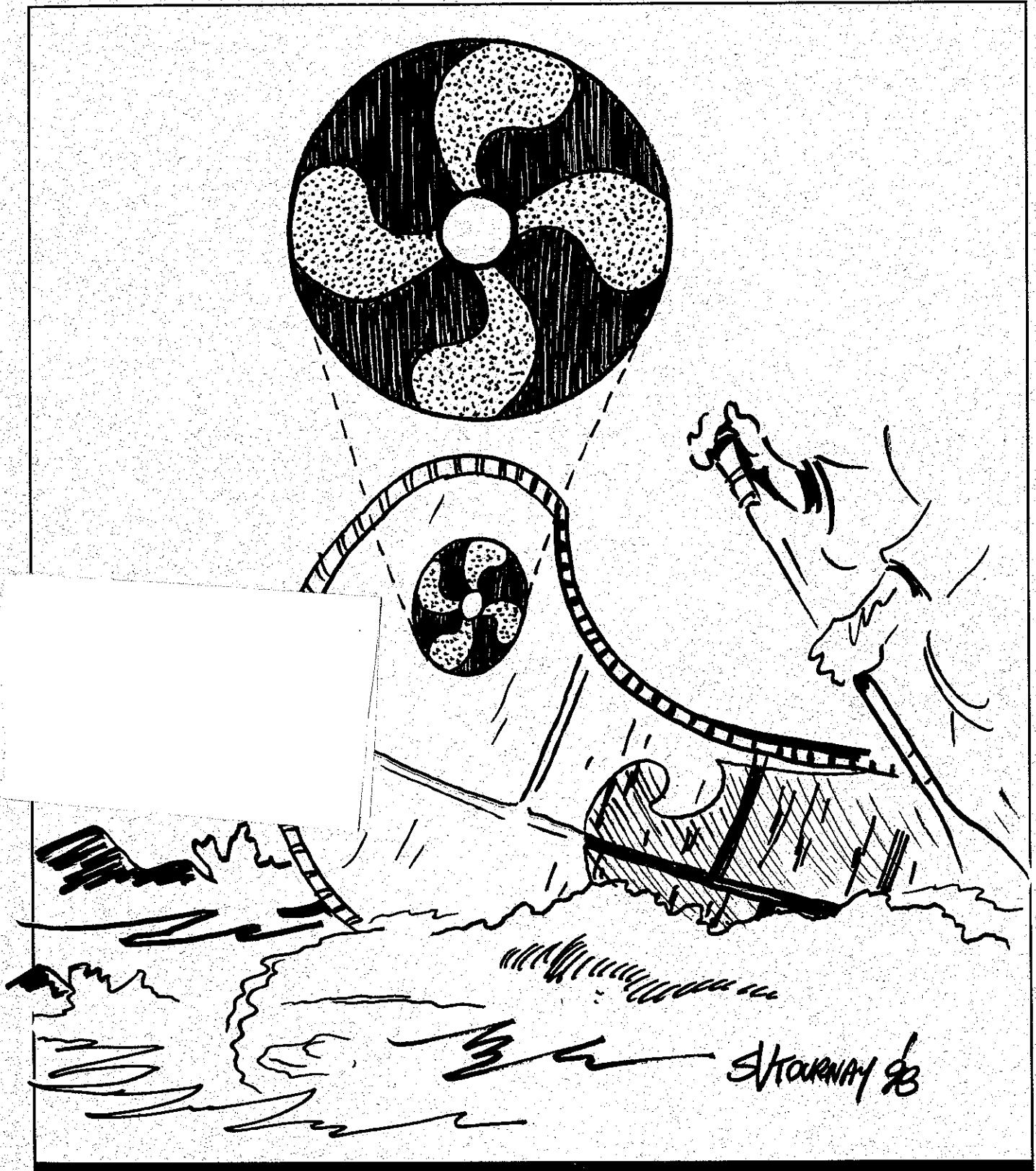
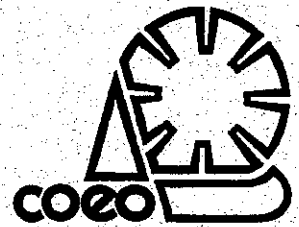


# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF  
Volume 10, No. 3, August 1998

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



# Pathways

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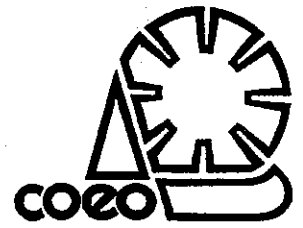
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# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Volume 10, No. 3, August 1998



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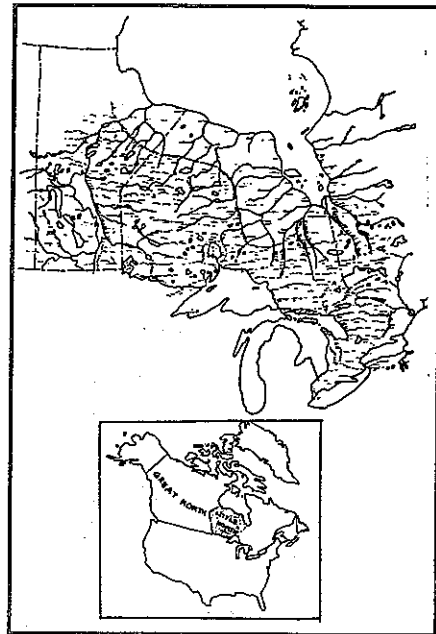
*By Bannerman Brown* ..... 34

**T**heme issues are always a treat to organize and produce. The process is a simple one. We, as an editorial board, discuss theme options for the year ahead considering the general interests of COEO readers and the interests of feature editor to be. Then, with a theme chosen, the editor seeks out submissions from choice representative practitioners in the field. For this issue's theme of Heritage Interpretation, we offer the ideas of Jim and Lisa Gilbert, in pioneer studies with a focus on "spirit visits," a definitional treatment by Peter Labor (familiar to many of us as the Voyageur musician-storyteller at the Tributaries '97 conference), and the blending of heritage interpretation and adventure education by Molly Ames Baker. We also offer interpretative content and programme ideas by Davis, Ortila, Brown, Henderson and Leckie.

If you have ideas for a future theme issue please pass them along to a member of the editorial board. We hope to produce two to three theme issues out of our five each year.

*Bob Henderson*

## *The Little North - Land and Light*



*See Sketch Pad for Canoe Atlas of the Little North information.*

What a great summer it has been. I have just finished packing for a sea-kayaking trip on Georgian Bay and am really excited about the change in scenery and mode of travel. I hope you've all had a wilderness experience this summer as nothing rejuvenates or inspires like Mother Nature.

Transitions, the 1998 COEO Annual Conference, is just around the corner. The programme has been organized around five themes: opportunities in outdoor education, knowing the land, outdoor education and the arts, technologies for outdoor education and outdoor education in motion. Pre-conference choices include "A Walk in the Clouds" and "Ecoscope". Best-selling author Heather Jane Robertson and our very own Mark Whitcombe are the featured presenters. Add to this back packet resources and an open stage and you have the makings of another great conference. Be sure to mark September 25 to 27 on your calendar and get snapping for the photo contest.

Figure out what to bring for our first ever COEO auction. Also, who will you nominate for the People's Choice Award? If you missed or misplaced the conference brochure from the last *Pathways*, or would like more information, call Barrie Martin at the Frost Centre (705) 766-2451. You shouldn't miss this celebrator of outdoor education and its future.

Last year it was Ian Hendry, James Raffan, and Seneca College who won COEO's coveted awards in recognition of their contributions to the outdoor education field. Who will the deserving recipients be this year? We need your nominations for the awards and for board of directors positions, as explained below. Please send them in as soon as possible.

Here's hoping September brings us an Indian summer and the opportunity to cross paths.

Linda McKenzie

## C all for Nominations

### COEO Board of Directors

Nominations (and/or volunteers) are invited for the COEO Board of Directors for the year 1998-1999. Any member in good standing may submit a nomination. A list of the Board of Director positions can be found inside the front cover of *Pathways*. Nominations, in writing, must be received by the nominating committee at least 14 days prior to the annual general meeting. Nominations should be sent to:

Nominations Committee c/o Kathy Reid  
R.R.#1, Norwood, ON K0L 2V0  
B (705) 745-5791 H (705) 639-5392  
Fax (705) 745-7488

### COEO Awards

Every year the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario chooses to honour its membership and Outdoor Education throughout the province by presenting three awards.

The **Robin Dennis Award** is presented to an individual or outdoor education programme or facility having made an outstanding contribution to the promotion and development of Outdoor Education in the

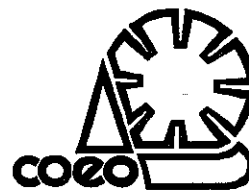
province of Ontario. The award was created in tribute to Robin Dennis, one of the founders of outdoor education in Ontario in the 1950s and 1960s, and is presented annually by the Boyne River Natural Science School and the Toronto Island Natural Science School.

The **President's Award** is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the development of the Council of Outdoor Education of Ontario (COEO) and to outdoor education in Ontario.

The **Dorothy Walter Award for Leadership** was created in 1986 to give recognition to an individual who, like Dorothy Walter herself, has shown outstanding commitment to the development of leadership qualities in Ontario youth. The individual should have demonstrated a commitment and innovation in leadership development, to learning in the out-of-doors, to personal growth in their own life and service to an organization or community.

Send nominations to:

Awards Committee c/o Glen Hester  
20 Linn Cres., R.R.#3 Caledon East, ON L0N 1E0  
H (905) 880-0862 B (416) 394-7860  
Fax (416) 394-6291



## My Art and My Travels

by Jonathan Berger

I am a native Philadelphian who began canoeing at Camp Wabun on Lake Temagami in 1958. Except for three years spent in West Africa as a Peace Corps Volunteer between 1967 and 1970 I have spent every summer on the waters of northern Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba. During the forty year period I have been a camper, a guide, a solo paddler, and family tripper. Currently my children, Michael age 12 and Erika age 9 accompany me on my trips.

Tom Terry of Sioux Lookout is also a constant companion on the waters and he and I have begun work on the Canoe Atlas of the Little North. This area encompasses the region between Lake Winnipeg, James Bay, Hudson bay, and the 50th parallel. We are producing canoe route maps, descriptive narrative, and drawings for the 44 1:250,000 NTS maps that cover the area. My drawings included in this issue come from that project. I can say without reservation that Tom and I have covered every single watershed and every major river, most minor tributaries, and many of the thousands of connecting height of land routes in the vast and magnificent region.

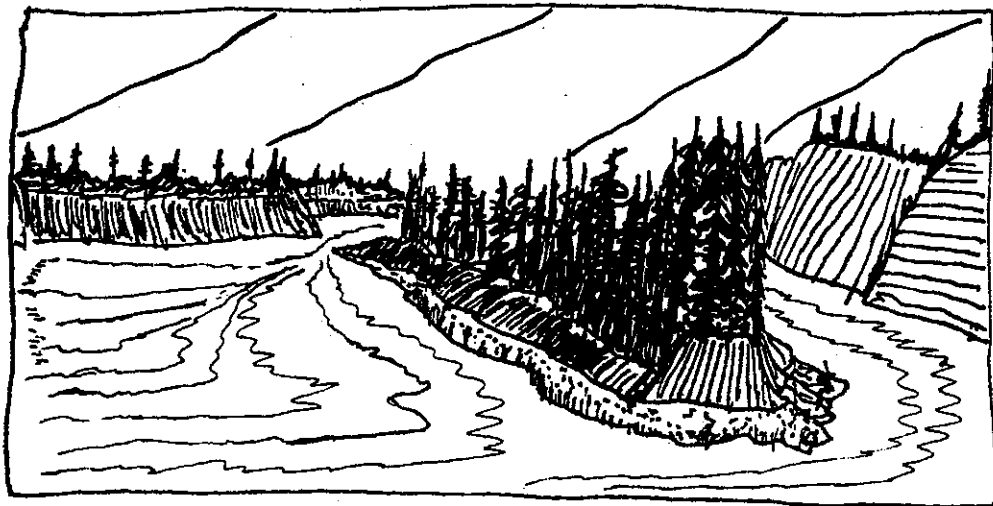
The work of Francis Lee Jacques and Sigurd Olson inspired me to begin drawing. I started in 1971. The Group of Seven has also provided motivation. I find the drawing to be very relaxing. As I paddle along during the day I compose drawings in my mind and after the camp work is done in the evening, after my ritual swim, I pull out the sketch book, and draw from memory the places passed during the day's travel. On occasion I redraw much of the stuff during the winter. I have an entire six foot high cupboard filled with sketch books that sits in my study.

May the Winds Be at Your Back.

Jonathan Berger

ANDREA TEBRAKE who constructed the "Tent Art" is a graduate from Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. She will be attending Brock University Teacher's College in 98/99.

Editor's note: Thanks to Steve Tourney for the Voyager Canoe cover



## Living History As An Experience

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### Abstract

History is perceived by too many students and a good portion of the general public as "boring", stilted and a series of facts, figures and dates representing very little in lasting significance or authentic learning. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that history can be brought to life and internalized in an authentic, lasting fashion in a variety of situations ( school, community etc.) by people of any age from six to ninety-six. This paper will demonstrate the step-by-step process by which any teacher and his class, can formulate, prepare, plan, research, rehearse and present role-playing presentations for class, school and/or community that meet and significantly enhance state/provincial mandated curriculum objectives. An effort will be made to show that when an individual enhances his awareness of his immediate environment, by assuming the roles of researched former citizens of the community, it helps to dramatically integrate the two key learning environments of school and community.

