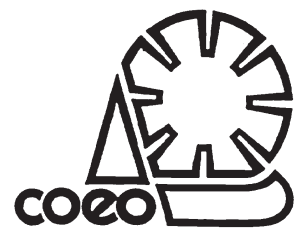


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Winter 2006, 18(2)



SNOW WALKERS' RENDEZ VOUS 2005
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Pathways

Our mailing address:

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COEO

Formed in 1972, The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that promotes safe, quality outdoor education experiences for people of all ages. This is achieved through publishing the *Pathways* journal, running an annual conference and regional workshops, maintaining a Web site, and working with kindred organizations as well as government agencies.

Contributions Welcome

Pathways is always looking for contributions. If you are interested in making a submission, of either a written or illustrative nature, we would be happy to hear from you. For a copy of our submission guidelines, please contact Randee Holmes, Managing Editor.

If you are interested in being a guest editor of an issue of *Pathways*, please request a copy of our guidelines for guest editors from Randee Holmes, Managing Editor.

If you have any questions regarding *Pathways*, please direct them to Bob Henderson, Chair of the *Pathways* Editorial Board. If you'd like more information about COEO and joining the organization, please refer to the inside back cover of this issue or contact a Board of Directors member.

Our advertising policy:

Pathways accepts advertisements for products and services that may be of interest to our readers. To receive an advertising information package, please contact Bob Henderson, Chair of the *Pathways* Editorial Board. We maintain the right to refuse any advertisement we feel is not in keeping with our mandate and our readers' interests.

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Pathways is published four times a year for The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) and distributed to COEO members. Membership fees include a subscription to *Pathways*, as well as admittance to workshops, courses and conferences. A membership application form is included on the inside back cover of this issue of *Pathways*.

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There is a trend evident in the open, no particular theme, issues of *Pathways*. It is this: Previous theme issues and feature articles create an impetus for writers to contribute and respond. This leads to a collection of themes that run through multiple issues over time. Two such themes are evident in this *Pathways* issue: (1) inquiry into technology and outdoor education—the implications, and (2) the hows and whys of incorporating journaling as an important learning activity. Looking back over the last three years of *Pathways* will prove that the conversation around these themes is ongoing. We, the Editorial Board, are pleased to see these ‘follow up’ contributions. In this way, *Pathways* has become known as a research site for Integrated Curriculum Programmes, for example.

With our 2006/07 content directions now set by the Editorial Board, we hope to run the following theme issues:

- Summer 2006: Sustainable Outdoor Education
- Fall 2006: Outdoor Education East of Ontario (as part of our Beyond our Borders initiative)
- Winter 2007: Urban-based Outdoor Education (to follow the next COEO Conference on this most needed theme)
- Spring 2007: Backcountry Learning

In an endeavour to decentralize the general work involved in producing *Pathways*, certain board members have taken on specific responsibilities. To contribute to any of the forthcoming theme issues, please send your submission to the appropriate board member:

- General Submissions: Bob Henderson or Scott Caspell
- Sustainable Outdoor Education: Zabe MacEachren
- Outdoor Education East of Ontario: Bob Henderson and Peter Goddard
- Urban-based Outdoor Education: Allan Foster
- Back Country Learning: Scott Caspell or Bryan Grimwood

Along with our regular columns and our hope to print Backpocket submissions to advance our practice, these are the themes we would like to carry throughout issues to follow. We also plan to introduce a focus on Risk Management and Safety issues. A new column, “Watching Our Step,” will be introduced (contact Ian Hendry if you’d like to make a contribution). Erin Sharpe will continue to further our commitment to printing “practitioner-focussed” research work in our “Exploration” column. This theme initiative was a friendly mandate from our COEO executive in 2005.

So there you have it—a revised decentralized Editorial Board structure and the directions *Pathways* is keen to pursue over the next two years. These initiated themes, however, in no way suggest we are narrowing our submission acceptance. *Pathways* always hopes to be first and foremost your “friendly, open to ideas and to all” practitioner journal. We encourage all submissions, follow up on all and work with all (especially first time submitters) within our mandate to promote outdoor education in Ontario and beyond.

Bob Henderson

Sketch Pad — The cover art for this issue of *Pathways* was generously provided by Margaret Stearns, courtesy of Kroka Expeditions Vermont (www.kroka.org). Additional art was supplied by Steve Tourney (pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 21, 28), Dominique Dery (pages 12, 22 and 24) and Kate Prince (pages 16, 18, 27, 30, 33 and 36). Dominique Dery is not sure she’s an artist, exactly. A philosophy student at McMaster, she carves blockprints from rubber and linoleum, mostly just for friends and family. Kate Prince will be working at Camp Kinark this winter and spring season.

Well, a new year is upon us. We find ourselves halfway through the first decade of the twenty-first century, at least the twenty-first century from a Western civilization point of view. We are also beginning the second year of the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. We must ask ourselves, is outdoor education moving with the times? Of course there are aspects of our movement that we wish to hold onto, not just for nostalgic purposes, but to maintain the commitment to the ideas that gave birth to COEO back in 1972. However, as our communities have changed since that time, so must the way we express and connect to our ideals and values. If outdoor education, and COEO as the voice for outdoor education, is to influence the values of our society and have meaning for the general populace, then it must also find ways to reflect and engage that population.

A means towards that end is being planned as you read this and that means is the conference this coming fall. The 2005 conference meant to reenergize OE/EE by bringing together members of COEO, EECOM, OSEE and others to pool our energies and reinvigorate our efforts with a renewed sense of unity. This year's conference intends to continue that effort by reaching out beyond our traditional boundaries and making connections with those aspects of our society not typically associated with the ideas of outdoor education.

The upcoming conference, as has been announced, will occur at the juncture of three cities: Toronto, Vaughn and Mississauga. It is intended to reach out to new partners in the goals for outdoor education by going within the urban landscape. Given its location there

may be some whose instincts suggest that this may be too "Toronto-centric" a conference for their needs. This will simply not be the case. Realistically speaking, all of our large towns and cities in Ontario are facing rapid change and population growth. Multi-cultural urban environments are becoming the norm for cities like Windsor, Guelph and Kingston as much as for the major urban centres of Toronto and Ottawa. In addition, as Gord Miller, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, recently stated, this dispersal of population away from the major metropolitan areas is going to be key for Ontario to develop a sustainable means of accommodating population growth.

Conference 2006 allows us to begin creating the tools for outdoor education to be relevant to these changes. If outdoor education is to have meaning in our society, it needs to find ways to be for all the people of this province, not just for those to whom it has traditionally appealed. Given that this conference is meant to reach out to and receive from other cultures, and to meet the changing needs of Ontario, it seems entirely appropriate to hold this conference in the capital of the province, which happens to be one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world.

I hope you will all join me in anticipation of the exciting times to be had this fall. We have spent much of our energies over the past few years building COEO's profile and working to become a strong voice in bringing forward and sharing the values of our profession with others. This conference is just the next step in that effort.

Shane Kramer

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
February 11, 2006	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	Scanlon Creek, Bradford
March 29, 2006	7:30 pm – 8:30 pm	Teleconference
June 3, 2006	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	TBA
September 16, 2006	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	TBA

The 21st Century or the Pleistocene: The Gear Choice Quandary

by Paul Van Horn

Like other trades, the profession of outdoor education has been profoundly influenced by its tools. The gear we use to carry things, cook, provide shelter, travel, and perform a myriad of other tasks in the wild has changed since the early part of the 20th century. The ever-evolving mix of materials, design complexity, intended use, and cost of these items may influence how we as educators ply our trade. The desirability of this equipment evolution has been a passionately debated topic in these pages, and, in the words of Jerry Dennis

When it comes to technology, many of us have mixed feelings. We tend to hate it almost as much as we love it. Even while we blame it for the mess the world is in, we're waiting for more of it to come along and bail us out. Canoe paddles made of plastic, Kevlar, and graphite might seem like the best things to come along since hermetically sealed beef jerky, but we're convinced that no paddle can compare to an old-fashioned wooden one. (1999, p. 99)

Rather than simply arguing for or against the use of traditional gear, however, I'd like to further "muddy the waters" by exploring the evolution of a few items of equipment and then pose questions about how our equipment choices might influence the content and quality of our educational experiences.

As outdoor educators, we can choose to start fires with hand drills, "cook" freeze-dried meals, carve canoe paddles with steel knives, or send journals home via satellite links. In short, we can choose to interact with the environment using cutting edge technology from the Pleistocene, the 21st century, or any point in between. (It's interesting to consider

that we may be the *only* profession that actually sees stone-age technology as a viable option!)

Although outdoor equipment has been evolving for thousands of years, I'll focus on recreational equipment from the 20th century. This equipment has changed in three fundamental ways. First, the materials used to construct outdoor gear have changed, with a variety of largely petroleum-based materials replacing the leather, cotton, wool, silk, and metal of the past. Second, the overall complexity of different items of gear has increased. And finally, the intended use of much equipment has shifted more towards specialization.

A brief study of two sample gear lists (one from 1923, and the other from 1992) revealed little difference in the amount or general purpose of the equipment (Kephart, 1923, p. 123; Graydon, 1992, p. 34). Each contains clothing, shelter, cooking utensils, a tool kit, and various other items for personal comfort, hygiene, and other purposes. The fabric materials used in the 1923 gear, however, were entirely organic in origin. Although some synthetics had already made their debut—celluloid was first produced in 1884 (Bellis, 2005)—petroleum-based materials such as nylon, polyester, and the various plastics used in the clothing of 1992 were still decades away from common use. Nylon entered the fibres scene in 1938 ("Nylon," 2005) with synthetic polyester following close behind in 1941 (Bellis, 2005). In the camping literature, synthetics begin to make their appearance during the 1950s and 1960s as campers used surplus nylon US Navy life raft sails as shelters (Manning, 1972). RC Rethmel (1964) lists many items of gear constructed using nylon, polyurethane foam, synthetic rubber, Dacron, and other synthetic materials. By the time

Harvey Manning published *Backpacking: One Step at a Time* in 1972, synthetics received common mention in most areas of equipment. Natural fibres continued to be recommended as alternatives to synthetics, but nylon and its cousins dominated the materials for shelters, raingear, and packs.

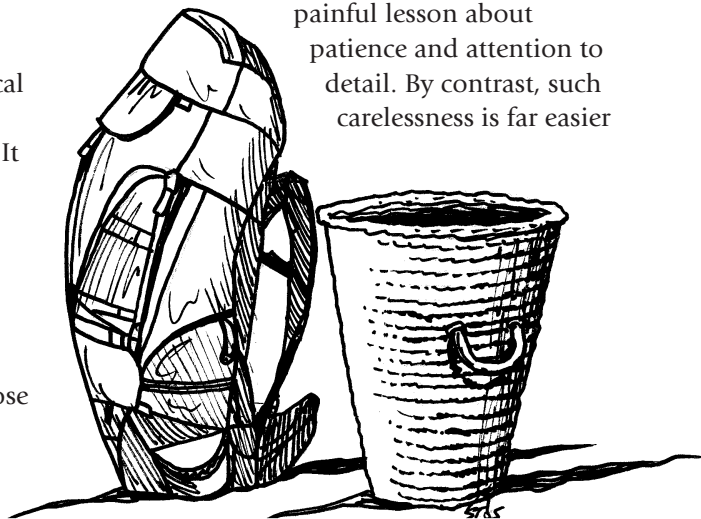
Although the debate of “natural vs. synthetic” materials rages on, I’ll go out on a limb and say that the material content of one’s gear likely has far less of an impact on the experience than the design and intended use of that equipment. The different materials do, however, provide a fantastic springboard for discussions about the deferred impact of our consumption choices!

