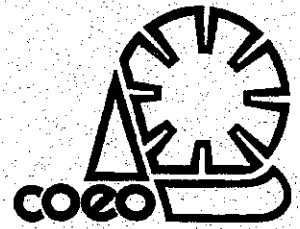


Pathways

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Volume 11, No. 1, January 1999

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



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Pathways

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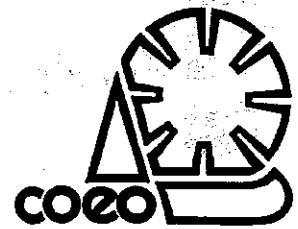
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At a recent editorial board meeting the question was posed - "who should do the November/December issue, the conference issue?" All heads turned to look at me. The appointment was swift. I was a member of the 1998 annual conference committee.

Being part of the 1998 conference planning team was an exhilarating and rewarding (and exhausting) experience. It was a pleasure working with my hard working conference colleagues — Bonnie Anderson, Kelly Anger, Dennis Eaton, John Etches, Mary Gyemi-Schulze, Glen Hester, and Linda McKenzie. Many others also helped out in significant ways the Eco-tourism students from Sir Sandford Fleming College, Debbie Knight, Dave Lyon, Katie Kad, the presenters, sponsors and exhibitors.

This issue is dedicated to capturing some of the content and spirit of the 1998 COEO Conference — TRANSITIONS: Outdoor Education Moving Forward. For those of you who couldn't attend, here is a glimpse of what happened. For the rest of us who gathered at the Frost Centre in late September this issue may be cause for reflection. I have tried to strike a balance of theoretical, reflective, practical, and instructional articles. I hope it works for you.

It has been a while since I sat down behind the editor's desk but I have enjoyed putting this issue together and am thankful for the opportunity to bring closure to the conference project.

Barrie Martin



The field of Outdoor Education continues to experience profound change. Our fall conference explored some of the transitions, opportunities and challenges we face. The conference was also a celebration of Outdoor Education. Over one hundred and forty people can attest to the success of the weekend. A warm welcome to the thirty new members! The evaluations were very positive and gratifying to the conference planning committee who worked hard to deliver an exciting programme. Our thanks go out to all the wonderful presenters, some of who contributed articles to this issue and to participants who made it happen. A special thank you to the many generous folks who donated items for our auction (who can forget the entertainment by the auctioneers, Bonnie Anderson and Dave Lyon!). Proceeds from the silent and the LOUD (!) auction helped to make this conference a profitable one.

Our Annual General Meeting was well attended. The highlights:

Regional events continue to be offered but with mixed success. Make Peace with Winter was a resounding success last February and plans are under way for another one in the year 2000. Other events have frustrated planners with little or no participation. Western region is keen to host a spring event and plans are well under way for the 1999 annual conference. If anyone is interested in organizing a winter weekend for '99 please let know. I'd be happy to help out.

COEO continues to provide input into curriculum development. Norm Frost, our link with the Ministry of Education, expressed his concerns that Environmental Science and Environmental Studies have been removed from the curriculum. Feedback from subject associations and the public may not have influence on the formulation of the curriculum policy documents. The draft policy document for Interdisciplinary Studies, does not include one Integrated Curriculum Programme employing outdoor and experiential education in the list of 26 sample course exemplars. Needless to say, many of us share these concerns. Paul Strome volunteered to head up a task force to look into

the matter. If you wish to get involved or provide feedback, you can contact Paul at 905-878-2814 or Norm at 519-925-3913.

The COEO membership showed some growth over the last year and this conference has definitely given it a healthy boost. Financially we experienced a net gain due to the successes of last year's conference in Ganonoque and Make Peace with Winter. We realize that, like so many other organizations, that our membership has declined over the years. We need to re-establish links with past members and reach out to the new folks working in the field. One way to achieve this goal is to update our Catalogue of Outdoor Programmes and Personnel. This is a large task but one that could be shared by the Board of Directors and other volunteers. Other marketing strategies, including a new brochure, could be pursued. Thanks to Dennis Eaton for offering to help out in this area.

Another way to reach more people is through a link with another organization. Contact has been made with the Ontario Society of Environmental Education (OSEE). They are keen to exchange journal articles, plan joint workshops, or a joint conference and offer reciprocal membership perks, e.g., a complimentary issue of each other's journal, free advertising for events, member discounts at conferences. In this time of cutbacks and threats to Outdoor Education we must help each other as much as possible. There is strength in numbers when it comes to dealing with curriculum omissions and weaknesses.

Along with the Ontario College of Teachers came requirements for teachers to remain qualified. One of these calls for ongoing professional development. Bonnie Anderson is currently checking into the feasibility of having participation in or planning of a conference be recognized as PD. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Thanks to an extremely dedicated and hard-working Editorial Board. We continue to have a widely respected journal. Mark Whitcombe outlined the themes of upcoming issues of *Pathways* and welcomed submissions.

He also reminded us to check the COEO WEB site - www.headwaters.com/COEO for updates on COEO and related events.

Last on the agenda was the presentation of COEO's annual awards.

The Robin Dennis Award was presented to Mark Whitcombe of Sheldon Centre for Outdoor Education for his outstanding contribution to the promotion and development of outdoor education in Ontario. Thanks to Mark for sharing some of his experiences with us in his inspirational presentation "Mud Between the Toes".

The Dorothy Walter Leadership Award was won by Bob Henderson of McMaster University for demonstrating commitment and innovation in leadership development, to learning in the out-of-doors, to personal growth and service to an organization or community.

Receiving the President's Award for outstanding contribution to the development of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario and Outdoor Education in the province was John Etches of the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre.

Congratulations to these most deserving winners.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of John MacEachern, a long time associate of COEO and a highly respected outdoor educator with the North York Board of Education. His influence remains with the hundreds of students with whom he shared his knowledge and love of the outdoors.

Two new Board members were welcomed to the COEO fold: J.D.Heffern, Leadership Development Coordinator at Camp Iawah; and Mary Gyemi-Schulze, a teacher with the Toronto Board of Education.

Have a great winter.

Linda McKenzie

Sketch Pad

Art in this issue is a potpourri of pieces. Marta Scythes was inspired to draw for Bert Horwood's *Sunrise Circle* activity. It is featured on our cover. Also see p.33 for her rendition of the Frost fire tower at the Frost centre. Marta, a freelance artist, has been featured in previous issues. She has had a busy year drawing, teaching a number of art courses for the Haliburton School of Fine Arts and taking courses at Queen's.

Sketches by Heather Edwards, a grad student at the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, can be found on p.2 and illustrating *Guitar Songs for Dummies*.

Animation student, Brian Bazinet, from Algonquin College penned a goeey interpretation fo Anatomy of a Story on p.16.

"Mud Between the Toes" and "Re-uniting Bits and Bytes"

Excerpts from the conference keynote presentation by Mark Whitcombe.

Note: The full version of Mark's speech can be found on the Web site <http://www.headwaters.com/mark/OETransSpeech.html>

...I believe that providing experiences that promote active learning is at the heart of what we do best, and I think we as outdoor educators, focussed on process, are one bulwark against the trend to increasing vicariousness in our society. Therefore "Mud Between The Toes" becomes an important and signal metaphor for that process of direct interaction with some kind of real world where the bits - the information, and the atoms - the physical reality, are re-united by a process of actively learning...

...I want to relate an experience I had. I worked for a year in the southwest of England up on the top of Exmoor, doing outdoor education at Yenworthy Lodge. I spent one absolutely stunning week working with three 15-year-old wheelchair kids. We did zip lines - you could hardly see the kids for the tangle of webbing and carabiners around them! We abseiled them down steep grassy slopes in their wheelchairs; wall-climbing; surfing in the ocean. I was doing the last evening programme with them. There was a group of Year 11, upper high school students, staying with them at Yenworthy, a group they were somewhat integrated with back in their home school. I was giving them a number of possibilities to do for evening programme. One of the possibilities was to give them a fire-by-friction demonstration, showing them my old stone tools I'd brought over. Helen, one of the fifteen-year-old wheelchair kids, had a BlissSymbolics board on her wheelchair. Now this was after working with her for six days, but I didn't really think she was communicating. I knew that she was responding, because when I picked her up out of the canoe, and pretended to stumble, dropping her feet into the water, she went rigid with catatonia, with the excitement of it all. I knew she was experiencing, I knew she was reacting.

But even though the wonderful people working with her said she was communicating, I had no real evidence of that. One of the men who was eating supper with her, called me over and said, "Mark, come and see this." And Helen, in a shaky, shaky manner, outlined on her BlissSymbolics board, "What Fire Make?" She wanted to see the fire, wanted to know how I was going to light the fire. And so I did the whole demonstration, lighting the fire by friction, passing the glowing ember around, everyone blowing on it. Helen blew on it, arms going up akimbo in animation, barely able to puff in her excitement. We got fire - but the most amazing fire was the fire in her eyes, and the fire in her heart, in her soul. To me, that's what outdoor education is about - it's about making that fire in our hearts and in our souls...

...Whatever the changes we have to make - and I think we're good at changes — whatever changes we have to make must come from our source of strength, and not become a knee-jerk helter-skelter response to some problem.

I think we live in a world of increasing vicarious experience. You can call that mediocrity in experience. There's less co-operation, less physical touch, less dialogue, less time, less story. To an outdoor educator that would mean fewer campfires, fewer hugs, less teamwork toward common goal, less direct visceral contact with the non-human. I think back to the 'hot' versus 'cool' of McLuhan; the degree of interaction, the degree of involvement; John Livingston's Domestication of Human Species versus that sense of 'wildness'. I don't know anything about the words of the song, but the title "Too Much Sex and Not Enough Affection" from Timbuk3 makes me want to find out more about it.

So here are some examples of vicarious experiences, and of limited contact with physi-

To me, that's what outdoor education is about - it's about making that fire in our hearts and in our souls...

So in outdoor education, we are primarily in the business of providing and mediating experience - experiences between the student and the environment, and at least as important, experiences between student and peer.

cal reality - ones that to me strike a chord. The boy who, when taken to an aquarium, asked, "Is this virtual reality or real reality?" While that may seem extreme, there is an aquarium, the Boston Virtual Fish Tank, a new public aquarium, whose fish are powered by computer graphics. Or there's the Japanese technology being used in restaurants with a small aquarium consisting of a thin water tank with a video monitor behind it. Using laser disks and high-definition video technology, the system displays images of fish on the monitor. The water (with bubbles percolating through it) gives a 3-D effect - and you don't have to clean them ...

...We had a kid last year from another city school, a school again surrounded by ravines of the Don Valley. All sorts of real wild things live in that valley: coyotes in the industrial area across from the school, deer travelling up and down the corridor, more foxes than I've ever seen at Sheldon. This twelve-year-old boy came recently from a third-world country. He was the oldest of five children, living a latchkey life, with I think five jobs held down between his two parents. This kid grew up without his parental culture, and in the presence of the most limited of North American TV/video culture. He walked on flat surfaces only. When he walked to school, he took the elevator down, walked on the sidewalk, walked over to the school. He had difficulty on stairs, because he had never had experienced stairs in the environment in which he grew up. To get him out on our flat paths at Sheldon was like watching a toddler walk. That was the limitation, the shallowness, the vicariousness of this boy's experience.

And then we've got all sorts of television, videos, cinema, the Net — and indeed all available media, increasingly giving us countenances that are the faces of nobody we need to reckon with.

