other cradles of civilization from being lost forever to the ravages of war, neglect, looting, abuse, and other threats to their survival.

That's not all. Morgan, a Stanford MBA who has a degree in urban and regional planning from Cornell University, envisions transforming communities near selected ruins on four continents into thriving economies. He wants the local populations trained to take on key jobs of conserving the sites and building a cultural tourism industry around them. The high-energy, fast-talking, self-contained Morgan is founder and CEO of Global Heritage Fund. It's a four-year-old non-profit that is already supporting ten projects in China, Russia, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Guatemala, and Peru as well as in Iraq, and monitoring conditions at three dozen other ancient sites (of 200 worldwide) that have been designated by UNESCO as the most endangered.

"After all these years I'm finally into city planning, but for ancient cities," quips Morgan.

Five years ago, while on a Nature Conservancy hike he decided he wanted to do something for the world. He began exploring

the idea for an international cultural conservancy tied to tourism after a trip to the Mayan ruins of Tikal, Guatemala's biggest tourist destination just across the Mexican border from the Yucatan Peninsula. It was there that he saw how, in a relatively short time, the tourist industry had improved the quality of life of a population whose previous generations had lived in abject poverty.

The Global Heritage Fund began to take shape over a lunch with Stanford archeology professor Ian Hodder, who, for more than a decade, has led an international team in excavations of a Neolithic site in Turkey. Hodder helped recruit an advisory board for Morgan that includes some of the top figures in archeology and preservation, none more respected than Hodder himself. "He's page one in every archeology textbook," says Morgan.

Not long after that fateful lunch, Morgan ended a 16-year career in Silicon Valley that had included stints for several big-name companies, including Sun Microsystems and Hewlett-Packard, and several startups. Well connected with the world of international finance and trade, Morgan has traveled extensively in developing countries and speaks four foreign languages—Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish, and French. He's put together a worldwide network of more than 600 archeologists, anthropologists, antiquities conservators, preservation experts, structural engineers, and other specialists to guide the long-term planning, training, and restoration work that will be needed.

"We believe these ancient sites have inherent capitalist value if you can get the people there to take advantage of an asset sitting in their own backyard," observes Morgan. His approach is to develop partnerships with donors, entrepreneurs, local govern-

ments, and preservation interests exclusively in developing countries, where the purchasing power of heritage fund grants is likely to go further. The fund selects sites that are reasonably accessible and have the necessary infrastructure, but where the average annual income is \$1,000 or less per capita and the local economy would be more likely to get a big boost from tourism. Projects go forward on a matching funds basis with local governments or other sponsoring partners.

"Jeff has a gift for identifying the key players everywhere he goes, sorting out the people who live in the culture and will get the job done," says Jack Hubbard, associate director of the Stanford University News Service and a veteran photojournalist who has traveled with Morgan to China, Peru, and Guatemala

to film heritage sites. "He may not be the biggest player on the block, but with his languages and his sharp mind he's been very, very effective overseas."

Morgan orchestrates all this with a full-time staff of only three employees from a cluster of tiny, computer-crowded offices in an old downtown Palo Alto Victorian that he bikes to daily from his home. A surfer and fitness buff, Morgan travels one month out of every three, a grueling schedule that at times takes him into remote locations that lack roads and have to be reached on foot or horseback unless a helicopter is available. But that doesn't bother him. "Ten years ago I couldn't have done this job at all," he observes. "There wasn't any Internet, people didn't have fax machines. In most of these place there weren't any hotels to stay at and it would have taken me four or five days to get to the place where I was working."

Iraq has hundreds of ancient cities, cultural sites, and settlements, some dating as far back as 2000 B.C. and the Assyrian empire. They include some of the most famous names in ancient history: Ur, Babylon, Samarra, Nimrud, Ashur, Ninevah, and Sennacherib, where scientists have labored for decades to uncover their secrets. However, since the U.S. invasion two years ago,

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Above: Morgan working in Palo Alto with one of his associates. **Opposite:** Morgan with children outside of Lijiang, China.





few sites have escaped the ravages of looters of artifacts that command high prices on the antiquities market. But even though looters and Iraq's continuing hostilities make archeological digs and preservation efforts risky business these days, Morgan is upbeat about the prospects for turning things around once conditions become more stable.