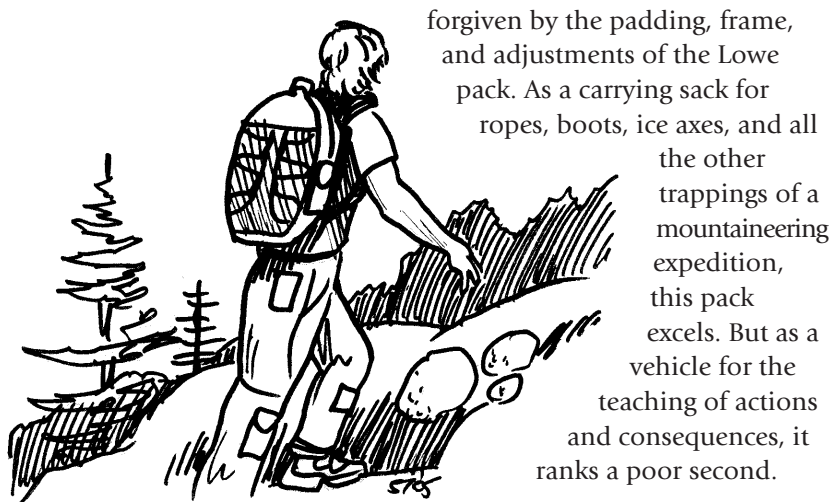
In 1972, Harvey Manning wrote that “The new is not necessarily better than the old, but invariably is more complicated” (1972, p. 62). Indeed, the number of seams, zippers, pockets, and adjustments is far greater in modern gear. A comparison of a Duluth #2 Packsack, and the Lowe Contour IV provides a good illustration. Ninety years and four pounds apart, and at opposite ends of the complexity scale, the Duluth and Lowe packs are representative of their respective eras, and the beginning and present state of backpacking. For much of the 20th century, until well into the 1960s, camping literature often touted the 2½ pound Duluth Packsack as one of the desired methods for carrying gear on “pedestrian” trips (Kephart, 1916, p. 129; Rutstrum, 1968, p. 198). The number of structural seams or connections (seams critical to the integrity of the pack) in this pack is eight, which includes the strap connections. It has three basic adjustments (closing flap, shoulder, and head straps). By contrast, a modern Lowe Alpine Contour IV pack, purchased in 1996 weighs 6½ pounds, and has 22 connections and seven adjustments! Due to its simplicity, the Duluth pack relies on design (flat, wide profile keeps weight close to back), and proper packing for comfort, while the Lowe uses numerous adjustments, and large amounts of foam padding for

comfort. Such complexity often issues a penalty in the form of weight. As this example illustrates, though the idea of “modern, lightweight gear” has been a part of the outdoor industry’s lexicon in recent decades, the trend throughout the 20th century has often been towards *heavier* equipment, not lighter (witness Nessmuk’s 16 lb. Cedar canoe (Nessmuk, 1920)). Interestingly, the latest trend in backpacks is toward “ultralight” gear. These packs use lightweight materials, and eliminate many of the adjustments, stays, pockets, straps and buckles found in the Lowe pack, marking at least a partial return to the simplicity of earlier eras.

As far as how these packs might affect the user’s experience, two possibilities stand out. First, with a little skill and some basic tools (needle and thread, awl, hammer) the entire Duluth Pack can be rebuilt by the user. With many internal seams, and complex geometries, the modern pack is far more difficult to repair, and likely would end up in the landfill if a crucial seam or part gave way. Lessons of gear repair, modification, and maintenance are difficult to learn and reinforce with complex modern gear.

Second, the simple design of the Duluth pack mandates careful packing and attentive use. If a careless user simply throws pots and pans, food, and a wadded-up blanket into such a pack, they will quickly learn a painful lesson about patience and attention to detail. By contrast, such carelessness is far easier





forgiven by the padding, frame, and adjustments of the Lowe pack. As a carrying sack for ropes, boots, ice axes, and all the other trappings of a mountaineering expedition, this pack excels. But as a vehicle for the teaching of actions and consequences, it ranks a poor second.

Camping equipment has also become increasingly specialized as a result of the influence of advances in mountaineering-oriented gear, and the demands of a consumer culture. Although specialized outdoor living equipment was available at the beginnings of the recreational camping movement in the late 1800s, the sheer quantity and variety of equipment available to today's camper seems far greater.

The use of highly specialized gear risks trivializing the skill level needed to use simpler gear in more challenging situations. Thirty years ago, the only people out practicing telemark turns in the steep backcountry were the bearded, die-hard "pinheads" of local legend. The skill required to authoritatively turn a skinny ski with leather boots in steep backcountry conditions is considerable, and requires many days of diligent practice. By contrast, "modern" plastic buckle boots, shaped skis, and cable bindings make the turn far easier and more accessible to anyone with the financial wherewithal to purchase the necessary gear. The credit card has replaced hard-earned skill. The process has become secondary to the goal. One might make similar comparisons between freeze-dried meals and meals from scratch, GPS units and compasses, and matches and flint and steel. Technology designed to make our lives in the backcountry easier often reduces the learning and personal growth opportunities inherent in the activity.

One might argue that such specialization allows greater achievement on the part of the user. Steeper slopes may be skied with the new gear, and can, when strapped to the feet of one of those venerable old pinheads, enable the most frightening slopes to be conquered with grace. If the conquest of greater and more difficult challenges is one's goal and the process is truly secondary, then so be it. But if the process is important, then might not a long, arduous apprenticeship be more rewarding? Then again, having just the right tool for a job has been valued throughout history. I, for one, shudder at the thought of having to do any amount of woodcarving without my trusty Swedish "Mora" knife. Am I missing out on some important process by using this exquisitely suitable knife for all my woodcarving tasks? These are difficult questions to be sure, but important to consider!

The constant evolution and proliferation of outdoor equipment also harbours the insidious trappings of consumerism. The "gotta-have-it" attitude fostered by the marketing of new gear brings with it the risk of trivializing the experience and the learning process in favour of the procurement process. "What do I have to *buy*?" is one of the first questions that springs to mind when considering a new outdoor adventure. We do of course need clothing and an assortment of gear if we are to practice our craft, but where do we draw the line against further consumption? Do we really *need* to get involved in the latest skydiving/iceclimbing/vertical caving/mountainboarding/snowboarding/adventure racing/traditional camping/ultralightweight backpacking craze? When should we pass on the latest activity or equipment "revolution" to our students? Can we continue to have a good experience with our existing gear? Can we make what we need? What messages are we sending to our students when we become advocates of purchasing more stuff?

In addition, the consumption side of outdoor recreation threatens to make our field a highly elitist endeavour. By modeling camping with

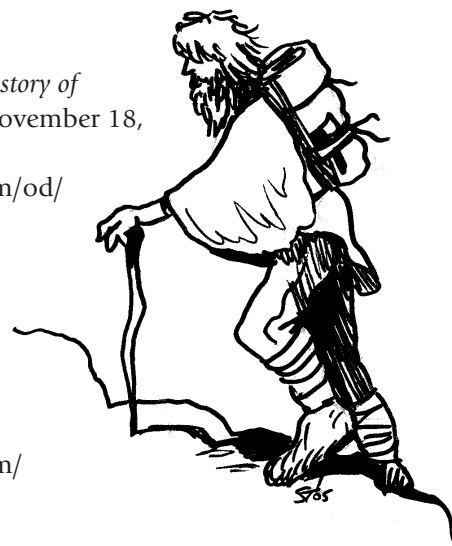
expensive gear (traditional or not... has anyone priced one of those fancy Swedish axes lately?), we are making it clear to our clients that enjoying the outdoors is expensive! For an illustration of this issue, I took a suggested "Three Season Gear Checklist" from Backpacker.com, and found the lowest priced items that matched each item at Campmor.com (see page 8 of this issue). The total bill (minus food and items most people would have at home, such as a "sun hat") came to \$658.50! And this was for gear that many "gear snobs" wouldn't even look twice at! By contrast, shifting the focus to so-called "primitive" technology opens a world of adventure for very little money. Shelters may be made, tools and equipment constructed, and an adventurous night spent in the backcountry with little more than a few basic items of clothing and some equipment brought from home (i.e., a blanket, and tin can for cooking). In the interests of social justice, we need to take a serious look at the economic accessibility of our field!

These issues are complex, but significant. The bottom line is that our gear should not drive our curricula. Rather, our needs must directly influence our gear choices. Let us be fully conscious of the equipment choices we make and seek to understand the potential impact those choices might have on the quality of our students' experience. In the end, what matters most is not blind adherence to either traditional or new equipment, but thoughtful, appropriate use of both. In *Camping in the Old Style*, David Wescott points out the importance of using technology with skill and care: "With traditional camping and modern camping, one is not better than the other; they are simply different by choice, and both must be applied with style" (2000, p. 12).

So let's shoulder those packs and never forget the potential learnings they may contain!

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A recovering gearhead, Paul Van Horn teaches outdoor education at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. He has also taught survival and traditional outdoor living skills at Boulder Outdoor Survival School in Boulder, Utah and Colorado Mountain College in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

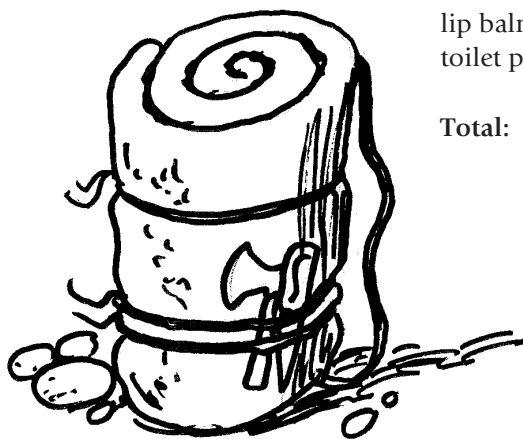
Three-season Gear Checklist

(from Backpacker.com)

(Prices are for the least expensive item available from Campmor.com in November 2005, and are expressed in US dollars. Items without prices are assumed to be available to most participants already.)

Clothing	Minimum Cost	Gear	Minimum Cost
Outerwear:		internal or external frame	
waterproof/breathable jacket	\$50.00	backpack	\$50.00
waterproof/breathable pants	\$30.00	three season tent	\$40.00
fleece/synthetic jacket or		down or synthetic sleeping bag	
wool sweater	\$25.00	(15° to 30°F)	\$110.00
waterproof gaiters (optional)		inflatable sleeping pad	\$30.00
synthetic hiking pants	\$20.00	trekking poles	\$50.00
synthetic shorts	\$15.00	canister stove and fuel canisters	\$40.00
Base Layer:		lighter and waterproof matches	
midweight long john top	\$17.00	cookset	\$17.00
midweight long john bottoms	\$12.00	eating utensils, bowl, and	
long sleeve T-shirt		insulated mug	
synthetic briefs	\$9.00	headlamp with extra batteries and	
synthetic sports bra		bulb	\$10.00
synthetic T-shirt	\$6.00	32 oz. Water bottles (2) or hydration	
Accessories:		reservoir	\$9.00
wool or fleece hat	\$10.00	water treatment (filter, tablets,	
midweight wool or		or drops)	\$5.00
fleece gloves	\$8.00	pocket knife or multitool	
Footwear:		compass	\$10.00
waterproof (optional) hiking		sunglasses	
boots	\$30.00	first-aid kit with personal	
camp footwear		medications	\$15.00
wool or synthetic socks (3 pr.)	\$24.00	stuff sacks	
liner socks (2 pr.)	\$10.00	assorted zipper-lock bags	
Extras:		bear-bagging rope (or canister) if necessary	
sun hat		insect repellent	
bandanna	\$1.50	mesh head net or suit (optional)	\$5.00
		sunscreen (SPF 15+)	
		lip balm (SPF 15+)	
		toilet paper and trowel	

Total: \$658.50 US



The Developmental Journey of Journal Writing

by Kim Warma

The first step towards writing is picking up the pen. Some people make an attempt, and choose not to continue. Others find something in the practice that calls them to write again and again. A writing habit established in adolescence is apt to provide the writer with a lifelong venue for reflection and understanding. Whether initially prompted by the writer's own interest or the encouragement or request of a teacher, friend, counsellor, or family member appears incidental. The significant step is the first one.