### "One man in his time plays many parts..."

Much has been written over the last 30-40 years about the importance of local historical investigation as a way of bringing to history students an "increased interest and a heightened sense of realism" (Brown and Tyrrell, 1961, p.1) and the power this approach has to make history "more relevant" and allow national trends to be more fully understood "when reflected in local incidents" ( Lord, 1964, p.8). Brown and Tyrrell (1961) even went as far as to theorize that local history, properly used, could be useful in developing "community consciousness just as national history has been used to develop a national consciousness" (p.12).

The recent growth in historical reenactment throughout North America,

encompassing every epoch from the French-Indian Wars to the Vietnam War has sparked a real interest in the use of reenacting as an effective teaching resource and as a means of "bringing history to life". Charles La Rocca (1993) writes about the experiences his students had with American Civil War reenactment involvement; "...they have come to think of local Civil War soldiers as real people, with all the nobility and frailties of any other human being" (p44).

Although these ideas and projects are certainly commendable and reveal the great potential that the study of local history and the advocacy of "living history" has, it still, for the most part, remains the domain of a few brave souls who dare to be different and dare to remove the study of history from the sacrosanct realm of the textbook and into the real world immediately outside the classroom. The reality of the average classroom whether it be elementary, secondary, college or university is, for the most part, one of straight rows, over-reliance on the textbook, and an unnecessary emphasis on a litany of facts, figures and dates with few attempts at relating world events to local events or the thoughts of world leaders to the thoughts of local citizens as expressed in diaries, journals, or newspapers of the particular time period under study. As Ron Brandt states in his article on authentic learning in Educational Leadership magazine ( 1993); "...all too frequently we turn what could be concrete activity into abstract exercises" (p.2).

As a result, it can be easily deduced that, if the entire concept of the use of local history and the exploration of "living history" within classrooms is a tentative activity, then the next logical step of actually endorsing of role-playing within those same classrooms enjoys a very limited usage and popularity. However, in all likelihood, most instructors are not deliberately refusing to see the value of such activities, nor are most of them diametrically opposed to such approaches. In fact, there is a very high prob-

*Students should be reminded that the assuming of a role of a character does not require the skills of an actor but rather the skills of living and observing.*

ability that the average teacher sees great value in them; however, many instructors feel that they lack the expertise to adequately employ those resources and at the same time meet all the requirements of the curriculum. Others would argue that they are not "local historians" nor even from the area in which they teach and therefore not familiar with local history resources and therefore would not feel comfortable in exploring this approach. Still, others would suggest that to move the study of historical themes and eras from the realm of the mandated course textbook and to the stage where students are actually assuming the roles of important historical characters/local citizens falls into the realm of the drama teacher, or at least the English instructor, and certainly well beyond the limited range of a traditionally oriented history/social studies teacher. While it is easy to understand how these objections have come about, they do not, in our judgment, represent serious obstacles for any teacher from any background if the approach is a concerted, step-by-step approach as outlined below.

### **STEP ONE - GETTING COMFORTABLE**

Both teacher and student must feel comfortable if the shift from a text-oriented exploration of history to a local living-history emphasis is to be a successful one. The instructor must feel confident that the curriculum-mandated aims and objectives are being met and that the research and information done within the classroom are being effectively presented. The student, on the other hand is in need of reassurance that he will receive help, direction and guidance in the initial research attempts and that she is not going to be graded on acting expertise. The key component to classroom success is the reassurance that the process will be a gradual one and that the text will never be totally abandoned. All participants, teacher and student alike, will move into this new approach with caution and a minimum of pressure.

The initial need to find suitable local resources for the research component of the local history approach can be equally shared by student and teacher alike. Very few places exist where there are not suitable local resources available for historical research. Most areas have libraries or local historical societies that have large or small repositories of local re-

sources. Important sources are letters, journals, estate records, court records, church records, cemetery records, local histories, local newspapers on microfilm, books, etc. In almost all cases, there are bound to be some local resources available for the research of at least one topic, theme, or time period in the course being taught.

### **STEP TWO - WARMING UP TO THE IDEA**

Once the research base has been established and clearly identified, both student and instructor must then get comfortable with the concept of role playing. To begin the process, it might be easier to assume small roles based on familiar historical figures that most students would have at least a passing knowledge of (ie. Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, etc.) and role play them in "warm-up" sessions. Students could be given the task of briefly researching a better known character from the time period currently under study and coming to class prepared to speak, without the aid of costumes or props, to one other person and then eventually to a small group of fellow students who may or may not be "in-character". Conversations rather than speeches should last a maximum of three minutes and be designed to provoke discussion and further questions rather than to present a complete, polished character. The point should be made to these fledgling role players, that they need not know a great deal of information about a character initially but that they should be able to take a character's key achievements, contributions, character traits, quirks etc. and be able to comfortably project them filtered through their own personality. From the very onset, students should be reminded that the assuming of a role of a character does not require the skills of an actor but rather the skills of living and observing. We all play many roles and our language, attitude, body language, facial expressions, manners etc. change as we play all the roles life requires of us (ie. daughter, student, baby-sitter, employee etc.). This task, with even just a small amount of practice should not constitute a major dilemma as individuals, at any age, are capable of drawing upon "...a wide range of role behavior appropriate to the social context and the situational expectations of others" (Clark et al, 1997, p.24)



### STEP THREE - WALKING THE WALK...

The focal point of the "warm-up" sessions should be to concentrate on the creation of fresh insights and new understandings of the character, as well as the historical time period, for not only the "portrayor" but more importantly for the audience experiencing and/or interacting with the character interpretation. There should not be an emphasis on creating a "script" and memorizing it but rather on the compilation of a series of interesting, key, anecdotal points concerning the character that can be naturally placed into a "conversational" format that is comfortable and natural for the individual "actor".

The teacher during this introductory period will come to visualize her role as one of facilitator, coach, encourager and historical guide (in an assumed role) who maintains the integrity of the exercise by helping individual students "shape" the role being created. This "shaping" is really the application of form to the teaching materials (the content), in order to offer students the most effective opportunities for creating meaning (knowledge and insight) from the research and performance. The teacher must always keep in mind that a "template" is being established in these early sessions, for all future first-person explorations and presentations.

The instructor will also soon realize that there is no need for him to have anything more than a very basic grasp of dramatic presentations in order to create a very successful first-person scenario. The most important quality the teacher brings to the activity is her love of history and knowledge of what needs to be covered in the course.

### STEP FOUR - TALKING THE TALK...

Once the research base has been established and students are relatively comfortable with the initial phase of role playing, the focus can then

shift from the research of the more famous to the central focus of the exercise which is to assume the role of local citizens who played a role to a greater or lesser extent, in the development and advancement of the local scene during the time under study in the classroom. The degree of involvement and the relative importance of the character researched and portrayed is of little importance. The real measure of a character portrayal is how realistically and clearly one can recreate the life style of a period, reflecting the essence of a real individual, his



Jim and Lisa Gilbert as "spirits". John and Martha McGregor prepare for another night of "spirit-walking".

reactions to everyday problems, her attitudes to the events of the day, personal commentary on local, national and international events and social issues.

The "period character's" strength lies in the creation of the personal, the human and the intimate and not in being a fountain of factual information devoid of context.

### STEP FIVE - DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Through the task of researching local resources, students may narrow their choices to two or three characters, decide to create a composite character or settle on a stock character (ie., miller, tavern keeper, merchant, farmer, teacher etc.) appropriate to the time as well as to the local milieu.

Once the local period character has been decided upon by the student, the attempt at establishing a relatively authentic representative from the era and locality begins. Adhering to the format/template established in Step #3, the students should be given time "to create themselves again".

### STEP FIVE - WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

A period character is a man, woman or child who can convincingly portray, from a physical, mental and vocal point of view, a three-dimensional person from the past. It implies a commitment to speaking and acting in the first person (the "I" voice and not the "They" voice). The key component in the

*The real measure of a character portrayal is how realistically and clearly one can recreate the life style of a period, reflecting the essence of a real individual, his reactions to everyday problems, her attitudes to the events of the day, personal commentary on local, national and international events and social issues*

*As characters grow and they become more comfortable with their roles, they may have the desire to move outside of the classroom and interact with the school at large or even the community.*

creation of this character is, once adequate research has been done, is the commitment to play a role to the best of their abilities and to concentrate on constantly creating, and recreating, a fully "fleshed-out" character. This can be initiated by completing a character outline sheet (see attached student persona worksheet).

Appropriate period clothes, props and accents are, of course, desirable but not, in any way absolutely necessary. A very believable character can be conjured up simply through knowledge, facial expression, body language and the impetus to engage others in meaningful conversation. Meaningful conversation should include, but is not limited to, the discussion of such topics as health, finances, politics, social conditions, religion, clothes, food, marriage, children, war, neighbors etc.

### **STEP SIX - COMING OF AGE**

Once the character has been "born", he will want to have a chance to interact with other "characters" within the class. As with the warm up session, conversation should commence with partners and then move to larger groups and eventually, if feasible and acceptable to the participants, to presentations to the entire class. As characters grow and they become more comfortable with their roles, they may have the desire to move outside of the classroom and interact with the school at large or even the community. At this stage, the organization of a "spirit walk" may be desirable. Within the school, a half day could be organized where small groups of students, suitably prepared before hand, could be led from station to station (inside or outside of the school) by a "spirit guide" to meet and interact with a variety of "spirits" from the area's past and, most likely, from a variety of time periods (a "time-line" situation).

### **STEP SEVEN - TAKING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD**

The next step, after the characters and routine of the "spirit walk" are well-established and all participants are very comfortable, would be to "take the show on the road" and perform a series of "spirit walks" out in the community using appropriate sites, landmarks or areas associated with the character as backdrops. The latter approach has been employed by the

authors for several years with a great deal of success on all fronts. Not only do the students internalize a great deal of information about history and their community but the activity serves the purpose of educating the local citizens about their area's past and generating a fair amount of tourist interest as well. Some "community spirit walks", that we have operated, have involved a combination of over fifty students (elementary, secondary, university) as well as several non-students (ranging in age from seven to seventy) and have run once every ten minutes, with groups of twenty-thirty people, for three hours a night over a span of three nights!

In addition to the many contributions this approach makes to the history classroom, the drama classroom, the school and the local community, there are some very specific skills that are developed within individual students. A few of those skills are researching, problem-solving, creative thinking, decision making, reasoning, presenting, self-discipline, teamwork, conceptualizing, tolerance and risk taking.

Using the step-by-step process outlined in this paper, teachers and students, at any level can easily and effectively experience this magical and meaningful world of escape and discovery. If the mark of truly authentic learning is evidenced through commitment, risk taking and personal ownership, then the art of historical role-playing promises a glimpse of a truly authentic approach where new, meaningful and engaging insights are only "a character away".

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## A STUDENT PERSONA WORKSHEET

Name of Interpreter \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Character \_\_\_\_\_

Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Line

Born \_\_\_\_\_ Present \_\_\_\_\_

Orientation (City/Village/Country) \_\_\_\_\_

Where is character located? \_\_\_\_\_

Father (Name/Occupation/Location) \_\_\_\_\_

Mother (Name/Occupation/Location) \_\_\_\_\_

Birth (Location/Date/Circumstances) \_\_\_\_\_

Brothers: \_\_\_\_\_ Sisters: \_\_\_\_\_

Childhood: \_\_\_\_\_

Education/Apprenticeship: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the emotional/psychological influences of your childhood on your present life?

What habits or traits do you have because of these influences?

Marriage: To: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

What life experiences has your character had? \_\_\_\_\_

What major events has the character experienced? \_\_\_\_\_

Physical condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Where does character live: \_\_\_\_\_

How did character arrive at site? \_\_\_\_\_

Character relationship to site: \_\_\_\_\_

Character relationship to other characters at the site: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned activities at the site: \_\_\_\_\_

In a paragraph describe your character in terms of personality, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, values and relations with others: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## The Living Heritage Museum as an Educational Tool

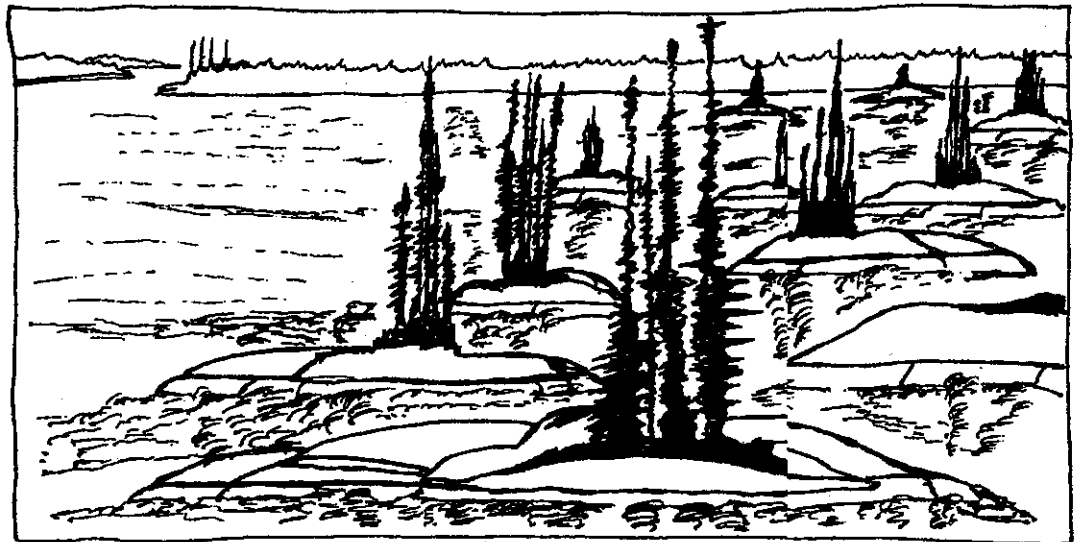
By Peter Labor

"Halt! What is your business at Fortress Louisburg?" The erect soldier stared my father in the face as I made ready to bolt for the car, or at the very least jump in the Harbour and swim for my life. My father, however, held tightly to my hand and replied, "We are apple farmers - come from the Annapolis valley to seek business." My father knew how to play the game. With that, the young fellow in the soldier costume stepped aside and motioned us through the gate into the fort.