He predicts that tourism will eventually be second only to oil as a revenue source for Iraq. "Some people poo-poo the idea, but remember, 10 years ago, tourism in Egypt was a disaster after the Islamic Brotherhood shot 40 German tourists at the pyramids, but now it's a \$3.2 billion industry," says Morgan.

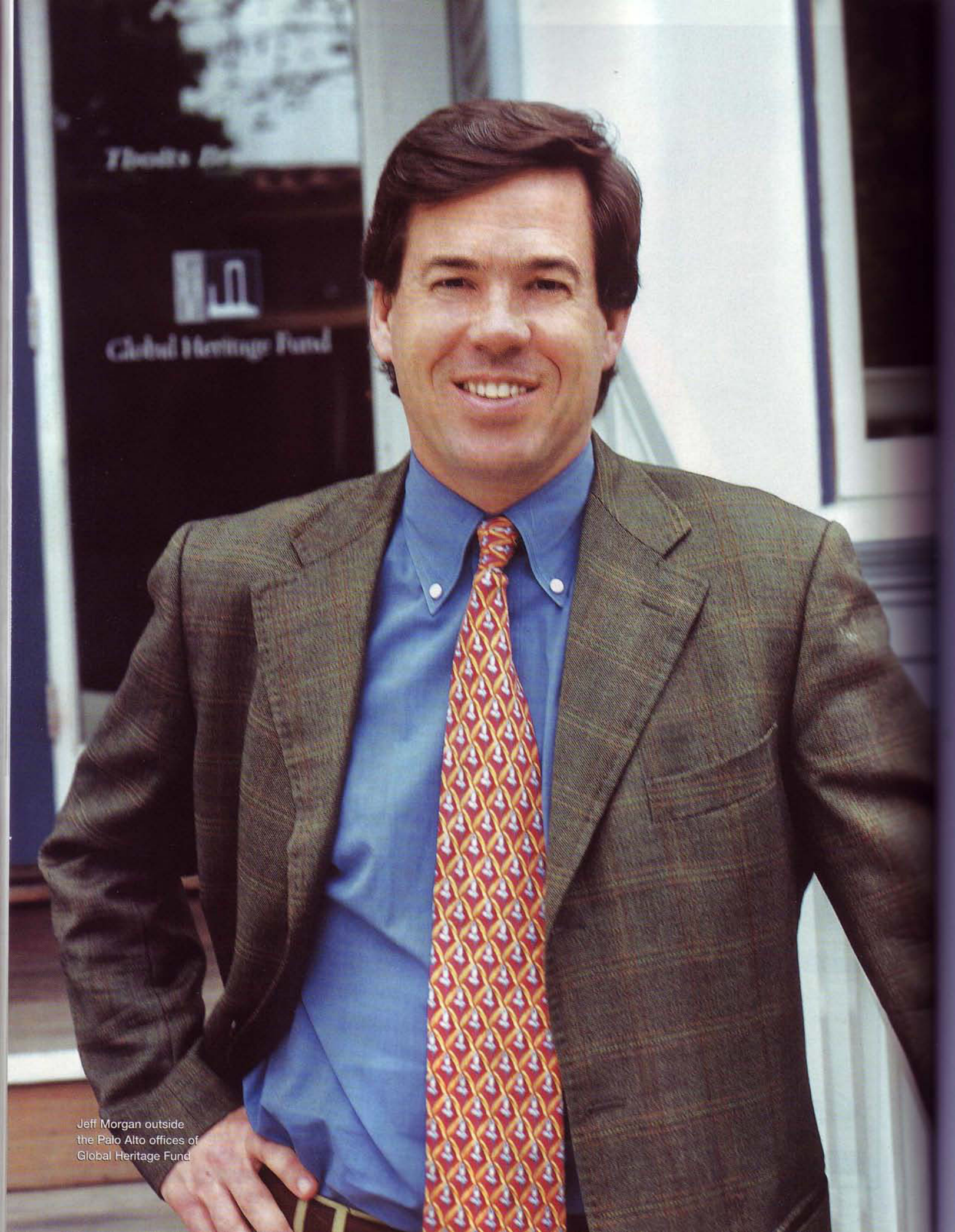
In cooperation with Iraq's Department of Antiquities and the University of Chicago's famed Oriental Institute, Global Heritage has invested \$200,000 in creating extensive master plans for preservation of five of the country's most endangered archeological sites and for training of local Iraqis for jobs as site conservators, guides, and artisans, as well as hotel, restaurant, and transportation workers for a projected tourist industry. "Five to ten years from now it should be quieter in Iraq, and there's a huge pent-up demand of potential tourists from Europe and the U.S. who'll want to see places like Babylon," he adds. "That's why our job is to start now for the endangered sites where we can be the most help because that's how things will eventually get funded by the World Bank when it's time."