This study looks at the effect of journal writing and a practice of reflection on cognitive and moral development; underlying that work is the desire to know how journal writing affects the writer's life. Of particular interest is transformative learning theory, which states that the outcome of transformative process is shifted perspective. According to many theorists (Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1990), that shift does not occur without a significant or traumatic event that forces a person into the re-evaluation necessary to process the event and at the same time establish an alternative point of view. Although I accept that the dynamic of a critical dilemma can lead to successful change, I am also interested in exploring alternatives to the concept of trauma as catalyst, and want to probe further the use of habitual journal writing as a tool for moderating upheaval while eliciting change.

Methodology

This qualitative study was based upon interviews with women who write. Some write in a small group, others write on their own. Through discussions and observation, I attempted to illuminate and articulate the value that each writer finds in the process of keeping a journal, culling emergent themes of

transformative learning and cognitive and moral development.

Each woman was interviewed privately. The results were transcribed and reviewed in an effort to isolate consistent themes. In this article, the reader will hear from Karen, Susan, Amy, and Jennifer. Portions of their interviews were used, verbatim, to illustrate individual experiences; these excerpts are italicized throughout the text.

Trusting Words

People who write sometimes speak of words that seemingly come from nowhere, as if they were sitting inside of them, queued up, waiting for a pen to be held, a sort of drawbridge to paper. People who write about writing explain this emergence of words as something that can happen fairly routinely, if the writer allows it to occur. The process is given a variety of names—writing from the pen (Goldberg, 1986), freewriting (Elbow, 1998, 2000), a strong flowing stream (Proffoff, 1992). Each, however, identifies the same phenomenon: a feeling, from the writer, that the words are not being considered before being written. Instead, they present themselves to the paper, coming from deep inside the writer. They do not detour through the conscious brain. They are raw, full of the passion and history that formed the situation they describe. To write in this way is to remove the author's filters. This writing, the writing that demands to be written, comes directly from the heart or the gut, and does not pass through an understanding of social acceptability.

There is a necessary courage in this writing. One must be willing to allow for discovery, which, by its very nature, refers to something previously unknown. To write like this is to

write about whatever surfaces, whether it is pleasant, difficult, agonizing, or fulfilling. To write in this way repeatedly requires a feeling of trust, a feeling that all of the women interviewed acknowledged having, in varying degrees, with their journals.

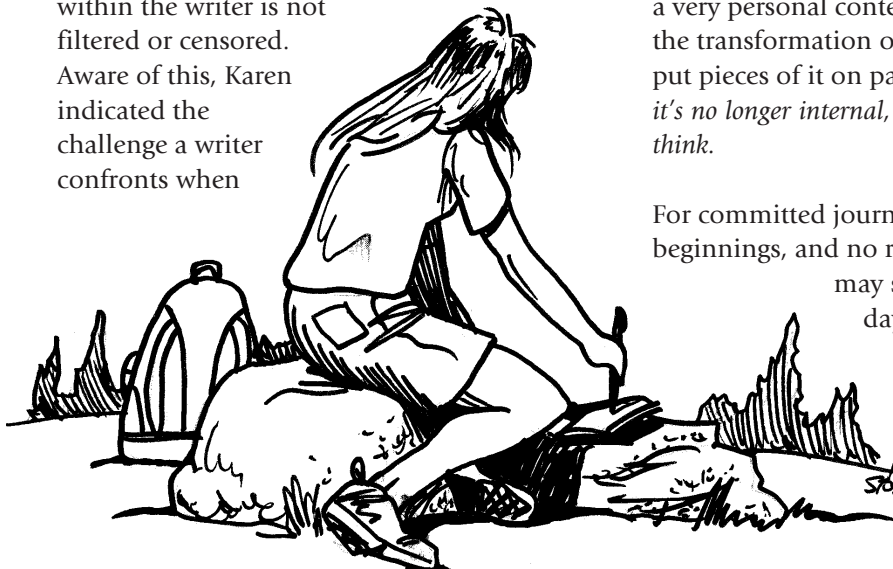
If a writer is concerned that someone else may read her journal, or she is unsure of the words that may appear, she may choose not to write. To turn oneself over to the power of the pen, the writer must dare to see what comes. "The aim is to burn through the first thoughts, to the place where energy is unobstructed by social politeness or the internal censor, to the place where you are writing what your mind actually sees and feels, *not* what it thinks it should see or feel" (Goldberg, 1986, p. 8). Writing without filters can be unpleasant in its newness, or frightening in its truth. It puts the writer's emotional safety at risk, compromising it when the writer's words prompt insight that threatens her standard way of viewing the world, her "habitual interpretations" (Schneider, 2003, p. 3). "The unconscious part of us knows more than the conscious mind will admit. Writing, like dreaming, sometimes tells us what we are not ready to hear" (Schneider, 2003, p. 3). Filters allow emotional distance. They are the obstructions that keep the writer's actual sights and feelings at bay.

Writing that comes from deep within the writer is not filtered or censored. Aware of this, Karen indicated the challenge a writer confronts when

unexpected truths surface, acknowledging that her own writing can be *raw and brutal*. Susan voiced the truth she finds when she indicated that her journaling *affirms*, saying that *writing is concrete*. Most writers know the emotional demands of writing, but they also know the rewards. Karen described the sensation she felt after a particularly emotional period of writing, saying *I feel exhausted, but I feel better*. Although sometimes uncomfortable, or even painful, writers know that, "When we write we make meaning" (Hillocks, 1995, p. 4). There is a balance in writing, as there is in most of life. The trick is to allow the process to work, to keep the pen writing through the difficulty until the meaning can be made.

Over and over, the writers that were interviewed talked about the validation that writing provides. When a writer writes her story she gives voice to her emotion, and presence to her action. There is an authenticity that occurs when the story is put into words—it becomes real. Kathleen Taylor (Taylor & Marineau, 1995) references the influence of perspective in assessing life situations, asking the question, "How does one have a reality and see it too?" (p. 22). Putting a personal story on paper can facilitate that kind of evaluation and understanding—of having a life and seeing it. Reading an account of her feelings, responses, and meanings made allows the writer the advantage of distance in a very personal context. As Jennifer said about the transformation of her life when she has put pieces of it on paper, *It's still personal, but it's no longer internal, it's external. I can read and think*.

For committed journalers, there are many beginnings, and no real ends. The journaler may stop writing for a few days, a week, or even months, but there is no intention of not going back to the writing process. For Karen, who has been writing for ten years, *even when*



a week will go by and I haven't written, there is never a thought in my mind that I will stop journaling. Similarly, Susan has a writing practice that is ongoing; *I can't not write. I could, but I don't.*

Susan's comment speaks to the compelling nature of the journal writing process. For a writer to get to the point of being able to write freely, she must feel confident that she can effectively manage whatever discoveries emerge. Until that assurance is established, the writer will likely be tentative about the writing she does. Jennifer vacillates, having yet to decide if her journal is for her, or for someone else. This ambivalence influences what she writes. Although she wants *to write things down so that it gives me [a chance to] step back*, she also wants her diaries to serve as a history for her daughters. *I want to let other people know that I had a life, and that I did things.* For many adult writers, this is the essence of the conflict that comes with writing a journal. Jennifer goes on to say *that has been my problem with keeping a journal. How much do I really want to let them know?* If a journal is to be a trusted space, it is important for the writer to decide who is the beneficiary of the writing, or make peace with the knowledge that at some point, someone else might read her words. In doing this, she will be more prepared to accept all of the stories that come when she allows the words to flow from the depths of her being.

A Time to Begin

Making time to write is a challenge. The most defining difference between the women who wrote individually, and the women who wrote as a group, was the writing pattern. The women who wrote individually had all begun or been introduced to the journal writing process in adolescence. Some continued to write from that point forward. For those who stopped, each had re-established her journal writing as a committed endeavour by her mid-twenties.

Adolescence and young adulthood are difficult times. Filled with changing bodies, changing

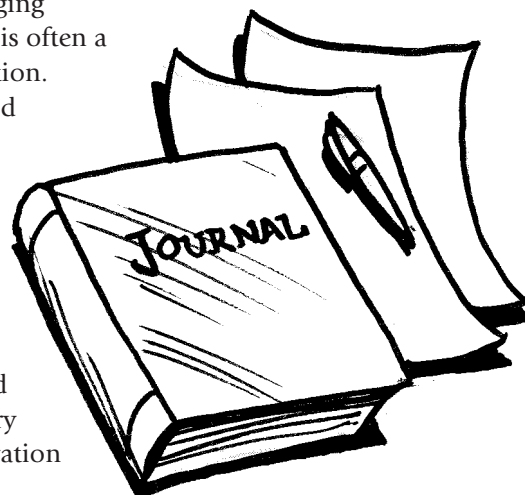
interests, and changing expectations, there is often a sense of disorientation.

Gilligan (Brown and Gilligan, 1993)

discusses the challenges girls confront as they negotiate a path through this tumultuous time, a time when accepted psychological theory indicates that separation is the hallmark of

maturization. A girl at this stage of development juggles relationships with parents, friends, and boys, attempting to balance emotional separation with a need for connection. Often, she uses another person's ability to listen to her and hear her concerns as a yardstick for determining the value of the relationship. "When others did not listen and seemed not to care, they (girls) spoke of 'coming up against a brick wall.' This image of a wall has as its counterpart the search for an opening through which one could speak" (Gilligan, 1988, p. 130). The journal, when presented at this time in a girl's growing up, can serve as that opening. Susan referred directly to her youth, remembering her first writing experience as occurring between the ages of ten and twelve. She pinpoints *a very traumatic seventh grade year* as another time when her journal was a crucial listener. Karen, particularly, talks about her journal hearing what she can't say elsewhere. *Sometimes I don't want to talk to other people. I don't want to seem like I'm harping too much.*

To ask a question, or make a statement, may create a degree of vulnerability in a young girl that is unacceptably risky, in which case she may choose silence. In lieu of silence, the girl who identifies a journal as a safe place to express her feelings and voice her changing perceptions gives credibility to her words. This simple process allows the writer a sense of



concrete existence at a time when rules and relationships are becoming more and more abstract. Schewy (1996) reflects, “over and over again I found my hunch confirmed. Many diarists begin to write between the ages of ten and twelve—precisely the time in their lives when their own voices are being sublimated to the demands of culture” (pp. 39–40).

Through early introduction, and subsequently perceived need, such as the turbulence of growing up, young girls who write in journals generally write often. By divulging concerns and questions that cannot be expressed elsewhere, the relationship with the journal as confidante is established with a strong allegiance. Progoff (1992), an advocate of journal writing and feedback who bases his beliefs in Holistic Depth Psychology, asserts that journal writing

achieves its results by bringing about a multiplying effect within the psyche. Its impact is cumulative, and this generates a progressively stronger momentum. In time, as the force of this momentum increases, it attains an autonomous power, as though at that point it had become self-generating and self-directing. It then seems to have an independent capacity to carry the person forward to the next step of growth. (p. 31)

There is evidence of this in the independent writers when they make comments that speak to the compelling nature of their journals, describing the practice of journal writing as *just second nature to me; I can't not write; I can't wait to get home and write*. The value of journal writing has proven to be so effective for each woman that it propels her forward, writing more, digging deeper, exploring new interpersonal terrain, affirming Progoff's belief that the journal serves to motivate the continued development of the writer. This ongoing use of writing as a tool for understanding and discovery was, for each of the three independent writers, introduced and encouraged early.