Such was my first experience with living history interpretation - at 8 years old. I am not sure how much I really remember from that first visit to Louisburg. I remember the rock hard bread, the small confining quarters, the smell of the powder from the noon cannon, the feel of the salt wind from the top of the outer wall. I also remember marvelling at the little yellow numbers on the bricks in a display, which explained how the whole fort had been taken, apart and reassembled one numbered piece at a time.

This living history experience had certainly impacted me, but had I learned anything "important" about history? Did I know who had been there and why? Did I achieve a better sense of my past in order to create a more complete sense of the present? Could I have learned just as much, or more, by reading a book or watching a film in my classroom? Tough questions all, but ones often asked when evaluating living history interpretation as a means of education.

Heritage, is variously defined, but consistently includes built, cultural and natural elements of our past. Some people argue that any human interaction with such heritage produces a moment of "interpretation". It is generally accepted, however, that interpretation is a process through which information about a "heritage resource" is conveyed, such that individuals are able to find meaning and increase their understanding. Historic sites often represent a meeting point for built, cultural and natural heritage, with interpretation



serving as the link between visitors and the resource.

Freeman Tilden's classic text, *Interpreting our Heritage*, first printed in 1957, lifted the practised (but undefined) field of interpretation to a new level. Tilden stepped out on a limb by quantifying the "art" of interpretation by assigning (reluctantly) a definition, and describing principles under which effective heritage interpretation should operate. Thirty years and two editions later, Tilden's book continues as the basis of contemporary interpretation theory, although a variety of factors are changing interpretation from that which Tilden described.

Formalised interpretation at parks, natural areas, historic sites and museums is under scrutiny. With growing financial constraints, the economic efficiency of interpretive programming is increasingly important. New (and often improved) outlooks on heritage preservation, increased cultural sensitivity, improved technology, and changing visitor needs are influencing public interpretive programming and raising questions about the need for traditional heritage interpretation. At Old Fort William, in Thunder Bay, for example, on-site signage, food services and non-historic programming are slowly creeping into what was once an immersive living history site.

The difficulty in establishing "the need" for historical interpretation as an educational tool is that the value of the "educational aspects" of such a program are often judged by objective measurement of outcomes. The difficulty in such a critical outlook is that "learning and education in museum settings are different from their counterparts in more traditional educational environments" (Manley, In Blatti, 1987, p. 16). Learning, Manley writes, can mean many things, from increasing aesthetic sensitivity to heightening curiosity and aiding personal growth, so evaluation of the educational benefit of participation in historical programs, based on traditional objective evaluation, often misses the point.

Just as Freeman Tilden emphasised the goal of revealing a greater truth by capitalising

on creativity and centring the interpretation on the visitor, evaluation [if required at all] must measure success in terms of the experience of the visitor (Alderson & Low, 1982). In order to achieve a positive visitor-based outcome, interpretive programs with the purpose of education, must be developed according to visitor needs. The multiplicity of needs of school groups, as "visitors" impacts on the development of such programs.

Booth, Krockover and Woods (1982) recognise site visitation as an important aid to formal education, but the awakening of curiosity and development of ideas is often seen as more important than "indoctrinating him [the visitor] with factual information" (p.7). Enhanced opportunity for participatory and inductive learning is an important component of education programs at historic sites (Alderson and Low, 1982), but the reality of "real academic needs" often infuses such components with the need for curricular relevance. To add to the mix, site based historical interpretation would lose much of its appeal if it did not attempt to capitalise on its capacity for initiating memorable multi-sensory experience (Tilden, Booth et al., Alderson & Low).

The "key" to linking curricular and objective needs to personal and development needs at historic sites is in creating an atmosphere in which students are facilitated in "thinking historically" (de Leeuw & Griffiths, p. 188). Such historical thinking involves seeing the past as alive and vibrant, and understanding why people did what they did, so that such information can be related to contemporary experience (Alderson & Low, 1982). Interpretation, as a means of relating the past to the present, can address a variety of curricular requirements by using the historical context as a metaphorical tool, or alternative setting in which students can experience renewed enthusiasm for learning through participation.

Though curriculum may form a basis for program creation, Booth et al. (1982) emphasise the importance of interpretation as a means of examining broad themes which may then be related back to curriculum. The effective

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*Such historical thinking involves seeing the past as alive and vibrant, and understanding why people did what they did, so that such information can be related to contemporary experience.*

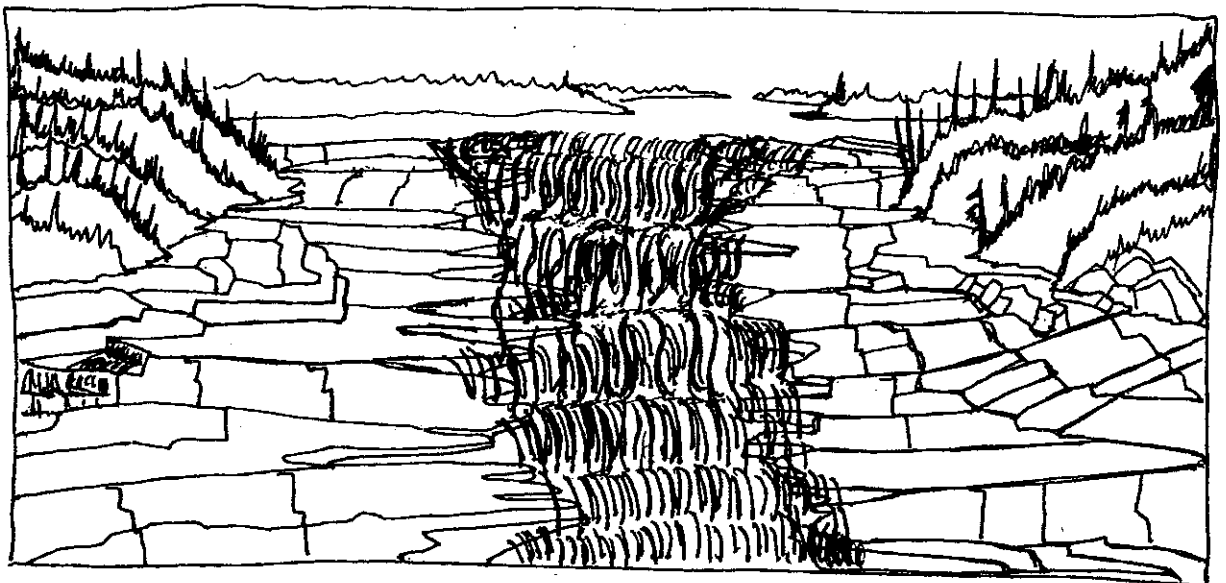
*Living history and hands-on interpretation enable educators to capitalise on the curiosity, sensory needs and creative enthusiasm of young students.*

education program, according to Alderson and Low (1982) involves; pre-training of the teacher with written materials or background instruction, student participation in the on-site program, and follow-up review and evaluation activities. Organised in such a way, the program furnishes the teacher with curricular information with which to prime students for directed historical thinking within the context of a largely active on-site program. It also recognises the importance of post-visit review in solidifying and summarising the visitation experience. As a result, on-site experiences may be clearly related to the modern experiences of the individual students, and the educational curricular needs.

Living history and hands-on interpretation enable educators to capitalise on the curiosity, sensory needs and creative enthusiasm of young students. Educational, cultural and personal needs may all be addressed in an attractive and inspiring setting. Objective evaluation of such an interaction in terms of measurable outcomes may be difficult or impossible. Yet what education is truly measurable? "Education", according to B.F. Skinner (In Booth et al., 1982), "is what survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten". The test then is time... and, after more than twenty years, I still recall that first visit to Fortress Louisburg with fond memory - I am not sure what I remember from the classroom in that year.

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## Fur Trade Era Interpretation

For years, we Outdoor Educators have been sharing details of the fur trade era of voyageurs, native peoples, and trans-continental trade and travel with our students. Finding a suitable costume from this era proves to be a reasonable request for evening sociables at our conference gatherings. Many of us in Outdoor Education have the opportunity to relate interpretive information while on a canoe day outing or multi-day trip on these same waterways of travel. Likely we use some of the same choice references: Eric Morse, *Fur Trade Canoe Routes of Canada/Then and Now*, and Grace Lee Nute, *The Voyageur*.

The following two interpretative articles are meant to add "colour" to those historical interpretative moments in the field. Both the voyageurs sash/garter and the Lauburu canoe emblem are little known in terms of detail, yet highly visible interpretative gems to add to one's repertoire.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

### THE VOYAGEUR SASH AND GARTER

by Wendy Davis

When paddling in the great voyageur canoes, listening to stories about the fur traders, it is possible to truly appreciate and marvel at the lifestyle these young men lived. The historical descriptions of these northern travelers briefly mention the clothing they wore but fail to explore the background of the belts they wore called sashes and garters. This article will examine the history and evolution of these garments so that we, as outdoor educators, can add these colourful, often worn in custom now items to our solid historical interpretations of this era in Canadian travel heritage.

Sashes and garters were most commonly worn in the 17th and 18th century by the voyageurs and Courier de Bois during the fur

trade. Eventually sashes, brightly woven thick belts, became the "insignia of the fur trade" (Myers, 1992, 37). These articles of clothing were used for many different purposes. Used for decoration and status, sashes denoted the region from which the fur traders came. Sashes were used to impress the Natives with whom they traded, as well as for trading barter for furs. Voyageurs honoured Indian chiefs with sashes if they were particularly happy with a successful trading season. More commonly, they were wrapped once or twice around the waists of the voyageurs and were used as belts to hold up their pants. Although there is very little documented evidence, it is generally assumed by historians and outdoor educators that these belts were also used to protect the lower backs of the men. This was confirmed by Shawn Patterson, curator of Old Fort William, in an interview in which he agreed it was plausible, but there is little evidence to substantiate this. Ruptured hernias, caused by the extreme loads that they were required to carry, were the second highest cause of voyageur deaths, the first being drowning (Patterson, 1997). Sashes have also been known to be used for warmth, as an emergency tump lines, or rescue ropes. If woven tightly and dipped in beeswax, they were also able to be used as cups.

Garters, smaller versions of sashes, were usually only 1-2 inches wide. They were tied at the knees as was the fashion and used to keep bugs out of their pants. They were also used as identification but did not always match the sashes identically as they were usually woven at different times and with different materials.

The origin of the sashes is unclear. It has been debated whether it was the French Europeans or the North American Indians who developed the art of finger weaving. Archeological evidence shows that weaving methods similar to the finger weaving used to make the sashes, was known in North America long before the Europeans arrived. In addition, there

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*These articles of clothing were used for many different purposes. Used for decoration and status, sashes denoted the region from which the fur traders came.*

is no evidence in European folklore or museums referencing this type of weaving it is still virtually unknown in France and most of Europe, except for Scandinavia. It appears that, as with so many other skills that the Natives taught the white man, the art of finger weaving was also passed on. It is most likely that the french then borrowed the technique, transforming the craft and introducing the renovated form to the Natives whom willingly accepted it (Barbeau, 1941).

The sashes, made by the women family members of the trappers, the voyageurs and the Natives, were not originally used for trading purposes. Made by the mothers and grandmothers of the men before they left for the interior, the sashes held great sentimental value and were often very intricate in design. The materials used to make the early sashes were coarse wool, vegetable, wood and indigo dyes, horsehair, beads and tinsel, mostly of European origin. Two or three strands of wool were often twisted to strengthen the strands. A form of flat braiding or plaiting called finger weaving was used to make the sashes and garters. This method does not require the looms, heddles or bobbins that are commonly used by modern day weavers.

The early sashes were loosely woven, made from blanketing wool and Native dyes. These sashes required 150 strands of wool, and at least 50 strands were required for garters. Depending on the individual, a standard sash would be 6-8 feet, long including fringes and bead work, and would weigh approximately 2-3 pounds. The later styles evolved to be more tightly woven with a close weave and firm texture to give longer lasting support.

In Eastern Canada and the great Lakes region, the sashes were multicolored, with red as the dominant colour. Originally the arrow pattern was most often used, but eventually the arrow evolved into one wide band in the center, that looked like a flame. the name Ceintre flechee (Belt of Arrows) remained despite these changes. The Native Indians of the area wove patterns that looked like single or double chevrons. Thus, these three dominate all sashes from the region.

Prior to this standardizing initiative there were several different styles of sashes. Some were named after the regions in which they were produced, while others were named for their quality and style. Ceinture Flechee (Arrow Belt), Ceinture a Flamme (Belt of Flames), common worsted belt and North Wester worsted belt were some of the different kinds produced.