Last June, Global Heritage and the World Bank co-sponsored a 10-day conference for Iraqi antiquities specialists in the relative safety of neighboring Jordan, near the ruins of longtime tourist

magnet, Petra's fabled "lost" city, carved entirely in its sandstone cliffs. "The Iraqis were blown away. They had never thought of planning a site as a tourist destination," says Morgan. He said he was told that when Saddam Hussein was in power, restoration of ancient sites was an oxymoron: Not only were modern building materials used, but every brick had to have Saddam's name on it." The Petra conference used what Morgan calls the "Picasso test" for selecting the five heritage sites that would be given priority in Global Heritage's preservation efforts. The test asks, Morgan explains, "if faced with saving only five of Picasso's thousands of works of art, which would you choose? That is the situation we're confronted with today in world heritage. We can't save everything. In China, for example, they've done a hell of a job ripping up their past to make way for new construction."

Nevertheless, Global Heritage is doing what it can to reverse this trend of neglect of China's cultural heritage. In its biggest success story to date, the fund has been instrumental in transforming one of the country's last ancient towns, 1000-year-old Lijiang, into a tourist attraction that is rivaling the Great Wall. In just three years, the number of tourists visiting Lijiang has grown from 300,000 annually to 800,000.

"When we first began our efforts," says Morgan, "many of the 4,000 native Naxi families were leaving because of poor living conditions." Global Heritage experts crafted a plan that called for restoring ancient homes and streetscapes, improving sanitation and sewage systems and water quality, and tearing down some of the more unsightly modern construction. Global Heritage also



Jeff Morgan outside
the Palo Alto offices of
Global Heritage Fund

established a matching preservation incentive fund that distributed small loans and grants to low-income residents to participate in conservation work, allowing them to stay in town and ensure economic sustainability.

In November, Morgan announced that his organization had committed \$250,000 to efforts to save the 1,200-year-old Foguang Temple—China's last remaining building made entirely of wood right down to the nails. Built during the Tang dynasty, it's considered a masterpiece of Buddhist 9th-century architec-

exchange, the fund, among other things, is promoting the airline with its network of CEOs and others who do business in Asia and elsewhere in the world.

The product of a high-powered Silicon Valley family, Morgan is no stranger to the world of foundation grants, although it's been mostly on the giving side. His father is James C. Morgan, who established Applied Materials as the world leader in the manufacture of silicon chip equipment. His mother is Becky Morgan, former state senator and onetime CEO of the non-



ture, but has not been repaired or maintained since the 17th century. "We got some help from outside pressure on this," says Morgan. "UNESCO told Beijing, 'Hey, guys, you've got to do something. You're killing the goose that laid the golden egg.'" Under a matching funds agreement with Beijing's central government, local authorities and provincial business interests, the project has now been budgeted for \$960,000 of restoration work over the next few years.

David S. Lee, chairman and CEO of On Communications Corp and a University of California regent, his wife, and four other Bay Area Chinese-American families donated \$50,000 each as Global Heritage's share of funding for the project. The Lees were the first donors to get the red carpet treatment from Singapore Airlines under a you-scratch-my-back agreement Morgan concluded last year that gives Global Heritage staff and their donor clients free air travel to Asian heritage sites. In

profit Silicon Valley Venture Capital Network, who now serves as president of the Morgan Family Trust. Jeff and his wife, Valerie, a French filmmaker and mother of the couple's three young children, are trustees.

The family fund has long donated to causes promoting educational and economic development. But Jeff was only able to squeeze \$110,000 from it for Global Heritage. "Preservation is just not their thing," he smiles. Nonetheless, his father did put him in touch with venture capitalist Bill Draper, who helped get Global Heritage off the ground with a \$300,000 grant from the Draper Richards Foundation, which helps non-profit entrepreneurs devoted to social change.