Any activity begun early and practiced consistently becomes habitual. Girls who write as a way of dealing with adolescent tumult will likely see the practice recur. Confronted with critical experiences after adolescence, paper and pen are easily retrieved, once again becoming tools for understanding. Although Karen, Susan, and Amy each made a point of saying that the writing they do in their journals is not all *negative bad stuff, not all conflict and struggle, sometimes it's funny*, there was also a consistent pattern of using the journal to decipher, vent, clarify, and reflect. This would indicate that even when a woman expands her journal writing practices beyond the wholly emotional, incorporating more sophisticated thinking into the writing process, she is still guided by the ritual of adolescent writing. She writes in an effort to make sense of her world. The journal comforts, *it calms, it does not judge, it helps me clarify*. Whether the writer is a girl or a woman, the benefit of a safe place to express an emotion or elucidate a position is priceless.

The Benefit of Written Words

In drawing together the experiences of the writers with literature that reviews writing processes, an integration of purpose, process, and theory emerged. Journal writing has the potential to play a significant role in the developmental process of young girls. Providing there is a sense of emotional safety and privacy in their writing, girls, particularly during adolescence, see a journal as a place to experiment with opinions, emotions, and relationships. This forum for authentic voice brings about a writer's deeper awareness and understanding of self, validating her personhood, and allowing her individual expression. It has become apparent throughout this research that the adolescent who writes is likely to continue writing. First, she uses pen and paper as a tool to manoeuvre through the difficulties of growing up; as an adult, she continues to use writing as a way to identify and understand situations in her life that may be difficult, emotionally charged, or transitional. For the girl who can isolate and identify her own voice amidst the cacophony of the culture, acknowledging, and expressing her position, there is authority—authority that has the power to elicit change.

There is hope in journal writing. The exploration of voice and mind introduces the writer to her vital, vibrant and complete self, taking away the judgment that so often accompanies disclosure heard by others. It strengthens the voice, offering the writer an opportunity to grow accustomed to the words that are so deeply imbedded in her being, knowing that when she expresses them, in voice or deed, she will stand taller in her presentation, and firmer in her resolve. "In our making and remaking of ourselves . . . we should end by having the *dream* . . . there is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope" (Freire, 1992, p. 91).

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The Gaia Hypothesis

by Itay Keshet

*Perfect as the wing of a bird may be, it
will never enable the bird to fly if
unsupported by the air.*

— Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936)

The story of Gaia began in the late 1960s when NASA hired the young chemist, James Lovelock, to develop a test for life on Mars (Lovelock, 1990). Rather than trying to find life at specified targets on the planet surface, as had been the prior approach, Lovelock began by examining the only planet we know to harbour life—the Earth. To search for life on other planets one must first understand the fundamental character of life. It is this exploration that led to what we today refer to as the Gaia hypothesis.

Imagine ourselves as aliens, curiously observing the Earth from far away. We could figure out which elements the planet is made of by analyzing the energy it reflects into space. By summing up all of those ingredients on a ledger and factoring in a few astronomical variables, we would get some very precise predictions about Earth's atmospheric composition. Strangely enough, by doing this, we would be led to the mistaken conclusion that the atmosphere on this unremarkable inner solar system planet is, perhaps as Venus, utterly inhospitable for life.

Standing on an Earth shaped only by the chemistry of its composition would be impossible without being pressure cooked in a chemical soup. Besides being immensely hot, every breath you took would contain 98% carbon dioxide, less than 0.0001% oxygen, a dab of sulphur, a touch of nitrogen, and a pinch of methane. Thankfully, we have a planetary temperature that allows most of the Earth's water to exist in liquid or vapour states and we experience oxygen at the reliable concentration of 21% (Lovelock, 2000, p. 33).

This state of affairs with liquid water and plentiful gaseous oxygen is very odd indeed. So given these observations, Lovelock proposed a simple test for life on other planets: analyze the composition of the planet and see if its atmospheric composition strays from what is predicted by chemistry; if it does, send an expedition (Lovelock, 2000).

The idea that the Earth's atmosphere was in deep disequilibrium with the planet's composition, and, further, that this state had been maintained over long periods, is evidence that some control mechanism must be at work. Lovelock explained this control system as the interaction between life and non-life. In other words, life is not a phenomenon distinct from what we think of as non-life such as rocks and water. It is the rocks and the water that imbue the Earth with life, and life that maintains the rocks and the water in their respective solid and liquid states. This is a profound statement and the ramifications of Lovelock's theory are so extensive that they require us to rethink our understanding of the natural world and the way in which we study, teach and learn about it.

The original hypothesis defines Gaia as “a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the total constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet” (Lovelock, 2000, p. 10). This is often read as “life regulates the environment for its own benefit” (Kleidon, 2002, p. 2), and, indeed, life does this through feedback mechanisms. In biology we talk about feedback mechanisms as being positive or negative. In a negative feedback system, the given process is inhibited by its product. For example, when we exert ourselves, we hyperventilate and thus restore a normal balance of blood gasses. On the other hand, positive feedback mechanisms yield

products that stimulate their production. As global warming causes the polar ice caps to melt, more water vapour is released into the air; the water vapour traps heat from the sun like an insulating blanket and causes the planet to warm up, further accelerating the melting of the ice caps. In this way global warming is a positive feedback mechanism because, unlike hyperventilation that leads to suppression of hyperventilation, warming simply leads to more warming. Life-processes tend to be self regulatory; they act through negative feedback mechanisms and they adapt and persist despite changes in conditions. This is contrary to inorganic processes that typically act through positive feedback mechanisms that ultimately terminate by annihilating themselves or their surroundings.

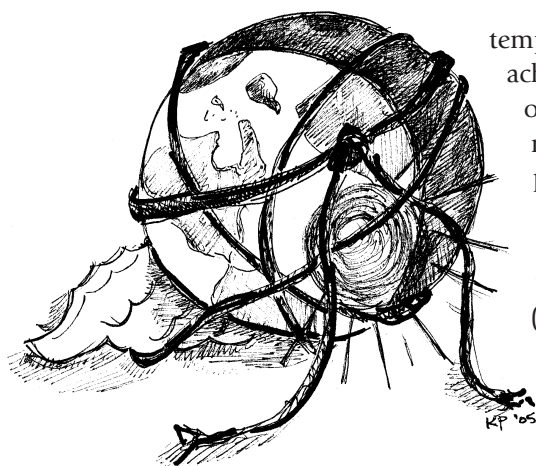
By thinking of negative feedback as predominantly organic and positive feedback as predominantly inorganic we would hypothesize that the history of a *living* planet would indeed be an example of relative calm amidst a violent and chaotic universe. The stars, depending on which stars you ask, tell us that the age of the universe is between 10 and 14 billion years. We know that the Earth is approximately 4.5 billion years old and by drilling down into the most ancient layers of sediment we can see that the first signs of life on Earth appear approximately 3.8 billion years ago (Wright 2004). Life on Earth is therefore an ancient phenomenon, roughly a third of the age of the universe, and has shaped this strange blue world throughout most of its turbulent existence.

Throughout the last 3.8 billion years the heat output from the sun has increased consistently, and despite ice ages and other drastic cyclical shifts in climate, the average overall temperature and atmospheric composition has remained relatively constant (Lovelock, 2000). The regulation of atmospheric composition is driven by the process of photosynthesis, whereby algae, bacteria and plants continuously remove carbon dioxide from the air and split apart the carbon and oxygen. The oxygen is released back into the air

and the carbon is incorporated into the structure of the organism. In this way, carbon dioxide gas is fixed in solid form, drastically reducing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (Sagan & Margulis, 1983). Examples such as this are evidence of a living control system, where organisms and their environments work synergistically to facilitate life on Earth.

At first glance the Gaia hypothesis seems teleological as it points to Gaia existing as an organism with a purpose—to maintain a sustainable environment for life on Earth. This implies a purposeful self-regulation of the planet and is therefore incompatible with the laws of Darwinian evolution (Kirchner, 2002). The problem is that evolution is a purposeless mechanism, a *how* without a *why* that results in tailbones, pinky fingers and appendices as much as upright locomotion, opposable thumbs and internal digestion.

The solution to the impasse between Gaia and evolutionary biology is in the tale of a fictitious planet known as Daisyworld. Daisyworld is identical in every way to our Earth except for the fact that it is populated solely by two species of daisies, one coloured black, and the other white. Both species of daisies have the same temperatures above and below which they cannot grow and both require the same inputs from the environment; the only difference is their colour. The young Daisyworld, just like the young Earth, is frosty because the young sun is relatively cool. On this young Daisyworld, the black daisies do better than their white counterparts because they absorb more energy from the sun. As the black daisies proliferate, they begin to darken the surface of Daisyworld with their numbers and cause the planet to trap more of the sun's heat. As the surface temperature increases the black daisies begin to fry whilst white daisies begin to experience a selective advantage and proliferate. Just as the black daisies cause the Earth to absorb more heat, so the white cause the land to reflect it. Daisyworld thus maintains a relatively constant surface temperature despite changes in solar intensity (Wilkinson, 2003). The beauty of this model is that global



temperature regulation is achievable using the principles of natural selection. The model does not invoke any purpose or intent on the part of the organisms to ensure their survival, yet this is the ultimate outcome (Sagan & Margulis, 1983).

The Gaia hypothesis has broad implications for the way that humans relate to

the environment. Our traditional, Western view of the environment has been anthropocentric and has ultimately led to the legitimization of our destructive behaviour. The Gaia hypothesis revolutionizes this idea by placing humans within the Earth, not sitting atop it (Bunyard, 1983). Gaia states that all organisms constitute a small but influential part of a greater whole and thus humans are not granted a privileged position above all other living things.

In spite of the holistic underpinnings of the hypothesis, Lovelock's personal view on environmental ethics runs counter to popular environmentalism. Lovelock acknowledges that human activity may indeed be 'fouling the nest,' but he does not see this as a problem. Pollution, he states, is natural, all organisms release waste products, and in fact many of the most toxic substances come from natural sources. Lovelock goes so far as to state that "the very concept of pollution is anthropocentric and may even be irrelevant in the Gaian context" (Lovelock, 2000, p. 103). Pollution, in this light, can be thought of simply as the accelerated cycling of terrestrial systems and not the introduction of alien destructive factors. When oxygen first formed in the planet's atmosphere, it must of have been the worst air pollution disaster imaginable. Oxygen is a toxic substance that results in violent exothermic chemical reactions. Oxygen corrodes metals, burns forests to the ground, and causes the formation of toxic free radicals with every breath we take.