Please note that I'm far from a Luddite - I'm a wirehead. What I'd like is things in more of a balance - high tech and high touch. We as outdoor educators have that high touch - that's the core of what we do best...

...So I believe that in our world, information (bits) is increasingly being separated from physical reality (atoms). The bits are being separated from the atoms of physical reality. I think furthermore, bits are separated by a lack of interaction and involvement, by a lack of process that ties the bits and the atoms together, that ties the information and the physical reality together. That process of interacting, of doing, of personal involvement is what we're all about. So outdoor education, in which those bits and atoms are joined by the experiential process, and joined by that direct connection between actions and consequences, that process of tying bits and atoms together, is where we're at.

Our Medium is their Massage and our Message. Outdoor education experiences are creators of affect, creators of feeling, creators of emotion, creators of reaction. There are at least three areas in which these affects, those feelings, are significant: firstly, in creating the initial awe and love for nature that Rachel Carson calls "the sense of wonder"; secondly, the importance of being involved and learning directly - that personal experience; and thirdly, establishing the importance of living, learning, working and playing together through the direct and personal experience of powerful group feelings. So in outdoor education, we are primarily in the business of providing and mediating experience - experiences between the student and the environment, and at least as important, experiences between student and peer. We specialize in creating and manipulating experience. We focus on connections and relationships - relationships to the environment, and to each other. Our medium of experiential learning massages our students, modifying them in significant ways and conveying some powerful meta-messages. Our Medium is their Massage and our Message. (modified after MW, Pathways, June 1992)...

...Just this past week with another Sarah from another Grade 6 class, we were doing a stream lesson. We found a little mayfly, an incredible little mayfly called Pseudiron - unbelievably streamlined, very flattened, the

front femur spread right out tight on top of the rock so that in the fastest water, it gets forced down onto the rock. The front of this gorgeous mayfly is shaped like the downswept front of a racing car — or vice-versa! The hind-side of the front femur is concavely curved, and the front of the next femur is convexly curved to fit into the concavity of the one in front. In order to minimize the turbulence of the flowing water going over top, there are tiny stiff hairs sticking backwards visible under a good magnifying glass, and more amazing even still, there are even tinier hairs sticking forward from the second femur up into the spaces between the front hairs. At the viscosity of flowing water, and at the scale of these insects, these mayflies have in effect created a solid surface. Sarah, who was really interested in stream insects, found one of these Pseudirons. She was going on and on about the enormous shield-shaped head sticking down onto the rocks, making this wonderful thing so streamlined. Using my good magnifier, I was able to help her see not only the shape of the femurs, but also the tiny hairs. She could see and understand the structure and function of these amazing adaptations. Our Medium of interacting with her and getting her to observe closely, Massaged her and got her to begin looking at other bugs. She really got the Message that if she opens her eyes, thinks about it, really tries to understand, she can learn an incredible amount. For that kid, there were light bulbs going off in her head about how she could learn and about the joys of learning that were pretty powerful. Our Medium is their Massage and our Message. In outdoor education, we stress the importance of the connections and connectedness. So when we find something in the stream, we don't just give it a name, we don't treat it as a noun, we don't treat it as an object. It's a verb, it's something living, it's a relationship to the velocity of the stream and the turbulence of the water. It's a relationship to the algae that it scrapes off the rocks. It's a connection in the web of life. One of the powerful characteristics of outdoor education is that we focus on and develop the inherent natural connections between knowledge. It's not science, it's not math, it's not history, it's not

language - it's reality. When we integrate those things, we bring them together...

...And outdoor education is fundamentally related to the curriculum and I use that word curriculum in the very broadest sense. We are interested in the development of the whole person within that framework. I think one of things that is important in outdoor education is that we are here for students, whether they be kindergarten kids, or university kids. We are working with people, not with subjects, not with some ulterior goal for some cause, but we are working with people. And that really contrasts with the narrowness of the current government emphasis on business — education being for business, with their whole denial of the educational validity of attitudes and values.

Norm Frost and I were down early in July at the Ministry of Education, giving input from COEO into the Secondary School Interdisciplinary Guideline. We kept saying what was missing in the document was that's there nothing there about values, about attitudes, about what we feel. The Family Studies people were saying the same thing. The Ministry staff were getting quite uncomfortable, and finally said they were being told that they can't use those words 'attitudes' and 'values'...

That fundamental opposition points us individually to action — political action that as a non-profit organization The Council of Outdoor Educators can not take. So it's not COEO that must take political action. That's our individual responsibility. Advocacy that as individuals we must take, not so much against any particular government, but against the neo-conservative reductionist narrow-focus mentality.

We've had many trends in our outdoor education past. One of the early trends was natural history, then out-of-doors skills, group dynamics, the environment, and with curriculum being one of the current trends. But consistently, our core and essential value has been and continues to be active learning, i.e., the process of learning by doing and experiencing. So whether that's Jim Raffan's "What are we going to have them do?" as the first question and the most important question. Whether it is the "hands, heart, and head" that Mary Roberts

And that really contrasts with the narrowness of the current government emphasis on business - education being for business, with their whole denial of the educational validity of attitudes and values.

(whom I talked about earlier) uses at the end of each lesson: Have we reached their hands - what have they done? Have we reached their heart - what have they felt? Have we reached their head - What have we helped them learn something new? Or whether it is Open Their Eyes, Open The Door, Open Their Hearts (referring to the wonderful little handout that I first got from Judy Halpern and Ian Faulds last Make Peace With Winter Conference)...

...In outdoor education, we have a wonderful history of accessing and honouring multiple modalities of thinking and of expressing. One of the key things about outdoor educators is that we're creative. Some are creative in coming up with new ideas, or people like me are good at thieving from other thieves.

In outdoor education, there's that whole importance of learning as developing narrative: living stories, and sharing stories. There's that idea of the interaction, because a story is an interaction, a story is something that is told, a story is something that is shared - and that's a really important part of outdoor education.

So I'll give some more examples of mediating experience - I've given some already. A few years ago - this was just genius! - Martin Hunt, who was working at Sheldon at the time, had a group down at the stream, doing a stream study in our incredible Sheldon Creek. There was a kid there with coke-bottle glasses, unbelievably thick glasses. He was standing in the stream with his hip waders, just standing there, turning this way and that way, just feeling the current on his waders. Our Director of Education was there with some trustees, watching the lesson. The Director watched this kid in the stream and watched Martin not getting this kid to do stuff in the stream. The Director walked up to the kid and said, "You look like you're having lots of fun!" And the kid with these great coke-bottle glasses stared up at him and said in a hushed and awe-filled voice, "I've never been in a stream before! It's just so - wow!" A direct experience! - and not necessarily the direct experience we wish to give...

...This brings me to what I know as a personal weakness as an outdoor educator. I get so involved in providing experience, that "Oh

no, it's twenty to twelve, we're still well out from the Centre. If you're a hopper, you better run ahead. The rest of you follow me, and off I stride in my size twelve boots. "What I often - too often - miss out is the mediation or the processing - helping the students attach some sort of meaning. ...My longtime mentor, Bert Horwood helped me focus on the point that the meaning I attach should not be the meaning that I want to attach but that meaning has got to come from the kids - their meaning...

...I believe that we also have to work towards the development of the sense of service, and finding joy and fulfilment in helping towards the common good - that sense of responsibility and sense of commitment involved in service beyond self. We bake cookies in the old wood stove at Sheldon. The kids have to go down to the barn and gather the eggs, they have to measure things out, they have to choose the right wood, cut the wood, and split the wood, and lay the fire the proper way - all those sorts of things. And no matter whether the cookies are burned or not, the kids love the cookies - which is a good thing, because more often than not, I burn them! When I ask them "Were those good cookies?" "Yeah, awesome!" "Then why are they good cookies?" "Well, we made them!" The next sequence of questions becomes something along the lines of: 'So what would a pioneer kid have felt? We brought the flour down from the Centre. We brought the milk and the butter from the Centre. But where did the pioneer kid get the flour? Where did the pioneer kid get the milk? the butter? You at least fed the chickens. You at least cleaned the chickens. You at least gathered the eggs. You've had that direct connection. But how would have pioneer kid have felt, eating cookies from grain they ground, harvested, tilled, planted, ploughed, etc.,... themselves? And it wasn't just themselves they were feeding when they made them - who were they feeding when they made the cookies and did all that work? And how is that sense of fulfilment and sense of responsibility different than you get when you buy a bag of Mr. Christies?' That's a very, very, different level! I think that kind of responsibility, and that kind of giving to the common good, that

kind of development towards service to others is really, really important and crucial - it's at the heart of what we should do in outdoor education. Think of the value of that experience, think of the response to that, think of what a pioneer kid would think about, and compare it to the tyranny of fun in our modern society. If you don't like the channel, you click the button on the channel changer. We go for the maximum adrenaline rush, no matter how short, no matter how contrived, and how controlled. The sobering thing, and something I think we need to be more aware of, is that ultimate value of fun - this is why I call it the tyranny of fun - is being treated as a commodity by organizations who can fill the orders. We get sucked into the tyranny of fun. Think about doing an extended wilderness trip. Think about the satisfaction that comes from the direct connection. You have to pull the paddle through the water; you have to prepare the food; you have to cook the food...

So what am I going to personally do? What are we going to individually do?

I think that involves deriving satisfaction from giving to others. "If you want to be happy for an hour, take a nap. If you want to be happy for a day, go fishing. If you want to be happy for a year, plant a garden. If you want to be happy for a lifetime, help someone."...

...Perhaps one of the most meaningful comments I got back during the development of this speech came from my friend, Paul Lydon of Yenworthy Lodge Outdoor Education Centre in Exmoor, England. Paul is the maintenance man, a wonderful cook, excellent watercolourist, and one of the most widely read people I know. He said "Good ideas and so on, Mark - but what does all of this being outdoor educators do for each of us as individuals? What do we get out of doing what we're doing?"

*Mark Whitcombe works at Sheldon Valley
Centre for Outdoor Education.*

Group Response

The Instructions: I'd like you to think back to your personal experiences you wrote at the beginning. I'd like you to think about the things I've tried to get off my chest. I'd like you to take words, phrases, ideas, concepts that you think are important and write them down.. On your way out, I'd like you to take one or more of your ideas and jot them down on the paper along the walls as a way of developing a group response, a group image, a group poem.

The Result:

- Experience: wholeness, relationship, circles and cycles, integrity, spirit
- Authenticity, Integrity, Connecting
- Allowing being in time and space versus changing time and space
- Love
- Individuality, Patience, Situational, Variety
- Stop being a selfish leader and let group members in on the 'hands-on' experiences
- "First, I must create a safety aura and net. Then I must allow Individual freedom and risk."
- We disorient folks. Sounds bad, eh? But remember Mark's story about Fire in the Heart and Eyes and that place in us we don't get to enough.
- Creating imaginations - when you use yours, you're empowered
- Having no expectations can lead to the most incredible experiences
- The kids are the drivers; we the teachers are the passengers.
- Hands, Heart, Head - their meanings, not ours
- Learn to do by Doing
- Let - allow - the audience to experience reality
- The process of life is "The Goods" and "The Goods" is baking cookies in a woodstove.
- Only in a state of reality does your heart beat, do tears flow, can arms enclose your soul.