When it became evident to the North West Company and the Hudson Bay Company in the late 1700's and early 1800's that these sashes were a popular trading commodity, the

focus on the sashes changed. The Hudson Bay Company increased the demand for the sashes and in the 1830's, families in the Assomption region of Quebec, just 25 miles north-east of Montreal, began mass producing sashes. These later came to be known as 'Assomption Sashes', named after the region from which they came (Myers, 1992, 37).

However, mass production ruined the art of these sashes. Entire families in the Assomption area worked on these sashes, weaving from dawn until 10 or 11 in the evening for 30 cents a day. During one day a weaver would be



This image is by Carl Bertsch and can be found in *The Voyager* by Grace Lee Nute, Minnesota Historical Society, 1955.



expected to weave half an entire sash, three feet, three inches. Today, one could not be expected to weave more than approximately two inches, as the process is extremely tedious and difficult. Due to the high demand, all sashes were produced by similarly, and much of the intricate and complex patterns were lost. As a result of this increased commercialization and the demand for cheap trade articles, the Hudson Bay Company stopped using the Assomption families to produce the sashes and instead replaced them with weaving looms in Leicester, England (Barbeau). This method produced sashes at a faster rate than that of human weavers, but were far less intricate and interesting.

Not only did the style of the sashes change over time but the way in which the sashes were worn was also modified. They evolved from being worn around the waist and tied at either front or the side, to being smaller and tied at the front. Eventually they developed into a belt with a buckle. However, these articles fell out of fashion in the late 1800's and are now only seen in voyageur re-enactments, museums and archives. These have been some attempts to keep the art of finger weaving alive. Members of the Canadian Handcrafts Guild of Quebec hosted a convention in 1907 to reintroduce the art, and there were small productions at Quebec Festivals in the late 1920s. However, since then, not much has been done for the art, outside of re-enactments and attempts by some families, such as the Ducharme family of Quebec, who work to keep the craft alive.

So much of the voyageur heritage is known and shared by outdoor educators with re-enactments and general canoe travel. While canoes, routes, and trade goods are often topics for interpretation; the voyageur clothing, though often worn, is commonly missing for the lesson. It is hoped here that this information concerning the colourful sashes and garter will add the historical interpretation of the era.

*Wendy is a graduate of the Kinesiology programme at McMaster University. She was exposed to voyageur heritage during a voyageur canoe paddling evening.*

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## A FUR TRADE EMBLEM: A CURIOSITY RIPE FOR HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

*By Bob Henderson*

A dominant emblem on the fur trade Montreal canoes (36') was a circle with four petals, or the four directions, or four...? The most popular interpretation of this attractive motif is that it represents the sun. Called the Lauburu, you can see it, front and centre in France Anne Hopkins painting *Shooting the Rapids, Voyageurs at Dawn* and others. Some canoeists today are reusing the symbol in the spirit of honouring the era when the canoe was the dominant form of transport and the waterways were this country's highways. It is a fitting symbol to bring back into popular usage.

The emblem is, curiously enough, also the national symbol of the Basque peoples of northern Spain. In the traditionally minded Basque landscape, you'll find the emblem on graves, etched or painted onto furniture, on utensils, books. The symbol is even the logo for a Basque bank. The emblem is also in common usage historically by the Mic Mac (Mi'Kmaq) peoples on the Maritime regions before being used on Voyageur canoes. The Mic Mac were fine canoe builders themselves.

Who can really claim the emblem as their own, the fur trade era via the Mic Mac or the Basque mariners who arrived in the late 1400's? The Dutch linguist Peter Bakker, in an article

*Who can really claim the emblem as their own, the fur trade era via the Mic Mac or the Basque mariners who arrived in the late 1400's?*

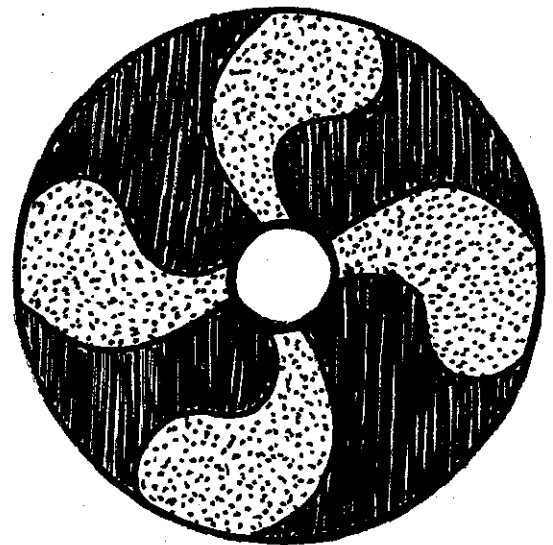
titled, "The Mysterious Link between Basque and Mic Mac Art," makes the following observations. Bakker shows with language comparisons that many words are common to both peoples and must have evolved from decades of a kind of common "trade" language; a pidgin language developing out of a long association of these peoples. He points out, for example, that the Mic Mac word for friend is *adesquidex*, while the Basque word for friend is *adeskide*. More coincidence? He shares many examples. In the end, the connection of the two cultures and the resulting language and artistic motifs interweaving is not in question. What remains a question is; who brought the Lauburu symbol where? Did the Basque introduce it to the Mic Mac or visa versa.

Unfortunately, no art forms from pre-contact Mic Mac culture survives largely due to their long associations with European peoples. Also, there is no Basque writing on the Lauburu symbol before the late 1500s. So, (in terms of offering proof of origin), both cancel each other out, as it were. Though this does encourage the shared association of the symbol. The Basque were among the first mariner/traders to arrive to the North American coast in the 1400s (mainly for the rich fishing grounds). The Mic Mac enjoyed a reciprocal trading arrangement for perhaps over a full century before settlement patterns influenced their mutually beneficial contact.

So this final question about origin will likely remain a mystery. That is just fine for the purposes of historical interpretation. It is appropriate to re-use this art motif as a fur trade emblem and representation of the time of early contact between indigenous native cultures and European "new world" mariner/traders. Educators find with this emblem a wealth of historical pathways to travel for interpretation to open minds to the expanding understandings and mysteries of the past.

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*Bob teaches Outdoor Education at  
McMaster University*



## Heritage Interpretation in Adventure Educations

By Molly Ames Baker

*What appeared to be roving advertisement for a rainwear manufacturer approached through the morning layer of lake mist. The mist was the soot that seemed driven by a flock of geese as it weisped and whipped its way along the water's surface; the band of people growing ever closer was the finest of kines - the kind with whom you would want to spend eight days in the woods. Quiet laughter, gentle collisions, and occasional "shhh's" travelled to shore as the canoes came in.*

A familiar scene to an outdoor/adventure educator - the group is bonding, morales is high, and friendships are being formed. So often in adventure programmes the group and the activity become the central focus. But at what cost? Do these canoesits recognize the silhouette of the white pines which line the shore? With each dip of the paddle are they reminded of all those who have passed here before them — for recreation, for livelihood, or for sustenance?

When all is said and done, the trip is over, the gear has been cleaned and people have said their goodbyes, the ultimate question remains: what roel did the land — the specific landscape through which they travelled — play in their experience? Were those particular waterways an integral part of the trip or could the trip have taken place anywhere? The cost of over-focusing on the activity and the group process may result in inadvertent exclusion of the land, at which point nature becomes merely a backdrop, a scenic drape surround the experience.

The demands placed on adventure education have evolved over time: historiacally, programmes have long focused on the activity as a means of promoting perosnal growth and group development (Ewert, 1987; Priest, 1990); but more recently, due to the increasing number of wildland users and related resource abuse, the need for lessening groups' impacts have been promoted. This has resulted in the advent of Leave No Trace techniques and their wide-spread adoption by adventure programmes.

Of late the need to promote environmental awareness among participants has been widely recognized within adventute education, but the integration of environmental objective beyond Leave No Trace practices (e.g. natural history) has been limited (Ross, 1996). Mission state-

ments, curriculums, and staff training do not necessarily reflect an emphasis on environmental objectives: the extent to which they are actually incorporated in the field has been dependent upon the interests and expertise of the trip leader. At present, there is a need to intergrate envoromenal objective on a more systematic basis. The day has passed that our participants can leave our programmes with a sense of accomplishments but without a sense of place.

Over four decades ago, Aldo Leopold acknowledged the threat of landlessness in our society, and currently landscapes are increasingly becoming more homogenized and we find ourselves in "Anywhere, USA" (Leopold, 1949; Hilten, 1996). It is incumbent upon us as outdoor educators to consider whether our programmes are promoting landless or 'landful' experiences. By emphasizing the uniqueness of the landscapes in which we travel, we can create opportunities which enable our participants connect with the land (Lutts, 1985; Hilton, 1996)

One method of emphasizing the unique attributes of landscapes - both natural and cultural - is interpretation. Defined as "a planned effort to create for the visitor an understanding of the history and significance of events, people, and objects with which the site is associated" (Alderson & Lowe, 1985), interpretation is a method of communication that challenges the intellect, touches the emotions, and sparks curriosity. For many decades interpretation has been no studies which explore the incorporation of heritage interpretation in adventure education programmes or evaluate its effect on the participant's experience.

The adventure education setting is conducive to the application of heritage interpretation in that "all land has a history" (Pearsall, 1990) and "every trail and waterway has a story" (Henderson, 1990). Rather than just paddling down the river to get to the next campsite, the group can stop for a moment to contemplate what it would have been like to travel there in the 1800's as a trapper: 'what gear would we be carrying?' what clothes would we be wearing? what plants and trees would be growing on the

*The adventure education setting is conducive to the application of heritage interpretation in that "all land has a history" and "every trail and waterway has a story.*

*Molly Ames Baker lives in Hamilton, New York and has co-directed the Outdoor Education programme at Colgate University since 1995. She is currently completing her masters degree in outdoor education with the University of Minnesota; her study, "Heritage Interpretation in Adventure Education," will be conducted this August through the pre-orientation programme at Colgate University, Wilderness Adventure.*

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riverbanks? what animals would we see?'

There are several factors to consider when incorporating heritage interpretation on the trail, among them are the creation of the interpretive lessons, training trip leaders to conduct them, and a method of evaluating the effect on participants. First and foremost, the interpretation must be 'doable' - the props' resources must be lightweight and portable (e.g. packable in a backpack), the activity must suit the terrain and climate, and the time and effort needed to create the lessons must be reasonable and within the scope of the administrative timetable. Arguably the most important element is preparing the staff, they must have enough information and a framework to work within, yet they need flexibility in order to utilize teachable moments in the field.

One method is to have the staff brainstorm an interpretive "bag of tricks" from which to draw. Once in the field, they can incorporate a minimum number of activities by using a "peppering" method - sprinkling interpretive moments throughout the trip. In this manner, interpretation becomes an integral part of the trip rather than a 'one-shot-deal'. In terms of evaluating the effects on the participants' experience, qualitative interviews can be utilized to determine if the interpretation enriched their experience and/or if it promoted a connection with the particular landscape in which they were travelling. In addition, the staff can use field logs to record the time, location, nature of the interpretive activity and their perception of how it was received by the participants.

The design of the activities, beyond the scope of the above listed concerns, is limited only by the creativity of staff and administrators. For example, utilizing existing resources; group journals (e.g. stepping back in time and making entries from the viewpoint of the trapper, logger or guide), bear bags (e.g. creating a tangible time line of the history of the area with the rope and judicious use of duct tape), cooking (e.g. preparing a meal that was typically eaten by inhabitants of the area in days gone by), gear (e.g. pondering what equipment and clothing the group would have used in making the first recorded ascent of a mountain).

When wilderness settings are explored in this manner, there is potential for the landscape to come alive as a tangible link to all that has happened before, revealing the interactions of land and people over time. Interpretation on the trail can help participants to understand the

history is a continuum and that their experience with, and impact on, the land are part of that continuum (Pearsall, 1990). The role of the adventure educator, when viewed with this mind set, can be seen as twofold: to become both the naturalist and historic interpreter in effort to show how natural and cultural worlds are interrelated, and to spark the imagination of the participants in doing so (Beam, 1993; Lutts, 1985; Pearsall, 1990). At a minimum, incorporating heritage into adventure education programmes serves to enrich the recreational experiences by adding a new dimension and enabling participants to view the land from a different perspective.

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## Being Your Own Pictograph Artist

By Noreen Orrillo

Most history textbooks depict the nature of our past and retell the story of how things have become as they have today. Yet the textbooks of the great outdoors, are not as concrete in the interpretation as the stone on which they lie. There is much speculation of what 'pictographs' are. These paintings are also referred to as 'rock art', yet the former is more accurate because it means picture writing (Rajnovich, 1994). Thus, the word 'pictograph', suggests that it is simply not art, but stories of the symbols and images 'written' in stone. I have always been under the impression that they just told stories, and in retrospect, I guess they do, yet they are much more than tales. While the simplest of definitions, is that pictographs are First Nations art of people, mythological creatures, bows and canoes which illustrate the ideas about the people who settled the area, they also represent a guide to the past and a window to the future (Conway, 1993).

Have you ever stared at a painting and wondered what the artist was thinking at the time or what was their inspiration? Or did you just want to sit back and enjoy the scene in front of you without overanalysing what the artist was trying to suggest? Well, many of us engage in conversation about the former, which tends to end in great debate. However, the latter are how I suggest that one should approach pictographs. Ultimately, we are guests to these pictograph sites and interpretations of such is merely a guide to their historical context. As such, pictographs are important to Outdoor Education because they serve as a large historical reference as to who lived in the area, what they encountered and what they learned (Conway, 1993). Without history, much of the settings for outdoor travel, has less meaning than it should. Since Outdoor Education is experiential, travelling to these pictograph sites, immerses the learner into history instantaneously.