The regulatory homeostatic properties of Gaia are even more powerful than oxygen's reactive nature as demonstrated by the relatively recent arrival of organisms that actually breathe the stuff. Lovelock maintains that the biosphere is far more resilient than environmentalists would have us believe. Humans are a part of Gaia, and unconsciously, perhaps even spiritually, we are drawn into the regulatory nature of the system. Lovelock is exceedingly positive in face of the dominant view that we are destroying our living planet but he does give a word of caution. There are certain regions of Gaia that Lovelock points to as irreparable. The estuaries, mangroves, wetlands and muds on the continental shelves are areas of great sensitivity due to their importance in chemical and nutrient cycling (Lovelock, 2000). These are the delicate membranes across which our living planet respire. The rest of the Earth, he claims, may not be of such importance to the preservation of life, and he gives license to use it pretty much as we want. This seemingly callous view stems from what is implied, but not specifically stated in the Gaia hypothesis. There can be no "land ethic" in Gaia, no moral justification for preserving the deep ocean or the sparsely populated deserts (Weston, 1987). The only value is in regions such as the tropical rain forests or for organisms such as the plankton, algae, and blue-green bacteria that are essential to the global regulatory system (Weston, 1987). In fact, the vast majority of species that once existed are now extinct, lending little value to the species of today as those too will eventually be replaced by others. Gaia maintains life, not any specific type of life, but life in general. The fact that the life it supports may not be of human form is not the concern of Gaia.

The solution to the dilemmas raised by the use of the Gaia hypothesis as an ethical framework is not to think of Gaia as a structure that defines ethical and non-ethical acts in terms of harm or benefit to Gaia. We miss the boat completely when we think of Gaia in these terms and I would assert that this superficial

interpretation has been the curse of Gaian environmental ethics. Even Lovelock fails miserably at describing an ethical framework for a sustainable planet conducive to humanity. Instead, the most compelling and inspiring aspect of the Gaia hypothesis is the scientific proof that all living and non-living things are interdependent and that the value of the air and the water is no less or more than the birds or the fish. Through this interpretation, we do not need reasons to conserve biodiversity such as the wealth of potential cures for diseases in the rain forests or the value of the world's forests as a carbon sink that pulls greenhouse gases from the air. The reason for conserving biodiversity comes from the simple fact that all things are alive and all living things depend on each other in order to maintain an Earth that they can inhabit. The Gaia hypothesis is not an ethical framework, but an understanding of our world as a living planet that informs our existing ethical structures. If we understand the world as a unified whole and we understand life as something that transcends cells and DNA and exists in the rocks, air, and water of this strange blue planet, then it is inevitable that we will be overcome with an appreciation for the place that human beings inhabit within it. If we value life, then Gaia shows us that life is indeed everywhere and that our value must extend to the land, the air, and the waters just as it does to the forests, the animals, and each other.

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The Healing Adventures of Summer Camp

by Stacey Marjerrison

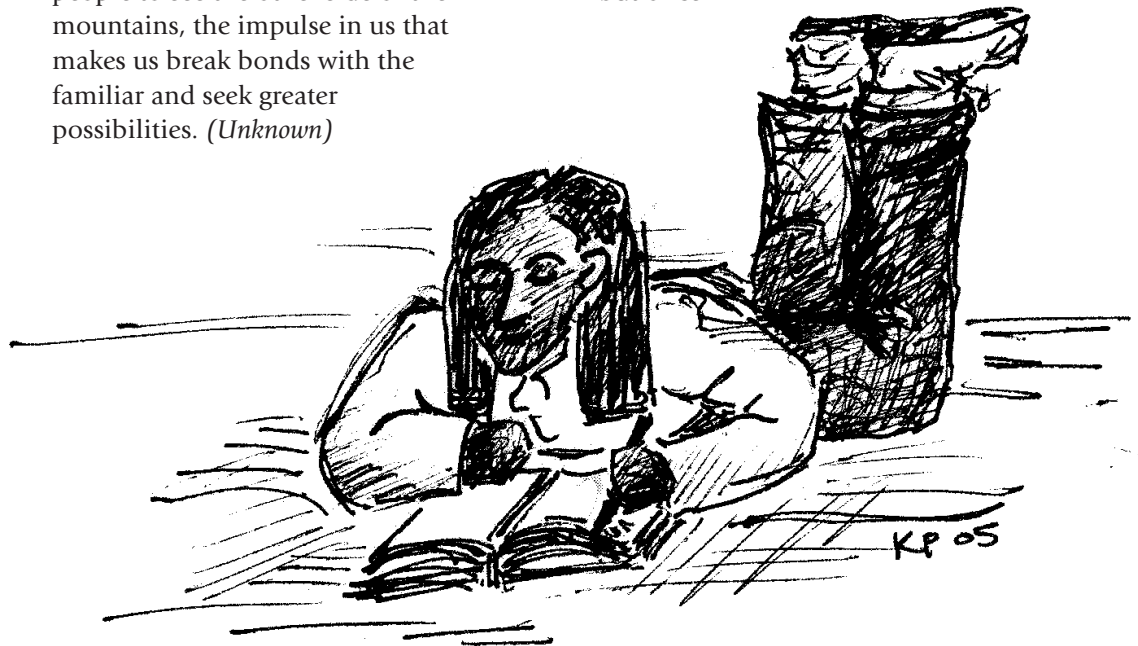
Adventure is a concept that lends itself easily to images and yet often evades definition. An adventure is typically seen as an exciting isolated experience such as skydiving or white-water rafting, or as an unplanned event that throws a twist in our lives. While accurate to some degree, dictionary definitions like undertakings "involving danger and unknown risk," or "exciting or remarkable experiences" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) fall short of capturing the true definition of adventure.

Even those working in adventure-based learning disagree upon a suitable definition for this concept called adventure. One view tends to characterize adventure as including uncertain outcome, risk, inescapable consequences, energetic action, and willing participation. Others in the field suggest that adventure is a word that cannot be defined in such a cut-and-dried manner and put forth the following explanation:

More than a word, adventure is an atmosphere, an attitude, a climate of the mind. Adventure is the curiosity of people to see the other side of the mountains, the impulse in us that makes us break bonds with the familiar and seek greater possibilities. (*Unknown*)

The definition of adventure is also considered in terms of how adventure changes a person. Henderson, for example, suggests that "adventure-based learning seeks self-growth through challenging experiences that heighten relationships and promote greater self-competencies and self-awareness" (1996, p. 139).

Considering a variety of perspectives I have arrived at some thoughts on the notion of adventure. As much as operationalizing a specific definition may be nice, I feel that adventure must have a different meaning to each person, and that it is the essence of the feelings evoked, more than the "willing participation" and "inescapable risk," that define an adventure. For example, I would consider my experience with a standard car that kept stalling on the sea-to-sky highway in British Columbia an adventure, but I definitely was not a willing participant in the escapade. There were no inescapable consequences in trying to network my house for cable Internet, but once



again, this was unquestionably an adventurous undertaking. Integrating the ideas of those in the field with my own thoughts, I see adventure as an event that forces a person to operate at their own boundaries of comfort and knowledge, challenging them, and providing opportunities for growth. Providing a more concrete definition than ‘a feeling,’ this definition would also allow an individualization of the adventure experience.

Adventure and Camp

With these thoughts on what constitutes adventure in mind, it is easy to see how the camp experience can fit into the majority of adventure definitions. From the simple act of leaving home to stay in a foreign place—an experience quite often outside the comfort zone of most children—to undertaking the risk involved with eating the mystery meals frequently served at camp, the common experience in itself is rather adventurous.

The most important adventure-based learning of camp experience, however, is usually of a more individual nature. From ropes courses, lake swimming and learning to kayak, to singing and dancing in front of one’s peers, camp provides an individual with opportunities for growth and learning in a typically supportive environment. By facing these aspects of adventure, campers are able to promote greater self-competency and self-awareness associated with Henderson’s idea of adventure, ultimately leading to increased self-confidence.

Special Camper Populations

It has been shown that “summer camp encourages self-confidence, self-expression, autonomy, and the development of interpersonal skills in children with major chronic illnesses” (Powars and Brown, 1990, p. 81) and that these factors come together to promote “mental and social well-being” (Lord, 2001, p. 133). In response to these claims, camps for many children living with

chronic illness have been created. Examples of the pediatric populations they serve include those with asthma/respiratory disorders, blood disorders, cancer, cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, and spina bifida to name a few.

Although most camps can provide adventure-based learning, those equipped to manage the needs of children with chronic illness can bring adventure experiences to children who might not otherwise experience them. In three significant ways, camps tailored to the needs of campers with chronic illness provide the support needed for campers to flourish in adventure experiences.

First, specialized camps provide physical support (Briery and Rabian, 1999). The majority of camps are quite prepared to deal with any sort of camp-related medical emergency that may arise, however, very few have the knowledge and understanding of chronic diseases and resulting medical conditions. By having staff fully trained to support children with a specific condition, there is less parental worry and less chance for mistakes due to being uninformed (Borsi O’Brien, 2003).

Specialized camps also provide psychosocial support. It has been shown that, compared to their peers, children with chronic illness are at a higher risk of developing psychological issues such as behaviour problems, poor self-concept and social withdrawal (Austin, 1989, p. 142). Briery and Rabian (1999) examined the effects of camp on three groups of children—those with asthma, diabetes and spina bifida. They found that all three groups experienced similar positive changes in their attitudes towards their illnesses (1999, p. 187). The camp experience was a large factor in their psychosocial adjustment to their physical condition (Briery and Rabian, 1999, p. 183). Similarly, after a camp experience, gains in self-esteem, independence and lifestyle control were seen in children with hemophilia (Thomas and Gaslin, 2001, p.

261), increases in self-esteem were noted in those with end-stage renal disease (Warady, Carr, Hellerstein, & Alon, 1992, p. 214), and improvements in psychosocial functioning, self-concept and locus of control were found in those with rheumatic disease (Steffl, Shear & Levinson, 1989, p. 14).

Finally, the third and most important advantage of special needs camps for children with chronic pediatric conditions is the experience of “normalcy.” In fact, the unifying characteristic between many of these camps is “to give the camper with a chronic condition a chance to play and be a ‘regular kid’” (Sawin, Lannon & Austin, 2001, p. 57). By integrating those who have suffered/are suffering from the condition into the staff of these camps (Miller, 2000, p. 1639), and isolating the camper population to those who have had intimate contact with the disease, these children get to experience not being singled out as different, often for the first time. As well, through meeting other people with the same condition, these children “learn that they are not alone and their disease neither defines who they are or what they can do” (Borsi O’Brien, 2003).

My Experiences

While academic evidence provides excellent support for the benefits of camp for children with chronic conditions, being a part of the experience, and seeing those benefits firsthand, is even more meaningful. Despite the fact that my only experience is with a pediatric cancer population, a few memories stand out as instances in which these children learned a great deal from their camp adventures, and indicate the overwhelming necessity for special needs camps.

The first meaningful experience occurred in a residential camp with a cabin full of nine- and ten-year-old boys. After a dreary rainy day, I was sitting on dinner watch with the group when a crack of thunder that sounded like it was ripping our cabin apart split through the grey mood. I hollered at the boys to grab their

sleeping bags, and we all crowded onto the covered porch to watch the charcoal sky come to life with lightening bolts, and the rain drench the camp in sheets. Sitting there mesmerized for almost an hour, the boys not only overcame fear of thunderstorms (I had to hold one hand, hidden under the blankets for the first 15 minutes), but also gained an appreciation for the natural phenomenon that they may have never otherwise experienced. Once the storm was over, with a half-hour remaining of our break, we all put on swimming suits and ran around in the puddles that had accumulated in the front field. Within minutes, we were all covered, head-to-toe, in mud. At that moment, staring at my group of boys with the sparkle of mischief in their eyes, I couldn’t see illness anywhere. A few of them on treatment, a few done and left with scars, a few carrying scars of a sibling lost to the disease, I couldn’t see this burden anywhere. Not a trace.

