Ludwig Schultze of New York, New York, clearly believes in preparing for anything the road may throw his way. A few highlights: "Earplugs: to minimize the noise from my own snoring, shoe-shine sponge: for a quick cleaning before a meeting, Apple iPod: all of my music. I'm in the bad habit of forgetting my iPod after waking up from a long flight (too much Tylenol PM?), so this is my third. To the people who have been lucky enough to find the last two, I hope you're enjoying my musical taste. Fujifilm Universal Adapter: the most universal one I've found. It works on every continent and in most every modern outlet. Laptop Cable Lock: by PC Guardian, for hotel rooms without a safe. My Nokia Bluetooth headset: allows me to talk hands-free with my wife while jogging to my flight."

My diving trip into the San Antonio cenote, a cave in the Yucatan jungle, was exhilarating. The almost-unexplored cave, two hours in the middle of the jungle, was used by the Mayans as a sacrificial site. Being lowered by a rope into this cave and having contact with the outside world only through a small hole in its roof, 80 feet from the water's surface, puts things in perspective. Life depends only on a thin nylon rope. Diving 80 feet farther toward the bottom of the cave added to the excitement. Finding many human bones, skulls, and ancient artifacts used for sacrifices is the way to "feel" history. — Ivan Schuller, La Jolla, California

My ultimate workplace would be on a sunny beach. All I need is a lounge chair, a small table for a laptop computer, and a rum drink (garnished with an umbrella, of course). I would be sitting by a palm tree that stretches toward the transparent blue waters of the sea, as if to suggest that I should be doing the same. — Paul Gewirtz, Hoboken, New Jersey
(Editor's note: We assume Paul is taking a break here with a "coworker").

Trying to tell someone you travel the world photographing hippos in zoos for a living is like trying to explain why you like to wear your underwear on the outside of your clothing. It's just not a normal thing to say. When I first accepted this job, my mother thought I was nuts. Ahead of me lay some 33 countries, five continents, almost 100 zoos, and 283 hippos. As I racked up airline miles abroad, I quickly lost all sense of who I was before this adventure began, and I became known solely as "the hippo girl." — Sarah Galbraith, Centre Island, New York