- Let's lick the plug from the wall
Get our fingernails dirty
Immerse ourselves in the new stream
And grow the wheat
To make the flour
To bake the cookies
With our children.

- I wonder
Head, Hearts, Hands
People, not Subjects
Choices
Experience it!
Re-connecting with natural reality
Service to Others
Happy for a lifetime
I Wonder

- Without being part of the process, we miss
our connection with nature.
The wholeness of how we have what we
have
Dig a garden
Plant a seed
Pick a cucumber
Make a pickle
Bottle it
Share it
Re-use the bottle

- Hands, Heart, Head
What we do, feel, learn -
Unmediated mediums
Create the experience
Connect to living
An integrated existence.

- Creating magic
The awe and respect that comes from group
sharing
Service
Choice
Responsibility

Reflections on Transitions

Editor's note: What follows is a compilation of reactions to and reflections from the 1998 Conference.

Katie Gad

Our medium is our message" was how Mark Whitcombe described the work of outdoor educators in his keynote address at the Transitions conference. As a teacher in training, I came to the COEO conference eager to add to my list of "professional skills". I came away realizing how much I had learned from meeting outdoor educators and sharing experiences during meals, beside camp fires, while listening to music, or even in silence during star gazing or the sunrise ceremony.

COEO is an organization of many long-time members and experts in the field of outdoor education. Yet, far from feeling intimidated or left out as a student and a new member as I might in another situation, I felt welcomed and like part of the organization.

The conference made me reflect on what I am learning as a student and how it fits with the philosophy of outdoor education. I had numerous "aha" moments both in the workshops and between them. One of those was during Heidi Mack's workshop, "Women and the Wilderness" where I realized that many of the elements that had drawn me to feminism and to outdoor education were similar. Another was in Martha Weber's "Wild Edibles" workshop, which introduced me to many tasty and useful plants that I would never see in a lecture theatre but am looking forward to sharing with kids.

Transitions was a medium that brought outdoor educators together and allowed me to find role models, inspiration, and a friendlier niche in the field of education.

Thank you to all the organizers and to everyone who was there!

Katie is a Queen's Outdoor and Experiential Education student teacher and a new COEO member.

Bert Horwood

Thanks to all the organizers for "Transitions," another great conference in the COEO tradition of power-house conferences.

In the swirl of excited thoughts and emotions I noticed some things that need to be considered with care. It seemed to me that three stimuli came together to provoke a very important but possibly dangerous action:

Mark Whitcombe put his finger most precisely on very core of what we do.

The dark images of potent contrary trends conjured by Heather Jane Robertson showed how broad the threats are.

Norm Frost's report on his Ministry of Education liaison experiences combined with a reminder that Environmental courses were now abandoned in Ontario brought us to the boil.

"We're mad and we aren't going to take it any more" summed up the mood of our annual meeting. COEO established a task force to find ways and means to promote environmental concerns in education.

This is a hopeful, constructive act. But I fear that it may dissipate our energy in battles which, even if won, would not make any difference. With great affection, I want to say that the loss of environmental courses may not be much of a loss. There is no evidence that environmental education has made any difference to the way Ontario people act. Let me take an observation I made at the Conference as evidence.

The refreshment stations in the Frost Centre were generously supplied. The beverage containers were throw-away paper-type cups. There were about 140 conference attendees (CHEERS!). A number of those carried

With great affection, I want to say that the loss of environmental courses may not be much of a loss.

reusable mugs with them all the time. I'll bet that together the rest of us (COEO members all) used at least 500 cups minimum, and maybe even as many as 1,000 over the weekend. Does anyone want to challenge this? For myself, I brought a mug, but I still used two cups for convenience.

Here's the point. If COEO members, on fire over the changes to education, persist in as simple a folly as using throw-away cups for their own comfort and convenience, how can we make any claim to effective environmental education? Where is the collective moral authority for our task force's work?

I believe that we must be working on personal and corporate exemplary practice in our everyday lives before we can hope to find the openings which will lead to authentic improvements in teaching others to live more gently on the earth. This is the place I hope the task force will start.

Bert is retired, formerly a professor with Queen's Outdoor and Experiential Education program. For Bert growing old is mandatory, acting old is optional.

David Hawke

I'm always amazed at how fitting the themes are to these gatherings, as most everyone I know is in a state of transition these days, with each new role requiring a transition of body, spirit, and mind. Transitions are not always fun, but each one always brings on new challenges - just to make life interesting!

Some words that came to mind as the AGM progressed. Somewhat random, but interesting to feel the emotions that flowed through the room:

Transitions:

Change. Growth. Unstable. Unknown. Exciting. Fear. Confusion. Acceptance. Suspicion. Caution. Optimism. Looking ahead. Looking behind. Flowing unchecked. Sifting fact from bull. Maturing. Leaner. Meaner. Passive to active. Acknowledgement. Pride.

Heritage. Respect. Value and honour maintained. Strength. Recognition. Satisfaction. Regret.

Reflection.

Time. It takes time to go through a transition, and transitions can be timely.

Reflection. Look at the past to see what was good and not so good.

Aceptance. If this is the way things are to be, then accept it, and begin molding it to my satisfaction.

New. This may not be comfortable because it's new. Break it in gently.

Suspicion. What's wrong with the way it was? Why the changes?

Intuitive. Things are bound to change anyway; prepare myself, get ready.

Terror. Why me? Why my programme? What will become of us all?

Insightful. Now is the time to learn new things, to expand my knowledge.

Optimism. I will survive. Other changes will occur. Others are with me.

Next. A transition takes me from here to there, it's the next step on the path.

Strength. Found within. If I believe in myself and my work, my spirit will fly to new heights.

David has been a son, brother, farm hand, restaurant food preparer, maintenance man, infantryman, land surveyor, biker, accident victim, unemployed, husband, photographer, naturalist, wildlife technician, writer, father, teacher, and now resort manager.

Lawrence Keyte

Awareness and simplicity: Thoughts from a long afternoon

Loose your mind to the hidden paths
the quiet crunching of boots
in the fundamental calm
take away the clutter so peace can descend
and clarity ease the brow

knock down a wall or two between the
living room
and the afternoon air
until all that remains between me
and the earth
is the essential shelter
small enough to force me to consider
what I keep
what I throw away
and assess those things
I always believed I needed

At this year's COEO conference, Mark Whitcombe's keynote speech addressed one of the crucial issues of our times. He spoke of the increasing vicariousness of living in a world that discourages active participation and direct experience. He also emphasized the need for meaningful relationships, both with our environment and with one another. Mark's words brought my own thoughts on simplicity and connection into focus, and led to this response to his address.

Each minute of our lives we are faced with decisions that will affect how we experience our world. Will we embrace distance or intimacy? Complexity or simplicity? Virtual reality or natural reality? Speed or slowness?

This century's drive for instant gratification, efficiency and finished product rather than process has taken us farther from the tranquil pace of our earth than ever before. When most of what we need comes at the click of a button, and communication no longer requires physical effort, we find ourselves adapting to our

circumstances by becoming ever more insular, unfit in body and spirit and severed from our natural environment. While technology used with discretion can improve the quality of life, its omnipresence seems to breed clutter and distraction.

sky deepens into twilight
candles are lit one by one
a diffuse glow
illuminates the cabin walls
piano and bookshelves leap into focus
and I am drawn to one or the other

there is no television here
no computer
no quick distraction
only direct and conscious participation
only me present in my own life

so the leaves of a novel begin to turn
or the ivory breathes another song
the pause is delicious
and the trees bend close to hear

Why is it that we always scramble for time,
and look to shave a few seconds
off of every task?

The very advances in technology that are supposed to give us more time to ourselves have, in many cases, had the opposite effect. Does a faster computer make it easier to free up that time on the couch with a good book?

No. Faster and more powerful computers have simply lured us into spending more time tapping away than ever before. Vacuum cleaners have caused us to expect cleaner houses, washing machines have us washing more clothes more frequently, faster cars have enabled us to get to more places, more often, and so it goes.

The simplicity that was a way of life for so many centuries threatens to become a thing of the past. Slowness now requires the active choice to take a step back.

*While technology
used with discretion
can improve the
quality of life, its
omnipresence seems
to breed clutter and
distraction.*

something is unleashed
when we release ourselves
from the confines of too many walls
distractions that don't engage the heart
and schedules that leave no time
to lie in a field
and listen to the wind sing in the grass

a slow unloading
of the spirit
an unfurling
a wakening of senses
to a universe of riches
and all the time in the world

The speed with which we run through the day only diffuses our energy, making it easier to avoid and forget the essence of our selves. What lies at the base of the familiar cry, "I'd love to have more time in the day"? It seems to be the protest of an increasingly material world, caught up in working to pay for more possessions, and for the services we require because of time we do not have.

The latter part of this century has brought about a fascination with buying and owning things beyond our means. Indeed, we get the house, car and stereo system. As a result, however, we sacrifice our time and our ability to choose. Suddenly we have to work full-time in order to pay for our lifestyle. We are stripped of options. Its go to work or miss the payment on the car, cottage or visa card. Debt necessitates fastness. Fastness incurs debt. Where does it stop?

The Amish say, "simplify your life and go deeper, making a commitment to what remains." Not as easy as it sounds, to adapt our pleasures to those things we can afford! But paring down our wardrobe, unloading extra furniture, and giving away what we don't use or need all reduces the need for interior space. A smaller living space means lower bills, and less time and energy spent earning the money to pay them. Full-time work then becomes a choice, and not something that drives the wheels of our lives.

What of "making a commitment to what remains?" When all that is left in our lives are those things and people we cherish beyond measure, commitment is not a difficult thing.

what life surrounds us!
to feel the earth
and know our place in her
and delight in everything she provides

to know the satisfaction
of making what you wear
building what you need
growing what you eat
to feel the same awe our ancestors held
for the planet they knew to be
at the very root of their existence...

so we drop to our knees
and scoop a handful of earth
inhale its damp perfume
redolent of decay and rebirth
we savour the long morning
where time is measured by the sun's arc
across the sky
and smile in knowing
how close we have come
to what matters

no vicariousness here
just intimacy
slow gratification
and the stretching day

Half the students in my high school classes this fall were absent during deer hunting season. This is the highlight of their year, when schoolbooks are shelved and schedules forgotten. For one heady week in the woods with their families, the safety blanket of distraction is lifted. When they are left shivering in the morning sun, the long day stretching ahead, their life is at its rawest, and all experience is close to the gut. Time has ceased its linear advance, and everything is wrapped in the present moment:

In puffs of frozen breath at the clearing's edge; in the stomp of chilly feet; in the anticipation and the silent wait.

*The Amish say,
"simplify your
life and go deeper,
making a
commitment to
what remains."*

Stripped of all artificial stimuli, these youth spend a week getting their fingernails dirty, delving a little further into their own spirits, and stepping in time to the earth's rhythms. They make their own choices out there. Their reality is wrapped up in the smells, sights and sounds of the forest, and places deep in their spirits come into focus. With or without a deer, they come home with sparkling eyes and a story to tell.