I have learned a great deal from visiting and researching pictographs. While on a canoe trip,

after I had seen a site, I was inspired to draw my own pictograph on a rock face. It was a drawing of one of the small lakes we had canoed the previous day. However, at the time, I knew not of the meanings and uses of pictographs. This is why I believe the use of pictographs is an essential tool for an Outdoor Educator. It allows one to use art, working with a native motif, to express individual ideas. Visiting these sites creates an atmosphere of wonder and inspiration and it is this inspiration which needs to be expressed. With some previous briefing of what pictographs may be, educators should invite their learners to express their ideas in pictographs of their own. This is what I have done. When presenting it to others, or in my case, my class and fellow trippers, many needed elaborate explanation. Whereas some pointed to certain figures and said certain word phrases such as; "Oh yeah...I remember that" and so on. These responses suggest that these figures are not just drawings of my trip but have meaningful insights as to what my trip encompassed.

Thus, by using my pictograph as an example, I will illustrate how figures create meaning to story. Furthermore, I will attempt to illustrate how educators should incorporate the use of pictographs when working within a natural or native setting or motif. Ultimately, I invite educators to use pictographs to allow their students to employ their knowledge of history, while expressing creatively their ideas and knowledge of themselves and their surroundings. This is essentially what learning is all about.

As I have mentioned before, the interpretation and meanings of figures and symbols are not engraved in stone. They serve as ideas and resources. As such, these brief interpretations will serve as a guide for educators to challenge their learners to interpret, understand and respect pictograph sites pertaining to their individual experiences.

Many of the pictographs found are draw-





ings of people, abstract symbols, medicine bags and mythological creatures. There are five main categories of paintings: abstract, supernatural and mythological creatures, human figures and man made objects, hand prints, animals and birds. Abstract symbols include circles, spirals, horns, and lines. These symbols may represent spirits which illustrate ultimate knowledge, long life and good luck. For example, a circle with a dot in the centre may symbolize a great spirit. Horns symbolize wisdom and lines from the mouth represents speech. Supernatural beings or mythological creatures represent many meanings. For example, the Maymaygwayshi are characterized as hairy human like creatures that live inside of cliffs. These creatures are said to hold the secret of medicine, whereas Mishipizhiw is a lynx or wildcat with a serpent like tail. This creature rules the great underwater and can alter waves and currents with its tail, if angered. Human figures may illustrate the enlightenment of shamans or shamans themselves. These figures have drums, pipes and rattles. These may show the importance of medicine-such as the pipe. The objects too, may illustrate relative time. For example, a gun drawn, depicts early European encounters, which denotes a particular time period. Hand prints are said to be the artist's signatures. Likewise, hands are unique, which allow the artist to record their presence. As well, hand prints may signify death or a warrior killed near by. Animals and birds are used to depict the artist's attitude toward nature. They are also used to represent the hunt, since they depended on animals for food and clothing. An example of the hunt is seen when an animal is drawn with a hole in the heart. Furthermore, drawings of animals pay respect to the animals who may also be messengers of the manitous (gods), such as the turtle, lion, wolf, serpent, bird and bear (Dewdney & Kidd, 1967 and Rajnovich, 1994).

These interpretations give meanings to the symbols and by examining each symbol on a site, enables the visitor to create a story which has been left for them to learn. I will use my pictograph as an example. First I will interpret the symbols individually and then create the story.

- 1) Canoes: canoes symbolize great journeys
  - 2) Pipe: symbolize medicine
  - 3) Mishipizhiw: represents the underwater god
  - 4) Two human figures with horns and lines: symbolize speech and knowledge (our trip leaders)
  - 5) Hand print: signature of the artist (me!)
- The last three symbols are not traditional symbols, these are my creations which have my personal meaning attached to them:
- i) Three stars: represent three nights of journey
  - ii) Roof on top of the pipe: symbolizes a hospital
  - iii) Circle of heads: represents togetherness

My trip was quite an unusual one for a travelling experience. There were three canoes, and we set out for a five day trip. The first night that we set out was a hard paddle. Most of the little lakes were quite smooth. Except for the final lake which had a very strong head wind, which made our search for a campsite, an exhausting process. The headwind had not occurred until after we had stopped and spoke about the great underwater god-Mishipizhiw. From then on, our paddle was extremely rough.

We set up camp that night and woke up the next morning with one of our trip leaders sick. Thus, as a group, we decided to cancel our trip and head back the way we came. So Day two of our trip was spent travelling back to the Outpost to get Shelly (the sick trip leader) to a warm bed and to a hospital to be checked out by a doctor. When we got to the outpost, Shelly went to the hospital and we decided to shorten our trip, re-route, and head out in the morning. So we left the next morning, on Day one of our trip (actually now Day three). We spent three nights on trip instead of the five the other groups were allotted. Some quarrels broke out within our group, because many were upset that we were not completing the journey in which we had set out to do. Tensions grew within the group and decisions had to be made about our re-routed journey. In the end, the group expressed concerns, voiced opinions and finally

came together. On the last day of trip we took a picture of our group (not including our healthy leader who was with us) with all our heads put together, forming a circle-which is illustrated on my pictograph.

Essentially, this trip was a coming together of group members that had been thrown together not by choice. The length of the journey at first was the cause of the tension, however, as the journey went on, the journey within ourselves to overcome our problems, became the central focus.

As you can see, the symbols and images mean things which allow for the creation of story. It is this story in which ideas and lessons can be translated. These sites illustrate how sacred knowledge should be treated with respect. A quote from a Native elder, Dan Pine, summarizes essentially what learning about pictographs has created for me:

"You must pray when you travel to sacred sites. Pray all that these lost things will come back to you. And it does. The rock speaks to you in a voice so clear. These are the preparations that you make when you are out. Say the words that are right. Make the proper interpretations. As for the real understanding, sometimes you can almost hear the Elders talking from years ago. They want you to be blessed. This is a spiritual communication. We live in a spiritual world. We must see that, honour it and be true. Then the greatest of powers will be with us...If we honour the same things, we can communicate anywhere, with anyone. The understanding that comes from spiritual discovery is like the communication between a mother and a child, only much stronger, because of the power of our grandmother, the Earth." (Conway, 1993, 154).

It is a privilege to be looking into someone else's ideas, thoughts and stories that have richly shaped their lives. This is why I believe pictographs are important in Outdoor Education. They allow us to learn and respect nature and history while realizing that the system includes ourselves. Presently, we are a part of the history within these pictographs and it is



important for us to share our ideas with each other, in turn enhancing our learning and perhaps enlightening our individual and collective journey through life. Let's keep the 'spirit' of pictographs alive and well with our students!

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## USE OF READINGS

by Bob Handerson, Linda Leckie

With fellow staff from a canoe travel instructional programme, we propose to explore the components of a successful education offering over a series of "In the Field" columns. See Pathways, Dec. 1997 for "Use of Games" and Jan./Feb. 1998 "Nice Work If You Can Get It" for an overall look at the guide's role. Future columns will include; use of ceremony and use of campfires.

The programme to be considered is McMaster University's Department of Kinesiology Summer Camp. The camp is nine days, consisting of two half travel days to and from our site north-east of Sudbury, two days-three nights to prepare mostly newcomers at the output base, and then a five day canoe travel-Canadian Shield experience. We have included the programmes Winter Camp here as well given that the use of readings is common to both. Winter camp is a six day base camp and camping trip in Algonquin Park.

*Over some tea we had some readings (as we have throughout the trip). They set a mood of appreciation for me, but also make me humble as I realize the power of nature and that I have only tipped the iceberg of what many have done.*

*Student Journal Entry*

The introduction of historical and philosophical readings to outdoor education settings can serve many purposes. Readings from travel literature can inspire a sharing of one's own stories. Personal accounts of experience from one's travel or otherwise can become understood as a site of learning and a site of entertainment. Readings of short vignettes from travel history/literature can add a descriptive flavour to one's present travels in a general sense of a continued tradition on the land. Readings also provide specific links through time to current practices. Finally readings can offer long lasting ways to frame complex notions of how we dwell on the earth and our manner of being that arise

in the experiential context of outdoor travel. McMaster University's summer and winter field camps use readings as a way to "pepper" the experience with opportunities for new understandings and a clarification of otherwise vague mental wanderings.

## STORIES TO INSPIRE STORIES

It can be a simple delight to sit back in a canoe, wall tent or by the fire to have someone's stories read to you. The telling can often lead to a sharing of our own stories. We have had success with personal story sharing sessions stemming from George Grinell's personal account of the 1955 Moffatt canoe trip on the Kazan River (Canoe, July 1988) and Elliott Merrick's account of a winter season on the trail in his 1933 book, True North. This book is required reading by all for our winter trip. Students pull out their copy heavily laden with bookmark tabs that highlight passages to share.

Soon students are connecting a Merrick experience to their own and a story telling session has ensued. (This can be encouraged with a subtle push from the guide.) The value of such story sharing should not be underestimated for its learning value. It is with the exploration of one's own stories that one provides meaning to their lives. One passage we use in this regard is former camp director Mary Northway's essay, "Going on Camping Trips." Here is a brief excerpt:

*So why do human beings go camping? Surely these snapshots of scrambling eggs in the rain, of spontaneously creating a party, of feeling utterly content under an August sky, do not give us the answer. Or do they? For what are the great purposes of human living? Could they simply be achieving of a goal in spite of adversity, participating in an enterprise that increases gaiety and enjoyment, and experiencing a sense of harmony between the world and oneself that resolves all*

*Readings from travel literature can inspire a sharing of one's own stories.*



conflicts and releases new springs of action? The achievement itself is never very great - it may be constructing a new philosophy or it may be scrambling eggs. Both, against the backdrop of the ages, are insignificant and will pass away. But it is not the achievement that matters but rather the achieving. Too in creating a party of good spirit, the gaiety and enjoyment are temporary. They are sparkles against the drab discontent of a bewildered world, but they are not illusions. They are of the stuff of which reality is made. The context of a sunny afternoon is no self-satisfaction. Rather it is a revelation of what life could be like were we not so anxious to be a-doing, to make an impression, to be a success, conceitedly to imagine that our peculiar ideas are the ones which will give the world its salvation — if the world would only listen. It may indeed be that these camping values are after all both the ends of life and its means; but to find them we must necessarily leave the whirligig of our superimportant busyness and take time to discover the essentials inherent in the everyday.

But one must not be too serious. Camp people often falsify the values and obscure the delights because we take them all too solemnly. "True humour," says Meredith, "is the ability to laugh at those things one loves, and still love them." Its value is that it allows us to see ourselves freed from self-centeredness. By such a perspective we are divested of our importance and our pomposity. At a glance we discover our insignificance and it is in the realization of insignificance that we find the beginning of true greatness.

But enough of such verbosity. Summer is here, trees are a-leaving, the flowers a-blossoming, the eggs a-frying. Let's go camping.

## A GENERAL DESCRIPTIVE FLAVOUR

A "backpocket" sharing of short vignettes from travel literature adds a descriptive historical flavour to our present travels that help dissolve notions of time barriers, "to snap the thread of linear time" as travel writer, Tim Cahill writes, and creates a mood of cultural identification across space and time distinctions.

We have used excerpts; from explorers George Back and David Thompson, from trader George Nelson, and from recreational travellers, Sigurd Olson, Peter Browning, Robert Perkins and P.G. Downes.

One example of a passage that sets a general mode for reflection and discussion occurs in Peter Browning's, *The Last Wilderness* (1975):

*After the meal John broke out his fishing gear for the first time. I relaxed and watched the sunset and the trees and the calm lake, listened to the restless, persistent chirping of the birds, and stared into the fire. Fire was not only comfort and convenience and necessity, it was the means by which we felt that we were masters of the situation. We were controlling the environment, bending it to our will and making it perform for us. In civilization, with all the light and heat one desires available at the snap of a switch, there is no such strength and security to be had from so minor a thing as fire. Technological and scientific progress seem capable of supplying endless amounts of power to individuals and societies alike, and at the same time increasing their longing for more power still, always more.*

*But that night I got a far greater sense of power and well-being than ever before from fire. What John and I need was the symbol and not the actuality of power, and for this the small comfort of a modest fire served quite well. Surely primitive peoples have always felt about fire as I did then.*

This sort of reflective passage is not necessarily meant to spark deep and rich campfire conversation, though it might. Rather, it is hoped that the reading captures a way of thinking that is coming into being within the present experience. Browning may bring the listener closer to a personal general descriptive understanding of their relationship with fire, technology, sunsets, progress. Who knows? The educator certainly cannot be accountable for the general spirit of learning housed within the relationship between such a reading, the campfire in the present and the listener. And, herein lies much of the wisdom inherent in using readings; that is, the throwing out (the peppering the experience) of gems of thought into the mindscape of the moment to travel how and where it will.