My second memory, less of a physical adventure and more of a conceptual one, happened with Alex. Ten years old at the time, Alex had lived his whole life in Toronto. Having to move downtown as a young child so his family could be closer to Sick Kids for his brother, Alex had never really been outside the city. On the first night at campfire, he kept looking all over the place, and seemed quite disinterested in taking part in the animated sing-along. Concerned that he wasn’t having a good time, I asked Alex what he was looking at. He took a moment to collect his thoughts, looked me straight in the eyes and said, “I was just looking at the stars, I’ve never seen them before.” My jaw hit the ground. Although it took me a minute to recover, I suggested that, if Alex took part in the campfire, he and I could come back out afterwards, and I would show him the stars I knew. He nodded enthusiastically. Generally one of the ‘coolest’ campers I have ever met, Alex spent that night wide-eyed, and like a sponge soaking up every droplet of knowledge I could recall about the night sky. For Alex, lying on his back and staring at the stars was an adventure like no other.

Finally, one of my most fond memories belongs to Savannah. She was a very ill little girl, extremely emaciated, covered head-to-toe in petechiae, and requiring several shots of morphine each day just to get through the pain. On the sunny afternoon emblazoned in my mind, it was our group's turn to play at canoeing and kayaking. Huge followers of the challenge by choice sentiment, our camp allowed the children to choose their level of participation in activities, and this afternoon Savannah had decided to not participate. Watching her face from our place on the dock, I could see that her decision was made by the understanding that she didn't have the strength to paddle, not that she didn't have the desire. Toting over a yak-board, I asked her if she wanted to hop on with me. Although hesitant—for she was as stubborn as she was sick, and didn't like doing things that she couldn't do independently—she reluctantly took her place in front of me. I paddled us out with her help, and we spent the afternoon playing with the rest of the cabin, touring around the lake, and enjoying our time on the water. Nearing the end of the afternoon, and not too far from shore, I looked at her again, and asked her this time if she would like to paddle us back by herself. A sense of determination overtook her face, and she nodded. It took us a little while to get back, but Savannah made it most of the way paddling on her own. And, just before we hit the sand, she turned to me and muttered quietly in a voice beyond her age, "I thought I would never get to do this." Although she has since passed away, this little girl and her adventure are one that I will forever remember. Without a camp specifically for children with cancer, Savannah would have never been able to attend, let alone participate in such a meaningful way.

Reflections

While my experience speaks only of children with cancer attending Camp Trillium, it is likely that similar experiences occur at camps for other special needs groups. In fact, in

exchanging stories with friends who have worked with children with muscular dystrophy, Down's syndrome, and cerebral palsy at Easter Seals camps, or those working with autistic children at YMCA day camps, I have come to understand that each environment provides the same kind of adventure experiences for the children served. Although the academic community puts less value in "anecdotal reports" of the value of summer camp for children with chronic disease (Briery and Rabian, 1999, p. 184), I think the picture that stories paint of the value of these camps is much more vivid than a statistical analysis. These anecdotal reports prove unequivocally that camp has made a difference in the life of at least one child suffering from a chronic disease. And to me, even if camp only makes a difference in how one child copes with his or her disease, special needs summer camps are worthwhile. The good news is that academic evidence is also mounting in support of these summer camps, and it is showing benefits to the majority of the camper population. Studies are proving that children with chronic illness not only learn better interaction skills, and gain support from others with their



condition, but that they also show increases in self-confidence.

What is it that occurs at camp to cause these increases in self-confidence? Some say it is the fact that camp allows these children to be normal, that it gives them the opportunity to try new things, and to make friends without the stigma of being "the sick kid." They suggest that camp "is a place where their condition does not limit their ability to participate in life" (Sawin et al., 2001, p. 57). Yet, what does this all boil down to? It is the fact that, often for the first time in their "overprotected and underexposed" lives (Powars and Brown, 1990, p. 85), these children are encouraged to participate in events that force them to operate at their own boundaries of comfort and knowledge, challenging them, and providing them with opportunities for growth. At camp, children are exposed to adventure, and the impact on their lives is tremendous.

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Thanks to Liz Newberry and Heather Bates for their assistance in preparing this submission.

Akiagun

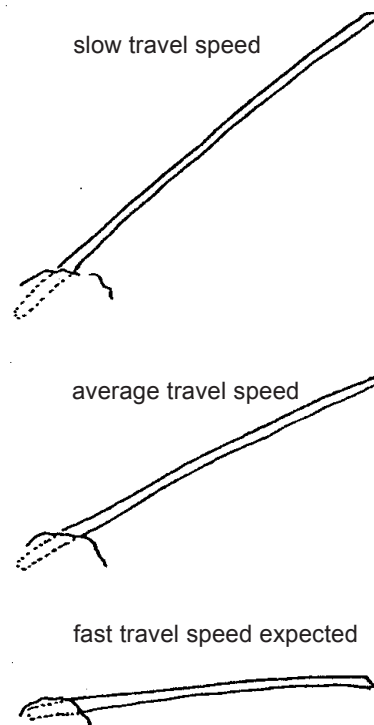
by Zabe MacEachern

Akiagun (Aki-a-gun) is an ancient form of communication adapted from winter travel conditions in the north woods region. It allows basic messages to be conveyed to travellers using simple, convenient means well adapted to winter weather conditions. Craig Macdonald has written detailed descriptions of Akiagun for the Ministry of Natural Resources, but I learned how to truly hear the messages of Akiagun from two Anishinabe elders who spoke to me about how to track and listen to the land.

I had the privilege of working with Robert Wayash and Fred Majors one summer in north-western Ontario. In the winter of 1998, Robert Wayash passed away during an ice travel accident. During the night of his wake, I felt like I was continually being asked to write about Akiagun—to write about it in the way Robert had explained it to me. Below I try to honour the trapping and hunting skills of Robert Wayash by sharing some of the reading skills he shared with me. Of course, Robert might have just referred to all of this knowledge as common sense in the bush—listening to the tracks and tracking knowledge.

On frozen winter lakes, paper messages are hard to write with un-mitted shivering fingers, not to mention frozen ballpoint pens. Letters carved in the snow are easily covered over and buried by drifting snow. On the other hand, Akiagun is readily seen from a distance on a lake, lasts for months (yet is organic and decomposable), and can be quickly and easily formed using just a knife or hatchet. Akiagun is placed on the main travelled routes of winter snowshoe trails and conveys the fundamental messages of winter travel communication.

To those accustomed to a phonetic alphabet, the signs and symbols of Akiagun may seem complex and to require memorization. But Akiagun messages were once “heard” because they were “felt” by an aware winter traveller. Akiagun is heard when the simple representations used in its telling resonate with a personal feeling. An example will serve to illustrate the point:

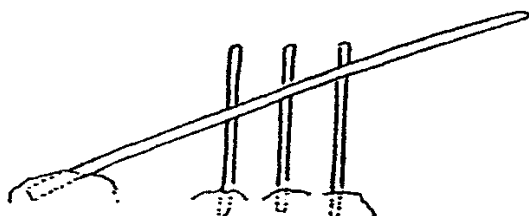


The direction and speed of travel is quickly and easily read in Akiagun. A stick placed in the snow points in the direction of travel. The stick is always placed and read in the snow from the direction it grows, base to tip. The angle at which the stick is placed in the snow indicates the speed of travel. An expected slow speed of travel due to slushy conditions, a heavy load to be hauled, or a chosen easy pace due to side hunting forages, can be indicated by a stick angled up high as if travel progress is similar to the slow climbing of a hill. A fast

rate of travel is indicated by a low angled stick reminiscent of the quicker travel speeds obtained on a smooth, flat terrain.

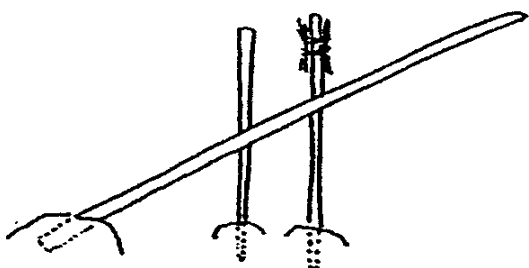
Akiagun originated in a time before watches and clocks, when the sun was a more frequently used timepiece. Anishinabe children, for example, played games that involved the keeping of time. They simply placed a stick vertically in the ground and laid another flat so that the first stick's shadow would match the stick on the ground when the designated time had passed. Like sun dials, the shadow moving from one side of a stick to the other represents a period of sunlight occurring during one day. In Akiagun, each upright stick represents the distance that could be travelled during one winter's day of light.

traveling for three days in this direction



In Akiagun, all the activities of camp life are represented in one simple feature. Setting up a permanent winter camp that will be used for some time involves the act of gathering, preparing, and making camp. Firewood collection and shelter crafting are two basic activities necessary at any camp. The simple act of gathering and attaching some sticks to the top of a vertical stick (used to represent days travelled) tells the distance from a permanent camp.

making camp two days travel away



In Roman times tree trunks used as pillars were purposely turned upside down because people believed this would inhibit the tree's spirit from re-rooting in the building, causing structural damage. In the Anishinabe culture turning a tree upside down is considered disrespectful to the trees. As a result, when trees are cut down for lumber their bottom ends are marked so that, after sawing, the lumber can be placed in a structure with its correct end up. As every tree planter knows, exposing the root to air even if only for a few minutes can easily kill a tree. To a winter traveller on a frozen lake a tree placed on the ice upside down can be quickly noticed as "unnatural" and "disrespectful." Such a sign draws attention from eyes used to seeking and noticing the messages given by subtle features of a landscape. It can be heard to say "something very unfortunate must have happened for someone to have created such a sign." An evergreen tree placed upside down means that a death has occurred.



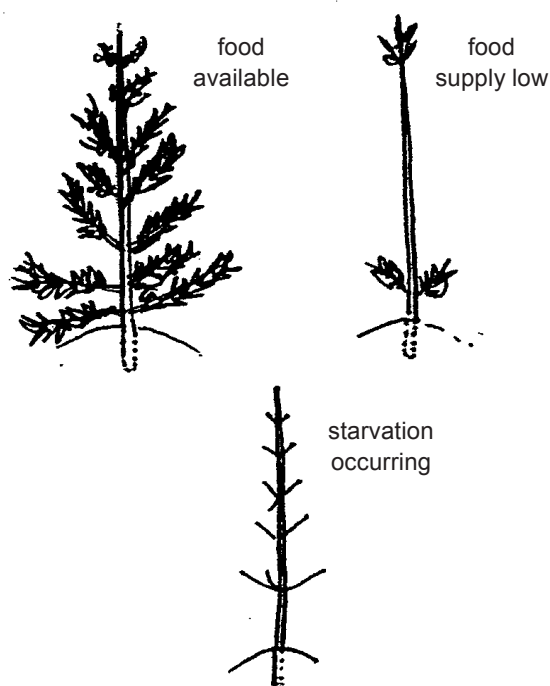
a death has occurred

small tree indicates death of a child



Hunters are often well aware of the availability of food resources for other animals. Deer or moose usually graze by eating and moving continually, taking only a few bites from each bush or tree unless the winter snow conditions are harsh and travel is impeded, difficult, or confined. In such cases, a shoreline may be heavily grazed as a hoofed animal seeks to conserve energy by travelling little. Heavily grazed shorelines are like a track left on the land by a harsh winter. Snowshoe travellers may be eating the meat of deer and rabbit, but

this meat was created by the grazing of deer and rabbit on evergreens and buds. Thus to a hunter, a thick, densely branched evergreen tree placed next to a sign indicating the location of a camp means there is plenty of food available and all is well. In the Anishinabe culture, it is likened to an open door policy, inviting passers-by to visit, share stories, and feast upon the offerings from the land. A tree that looks heavily grazed, because a traveller has removed most of the limbs, imitates an animal confined to an overgrazed area. Hunger and starvation may be occurring in the camp near this sign, beckoning those with food to come and share. A dead tree indicates no food and starvation—death may be coming.