"Jeff clearly surpasses all the expectations we have of vision, intelligence, energy, and relentless determination that are the foundation's standards for our fellowships," says Draper. "In my opinion, he is a superstar whose enthusiasm grows exponentially as he



Opposite: Morgan (center) is pictured with a Chinese delegation to save Foguang Temple. **Left & Below:** Global Heritage Fund is working to save more than two dozen Mayan cities, like the one pictured left, in the Mirador Basin. Pictured below is the historic Chinese Village Lijiang. It is Global Heritage's biggest success story to date with an increase of 500,000 tourists to Lijiang annually in just three years.

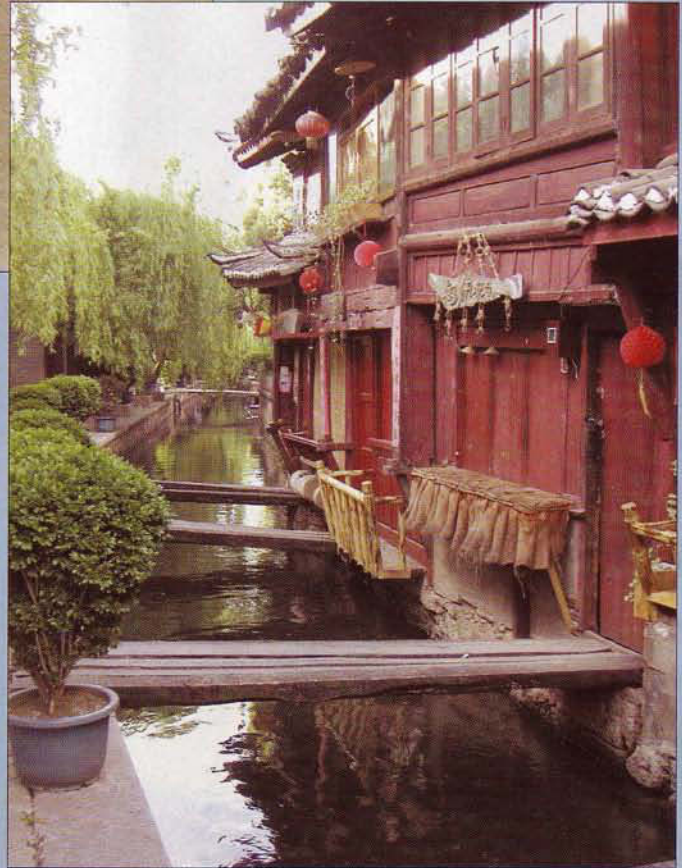
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goes on. Once he gets your ear, he never lets up," Draper laughs.

While Morgan complains that fundraising is a maddening, time consuming chore ("You can make 100 phone calls and get only one or two donors"), he's clearly no slouch at it. For example, actor Mel Gibson has given \$500,000 for Morgan's most ambitious project to date, a collaboration with the Guatemalan government and a number of preservation and conservation organizations to permanently protect 600,000 acres of pristine rain forest in Guatemala's Mirador Basin. The forest embraces the ruins of more than two dozen pre-classic Mayan cities that include some of the world's largest pyramids.

It's a race against time, looters, logging companies, "slash and burn" settlers and Columbian drug lords who have been clear-cutting large sections of forest for landing strips for refueling of aircraft making delivery hops into neighboring Mexico. "It's our biggest and most expensive project," says Morgan, whose board is devoting \$1.2-million of the fund's \$1.8-million budget this year to Mirador. Among other things, it will help pay for satellite mapping and radar scanning of all 26 Mayan city sites that have been uncovered under forested mounds in preparation for a final master plan.

Global Heritage and its partners in the massive project that is expected to cost \$20 million or more are working to hold off development of roads into the area, which inevitably lead to extensive and destructive fires. One proposal Morgan and a team of structural engineers have made is to build a narrow-gauge railroad into



the basin that would take tourists to all of the Mayan sites. "That's the dream," he says. "A nice little choo-choo that would do the work of conservation."

The other dream is that when the work of transforming Mirador into a national park is done, with all its protections in place, it could become Guatemala's second major tourist destination after Tikal, which is now bringing in \$200 million a year.

Morgan is delighted with the impact that Global Heritage has had in such a relatively short time. "There are two great things we are doing for the developing world," he says. "One is we are taking sites that overall have an inherent value of billions of dollars and helping to turn them on to produce cash flow. Before they were just mounds sitting in the jungle and no one was taking care of them." The other, he adds, is helping to do long term economic development of communities near the ancient ruins. "I like it when the local people make money." ■