*And, herein lies much of the wisdom inherent in using readings; that is, the throwing out (the peppering the experience) of gems of thought into the mindscape of the moment to travel how and where it will.*

## SPECIFICS FOR THE MOMENT

Specific passages work well for specific events. A passage serves to add a vibrancy to the present moment and activity. George Back's passage of "starting out" in 1834 to explore the Great Fish River to the Arctic Coast is easily comparable to our own starting out. P.G. Downes' recorded trials and tribulations on the portage trail into Kasmere Lake, N.W.T., offers sentiments easily shared and a useful motivator before our own watershed crossing portage. Questions about the land's past traditions of travel often follow such readings, usually not right away, but later that evening. The asking of questions, such as, how did P.G. Downes travel without a map?, was George Back's mission successful?, what else did Back do?: serve to fill the landscape with the past adding a dimension that allows our own travels to be part of this rich past. One's imagination is tapped and our present enriched.

### "Starting Out" George Back.

*There is something exciting in the first start, even upon an ordinary journey. The bustle of preparation - the act of departing, which seems like a decided step taken - the prospect of change, and consequent stretching out of the imagination - have at all times the effect of stirring the blood, and giving a quicker motion to the spirits. It may be conceived then with what sensations I set forth on my journey into the Arctic wilderness. I had escaped from the wretchedness of a dreary and disastrous winter - from scenes and tales of suffering and death - from wearisome inaction and monotony - from disappointment and heart sickening care. Before we were novelty and enterprise; hope, curiosity, and the love of adventure were my companions; and even the prospect of difficulties and dangers to be encountered, with the responsibility inseparable from command, instead of damping rather heightened the enjoyment of the moment. In turning my back on the Fort, I felt my breast lightened, and my spirit, as it were, set free again; and with a quick step, Mr. King and I (for my companion seemed to share in the feeling) went on our way rejoicing.*

We have used this passage by George Back at the beginning of the group travel experience. Whether one is departing the Outpost comforts (be they as they may) or wintering over at Fort Reliance before the final push in to the Arctic unknown, or a weekend trip in newly explorable local bush, the feeling of excitement in the act of departing are common. A stretch of imagination is required to connect the surviving of winter and relative inactivity of Back's men to the urban experience and short outpost stay of our groups. However, this stretch of mind is precisely the task at hand. The passage is best read to an attentive group just before donning the snowshoe or boarding canoes. Ahhh...to be an active part of a great tradition.

### *Portage Passage in Sleeping Island (1943).*

*Packing over the portage has a peculiar limiting and brutalizing effect on the mind. Personally, I found myself becoming less averse to it. ...After a few hundred yards, your neck muscles begin to shriek in remonstrance, and it is an aid to grasp the two straps on each side of the head and pull them and the load forward. ...[at the end] you feel curiously light. With a savage exultation you dogtrot back over the trail with feverish impatience for the next load... ...There are few sweeter words to the man of the North than: 'By God, there is a man that can pack!' The North is so crushing, it gives away before the ineptitude of man so slightly, its rewards are so withheld, that these small conceits are magnified out of all proportion and are warming wine to the spirit.*

A further sample of specific occasions that one can count on for a spontaneous passage sharing includes, facing a head wind, trouble finding a portage, being hungry and daydreaming of food, the call of the loon, the winter stillness, the joy of effort. A special moment on trip is the occasion for a final reading and bringing of the group together into a circle. For 17 years the following passage by Grey Owl has been a highlight:

*Each succeeding generation takes up the work that is laid down by those who pass along, leaving behind them traditions and a standard of achievement that must be lived up to by those who would claim a membership in the Brotherhood of the Keepers of the Trail.*

Grey Owl's words provide a finale before the last portage or open stretch of water to the official end of the trip.

The message that one hopes is conveyed is that of having extended oneself into the landscape's roots and traditions, to having not so much "gone on a trip" but having dwelled with the past. If Grey Owl's words connect, one feels a shared brotherhood with a sense of responsibility for the preserved integrity of the possible "fit" with the land.

Years later, we, as staff of these camps, have felt the swell of satisfaction when a former student has signed a letter, "fellow, keeper of the trail," or shouted out in a busy shopping mall upon a chance meeting, "By God, there's a man who can pack!" These are powerful moments for educators particularly those who subscribe to the notion of B.F. Skinner, that, "Education is what survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten." In fact, the confidence to continually use readings in group travel settings where they may easily be considered incongruous, comes mainly from reading students field notes or journal entries written much later. It is often discovered later that a passage, general or specific, that appeared to have fallen flat, had lead to a quality journal entry and lasting site of learning (a.k.a. Skinner's education).

## FRAMING COMPLEX INQUIRY

Yet another way in which we use readings in the field is to offer a framing context, or an offering of language to inform rich contrasts that are common with the shift from an urban-schooling context of knowing and being, to a wilder outdoor-experiential context of the outdoor travel experience. Students who might cringe at the thought of philosophy, discover that, as A.N. Whitehead reminds us, "Philosophy begins in wonder...the aim of philosophic understanding is the aim at piercing the blinders of activity in respect to its transcendent function." Here are three examples that over the years have had staying power and thus have helped students articulate their own inquiry.

*From Alan Lightman's novel, Einstein's Dreams:*

*In this world there are two times. There is mechanical time and there is body time. The first is as rigid and metallic as a massive pendulum of iron that swings back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. The second squirms and wriggles like a bluefish in a bay. The first is unyielding, predetermined. The second makes up its mind as it goes along. Many are convinced that mechanical times do not exist...Such people eat when they are hungry, go to their jobs at the millinery or the chemist's whenever they wake from their sleep...Such people laugh at the thought of mechanical time. They know that time moves in fits and starts. They know that time struggles forward with a weight on its back when they are rushing an injured child to the hospital or bearing the gaze of a neighbor wronged. And they know too that time darts across the field of vision when they are eating well with friends or receiving praise or lying in the arms of a secret lover.*

*Then there are those who think their bodies don't exist. They live by mechanical time. They rise at seven o'clock in the morning. They eat their lunch at noon and their supper at six. They arrive at their appointments on time, precisely by the clock...When their stomach growls, they look at the clock above the stage to see when it will be time to go home. They know that the body is not a thing of wild magic, but a collection of chemicals, tissues, and nerve impulses. Thoughts are no more than electrical surges in the brain.*

*When the two times meet, desperation. Where the two times go their separate ways, contentment. For, miraculously, a barrister, a nurse, a baker can make a world in either time, but not in both times. Each time is true, but the truths are not the same.*

Concerning the travel end:

*...And so what is the final test of the efficacy of this wilderness experience we've just been through together? Because having been there, in the wilds, alone in the midst of solitude, and this feeling, this mystical feeling if you will, of the ultimacy of joy and whatever there is. The question is, "Why not stay out there in the wilderness the rest of your days and just live in the lap of satori or whatever you*

*The message that one hopes is conveyed is that of having extended oneself into the landscape's roots and traditions, to having not so much "gone on a trip" but having dwelled with the past.*

want to call it?" And the answer, my answer to that is, "Because that is not where people are." And the final test for me of the legitimacy of the experience is, "How well does your experience of the sacred in nature enable you to cope more effectively with the problems of mankind when you come back to the city?"

And now you see how this phases with the role of the wilderness. It's a renewal exercise and as I visualize it, it leads to a process of alteration. You go to nature for your metaphysical fix - your reassurance that the world makes sense. It's reassurance that there's something behind it all and it's good, you come back to where people are, to where people are messing things up, because people tend to, and you come back with a new ability to relate to your fellow man and to help your fellow man relate to each other.

Willi Unsoeld

We tried to satisfy them all [newspaper reporters] but somehow our answers sounded flat and innocuous. There was really nothing we had done that was exciting or that would make a good story, no hairbreadth escapes or great dangers, nothing but a daily succession of adventures of the spirit, the sort of thing that could not make headlines. Our newspaper friends, I know, were disappointed. They had expected something sensational, but nothing we gave them sounded good.

Sigurd Olson, *The Lonely Land*

A sub-category of "framing complex issues" is one we call "wilderness contemplations." Here the focus is on the natural world and personal relationships. We remember that, beauty is not in the eye of the beholder, but in the relationship between the beholder and beheld. Here are two examples from our readings repertoire.

*On my trips back and forth to the outhouse, I took more and more enjoyment from touching the great white pine. One morning, with my arms wrapped around the trunk, I began to feel a sense of peace and well-being. I held on for over fifteen minutes, chasing extraneous thoughts from my mind. The rough bark was pressed hard against my skin. It*

*was as though the tree was pouring its life-force into my body. When I stepped away from the white pine, I had the definite feeling that we had exchanged some form of life energy...I feel this communion, this strange attunement, most readily with large white pines, a little less with big spruces, sugar maples, beeches, or oaks. Clearly white pines and I are on the same wavelength. What I give back to the trees I cannot imagine. I hope they receive something, because trees are among my closest friends.*

Anne LaBastille

*Early morning in the wilderness is the time for smells - before senses become contaminated with common odors, while they are still aware and receptive. Civilization has robbed us of much of our sensitivity to smells, has dulled our original powers of perception by too much living indoors. It has substituted the by-products of industrial combustion for the natural smells of earth, water and growing things. The smell of the morning is an adventure, if you can start the day by going outdoors and sniffing the air.*

Sigurd Olson

## THE STUDENT'S TAKE ON ALL THIS

As staff, we are aware of the possible claim of imposing our values on our students. Certain passages and how they might be treated, bring staff, student, and reading passages together to explore variance in value orientation. However, firstly, it is necessary to remind ourselves and all, that no teaching is value-neutral. Secondly, we seek readings that we hope will be relevant and have proved relevant for us. We don't wish to avoid the more difficult contemplative personal inquiry, rather, we hope to find it and provide a safe place for students to take the inquiry of the historical and philosophical where THEY will.

The following are selected excerpts from student journals that pertain to our use of readings at the McMaster camps. It seems

appropriate to give the students the last say. It must be added that journals are not graded based on content which might encourage a student to, give the teacher what students perceive the "teacher" wants. Suffice it to say, we are confident that the following sentiments are both genuine and resonate with the majority of students attending these outdoor education field camps.

*I began thinking about some of the reading we had done, particularly the one about the portage. I was living what that man had described. During the course of the trip, I was continuously reflecting back to this excerpt, "canoeing is a passageway into man's past." (Sigurd Olson) I could not agree more.*

*The entire trip was nostalgic of the days gone by. It got to the point where I could vividly see and feel the trials and tribulations that our ancestors experienced. I feel that the historical background provided was an important aspect and made me appreciate our forefathers and the beauty of the land even more.*

*The second reading had to do with the trail (Grey Owl, "Keepers of the Trail"). It explained that after tripping, the experience and the surroundings became part of you forever. It was our responsibility as new trippers to keep the trail alive, to keep it going by use of it and by teaching others of its existence. The art of tripping had to be handed down to others, for without them, the trail could not continue. This piece of writing sent shivers down my spine.*

*"It was a moment when time stands still, and human beings cling close together." Elliott Merrick This sentence aptly describes my "meaningful moment" at Winter Camp. It refers to the night (it matters not which) that we sat around the campfire reading passages from Truth North. To see everyone "cling" together in the light of the fire, listening to pure art, fantasizing about days of*

*yore. Time stood still. We were out of context, yet in context, able to imagine the richness of Merrick's experiences. To look into the faces, uncovered by the glow of the fire and see minds dancing with the romance of the moment. For these people, time stood still, and for me it is a picture I will carry in my thoughts forever.*

*Bob Henderson and Linda Leckie*

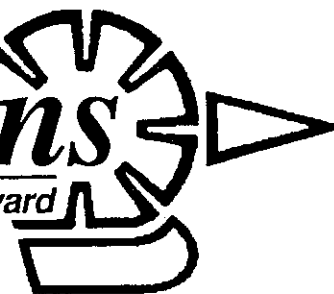
*Bob and Linda teach at McMaster University and Bishop Strachan School respectively. Both co-instruct, within a staff team of McMaster's Summer Camp.*

Sources not fully mentioned in text that are rich sources for travel readings include: Mary Northway, *Going on Camping Trips*, in K.B. Webb (ed.) *Light From a Thousand Campfires*, 1960; Robert Perkins, *Against Straight Lines*, 1979; George Nelson, *The Orders and the Dreamed*, (eds.) Jennifer Brown and Robert Brightman, 1988; George Back, *Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River...1970/1836*; Grey Owl, *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, 1975; David Thompson, *Travels in Western North America*, (ed.), Victor Hopwood.



# Transitions

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Natural Resources Centre  
Dorset, Ontario

The program committee has its collective nose to the grindstone pinning down the roster of excellent selected programs. In addition to a collection of great sessions, the weekend will be rich with all sorts of special happenings to whip you into an unprecedented state of euphoria! Check out the "events within the event" list below. Please highlight to all your non-COEO friends that they can qualify for the terrific member rate by becoming members upon registration. So, come one, come all! The Haliburton Highlands will be ablaze with colour!

### Pre-conference Options

*A Walk in the Clouds* - Explore the new Canopy Trail and the Wolf Centre at the Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve.

*Ecoscope* - A wetlands education program for secondary students. Receive hands-on training and the full package of materials.

### Keynote Speakers

*Heather Jane Robertson* - of the Canadian Teachers Federation and author of *Class Warfare* and *No More Teachers, No More Books* will provide us with a broader context for outdoor education. She is a best selling author who writes and speaks about schools, democracy, kids, politics, technology, equity and how they overlap, intersect and confuse us and make education the most important work we can do. In particular she will "sing the Pepsi Blues", emphasizing the commercialization of everything from nature to the human spirit - certainly an issue facing today's outdoor educator.

*Mark Whitcombe* - will provide "A Mud Between the Toes" perspective of Outdoor Education in Ontario and the challenges facing COEO. Mark has provided critical leadership in outdoor education at his centre, in his board, in COEO and beyond.