Slowness has brought them closer to life.

to feel and know the seasons
by the texture of light
the scents on the breeze
the turning of stars
the bigness of sky

because you're in them
immersed like the boy in the stream of
Mark's story
first time ever
eyes full of wonder
as he looks down at the play of water
against his rubber boots
wide-eyed
smiling
alive

no TV documentary can touch
that swirling sound
or kiss the face with a scent of water
and the taste of cold on the tongue

little boy with your rubber boots
in the playful eddy
paint me a picture from behind those eyes
draw me a breath from your lungs
play me the song of the new stream
and speak to me of its wonder

*Lawrence teaches part-time in Lanark County
and lives with his partner Heidi in a cabin west of
Perth. They have chosen to heat with wood,
hand-pump water and light with candles
to honour slowness in their lives.*

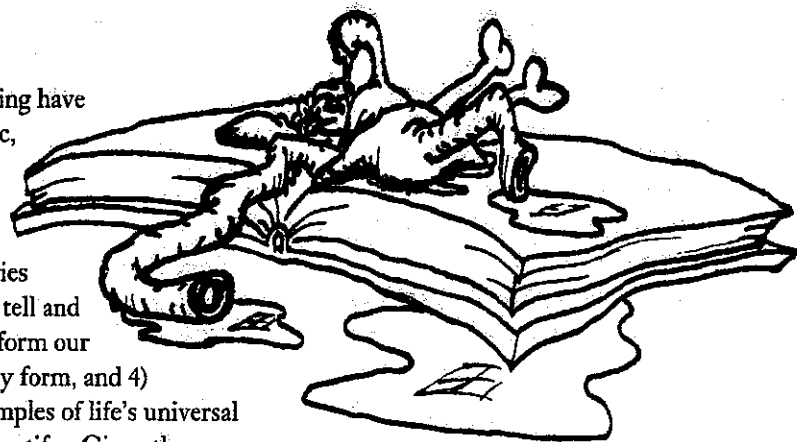
*With or without
a deer, they come
home with
sparkling eyes
and a story to tell.*

An Anatomy of Story

By Bob Henderson

Enough years of teaching have confirmed a few basic, central things; 1) we humans learn best through stories, 2) we define ourselves via stories - the one's we choose to tell and the one's we like that inform our lives, 3) we think in story form, and 4) stories best serve as examples of life's universal truths with which we identify. Given the above, which seems quite important, almost obvious; it is strange that this significance of story in our lives as educators and as learners is so readily lost to a more objectified, deductive, transmissive way of knowing which is certainly more valorized in formal education. C.A. Bowers in this 1998 book, "The Culture of Denial: Why the Environmental Movement Needs a Strategy for Reforming Universities and Public Schools", includes stories, "that explain origins and fundamental relationships" within his list of a low status knowledge realm for our culture, but an area of cultural development dominant in ecologically centered cultures (1997, p. 4). Though one just has to think of students craving for the story form of a particular subject content (not to mention one's own craving for personal story) to keep story central as a means of expression for their teaching and learning.

Two quotes from the opening chapter of Douglas Coupland's novel, "Generation X: Tales of an accelerated culture", eloquently suggest this craving for story as an imperative to young peoples lives. "I'm just upset that the world has gotten too big - way beyond our capacity to tell stories about it" (1991, p. 5). "Either our lives become stories, or there's just no way to get through them" (1991, p. 8). Strong stuff this, but I am coming to the point more and more whereby I am comfortable reiterating such emphatic thoughts about story.



In a softer, more tempered manner, the scientist Montagu once said, "What we need is not more knowledge, but more understanding". To which the outdoor experiential educator is certain to reply with; "yes, and we achieve much of our understanding through experiencing story about knowledge/subject, content". Examples of this would be, the stories we can tell from our time together doing a pond study, paddling at 50 strokes a minute pace in a Voyageur fur trade canoe, watching that squirrel during my solo, and the stories of how our group got all members over the wall. The learning is largely in the procurement of story. Or as a student I worked with once said, "through stories I was able to convey the juice of the trip".

So to return to the novelist Coupland, "I have instigated a policy of storytelling in my life" (1991, p. 13).

THEORY BEHIND STORY

When telling or experiencing a story, the story is always up front. There is however a way to comprehend the breadth of meaning about story - the idea - by trying to present a theory behind story. See Figure 1.

Or as a student I worked with once said, "through stories I was able to convey the juice of the trip".

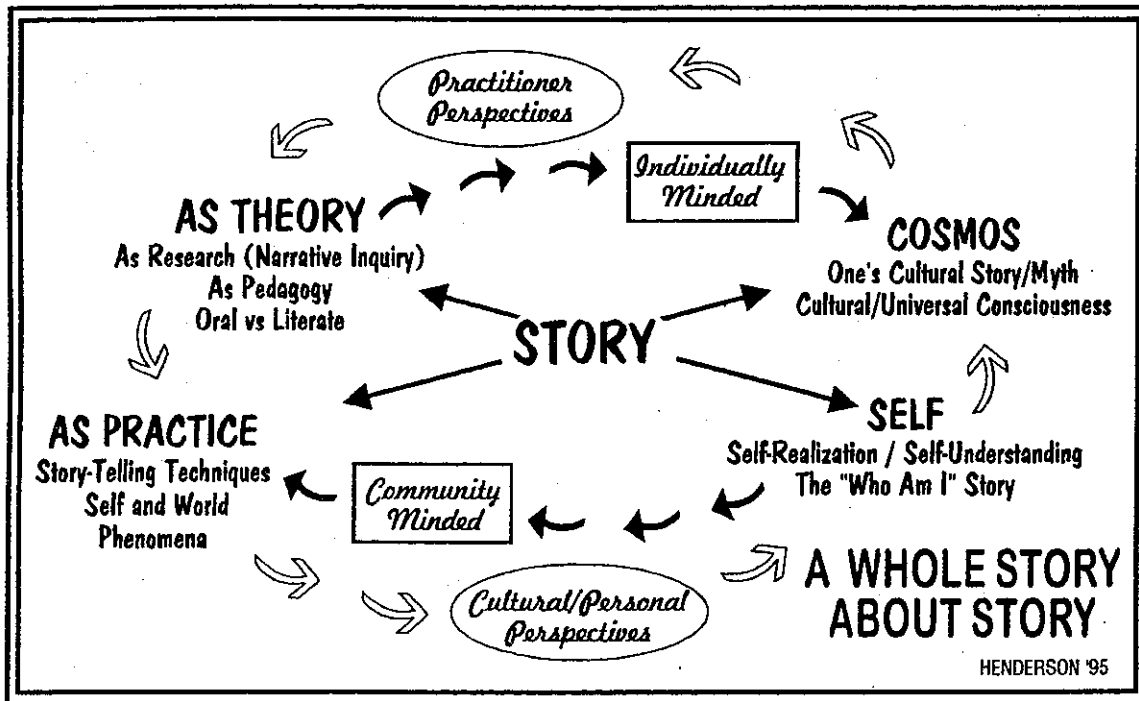


Figure 1

STORY AS THEORY

Story in a theoretical sense can be explored as a research form, as pedagogy, and as cultural work or social activism.

1) RESEARCH:

Exploring one's life history is now referred to as narrative inquiry. Connelly and Clandinin point out that, we call the phenomenon of telling, "story" and the inquiry into story, "narrative". "Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of these lives whereas narrative researchers describe such lives... and write narratives of experience" (1990, p. 2). Composing a life narrative of self or another involves interpreting and connecting critical incidence. Narrative inquiry gives meaning to life experiences, initiating the task of how to shift from pre-articulated life into telling. It involves an imposition of order onto what is often chaotic and non-linear. The end result is often a clear direction towards theory building and clarity of practice for one's professional life and for professional understanding generally.

2) PEDAGOGY:

Story is a means of expression to engage emotion, to entice wholeness, to enhance understanding, to draw out complexity, and to provide information. Whether in oral or written form (storytellers will almost always tell you that oral story telling is best) story enhances meaning to information given. Just think of the Earth Education activity, paint chips, introduced without a story. Bland, indifferent. With story, comes the magic that stirs the imagination. Best yet, as an enhancer, story is for education, that part of education that survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten.

3) AS CULTURAL WORK:

Story as cultural work concerns how people change themselves. There are basic stages leading from felt grievances of being "determined", toward a greater self/cultural understanding leading to self-determinacy. Educator Paulo Freire spoke of "circles of silence" (1989, p. 23). These circles can be transformed if the individual seeks to; 1) explore felt grievances through exploring their stories of life, 2)

We all need to have a sense of who we are and share who we are with certain others.

explaining the conditions of these frustrations by sharing stories with others that point to common historical/social context, and 3) to seek to express some new programme of action (some new story of self and community) to alleviate these initial grievances (Fay, 1977). Gramsci as a cultural worker spoke of a "praxis in the present" whereby a mutually educative enterprise of people becomes increasingly conscious of their situation in the world (in Lather, 1991, p. 72). As a story telling focussed travel guide (at times in the year) these ideas for story as a change agent are immediately understandable and workable in outdoor education practice.

STORY AS SELF

We all need to have a sense of who we are and share who we are with certain others. Whether it be, the former work of narrative inquiry or learning informal ways to open up the self for self understanding and self expression, story is the best way to develop and maintain a genuine self-identity. In outdoor education, when groups get together, one can work to creating a trusting sincere gathering, allowing and encouraging people to share of themselves. You can explore with people, critical incidence in their lives and/or try game-like setting. One game, two truths and a lie, is an effective storytelling session strategy to open up the story as self expression quality. Each person, in turn, tells three brief statements of events in their lives. Two must be true and one false. The others draw out the story by asking questions until that point that they can guess which story is true or false. The hidden gem about this story activity though, is the important sharing of self involved that can be liberating to the self and super significant to facilitating a positive group dynamic. It must unfold naturally though.

Morris Berman in "The Reenchantment of the World" offers an interesting conceptual model to capture this sense of opening of self that is suggested here to be largely influenced by the quality of story telling within the

experience. See Figure 2. Berman's false self guards their inner true self exposing a secondary generalized false self (or the self that is expected or you want me to be). In return, they receive this same generalized self back from others. Hence, actions are less meaningful and perceptions less real. However, if embodied true selves are complimented in interpersonal relations, actions and perceptions take on more meaningful and real shape in a liberating way. Story is integral to the "true self system interaction".

STORY FOR SELF-CULTURE/ COSMOS

Along with developing self-understanding we can develop a consciousness of the cultural story in which we find ourselves and by which we have been contextualized. Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme have written about the "öuniverse story" (1988). They wish, no less for us, than the shedding of our cultural mythical evolution story for a new cosmic story that ground us in a more ecologically viable way in the cosmos. This "big picture" view on the idea of story is certainly a budding cultural expression in popular culture. The popular Socratic dialogue-based novel *öIshmaelö* also tries to expose the *östoryö*, the expression and the assumption of our "Mother Culture". Story, in *Ishmael* is defined as, "a scenario inter-relating man, the world, and the Gods". To enact a story is to make it come true. Hence culture is "a people enacting a story". To cut to the chase, the cultural story we live in, like all stories, is based on a premise. Our cultural stories premise is, "the world was made for man". Another story to enact may bear another premise entirely. That is, "man was made for the world". ["Man" is Quinn's usage]. Such a premise would change dramatically the destiny and divine intentions of humanity. We would, simply put, enact another story as other cultures do and have throughout time. To begin this long view process is one way to consider the importance of story in our culture.