Evergreen trees with broken dangling branches bent upwards, or only removed from one side, indicate that there is an injury or someone is too ill to travel. In Akiagun a very simple yet beautiful representation occurs; the health of a person is told by comparing them to the health of a tree.

While a phonetic alphabet, such as used in the English language, uses abstract symbols in the

form of letters to represent sounds, the messages sent through Akiagun seem only one step removed from the winter landscape they are written upon. They are not based upon a representation (as a letter symbol is for a sound written on a page, which links it to a syllable, which forms part of a word, which may have numerous definitions in various distant contexts). Reading Akiagun is like tracking: it conveys the messages of how the two-footed creatures are living upon the land. To hear the messages of Akiagun, one must have some understanding of the stories told by past generations, stories that serve as a guide for a traveller's sense of awareness and inform her of the subtleties of the land in winter. To this knowledge the present context of a message must be added. The past and present are both necessary to hear Akiagun.

Unlike a text written on pages created from the trees of one region, and possibly conveying a message about the trees in another region, Akiagun is always dependent upon the local winter context. It cannot be removed from the snowy terrain upon which it is written. Akiagun does not make sense in the rain forest. It is designed for north woods travellers, those who have journeyed far on snowshoes. In the spring, Akiagun melts into the depths of lakes and the ancient time of passage. The survival of Akiagun is dependent upon winter travellers in the north woods who remember how to hear the voice of the snowy terrain, seek the wood from the local forest, remain aware of the messages told in winter's tales, and choose to use this ancient form of telling.

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Post-camping Depression: A Lethal Possibility

A treatment of Muller's article

by Mikey Ivany

Those of us in the field have long been proponents of the positive impact of camping, although the extent of this impact has long been debated. A retrospective case study analysis may help some of us facilitators understand the depth of our work and the danger in not properly managing the transition from such an experience.

A two-day camping experience into the Rocky Mountains was provided as part of a treatment for 17 adult patients, some of whom were outpatients, of a Fort Logan adult psychiatric facility. The camping trip was regarded by the patients, the 20 staff, and the eight relatives of the patients as a success and included pursuits such as hiking, riding, sitting around a fire talking, and singing. The large amount of social time, the sharing of meal responsibilities among everyone on the trip, the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature, and the experience of a different lifestyle were all well accepted. Upon returning, the weekend staff began their shift and the weekday staff, as well as the outpatients, went to their respective homes. That weekend, widespread depression was reported among the inpatients by the staff and also self-reported among the outpatients. The depression was so significant that one inpatient tried to commit suicide by overdosing, and another outpatient committed suicide the first night she returned home. Staff report that this individual had been very involved with others during the camping trip and showed no hints of suicidal ideas (Muller, 1971).

This example shows outdoor experiences and outdoor settings have very real and potentially life-altering impacts. It is important for trip leaders to plan for the facilitation of transitions from an outdoor program to an indoor program. In learning from this event

and in understanding the possible reasons for depression, we can better facilitate the changes. After the event, several theories were put out on what was labeled: "Post-camping Depression: A lethal possibility" (Muller, 1971). These theories are included below, as are some additional theories that may help to explain the traumatic event.

- a. A sense of real community may have emerged as well as greater mutual understanding; this was lost upon return (Muller, 1971). If this is the case, then, despite the tragedy, we should be glad we have a treatment option that has the potential for this much meaning.
- b. Fewer demands on patients, relatives, and staff were present in the outdoor setting. The patient-therapist separation was almost removed and relating to one another on a more equal basis was possible. As well, the freedom from scheduled life was removed when they returned home to their respective lifestyles (Muller, 1971). If this theory is right, then perhaps we need to reevaluate the constraints of our present system; simply not exposing individuals to freedom opportunities is not an acceptable solution.
- c. The two days were a regressive experience that allowed individuals to relive their carefree teenage years at camp and their carefree existence; the realization that these magical years were gone would have been depressing (Muller, 1971). Personally I find this theory the most difficult to believe, due to the fact that the teenage years are often emotional roller-coasters and very hard for individuals.

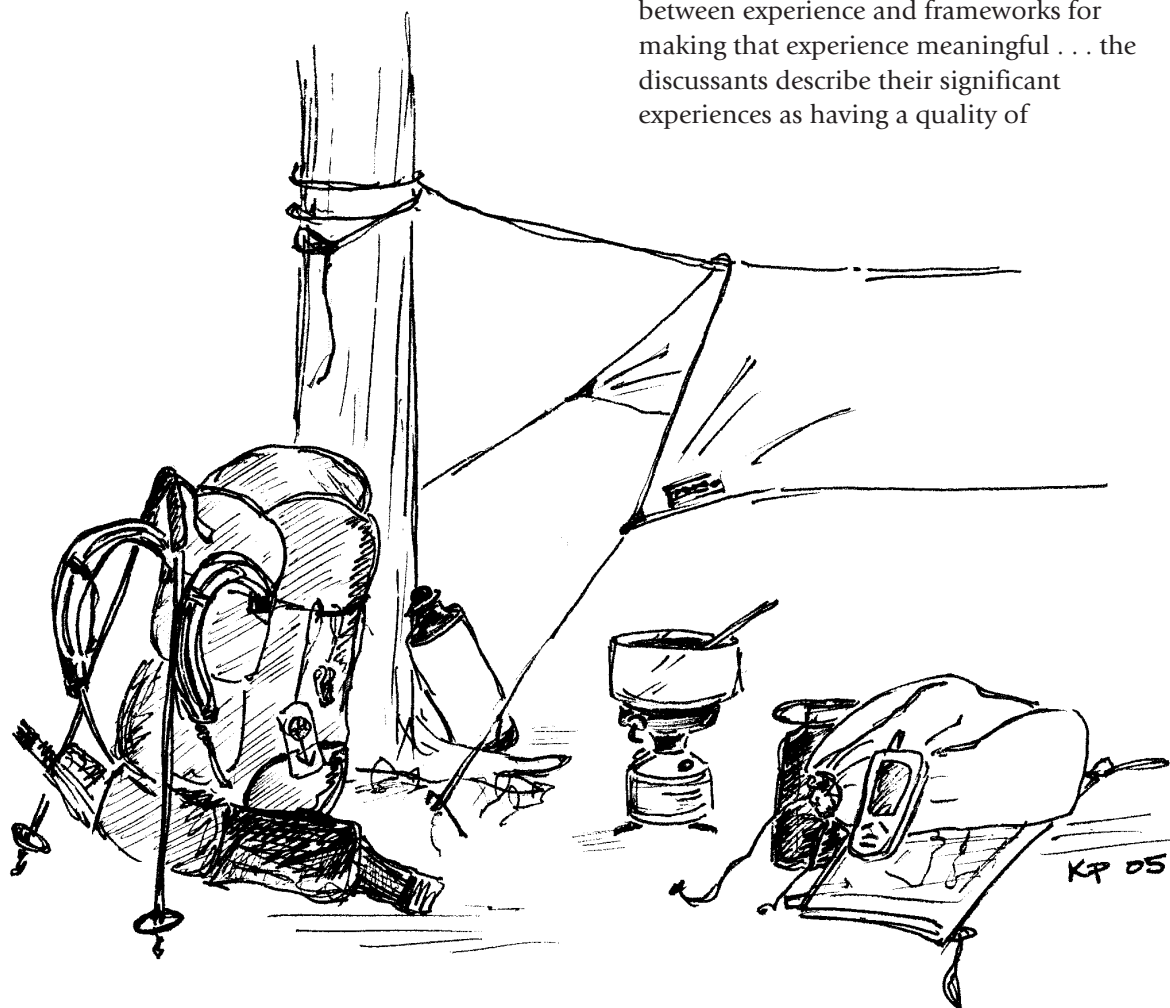
These difficult years are highly correlated with depression and suicide (AAS, 2001).

- d. The greater transference from seeing the staff as human was a major let-down to the patients and started their depression (Muller, 1971). In my opinion this theory should be discounted too; from my personal experience, we want our heroes to be human. As we see their faults, we also see their strengths; this is what makes them role models that we can learn from. The greatest role-models in life are those that continue to grow themselves.
- e. The sharing times may have, in retrospect, caused anxiety in some patients who were now more open and more vulnerable with

their peers (Muller, 1971). I don't put much faith in this theory either.

Friendships and therapy are based on the relief that comes with sharing personal experiences with others and therefore increasing our connectedness.

- f. The trip may have been one last desperate attempt to find a reason to go on living; the realization that this was the most enjoyment they would get out of life would make going on living not worthwhile (Muller, 1971). I disagree; staff reports do not in any way support this conclusion.
- g. "To understand why relating to nature can be a therapeutic experience, it is important to recognize the mutual dependence between experience and frameworks for making that experience meaningful . . . the discussants describe their significant experiences as having a quality of



'connectedness,' of being a part of a bigger whole, which enhances their personal well being and sense of belonging. It has been said that this 'connectedness' can generate anxiety, fear, or guilt due to a new view of how rooted ecological destruction is in human priorities, beliefs and actions" (Maiteny, 2002, p. 43). This connectedness needs to be considered for those who are trying such outdoor activities for the first time as part of their physical rehabilitation therapy. The individual needs to be able to express new feelings of self-confidence, and relationships, but also needs to have an outlet in case that connectedness begins to distress the individual about the way we live as a society.

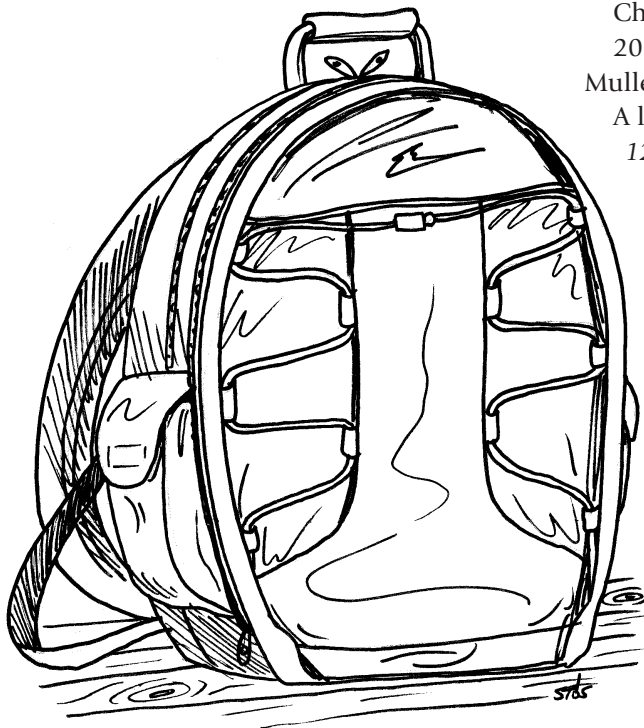
There have been many theories put out on various reasons why individuals have a difficult time adjusting back to their previous lifestyles after having been on a wilderness experience, whether the intent was therapeutic or not. From my experience facilitating wilderness trips and from the research I've

looked at, I believe that it is important to talk about the connected feeling that individuals experience when on trip and to help them figure out for themselves how not to lose that connected feeling in their daily lives. It is not enough for us to provide the meaning; we must teach them how to keep it alive.

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Conference 2006 . . . Genesis and Geography

by Clare Magee and the Conference Committee

Genesis: 2003–2006

Those present at the 2003 COEO annual conference at Paradise Lake may remember a major think-tank theme as we put outdoor education in Ontario “through a looking glass.” One of the follow-up recommendations from the think-tank sessions was, “If getting people to outdoor centres ‘in the country’

- is not financially sustainable by school boards
- maintains accessibility barriers for most urban populations
- continues the myth that nature is ‘out there’

then let’s get more outdoor education happening locally where it can be sustainable and be real in affecting lives.”