### Special Conference Events

*COEO Auction Sale* - Bring along an item for the auction sale and join us for an hour of fun and laughter and a worthy cause.

*Open Stage* - the whole conference and facility will be an open stage where guests and participants anytime and anywhere will perform. A song, a tune, a story, a poem, a role, a painting, a back pocket activity are all possibilities. David Archibald will be a featured performer and master of ceremonies for the Open Stage.

*Back Pocket Resources* - Presenters and participants will share activities and materials that are invaluable tools for outdoor education. Everyone will go home with ideas that can be used on Monday morning.

*3rd Annual COEO Photo Contest* - new categories, new prizes; Humour In The Outdoors, Abstracts, Plants, Landscapes, Doing It Outdoors. Get snappin'. Bring your entries to the conference.

*The Full Count Blues Band* - Wailin'; Saturday night, dance your buns off.

### The Program

We are striving to build a conference that meets the current needs and wants of outdoor educators. We asked outdoor educators what knowledge, skills and resources they needed to make a difference. The program will reflect ideas gathered from COEO members and others over the last year; a long list of great suggestions was generated. We have organized the program into five "strands", *Opportunities in Outdoor Education*, *Outdoor Education And The Arts*, *Outdoor Education in Motion*, *Knowing the Land*, *Technologies for Outdoor Education* with our list of programmes being confirmed listed below. A more detailed registration package will be sent in the mail upon your request.

**COEO 1998 CONFERENCE  
REGISTRATION**

Please check one:

I am coming. Payment is enclosed.  
Please send me a program registration package. Complete Parts A and B below. Send registration form and payment by mail to Dennis Eaton, COEO Conference Registrar, R.R. # 1, 229 Kenrei Park Drive, Lindsay, ON K9V 4R1 Or fax or email form with credit card information to 705-766-9677, or deaton@oise.utoronto.ca

I need more information. Please send me a full registration package. Complete Part A only. Send request for more information to Dennis Eaton (as above) or c/o Barrie Martin, Frost Centre, R.R.#2 Minden, ON K0M 2K0 fax 705-766-9677 or email martinb@gov.on.ca.

**Part A - Participant Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone - work \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone - Home \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
COEO Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B - Conference Packages**

Pre-conference Friday, Sept. 25, 1998  
9:00am - 4:00pm

Please indicate your choice. *Become a COEO member now and qualify for the member rate!*

	Member	Non-Member
<b>"A Walk in the Clouds"</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Package	\$135.00	\$140.00
<i>Includes program, Thursday night accommodation, breakfast and lunch on Friday</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Day Package	\$ 75.00	\$ 80.00
<i>Includes program, lunch on Friday</i>		

**"EcoScope"**

<input type="checkbox"/> Full Package	\$120.00	\$125.00
<i>includes Thursday night accommodation, breakfast and lunch on Friday</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Day Package	\$ 60.00	\$ 65.00
<i>includes lunch on Friday</i>		

Conference

Friday, September 25 from 8:00pm until Sunday Sept. 27 1:00pm Please indicate your

choice. *Become a COEO member now and qualify for the member rate!*

	Member	Non-Member
<b>Full Conference</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	\$210.00	\$260.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$150.00	\$185.00
<i>includes 2 nights accommodation - double occupancy and 5 meals</i>		

**Conference - Day Use Option**

<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	\$135.00	\$185.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$ 90.00	\$125.00
<i>includes lunch and supper Saturday, and lunch on Sunday</i>		

**Conference - Saturday - Only**

<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	\$ 75.00	\$125.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$ 50.00	\$ 85.00
<i>includes lunch and supper</i>		

*Note: In addition to meals and accommodation described above the conference packages include programmes, materials, entertainment, friendships, snacks and beverage breaks and access to recreational facilities and equipment. All prices include taxes.*

**COEO membership**

- regular \$40.00  new member  renewal  
 student \$30.00

**Payment:**

- Conference Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_  
Pre Conference Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_  
COEO Membership \_\_\_\_\_  
Friday night supper \* - add \$12.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Owing** \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit (minimum \$50.00 deposit) \_\_\_\_\_

**Balance Owing \*\*** \_\_\_\_\_

\* for early arrivals and pre-conference participants  
\*\* balance payable by post-dated check by September 11, 1998

Funds payable to COEO Conference '98

- Cheque enclosed  Money Order enclosed  
 Visa  MasterCard

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Cancellation Policy - After September 12, 1998, \$50.00 deposit is forfeit unless a replacement person is found.*

- Can You Provide An Auction Item? What Can You Bring? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Would You Like To Participate In The Open Stage? What Would You Like To Do? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Are You Entering The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Photo Contest?

For more information contact;  
Registration: Dennis Eaton  
705-324-4210 (h)  
deaton@oise.utoronto.ca  
Programme: John Etches  
705-766-0578 (w),  
etchesjo@epo.gov.on.ca

## **Ontario's Old Growth: A Learners Handbook Exploring Old Growth Forests: A Teachers Manual**

Right off the bat I want to say how much I appreciate having a resource such as this for teachers and learners. I just had the chance to be in the old growth forest on Obabika lake in Temagami. I wish I had these books along with me at they would have added to our experience of this ancient forest. Perhaps the section that people will find most valuable is the section in each book on snags (upright dead trees) and downed logs. These are key to an understanding of the ecology of old growth and is an area that is difficult to get clear concise information. These guides give us the opportunity to classify these ecological features which is a way of enriching our understanding of their key role in the forest.

The focus on the learner not necessarily being a formal student, is a nice incentive for the naturalist in us all to learn more about these forests and the way these two guides complement one another is masterful.

The teachers guide goes through exercises and group worksheets on classifying the various components of old growth so the learner concentrates on some "hard" skills such as Tree identification, mapping forest study plots and classification of snags and downed logs.

The learners handbook goes into the detail that one needs to put the skills into perspective. It does a nice job allowing a keen observer to feel they are embarking into the forest with the eye of an ecologists. As I mentioned earlier this is definitely a guide that you will want with you on a trip and has some wonderful diagrams to help you along. An old growth checklist is a nice touch to help you monitor a forest in your area and compare it to established old growth.

This brings me to my only seemingly contradictory criticism. The authors set out as a goal to help learners gain an awareness of and appreciation of the importance of old growth. Yet when they recommend their site selection I

feel they compromise too much by stating that any forest will do due to the travel time and expense to get old growth. This makes the guide practical but it loses its true essence. It is kind of like saying we are going to talk about experiential education.

I know their intent is to get students into old growth and because it is vanishing (Temagami just lost Owain lake), it makes the necessity to see real old growth all the more important. Getting people to the old growth will have the positive spin off of helping local economies realize their importance.

This is the kind of positive thought I think these books will foster in the classroom and the naturalist. I strongly recommend anyone who is interested in old growth to get their hands on these guides.

They are available at AFER (Ancient Forest Ecological Research) 39 Westmorland Ave, Toronto, Ont. M6H 2Z8.

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*Review by Bruce Murphy*

*Bruce teaches outdoor education at Temiskaminc  
Highschool in New Liskeard.*

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*Getting people to  
the old growth will  
have the positive  
spin off of helping  
local economies  
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importance.*



## Exhibition? in the Wilds?

Canoe...there is perhaps no other image that captures the essence of Canada and the spirit of the wilderness. The McMichael Gallery will bring together works that capture the spirit and theme of the canoe to present "In the Wilds: Canoeing and Canadian Art, opening June 27 and running to November 1, 1998.

Nothing could be more perfect and practical, in both design and form, than the canoe to travel through Canada's hidden waterways and wilderness. Its popularity and appeal that strengthened through years as its function and need for transportation has diminished. To many Canadians, the canoe not only provides a recreational way to travel into the landscape, but allows a means to travel back in time and transport them to a period when people lived closer in harmony with nature.

The canoe has been portrayed as a mode of transportation, a vessel of adventure, an escape to serenity and an icon of our heritage. Drawn to its shape, design and curve, many of Canada's artists have been inspired to capture its image - from mid 19th century First Nations painters to the Group of Seven today's contemporary artists.

## In the Wilds

Canoeing and Canadian art explores the role of the canoe and canoeing as it intertwines the Canadian art history. It will include over 60 works of art spanning a 150 year period from the mid 19th century to present day. In addition, there will be a display of historic canoes and paddles from the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough. The exhibition includes work by historic artists such as Paul Kane, Cornelius Krieghoff, Group of Seven, Emily Carr and David Milne and current artists such as Alex Colville, Gordon Rayner and Landon Mackenzie.

The theme of canoeing in Canadian art has no boundaries. It cuts through regions, generations, media and styles. What is exceptional is that by mounting an exhibition of this scope, the McMichael is bringing together a collection of

paintings, prints, drawings and mixed media works by some of this country's greatest artists, both historic and contemporary, who are otherwise unrelated and might never have been shown together in one exhibition.

The manner in which artists have depicted the canoe has changed over the years. In historic works, the canoe appears matter-of-factly, like any other object of a material nature, from an element of First Nations culture and hunting to being portrayed as an indispensable and irreplaceable means of exploration and development. In early 20th century works, as represented by Tom Thomson, the Group of Seven and their contemporaries, recreational canoeing was prevalent. In addition to their personal enjoyment of the sport, the canoe was used as a means to transport the artists to remote areas they wished to paint. In later works by contemporary artists, the image of the canoe is used, quite consciously, for its symbolic meanings and the activities' spiritual nature.

It is surprising to find that a great number of modern artists with differing styles have used an image of a canoe in their work. Interestingly, not all the artists whose works are included in this exhibition are canoeists themselves. Some have never been in a canoe but use the image for its symbolic meanings. Other artists are avid canoeists and the canoeing experience has deeply informed their artistic practice. In some cases, including historic paintings by Tom Thomson and Franklin Carmichael and some contemporary pieces, an image of a canoe has not been included in the work itself. Instead, the work captures an image from the artists' viewpoint while in a canoe.

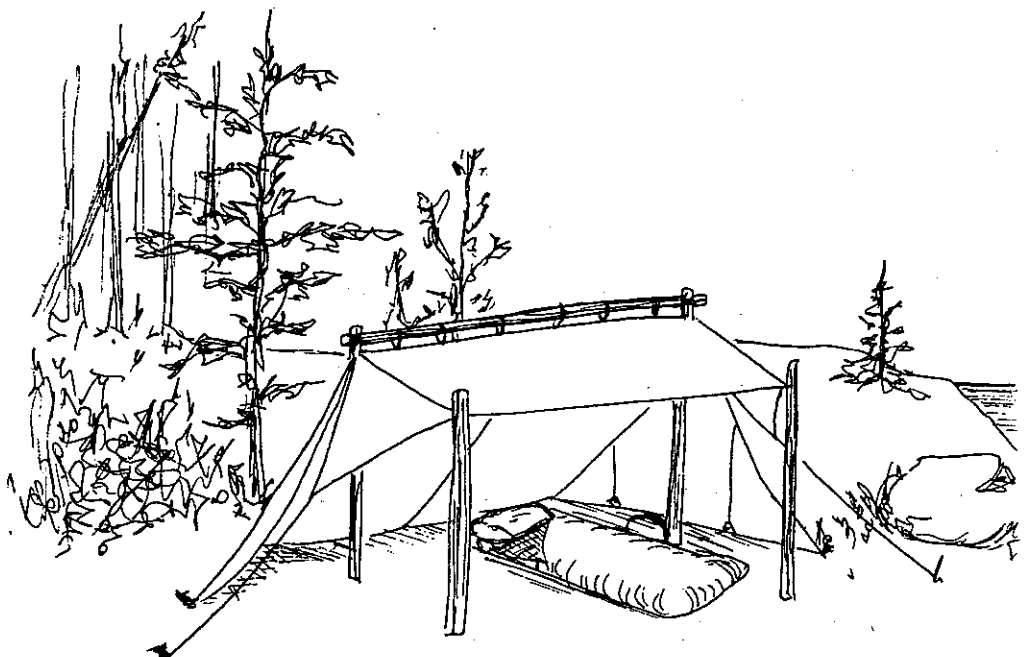
Derek Besant, a contemporary Canadian artist whose work will be on display is one artist who was greatly influenced by the canoe. He recounts his memories of this great Canadian pastime. My first recollection of canoes are from the summers as a child travelling across Canada. I can still see the shapes of the provinces as a map with the wandering lines names St. Lawrence, Saguenay, Red, Assiniboine, North Saskatchewan, Milk and Coppermine. A country made up of rivers. Time spent in a

canoe was sacred, quiet, a place to consider and think about each stroke of the paddle, watching the rivulets formed in the stream undertow.

In a 1970 article in *Wilderness Canada*, entitled, "Exhaustion and Fulfillment: The Aesthetic in a Canoe," Pierre Elliot Trudeau, an avid outdoors man and canoeist said, "What sets a canoeing expedition apart is that it purifies you more rapidly and inescapably than any other. Travel a thousand miles by train and you are a brute, pedal five hundred miles on a bicycle and you remain a bourgeois, paddle a hundred in a canoe and you are already a child of nature."

*In the Wilds: Canoeing and Canadian Art* is included with gallery admission. Rates: Adults \$7, Seniors \$5, Students \$4 and Families \$15. A catalogue written by guest curator, Liz Wylie will accompany the exhibition. Special public programmes, lecture, and events will be offered. Canoe-themed menus at the award-winning Tanglewood at McMichael restaurant and terrace and a selection of canoe-themed products in the Gallery Shop will be available. For more information, call (905) 893-1121 or visit the web at [www.mcmichael.on.ca](http://www.mcmichael.on.ca).