These grand scale application of story as a cultural/cosmic understanding are solidly gaining ground in our culture as we come to understand our haplessly direction into even greater socio-environmental degradation. In story, people are seeking new cultural/cosmic explaining stories. Pivotal to this rethinking is the optimism and hope in consciously choosing our beliefs. Gregory Bateson put it this way;

In choosing our beliefs [and stories] we are therefore also choosing the images that will guide, create, and pull us, along with our culture, into the future. The world partly becomes - comes to be - how it is imagined.

STORY AS PRACTICE: TECHNIQUES/TYPES

Incorporating storytelling into a curriculum is an exciting initiative with many avenues to pursue. First and foremost, there is the oral storytelling medium. Consider heritage stories, the story of your community, and natural history stories, such as the geology of your region as a story. Stories will have central elements of characters, time sequences, plot, key elements and fun/unusual details to add flavour. Filling one's landscape with stories provides an enriching depth of imagination and interaction. For learning/developing stories, you might create story cue cards - point form notes that flesh out the flow of the story with a quick revisit. A third form of oral storytelling is experience stories. How do your experiences or others experience echo with others? Drawing out the more universal principals of significance allows you to select choice stories to share from experiences.

Reading stories is not to be looked over as secondary to the oral telling. Reading a story to a class or around the campfire can also be a powerful medium of expression. This would include reading children's books to adults...and children. For example, the Dr. Seuss stories *The Lorax* and *The Butter Battle Book* are excellent enviro-political storybooks. To explore the depth of meanings of the travel

experience try reading a chapter a night from George Grinnell's book, *A Death in the Barrens*. (A single night shorter version of this infamous 1955 canoe trip can be found in *Canoe Magazine*, Spring 1988 as "Art Moffat's, Wilderness Way to Enlightenment".) On a less serious note, reading a chapter a night of a *Harlequin Romance* (with some cheesy acting) can be one heck-of-a-good time on a canoe trip.

The single image is a technique to support an oral storytelling. The image becomes a visual focus through which to convey component to the story. The visual image allows the audience to be interactive with the story. They can pick out aspects of the image for questions or piecing the story together.

Improvisational stories also involve the audience. Here, cards may be given to individuals within the audience with instructions and a cue or prompt. At the appropriate time in the telling, they would burst into the story with their acting prowess.

Another technique would be performance storytelling. This involves physically acting out the story. As a solo act or as a group, a story can be told in stations along a trail to a travelling audience or using a single stage. I have been involved in exciting performance stories in both forms; a travelling performance in stations of the Hubbard's travels in Labrador and an evening telling of the Windigo native story enacted with candles on a winter shore line. For both, props such as candles, campfires and costumes were important. Rehearsals and a commitment to acting out the story were also important.

The techniques mentioned are not a complete list, but should illustrate the wealth of options and creative potential that exists in exploring storytelling techniques as a component of theory behind story.

CONCLUSION

Within the theory and techniques offered about story there are grand aspirations and objectives made - a quick encapsulation of the

ideas presented may be; if indeed we live storied lives, then we ought to live that way. As educators, we need to understand what makes our work relevant, enlightening and fun. I suspect we will discover story to be at the centre of our best moments as educators and learners.

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Astronomy - System Models for the Schoolyard

By Mark Whitcombe

Here are several scale models of the solar system that can be used out in the schoolyard to achieve several of the Grade 6 Science and Math expectations. Actually, the mass model becomes community-based - with the Sun being represented by everyone in the class huddled together, Pluto is 11.5 kilometres away!

These models originated with my 12-year-old niece, Alison, adapting a non-metric 10-yard model, and extending it to include relative sizes. Alison is now Dr. Alison Sills, Ph.D., Yale (Astrophysics)! I have extended the model to include a mass model, again with relative distances and sizes. I have a 5m string, marked off with the measurements in column 4 of the first table. After having the kids hold the various positions along the string, and quickly realizing how crowded they are, I spread them out along a playing field, holding various items that represent their scale size when compared to their distance from the Sun. The combination of the distance and size scales makes for an effective impact of how small and spread out the various components of the solar system really are!

To emphasize the relative smallness of the planets compared to the Sun, I worked out the second model, which uses mass the starting point, not distance as in the first model. If the mass of all the class represents the total mass of the solar system, then everyone becomes part of the Sun! The Sun would occupy a tight circle of a few metres across! At that scale, Mercury becomes a speck of dust 114 metres away! Earth has the mass of 6.7 grams (roughly equal to a loonie!) and is nearly 300 metres away! Jupiter is 2 kg one-and-a-half kilometres away. And Pluto is another speck of dust 11.5 km away! I like to make the point that on that scale, Earth would be the size of the end joint of the little finger of the smallest student orbiting three

soccer fields away. The biosphere would be invisible on that Earth — and that's what we live in! Note the stretching of the relative truth = the mass model is based on 30 adults, averaging 75 kg each. It would be excellent advanced work to re-calculate the model based on the actual number of students in the class, using their proper masses!

Mark Whitcombe works at the Sheldon Valley Outdoor Centre. He led a Night Sky exploration at the Transitions Conference

	Solar System String Model				Playing Field Model	
	mean distance (million km)	mean distance (light minutes)	string distance (cm (total = 5m))	scale size (Diameter) mm	distance (m (total = 100m))	scale size (mm (dia.))
Sun	—	—	0	1	0	20
Mercury	58	3.2	5		.97	
Venus	108	6	9		1.8	
Earth	150	8.3	12.5	0.01	2.5	0.2
Moon (from Earth)	0.4	(1.3)	0.03		0.006	
Mars	228	12.6	19		3.8	
Asteroids	~300-750		50		9.9	
Jupiter	778	43.2	65	0.1	13	2
Saturn	1431	79.5	120		24	
Uranus	2886	160	245		49	
Neptune	4529	251	380		76	
Pluto	5936	330	500		100	

	Mass Model				model distance (m dist to planet)
	mass (Earth=1 unit)	diameter (km)	scale mass if people packed 4/m ² (kg (30 adults = mass of solar system))	diameter of model	
Sun	332946	1392000	2250kg	2.7m	
Mercury	0.012	4878	0.00008		114.
Venus	0.81	12104	0.005		212
Earth	1	12756	0.0067		295
Moon	0.0123	3476	0.00008		
Mars	0.107	6787	0.0007		450
Jupiter	318	142980	2.14		1500
Saturn	95	120540	0.64		2800
Uranus	14.5	51120	0.097		5700
Neptune	17.1	49530	0.1		8900
Pluto	0.002	2300	0.00001		11600

Sunrise Circle

By Bert Horwood

To participate in the sunrise in some way is essential for becoming aware of our kinship with nature. There are many traditions and cultures which celebrate dawn. Here is a very simple yet profound way that is compatible with current Western tradition.

Choose a place that overlooks the sunrise. (Be sure to check the time and location of dawn, there is a large seasonal and topographic variation.)

Have a sitting pad for each person, if needed.

Gather the group a little away from the site and describe the procedure:

"We're going to walk a little way in silence to a place where we can look out over the world and watch the sun rise. We will keep silent at first. Be aware of the sky, how the light and colours change. Be aware of one another, how we breathe and how we can feel each other's presence. Be aware of the sounds of other living things, birds, squirrels, and insects. Simply relax and be a part of the world as it turns toward the sunrise.

"After a little while, someone may feel the desire to say something. If that happens to you, speak into the silence. But no one is expected to speak. If someone does speak, let silence return. It is not an invitation to conversation, but rather an expression of some important feeling. No one is expected to speak and it's okay for us to watch the dawn in complete silence."

Then move silently to the site and arrange people in a partial circle that is open to the direction of the rising sun. Some sites may require that people sit in any place that is comfortable.

After the sun's disk clears the horizon, or, if cloudy, the time of sunrise has passed, the leader stands and gathers the group into a circle holding hands silently for a while before inviting people to express any thoughts or feelings they would like. Conclude by shaking

hands all round and wishing each other "Good Morning!"

Above is the simplest version. If the prospect of prolonged silence is too scary, the leader could have a poem or song to use during the silence. Examples are "This is the Salutation of the Dawn" and the song below.

A pleasant option in cooler weather is to have mugs, and a billy of tea (cocoa? coffee? hot cider?) on hand. Part of the instructions would include information that you will come round the group once it is settled with a mug and billy pail and pour them a cup for them to enjoy while watching.

Bert's Dawn Song

(tune "Misty Mountains")

Hoo! Roo! See the Sun rising.

Hoo! Roo! Feel the Earth turning.

Hoo! Roo! Powers of the universe

Be with us now in the morning.

Bert Horwood, a mentor for many of us, is a retired professor from Queen's Outdoor and Experiential Education Program. He and others at the Transitions conference greeted the dawn in fine style.

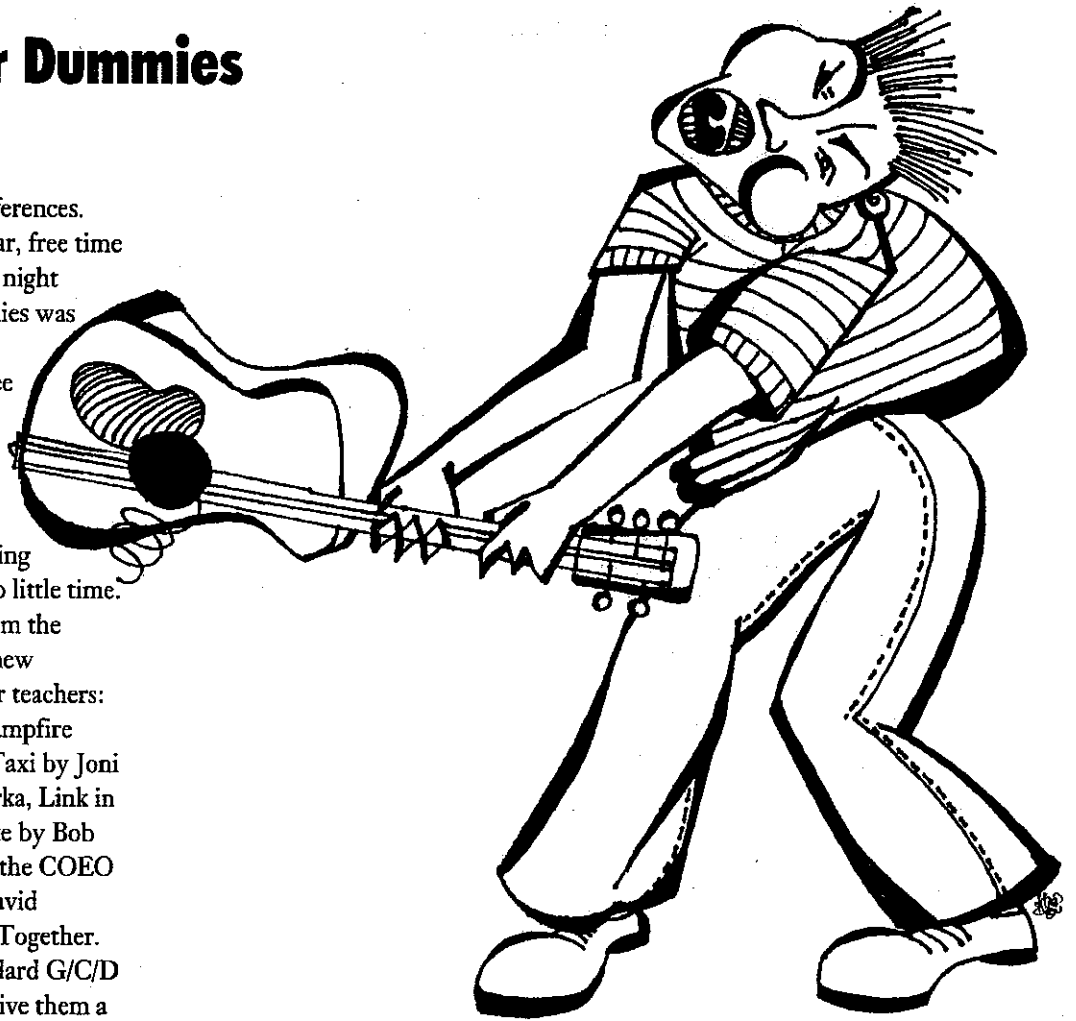
Guitar Songs For Dummies

By Bob Henderson

Music is a big part of COEO conferences. Song sharing sessions are regular, free time events and rallying moments for late night gatherings. Guitar Songs for Dummies was designed to allow time for beginner guitarists to learn a few essential three chord environmental folk songs. Putting a little structure into teaching contemporary environmental and outdoor based songs to our otherwise guitar/song free wheeling time was the goal. So many songs, so little time.