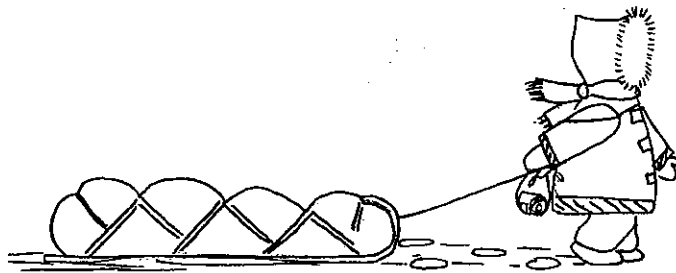
*Charles-Antoine Rouyer*



Redeemer College Kinesiology Department presents

# W I N T E R TRAVEL/CAMPING CONFERENCE

If you enjoy hand-hauling toboggans by day on snow shoes and then nestling in a wood stove heated wall tent at night, or if you would just like to learn more about this and other modes of winter camping—this conference is for you!



**Tentative speakers list includes:**

**Garrett and Alexandra Conover**

authors of *A Snow Walkers Companion* and *Beyond the Paddle*.

**Craig McDonald, Bob Henderson, Craig Lawrence, Linda Leckie, Don Standfield, Chris Blythe, Bob Davis and Allan Brown.**

**To be held:**

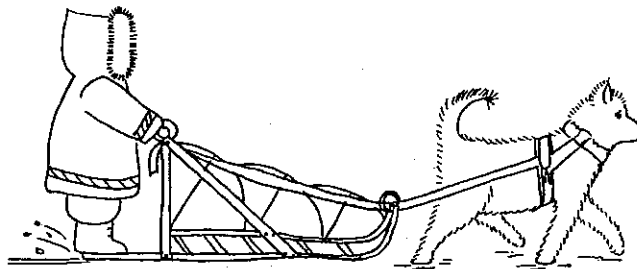
**Friday & Saturday, October 23 & 24, 1998**

**Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario**

**Cost: \$85.00 (\$65.00 student fee)**

(fee covers dinner on Friday, all three meals on Saturday plus snacks;

Accommodation is FREE, if you want to pitch your tent in our gym—otherwise you're on your own)



This is a call to those interested in attending and also to those who may wish to present. Tailgate vendors welcome. To get on our mailing list call Allan Brown at (905) 648-2131 x221. Applications are due by Oct. 2, 1998.

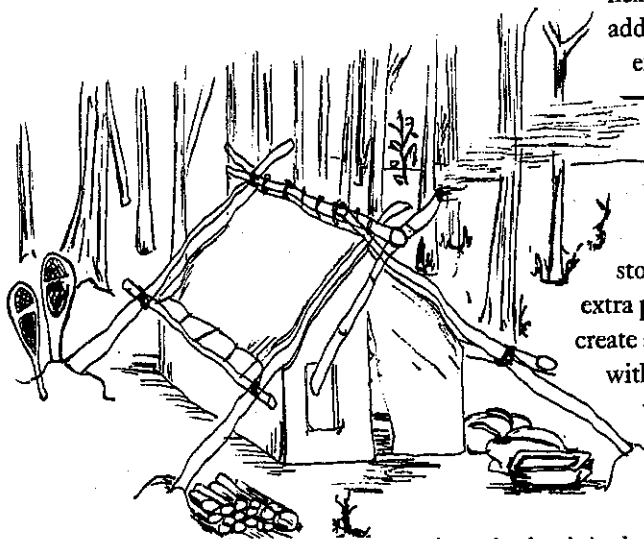


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## THE TENT DWELLER

By Bonnerman Brown

*It strikes me for example that there are a lot more expedition tents out there than there are actual expeditions.*



Carefully tucked away in a corner of my basement is a top of the line, geodesic dome tent, complete with aircraft aluminum poles. The experts in the industry assure me that it is capable of withstanding hurricane force winds and excessive snow loads the likes of which I would be likely to encounter, say, in an assault on Everest. When purchasing it, I thought it prudent to acquire the special "Expedition Fly" that is available for use with this model. It sits on the shelf next to the tent in its own special stuff sack, both of them eagerly awaiting their next outing. In

addition to dozens of extra webbed loops to be used for lashing the tent down in those "once-a-century" storms and the two extra poles that work to create a useful vestibule with built in cooking vents, the expedition fly differs from the standard

issue in that it is also a flashier colour.

I have had occasion to call upon this bombproof shelter in all its expedition fly glory only once. This was during a two night stay in a public campground with a group of high school students from one of my wife's Phys. Ed. classes. No, the winds weren't excessively high, nor the snow deep on this outing. In fact it was lovely spring weather with nary a puff of wind or cloud or even drop of dew in sight. No, the use of the expedition fly on this weekend was necessitated by the fact that I just couldn't find the pole for the regular fly so the expedition model finally saw the light of day. We didn't encounter anything in the way of severe weather that trip, although one night a bull

moose did wander through our camp. I must report that the students in their \$39.98 bargain tents seemed to weather this encounter just as well as I.

I have been giving some thought lately to my camping gear, or, more specifically, to the gear that I use to take students out on trips. I wonder to what extent the equipment used on such outings reflects a certain view or mind set towards the land, which then in turn affects the experiences of the students travelling upon it.

It strikes me for example that there are a lot more expedition tents out there than there are actual expeditions. Compared to the summit of Everest, the type of conditions that we are likely to encounter in the wooded areas of the Canadian Shield, which admittedly is where the majority of our Outdoor Education forays take us, are quite benign. The worst we are likely to encounter is a little bit of rain and some bugs. But even knowing this, I still persist in purchasing for my program, tents engineered for some of the most extreme weather conditions on earth.

Before addressing what the implications of using top of the line expedition tents on non-expeditions may be, let me touch on why I am driven to purchase equipment that far exceeds my real needs.

I must admit that I am, as one friend has politely put it, a bit of an "outdoor gear aficionado". I like talking about it, reading about it and spend hours leafing through buyers guides and other sources of product information. I am not so much an unsuspecting victim of the industry's advertising writers as a very willing participant in their marketing strategies. I don't think that I am alone in this. In fact for many of us the goal has become as much to simply obtain new and interesting pieces of equipment as it is to ever use them and this simple acquisition of gear is seen by us to confer some kind of competence in its use. I don't profess this to be a new and profound insight into ours, the most

materialistic and consumer oriented society on earth, although one might have hoped for something a little different from the relatively "green" back to nature segment of the population that we as trippers represent.

This quest for gear is attributable at least in part to the fact that the vision we entertain of wilderness, and of ourselves in that wilderness, is to an extent, contrived. Our view of the land is filtered through the various lenses of our cultural and literary heritage. We have been raised on stories of the "courier de bois" and the "voyageurs", seemingly superhuman beings paddling from dawn to dusk and carrying impossible loads. The often times tragic accounts of those struggling against the elements to explore this continent or in search of a Northwest passage are integral parts of the Canadian mind scape. The romanticising poetry of Service, the graphic accounts of Susanna Moodie and other early settlers, all of these paint a picture of a vast, unforgiving, wilderness crying out to be tamed by "true adventurers on epic journeys".

That we carry this cultural baggage is a point not lost on the camping gear industry. Marketing strategists play this up and advertising copy calls to the indomitable voyageur within us all. Our perception of our real needs then becomes filtered in two ways; first, we purchase with visions in our minds of the epic journey our heritage compels us to make and second, it becomes difficult to envision any jaunt into the woods as having less than expeditionary proportions. While we may well know that we will be pitching our tent only a stone's throw from the car, from our living room base camp, the campsite still looks a lot like the summit of Everest.

You may say, "What's the big deal? So you spend a little more than you have to and wind up with a tent that's a little sturdier than you really need, there's no harm done in that is there?" Well I think that there is harm done and that the damage occurs at several levels.

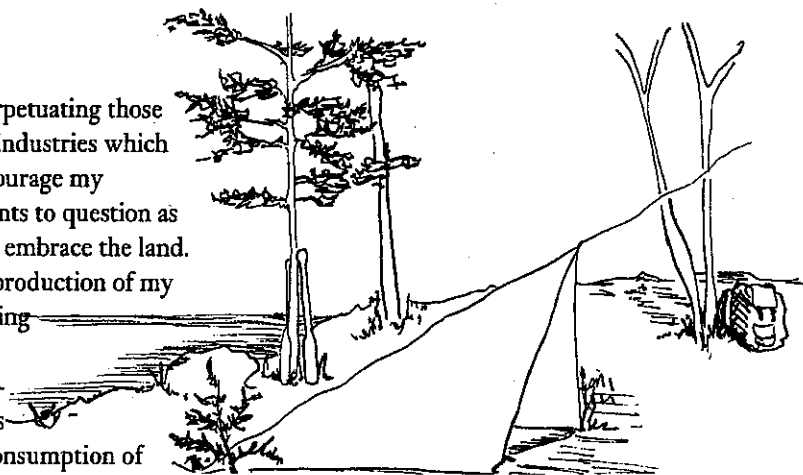
First of all, by going the route of nylon tents and aluminium poles, Royalex canoes and Goretex rain gear and so on, I am participating

in perpetuating those very industries which I encourage my students to question as we re embrace the land.

The production of my camping gear necessitates the consumption of nonrenewable resources and causes toxins to be spewed into the environment - conveniently this usually occurs somewhere other than an area I am tripping through, so the impacts of my purchases are not immediately visible.

I am not naive however. I realize that the very act of going on a wilderness trip at all means we will produce some kind of impact. We do not enter the wilderness naked. We need something in the way of provisions. But how can we lessen the impact that we and our equipment makes? Nylon is a synthetic product and is non biodegradable. Out of it you can build a tent which will withstand excessive snowloads, monsoon rains and hurricane force winds. Yet it can't withstand sunlight. It is estimated that a nylon tent left pitched in the sun may last as little as six weeks. After only a few seasons my synthetic tents are ready to be replaced. Canvas ( Egyptian cotton) on the other hand is a natural, renewable product. The life expectancy of a canvas tent, properly cared for can exceed twenty years, at which time it is then biodegradable. If one of the lessons that we are trying to teach through our trips is sustainability and the appropriate use of technology, do canvas tents and wooden canoes make more sense than the products touted by the petro-chemical industry? Since the high tech gear neither performs better or really costs less than the traditional, this point should at least be open to debate.

It is also possible that harm is done when the high tech gear begins to interfere with the overall purpose of the tripping program. One of my primary purposes in taking students on wilderness trips is to reconnect them to a land



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*The life expectancy of a canvas tent, properly cared for can exceed twenty years, at which time it is then biodegradable.*

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*Our activities come to be technology driven; that is, that our activities come to fit available technology rather than that the technology be tailored to our activities.*

that they are becoming increasingly alienated from. In this respect, it is my belief that the expedition tent, ensolite pad and synthetic sleeping bag that we take with us into the woods can act as a technological buffer with which we insulate ourselves from the environment. When you zip shut the door of your geodesic cocoon you enter another world, a reassuring world of familiar nylon and this years colours. You have brought a little of the familiar into an environment which for many is foreign, and while this may be cast in a positive light - as a way of easing the transition between two modes of existence for example - it can also be said that sealed inside your nylon shell you have entered an environment of your own making and disconnected yourself from the one outside. Physically you are shielded from the elements but mentally you are shielded from "the land". Admittedly a canvas tent entails a certain environment also. I have travelled with both styles of tent and can only report anecdotally that those who sleep under canvas, utilizing poles they have obtained themselves in the bush seem to go through a more rapid process of "land embracing". Students using canvas often comment on the experience, remarking on the efficiency of so simple a technology as canvas and rope in providing shelter. As small a point as this may be, obtaining their own poles seems to strike a chord within many, perhaps because they are obtaining shelter from materials at hand rather than from those they have brought with them. In a world of synthetics, canvas is often a novel fabric for students, one which at first they do not trust to keep them dry and sheltered. Camping under canvas itself becomes a small challenge, and when they do stay dry and comfortable they gain a feeling of accomplishment. Students using nylon tents seldom if ever comment on the experience. They seem to take for granted that the tents will provide the shelter they need and so seldom report any feelings of accomplishment. It is my observation that the more high tech a tent used on trip is, the more it is viewed as a retreat or refuge from the outside environment. Since my purpose is to get students to spend time living "within" a

landscape, I view the ability to withdraw from it a hindrance. When the tools that you use to carry out your trade begin to interfere with your purpose, then I would say that those tools are loosing their effectiveness.

I have my doubts as to whether we humans have the ability or moral character to limit either our desires or the scale of technology that we use in virtually any of our endeavours. For us the efficacy of a technology or tool is merely its existence. In this sense our activities come to be technology driven; that is, that our activities come to fit available technology rather than that the technology be tailored to our activities. I would put forward that our tools should be adapted to fit our needs rather than we be made to conform to our tools.

Please understand that I don't claim to be a saint in these areas. I have amassed as much or more high tech, synthetic gear as the next person and yet can count my really big trips on one hand. It has been a gradual and ultimately humbling process to come to the realization that I have pursued the gear at the expense of the experience itself. Slowly my focus has come around from the promoting of proficient use of hardware to the facilitation of an experience. My hope is that in the area of outdoor gear I will be able to distinguish between my own wants and my real needs and that my students will hold me to practising what I preach.

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*Bannerman (Allan) Brown teaches outdoor education within the Physical Education Programme at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.*