The following are a selection from the songs that were shared/played with new guitarists and a collection of co-guitar teachers: Holy Spirit by Victoria Williams, Campfire Light by Ian Tamblyn, Big Yellow Taxi by Joni Mitchell, Branching out by John Gorka, Link in the Chain by John Sebastian, Parkette by Bob Snider, TV by Cheryl Wheeler, and the COEO favourite played by its songwriter David Archibald, Where the Waters Come Together. The majority of these songs are standard G/C/D chord songs. So seek them out and give them a try. Here are a couple of song verses to provide some of the fun educational aspect connected to these songs.

I like to sing, I love to dance
I will play the fool if I have the chance
All round the campfire light.
Ian Tamblyn, Campfire Light



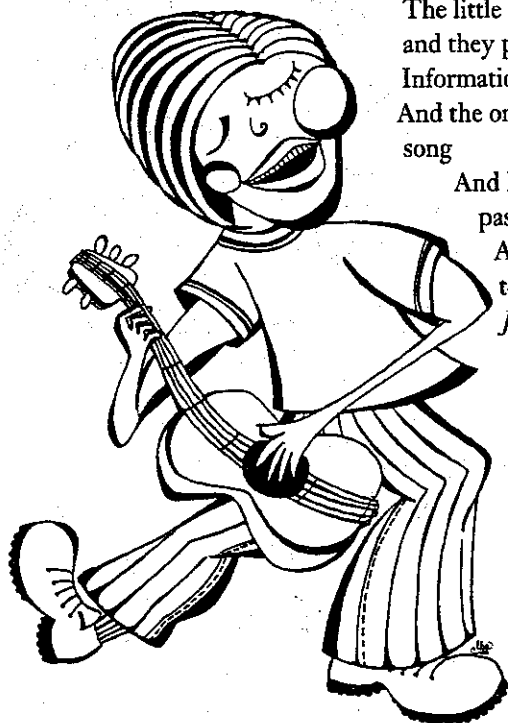
Now it's the same in this world as inside you
and I

The little cells live and the little cells die
and they pass
Information on down to the next in line
And the one at the end learns everybody's
song

And he makes another link and he
passes them along

And we got to keep the chain
together atill the end of time.

John Sebastian, Link in the Chain

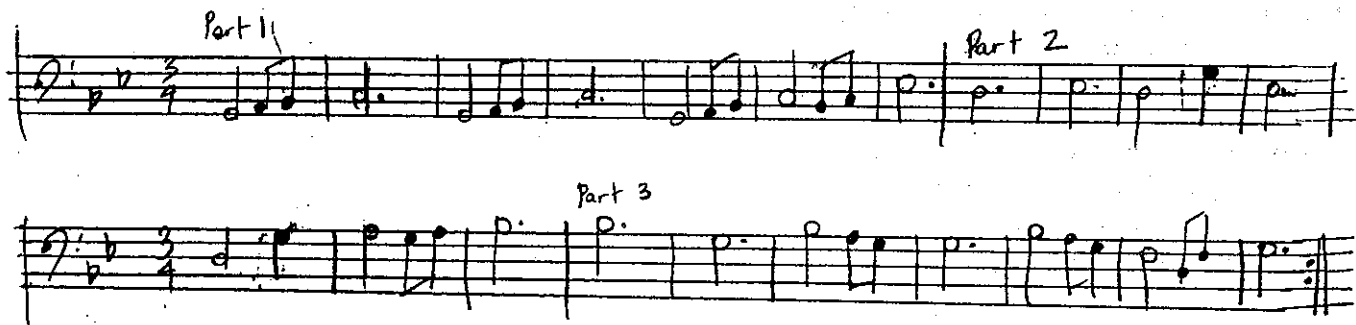


The folk music hero Pete Seeger once said of another folk legend Woody Guthrie; "any fool can be complicated, but it takes a genius to be simple". The above list are all simple, three chord songs with something to say. There can be a certain genius in a singer songwriter folk song. These songs work because they stick and they inform and they are fun. If keen, send me a 60 minute blank tape to be returned with the songs offered up at this session. (See editorial board list for address).

Bob Henderson teaches Outdoor Education at McMaster University.

Editor's Note: In the spirit of this article I have also included the music for what is becoming COEO's theme song, David Archibald's Where the Waters Meet and the music for the beautiful chant that was performed at lunch time by a group led by Heidi Mack.

Australian Angels Diving Hall Chant



I do not know the origin of this chant but many people have asked for it. Hope you can print it

Heidi

Where the Waters Come Together

Original Key D -- Guitarists Capo II

David Archibald

C *Coda* G/B Am7 C/G

Where the wat-ers come to- geth- er You and
 Where the wat-ers come to- geth- er When the
 wat-ers come to- geth- er You and

[2] F G C C G/B Am7 C/G F D7

I will walk once more And we'll ga- ther up the mem' r- ies as they wash up on the
 sea- sons change their mind And the geese are head- ing south- ward Leav- ing win- ter far be-
 I were meant to meet And we'll shake those wear- y years off as we soothe our tir- ed

[5] G Am E7 F

shore And the laugh- ter comes so eas- y as the fi- re starts to
 hind And they know just where they're go- ing They're not like us at
 feet And for one fine fleet- ing mom- ent We've found our jour- ney's

[8] D⁹sus⁴ C G/B Am7 C/G F G

glow Where the wat-ers come to- geth- er to- geth- er We will
 all Where the wat-ers come to- geth- er You can feel the breath of
 end Where the wat-ers come to- geth- er Then we're on our way a-

[11] C

go
fall
gain

[14] 1. 2. G C/G

Where the and they run so far and they

[17] G7 C/G G C/G G7/G

run so free And their banks are filled to burst- ing as they're thirst- ing for the

[20] *D.C. al Fine* mp

sea Where the

Look-See-Paint

By V. John Lee

“ DIRECT EXPERIENCE AND FAITH IN THE SENSES PAINT TRUTH —PASSION GIVES IT POWER...”

So says the philosophy underlying Look-See-Paint, a program, paint kit, and a video presented at the 1998 COEO Conference. “Art and nature are old friends,” says Jeff Miller, founder and impassioned promoter of experience over analysis and of faith in our senses. Look-See-Paint cuts to the heart of a holistic world-view — to the idea of “Deep Ecology” and suggests that salvation of nature and a corresponding salvation of our eroded “natural spirit” can be found in the arts. The arts are the playground of ideas, and in play we are in reach of truths that can supercede the strictly intellectual. Look-See-Paint also recognizing that ideas are the playground of our minds gives room for individuality, without ignoring our commonality. We can all think and Look-See-Paint claims that we can all paint. It proclaims unequivocally that we must feel passionately if we are not to be stripped from our genesis and nurture in nature.

“And so we live a life wherein confusion, contradiction, anger and frustration become our familiar excess baggage. Where cynics thrive and those who come to trust are naive.”

Jeff Miller

We Need Beauty

“I don’t know anything about art, but I know what I like.”

...And, I don’t know anything about nature, but I know that I like it.”

...Or,

“I don’t know what it is, but it’s beautiful.”

These hypothetical comments spring from the Look-See-Paint sessions. An elderly woman makes a painting outdoors, on a small piece of paper, with a few vivid colours and a

single brush. Her painting does not look like her surroundings, but all gathered in her group agree it is beautiful. In this assertion they are affirmed by the idea that painting is a process, and that every painting counts. In fact everyone is affirmed for individual effort, and for group participation this day in this location. There are no winners and certainly no losers. There is no philosophical search for the meaning of beauty and how it is to be recognized or achieved. Yet all are aware of a sense of well being, of either a discovery or re-discovery of an instinct and ability for expression. The paintings are beautiful because they are believable, not because they meet some predetermined criteria.

Look-See-Paint has staked the position that you need know nothing about art or nature to paint in the outdoors. Faith in the senses and the power of experience are sufficient. Poor and bad experience with either is felt to stand in the way of such feeling. This is not to assert that knowledge or intellect is a detriment, rather that simple exercise of the senses and the flux of experience are not to be discounted. In mathematics a solution to a problem or the development of a theorem is said to be beautiful when it is elegant—direct, simple and demonstrable. Look-See-Paint speaks this language in paint and paper.

We do need beauty. We need our expression of it. The cave painters of antiquity may have had motives we can only guess at, but they understood the power of expression. And they understood the value of creating it. All too often we use the power of expression to create desire through fad and fashion, never distinguishing desire from need. Desire consumes where need sustains. We came from nature and we will return to nature—the eternal pattern of life and death. Nature sustains us, promising neither comfort nor accumulation, and this elegant truth is beyond comparison. If we fail to see beauty in this truth, we are blinded and ravaged by our desires.

beauty in this truth, we are blinded and ravaged by our desires.

Connections

Siamese twins, uniquely connected share in a manner far beyond the world of our everyday experience.

Physical connection as demonstrated by the anomalies of the shared organs and common flesh of "Siamese twins" is obvious, but what about less obvious connections? Beyond such a special case exists shared response, emotion connected and demonstrated through weeping, and laughter, in the many moods from anger to sorrow or in jubilation. Mental connection can be traced through research and observation: mental connection leaves historical tracks in writing and conversation. Cultural connections are observed in language, behaviour, attitude and dress, even physical attributes may speak of genetic connection. And these are everywhere.

We are creatures of connection. None is self-sufficient, neither hermit nor monk. We are dependent, and if dependent then connected. The most urbane socialite is intimately connected to the sewage system, which is inextricably connected to our water supply. Reality is what we feel and believe, and if we do not feel connected, that reality evaporates — until a new, perhaps more unpleasant reality is established. Theories of mind and thought that seek patterns and methods of connection succor the neurophysiologist and tantalize exponents of artificial intelligence. Information, feelings, memory, even cognition seem to adhere to the folk wisdom of "use it or lose it", and "practice makes perfect." Positive and negative reinforcement each has their effect. Look-See-Paint promises positive reinforcement of sensual connection: of the power of experience, of communal connection through outdoor painting and the belief that these rivulets of common experience will carve channels of concern and rivers of advocacy.

In the realm of art education, Look-See-Paint stands as the antithesis of the direction

taken by Ontario's new curriculum for the arts. Look-See-Paint is a permissive invitational program that allows you to "do it your way" and damn the mile stones of comparison.

Comparison and connection can buoy or sink the ship of acceptance. Outdoor educators know from experience that "Mud Between the Toes" is more than a mere slogan for the connections that occur in the field. To "feel" the statement does not invite comparison to other sensation or to some degree of experience. You feel it or you don't, and if you have no experience you are relegated to a world of imagination.

Art and imagination are friends of long duration. As long as the friendship of art and nature ...who knows? Image and imagination are more than friends, they, like our Siamese twins are often inseparable. Look-See-Paint does not aspire to the role of teaching art or of teaching nature. Look-See-Paint aspires to the role of engaging the senses, invoking the power of experience to make connection. And in the process, developing reverence, love and advocacy for all of nature. This is well worth imagining!

The twenty-seven participants of Look-See-Paint at the COEO conference may now have mud and paint between the toes.

V. John Lee is a designer, and consultant in the book publishing industry. His close association with Jeff Miller and the Look-See-Paint program has resulted in a series of unpublished essays on the theme of Art, Nature and the Individual. Look-See-Paint, a highly effective art program, has been presented in schools, schoolyards, outdoor centres, resorts, and parks. For information contact Jeff Miller at 705-329-1844 or by email looksee@bconnex.com

Cycling To Awareness

By Stan Kazak

We promote the concept of diversity in environmental education. It is an ecological feature that provides ecosystems with the ability to respond to change. Having differences is a strength that provides for options when the going gets rough.

Outdoor/environmental educators don't need to be told that we are in a time of change. What aspect of our teaching or what aspect of the society in which we live and work provides us with a difference that we can call upon as the going gets rough?

Cycling, of course. Interestingly enough, cycling has not been considered an important environmental education theme or a serious transportation alternative.

It is common for up to 10 to 15 percent of the student population to get to school by bike. They do so by surmounting considerable barriers: lack of infrastructure, poor motorist knowledge and attitudes of cycling, parental fears or apathy, law enforcement problems, economic disincentives, and maybe most important, inadequate safe cycling training and education.

The bicycle is one of the small solutions in the sustainability challenge that we face. It is a rich curriculum topic that provides for the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations. It is relevant to students. Unfortunately, in many cases school practices contribute to its marginalization.

As environmental and outdoor educators it is worth considering the benefits of directing some attention to cycling. Cycling offers solutions to a wide range of problems. In the community and in the curriculum, cycling connects environmental issues, health and fitness, law and citizenship, an understanding of appropriate technology and the pure joy of independence and freedom in the outdoors. This is a powerful integrated mix of issues that makes the merits of cycling education hard to ignore. These aspects of cycling can be the basis for some very practical collaborative work

amongst various constituencies.

The Ontario Cycling Association (OCA) has embarked on a program to encourage safe cycling education, recognizing the shared responsibility of schools, community agencies, and parents. The strategy has four components that include: schools adopting sound cycling policies, acknowledging and encouraging the role of local agencies, improving cycling curriculum, pedagogy and resources, and informing parents. The strategy provides clear and realistic direction for educators.

School Cycling Policies

Surveying cycling in schools across the province reveals that Boards and schools vary greatly in how they deal with kids and bikes. Some hope the issue will go away if they just ban cycling to and from school. Meanwhile a neighbouring school may not have a cycling policy at all so that even some children in grade one risk the ride to school unaccompanied. School cycling should be based on sound practices that reduce risk and encourage participation in this healthy and environmentally friendly means of transportation.

Cycling in school takes place in two contexts: 1. students riding to and from school and, 2. cycling as part of the school program. Though a surprising amount of cycling currently takes place as part of the school program, it is cycling to and from school that involves the greatest level of participation.

Schools have limited responsibility for students riding to and from school. Generally speaking their jurisdiction ends at the schoolyard boundary. The school's jurisdiction is limited, but its influence is not. Clear and well-founded school cycling policies promote cycling and give all those involved an understanding of what is required to ensure that students make it to school safely.

The OCA draft School Cycling Policy

Cycling has not been considered an important environmental education theme or a serious transportation alternative.

addresses a lot of the issues. Recommendations include:

- Every student riding to and from school must wear a properly fitted, approved cycling helmet while cycling.
- Elementary students wishing to leave their bicycles on school property during the school day must have written parental permission.
- Primary students should ride to and from school only when accompanied by an adult or when conducting their entire home-to-school trip using designated off-road trails.
- Students in grades four and above should successfully complete the basic level of cycling instruction before riding to and from school unaccompanied by an adult.

Teaching Cycling

Cycling education can be categorized on three levels: In-class instruction, on-bike instruction, and on-road instruction.

In-Class Instruction

The topic of cycling is so rich it can be taught at all grade levels. On a subject level it can be addressed in Health classes. As an integrated unit of study on a broader topic such as transportation, cycling can become a perspective through which other forms of transportation are compared. And as a directed integrated learning project it leads to achievements such as a student researched and designed Community Helmet Safety Campaign, A Safe Cycling Show based on a fashion show format, or a mall display on transportation options.

Many good cycling education resources are available to assist teachers. The soon to be published *Young Cyclist's Guide* is a resource that provides all the information needed for in-class cycling instruction. Written by the Ontario Cycling Association, class sets are available from the Ministry of Transportation free of charge (Call 1 800 268-4686 and ask for publications).

The OCA also has a resource list including print, audiovisual, and CD-ROM cycling education materials that should be available in every jurisdiction for use by teachers.

On-bike and On-road Instruction

On-bike and on-road instruction usually necessitates the assistance of others outside the school. Many community agencies and local groups are involved in cycling education. These include local police, the health and injury prevention units, service organizations, and private instructors. They can play a key role in insuring children receive some form of on-bike instruction before they start riding to school.

Watch a trained cyclist ride through traffic and you will soon understand the power of on-road cycling instruction. Trained riders are predictable, know their place on the road, and are appropriately assertive. Automobile drivers respect these riders. They have confidence in what they do. Train enough cyclists and we will change the nature of transportation on our streets.

With on-bike and on-road instruction, the issue of instructor qualifications arises. The standard is CANBIKE II. Every teacher involved in taking students on the road by bike should have CANBIKE II training or accompany an adult leader that does hold this certification. CANBIKE II courses are offered regularly throughout the province or can be specially arranged for groups of six. Take a CANBIKE II course and marvel at what it does to your cycling knowledge and practice.

One of the highest achievements of cycling education takes place when student transportation on school field trips takes place by bike. There are several examples of this taking place in the province. It is exciting to see a whole class on the road, all cycling with authority, having been effectively trained.

Informed Parents

Parents hold most of the responsibility for ensuring that their children are adequately prepared to cycle safely. Unfortunately for many parents, bicycles are regarded as toys; if a child knows how to ride one they are ready to ride to school. This is dangerous. As educators we can help inform parents about safe cycling practices. Informing them about the content of a good school cycling policy is one place to start. In addition school staff can assist community

The topic of cycling is so rich it can be taught at all grade levels.

agencies such as the police by passing along information to the home that has been prepared specifically for parents.

School councils should be brought into the picture. They can be encouraged to do the leg work to get an on-road cycling course going after school. Kids CANBIKE programs operate with small classes of six to eight children and can easily take place after school or on Saturday.

Community Agencies

Community agencies have been mentioned several times already. They play a vital role in ensuring that safe cycling practices are learned by students. In many cases they are the only means by which students will have access to on-bike and on-road instruction. Police departments have been active with bike rodeos for many years. Local health units now have injury prevention as part of their mandate. In some of the larger urban centres in the province safe cycling committees organized at the municipal level provide a wide range of programs and curriculum resources. Schools have a key role to play in promoting safe cycling education, but under the present circumstances they cannot do this alone. It is important for educators to recognize this so that they are not reluctant to call upon assistance from community groups when it is available.

Your Role as an Educator

Regardless of your position in the education system, we all have a role to play in promoting safe cycling and making every school cycling friendly. Which of these activities can you do?

1. By cycling to school you provide students with an excellent role model. The more adults that cycle regularly as part of their daily transportation, the sooner cycling will be viewed as viable alternative by young people. H.G. Wells was on to something when he said, "Every time I see an adult on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race." Let's show our students an option that is available to them.

2. Promote in-class instruction in your school. Make colleagues aware of the resources that are available to them. Work together with other school staff to provide the highest levels of instruction by organizing cycling instruction as integrated units of study or as directed learning projects such as a community bicycle helmet campaign.

3. Inquire about your school's cycling policy. If you have one, is it adequate? If you do not, then raise the issue using the appropriate channels.

4. Contact your community agencies to determine the type of program they offer. Make sure that those providing instruction to students are qualified and that the program reflects current cycling instructional practices and knowledge. Assist those operating these programs in reaching parents in your school community.

5. Prompt a cycling education workshop in your board. OCA offers several to fit a number of needs. If funding is tight, there are a number of sources to approach.

Every day we are reminded of the many problems we face as we lurch toward the end of the century - a population with increasing health and fitness concerns, some of the worst air quality in North America, and traffic snarls that result in road rage. Cycling is a part of the solution to all of these challenges.

So, if it's been a while since you rode a bike, get back in the saddle. Take a cycling course. Get your family out on their bikes. There are many excellent trails connecting communities across the province. Cycling is a sustainable practice that we can encourage and enjoy both at school and at home.

Stan Kozak is an educator and independent education consultant with Curriculum Advisors. He can be reached at (519) 826-0408 or Stan presented a cycling workshop at the COEO conference.

To reach the Ontario Cycling Association contact: Will Wallace, Recreation and Transportation Co-ordinator (613) 842-4245, wwallace@istar.ca

The Gathering

THE EVENT: The 29th Annual COEO Conference

September 24-26, 1999

**THE PLACE: Camp Tamakwa on the shores of Tea Lake,
Algonquin Park (a boat in only location)**

THE THEME: The Park/Land as Teacher

On these shores in 1836, an elderly explorer of the western interior, David Thompson, stopped to refashion his one large canoe (adequate for the big waters from Georgian Bay through the Muskoka's up to this point) into a smaller form and built another for his push over the height of land into Ottawa River watershed. He left Tea Lake with two canoes to seek out the difficult height of land route in the low waters of September. Just up river, around the bend at Lake 3 (as it had been called then - third from the headwater lake leading into the Petawawa River system), artist and fishing guide Tom Thomson would meet his mysterious death in 1907. The shores of this lake, Canoe Lake, still offer many remaining pieces of the full Tom Thomson mystery. Wolves in Algonquin have fascinated campers and scientists for decades. The increased interactions of wolves and people are presenting a widening range of issues to consider. Algonquin has seen the full range of camping gear and styles from what we think of now as traditional to the most high tech. The question of shelters, cooking styles and travel modes offers much for to be (re) considered and considered. In the 1930's Ester Keyser was the first woman guide in Algonquin. She travelled throughout the park in a time that holds another story of Algonquin.

Yes, Algonquin is a land set apart with a wealth of stories to share. Come to beautiful Camp Tamakwa in September 1999, to learn more of the magic of this well storied place. But it is not just about Algonquin as teacher. The land as teacher as our theme means, we, as a conference committee, are committed to providing sessions/workshops/time to soak up the power of the land, make connections from Algonquin to your homeplace, and offer ideas and resources for Monday morning that fit land as teacher.

We have enough ideas, some new, some tried and true, for weeks of professional development conferencing. We have a site that will

be new to most folks that is quite different in many ways. Here's a few: outdoor theatre, a boat trip into the site, HEATED and non-heated sleeping cabins, great food (at camp?), canoes-docks-campfire pits - large and small, high and low ropes course, hikes and canoe outings.

We have a programme of professional activity and working groups to cater to the issues that matter most in terms of curriculum planning, politics and personal development. We're excited about all our ideas but in the wise spirit of last year's successful conference at the Frost Centre, we wish to seek out any ideas for sessions, thoughts about conference timing, special events, whatever you'd like to suggest. Now is the time.

See you at Camp Tamakwa on the shores of Tea Lake, Algonquin in September 1999.

Where it all comes together!

Your Conference Committee 1999

Ellen Bond, Mike Elrick, Mary Gyemi-Schulze,

Bob Henderson, Glen Hester, Leslie Hoyle,

Linda Leckie, Zabe MacEachren,

Lisa Primavesi, Janine Reid

Zebra Mussel Mania Travelling Trunk

Tune into zebra mussels and other exotic species with this award winning science kit and curriculum. The experiments, games, stories and other hands-on activities, will help educators teach children at the Grades 5 and 6 levels about a wide range of problems and solutions associated with zebra mussels and other exotic aquatic creatures. The Zebra Mussel Travelling Trunk was developed by the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Program and is on loan to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. It has been modified to ensure that the activities relate to Ontario. It is available for loan, three weeks at a time, for a \$30.00 administration fee. Please call 1-800-563-7771 for more information or to book the trunk.

WILD Education Leader Workshop February 5-7, 1999 Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre

A training workshop for educators who want to be workshop leaders for Project WILD, Fish Ways, Focus on Forests and Focus on Fire. Completion of an introductory workshop in one or more of the programs is a pre-requisite. For more information or to register please contact Barb Kerr at 1-800-563-9453, by fax 613-721-2902, email barbk@cwf-fcf.org or mail Canadian Wildlife Federation 2740 Queensview, Ottawa, ON K2B 1A2.

Winter Eco-computer Camp March 16-18, 1999 Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre

Join us for a fun, interactive camp for families that explores the world of nature through the use of computer technologies and outdoor explorations. This residential camp is suitable for children ages 6-12 accompanied by an adult. For more information or to register contact Jan Cooper at 1-519-823-4513, email jcwebb@albedo.net or mail 111 Westmount Road, Guelph ON N1H 5J2.

For information on other Frost Centre events visit http://come.to/frost_centre.

Greener Active Use Spaces for All

Go for Green: The Active Living and Environmental Program and the Ontario Parks Association have developed a document containing 5 Success Story articles on "naturalized" outdoor active use areas in 5 different regions of the country. These stories describe successful strategies undertaken by park managers and community leaders to protect their environment and enhance it by using alternatives to chemicals and the benefits of these strategies.

They are entitled:

- Naturalizing A Trail û Linking Recreation, Environment and Community
- Chemical Free: A City-wide Pesticide By-Law
- Waterloo/Es Plant Health Care Program ûAn Innovative Approach to ôGreeningô Sports Fields
- Northern Exposure: Activity in the Park
- Environmental Stewardship and Commitment through First Naturalization in the Canadian Prairies

To order the Success Story document call Go for Green at 1-888-UB-ACTIV or print them from their Web site at: <http://www.goforgreen.ca>

**Third Biennial Great Lakes
Student Summit - The Great
Lakes: Your Concerns, Our
Concerns, Areas of Concern
May 12-14, 1999
Buffalo, NY
For grades 5-9**

Focus of this Summit is on Areas of Concern or AOCs. These AOCs are geographic areas designated under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement where local action is necessary to restore and protect environmental quality. There were 17 AOCs in Ontario (31 in the US) but Collingwood harbour was the first AOC to restore its beneficial uses and be taken off the list. This list of locations should make it easier to identify which teachers may find this Summit of interest.

The 16 Ontario AOCs are: Lake Superior - Thunder Bay, Nipigon Bay, Jackfish Bay, Peninsula Harbour St. Marys River (Sault St Marie) Lake Huron - Spanish River mouth, Severn Sound St. Clair River (near Sarnia) Detroit River (Windsor) Lake Erie - Wheatley harbour Niagara River - Lake Ontario - Hamilton harbour, Metro Toronto, Port Hope, Bay of Quinte St. Lawrence River (Cornwall)

Sponsors: County of Erie, Erie County Environmental Education Institute, New York Sea Grant (State University of New York, Cornell University, US Dept of Commerce), Great Lakes Program at the University of Buffalo and Great Lakes Centre at Buffalo State College Summit in 1997 attracted over 225 students from Great Lakes states and Ontario.

For more information, contact Helen Domske at 716-645-3610 or hdomske@cce.cornell.edu



Adult Skill Development At Bark Lake

After many requests from pre-privatization "Barkies", it has been decided to try to re-initiate the adult skill development program at Bark Lake. To truly be run as previously, we will not only require adequate numbers of participants but instructors as well. If this program sounds interesting to you, please take the time to fill out the form below and send to Bark Lake.

Your Name: _____	
Address _____ _____	
Phone (w): _____	Phone (h): _____
Fax: _____	E-Mail: _____

Have you previously	
<input type="checkbox"/> attended an adult skills program at Bark Lake	<input type="checkbox"/> instructed an adult skills program at Bark Lake

Preferred Date	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd week of August	<input type="checkbox"/> 3rd week of August	<input type="checkbox"/> 4th week of August
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Preferred Length of Program		
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday - Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday - Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____

Please check the Accommodation and daily rate most appropriate (rate is all inclusive):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard Accommodation \$65 per day	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Centre Dble Occupancy \$95 per day	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Centre Single Occupancy \$115 per day

Please check all that are appropriate:			
Skill	Participate	Instruct	Receive Certification
Low Rope Initiatives			
High Rope Challenge Course			
Flat Water Canoeing			
White Water Canoeing			
Intro. To Kayaking			
White Water Kayaking			
Wind Surfing			
Archery			
Orienteering/ Navigation			
Nature Interpretation/ Ecology			
Rock Climbing/ Bouldering			
Team Building			
Other (please specify)			

Know anyone we should contact? Please list name and any contact information known:	
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BARK LAKE

Irondale, Ontario, Canada K0M 1X0
 Tel. (705) 447-2447 Fax (705) 447-2475
 info@barklake.com

Fax, Mail or E-mail to:

A Magical Night

By Leo Jorgensen

This Thursday evening past, a group from Bracebridge joined us at Yearley.

I was fortunate enough to cover the day programme as well as the evening programme. Even though this means a 14 hour day, I usually enjoy the connection and bond established with the children from the minute they get off the bus right through until 'bed time'. With each of the school groups that visits Yearley, parent volunteers usually help with the cooking and behind the scenes details. This particular group brought 2 Dads with them, which I thought wonderful. Makes a difference to all the kids seeing 'Dads' willing to participate in what they are doing, plus cook!

Richard, a tall lanky man who drives plough in the winter and works on road crews in the summer, established a wonderful quiet rapport with the kids.

Dave was Richard's opposite in appearance - quite heavy set with a grizzled beard and such a laid-back manner that I instantly liked him. A very unassuming man to say the least! As I was preparing for our evening programme, Dave quietly came up to me, wondered what my plans were, then asked if he could play the bagpipes for the kids. I was quite taken aback and very pleased that we should have such talent in our midst. Of course he could play for the kids!!! We came up with a plan and off I went with the kids on our evening walk.

At Yearley we are fortunate enough to have 3 ponds on site, shouldered by a lovely big field and surrounded by forested hills. A perfect setting to do a night walk and talk about astronomy or any other night wonders! The children are usually 'a-buzz' with the excitement of being out at night without flashlights, so by the time we get to the ponds I've discovered that we need something to get us focused on the night sounds and sky. This is when we gather close in, and I ask them to accept a challenge - the challenge is to find their own

little piece of 'real-estate' (in the field), and sitting or standing solo, listen and watch the night for exactly 2 minutes without talking. Obviously, some groups do better than others with this challenge, yet ultimately it seems to work in calming them down and connecting them to the night instead of with each other.

On this magical night, the sky was clear, crisp and cool with a gibbous moon. The children had just settled into silhouettes dotting the field in little groups of one or two. The quiet stillness of the night was taking hold as I listened to the children gasping quietly at the beauty of the sky above, that until that moment they hadn't really noticed. I love witnessing that realization when it grabs hold. Suddenly, as if magically on cue, the haunting sound of bagpipes carried through the distance. A shiver ran up my back as the melody echoed off the surrounding hills and floated amongst the children, who were absolutely spellbound. One beautiful song after another filled our ears and souls, ending with 'Amazing Grace', which always brings a tear to my eye.

Our astronomy sharing after that held a depth and magic that isn't always present. I thought of my time in the Astronomy programme at the Transitions Conference as we talked about Jupiter, Pegasus, the Micmac legend surrounding 'Ursa Major', and the metal particles collected on the road side with a magnet, as a result of meteor dust. The children gleefully asked, "is that stardust?" Why not? - makes sense to me!!

I usually end my evening walks with a gathering around a fire and the 'legend of the talking stick', which we follow up with a 'talking stick circle'. I stumbled on this form of 'debriefing' our evening walks last fall when I was just 'filling in' for one of the staff. Has been quite successful, as it gives 'everyone', adults and children a voice. I've come to realize that the kids are talked at, talked to and told what to do

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all day long, when what they really need is a time and space to verbalize their own experiences, learning and questions in their own way. I usually start the talking stick circle to give the kids an idea of how 'open' their sharing can be if they wish it. This night I felt very touched by the magic bond that held us all together through music. I was making my own realizations as I talked - those magical moments in life, which we somehow store in our conscious minds - leaving them there until a time when we need them, to draw strength from them. I thanked Dave Brown for his wonderful contribution and for the magic that he shared with us. "Chances are", I said to the group "that we'll never have another night just like this ever in any of our lives again".

As the talking stick made it's way around the circle, I found myself mesmerized by the insightful remarks shared by the children. Dave's music had a very obvious, profound affect on them! When the stick reached Dave's hands, he quietly thanked us all for our comments, then continued, "I've been playing the bagpipes for 27 years, started when I was 12 and always liked the way it made me feel. I worked as a police officer for 13 years but felt that I should give my job to someone who 'liked' to do police work and could do a really good job at it. So, I stopped being a police officer and now play the bagpipes professionally. I have my own school as well as playing for weddings and funerals or other events. I've been to Buckingham Palace - played for the Queen, Princess Di, and the Queen mother; opened up a concert for Rod Stewart; played for Bob Marley, and Arnold Swartzenegger. I guess what I'm trying

to say is that if you find something in life that makes you happy inside, don't ever give it up - no matter what anyone says, no matter who they are." Wow, you could have heard a pin drop! - mind you, that is the nature and magic of a 'talking stick circle' anyway - but this was different, we were all completely enthralled with the gentle, straight from the heart speech given by this very unassuming man. And the child who sat beside him was the most enthralled of all. Callum, the quiet child by the firelight whose face glowed with overwhelming pride which said, "That's my Dad."

Did I tell you that I love my new job?

Lea Jorgenson is an outdoor educator at the Yearley Outdoor Centre north of Huntsville. She also offers programs and trips through her business, Stonewood Adventures and Retreats.