Those who attended the 2004 gathering at Onondaga Camp may remember a recommendation to the COEO executive and board from the floor of the AGM, “to work toward more cultural inclusion in COEO and in Ontario outdoor education.” All present nodded heads positively and voted to support the recommendation.

It was an uplifting fall 2005 conference, with EECOM and partners, at Tawingo. For the writer, the most memorable session was facilitated by two petite and highly effective museum staff from Montreal. They shared indoor and outdoor activities they use that engage people with what a sustainable city looks and feels like, with what changes would make their city more sustainable. Although the session was conducted in English, there were two dedicated French-speaking individuals in the group of twelve participants. After either some technical information or directions were presented, one of the facilitators would

casually turn and concisely address the two in our other lilting national language.

These are the applicable memories:

- This writer was pleased to be Canadian and in the presence of such adept cross-cultural facilitators.
- The idea of a museum doing outdoor, experiential, inter-active, on-the-land sustainability education is very positive.
- Lots of similar non-formal, urban, outdoor/environmental education is happening in small pockets across Canada.

The “place-based education” movement positively addresses the above realities. Realizing that most urbanites live in a small geographic “place,” education about history, geography, culture, and the life-sustaining natural processes of the planet are purposefully done in and about that place. Relevance is achieved. Outdoor, experiential, inter-active learning is part of the methodology.

The 2006 conference logically follows the preceding “gathering of direction” into a “gathering of action.” (See *President’s View* in this issue for additional “gathering of direction.”) There are fourteen conference committee people, a blend of COEO members and non-members, and the number keeps growing. It’s one thing to have general conference ideas. It is another to actualize them, organically, in a new context.

The committee is working to blend with a diverse urban community. It is seeking attendance by community leaders and community youth. Some sessions will showcase excellent examples of local outdoor/environmental learning. For those in a school setting, how would you like to visit a small African-based school that has a plant growing

on every student's desk, a naturalized school yard and a vegetable garden, and its students annually plant a hundred trees to help restore the Humber ecosystem? For all in outdoor education, how would you like to learn from community leaders to identify and understand specific cultural barriers to outdoor learning, and ways to enable learning through those barriers? How would you like to add some social games, songs, and stories drawn from other cultures to your program repertoire? These specific opportunities and more are being created.

Geography

Located near the junction of Highways 407 and 427, on the bank of the Humber River (a designated Canadian Heritage River) and adjacent to the Humber

College Arboretum, is the Humberwood Community Centre, the conference base. The building immediately appeals because of the obvious naturalization around it. It has walking trails, bike trails, and public transit accessibility. It houses two schools, a recreation centre, and a community library. It is the community hub for this part of Etobicoke. Some of the typical multi-ethnic, multi-generational use of the building will continue while we host the conference in another part.

The bike trails along the Humber may be used for one of several travel sessions with pre-planned community showcase/engagement stops along the way. Other travel sessions may be by TTC or by bus. The nearby Claireville Reservoir is minutes away by bike or foot trails. It may be used for some water-based conference sessions. There is urban camping at nearby Indian Line Campground, a

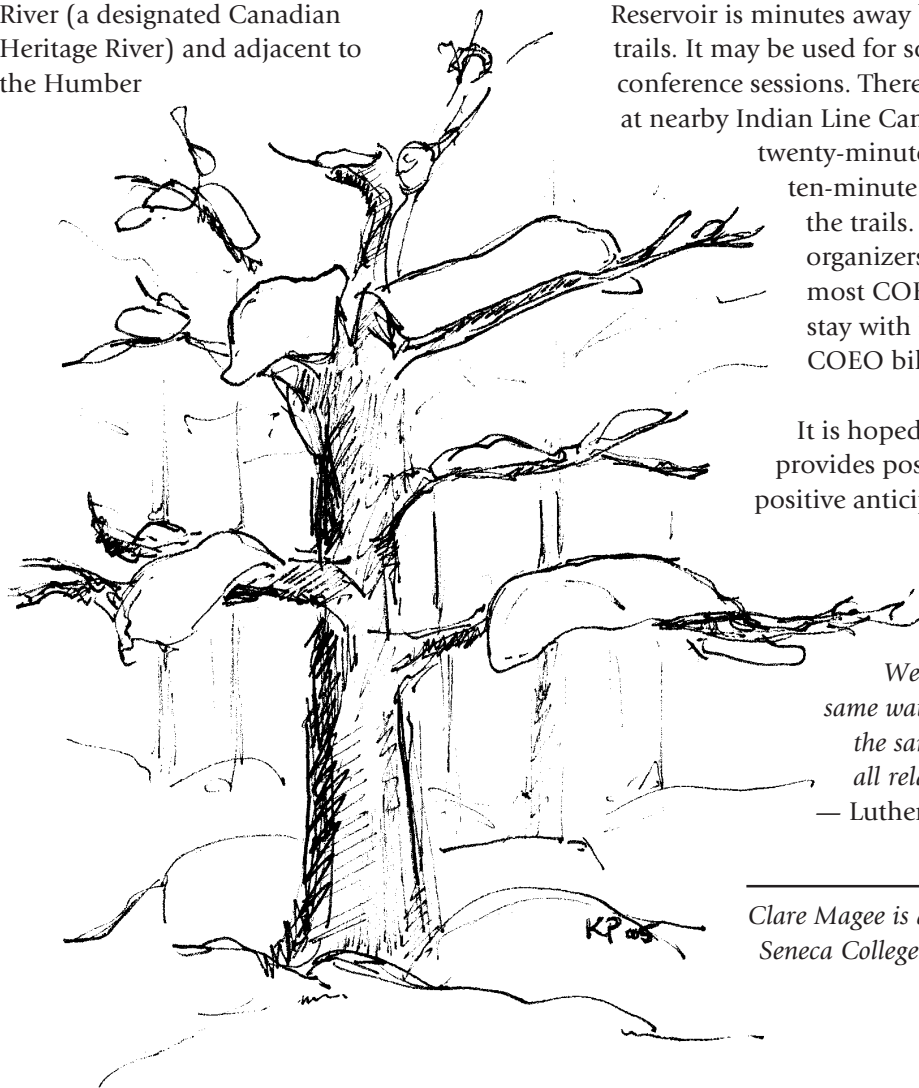
twenty-minute walk or less than ten-minute bike ride away via the trails. Conference organizers, though, expect most COEO attendees to stay with local friends or COEO billets.

It is hoped this outline provides positive context and positive anticipation for the new direction of the 2006 conference.

*We all drink the
same water and breathe
the same air. We are
all related.*

— Luther Standing Bear

Clare Magee is a faculty member at Seneca College.



Sigurd Olson's Lasting Legacy

by Ted Gostomski, Clayton Russell and Pam Troxell

Fifty years ago this past summer marked the completion of two new adventures in the life of Sigurd Olson. He had signed a book deal earlier in the year with Alfred A. Knopf and began writing his first book, *The Singing Wilderness*; and he left to paddle the wild Churchill River in Saskatchewan with his fellow Canadian voyageurs. This trip would later be chronicled in Olson's book, *The Lonely Land*. Both Olson's writing and his adventurous spirit continue to shape our contemporary views on wilderness travel and conservation as well as our ability to imagine, understand and articulate the many intangibles of which Olson spoke—intangibles that many of us today are seeking to enrich our own lives.

In the article that follows we will learn more about Olson's lasting power and contemporary relevance as a writer and we will outline his continued influence on the projects and work of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. As you read this piece and rediscover one of North America's greatest conservationists, or perhaps meet him for the first time, we would also like you to consider the following aspects of Olson's legacy. He was a tireless advocate on behalf of the natural world and for future generations. He traveled constantly to champion all sizes of environmental concerns. He spent hours talking with and writing to young people, encouraging them to aim their dreams high and not to get bogged down in petty squabbles. And he shared with us the secret—that one undeniable truth, proven time and again by great naturalists and outdoor educators:

*When you lose the power of wonder you grow old, no matter how old you are.
When you have the power of wonder, you are forever young. And that is the secret!*

The singing wilderness has to do with the calling of the loons, northern lights, and the great silences of a land lying northwest of Lake Superior. It is concerned with the simple joys, the timelessness and perspective found in a way of life that is close to the past.

These first words in the preface to *The Singing Wilderness* began Sigurd Olson's career as a book writer. He had written numerous articles before this—stories, essays, opinion pieces—but, in *The Singing Wilderness* and the eight books that followed, Sigurd Olson became known to a much wider audience, one that embraced him and his ability to put together the words most anyone else could only struggle to choose. But Sigurd Olson's legacy is more than his words. When Olson died in 1982, he left a legacy of land protected for the enjoyment of millions, whether or not they would ever see it.

Nature writing in the style of Sigurd Olson revolves around four major issues: wilderness travel, wilderness protection, spirituality, and intangible values. A number of authors have written about their experiences within these realms. Richard Nelson, Terry Tempest Williams, Kathleen Dean Moore, and Paul Gruchow are a few of the more contemporary names one can find on the shelf at the local book store. So, in light of the plethora of modern titles that are available, why should a reader or wilderness advocate have any interest in the work of Sigurd Olson? Is it not dated compared to these more modern works? While working at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute in Ashland, Wisconsin, we spent a lot of time talking with people about Sigurd Olson's writing and his legacy, and our experience suggests that his writing is not dated, but in fact is timeless. Discussing his writing, we have seen people become nearly

speechless, exuberant in their praise; some have even broken down and wept. Olson's writing is as powerful and poignant today as it was in his day. But that is our experience. Let's examine some of Olson's thoughts on the four themes and their relevance to today's reader.

Wilderness Travel

Wilderness can be appreciated only by contrast, and solitude understood only when we have been without it. We cannot separate ourselves from society, comradeship, sharing, and love. Unless we can contribute something from wilderness experience, derive some solace or peace to share with others, then the real purpose is defeated.

Listening to today's philosophers and wilderness advocates, you will hear that wilderness is an entirely human concept. Without cities and towns, homes and high rises, there would be no wilderness. It is a word that, with no context, has no meaning. What is wilderness in a time when no place is "untrammelled by man," either by direct contact or through the influence of global climate change? To some, wilderness is only found on a roadless tract of land with a formal designation from the Federal government. For others, it is the unmowed corner of their yard where a single birch or pine tree grows. Moreover, if there is nothing gained from the "wilderness experience," then the wilderness begins to lose its value. If there is no rejuvenation found there, if wilderness becomes just an extension of our busy lives with no relief and no glimpse of our own more primitive past, then what's the point?

Wilderness Protection

A basic ecological truth, which we still ignore, is the interdependence and interaction of all living things, including man.

Though Sigurd Olson's writing may be dated in its use of gender-specific terms (that was the style of the day), the message is the same. Change "man" to "humans" and you still have a "basic ecological truth" that is taught in every high school and college biology class. In fact, Olson did just that.

Sigurd Olson earned a bachelor's degree in 1920 and almost immediately became a high school science teacher in northern Minnesota. In 1932 he earned a master's degree after studying and writing about the predatory behaviour of wolves and coyotes. He went on to become the dean of a junior college in Minnesota, a job he held for 12 years. Olson was more than a naturalist; his education and experience were grounded in the scientific method. Olson's advocacy for wilderness and his work to protect places such as the Quetico-Superior forests of Minnesota and Canada, the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in Wisconsin, Dinosaur National Monument along the Colorado River, and extensive tracts of wild land in Alaska was at least partly based on his scientific training. He understood that the global web of life could not be sustained if large, unbroken landscapes were not there.

The same is true today. We are still fighting to protect the breeding grounds of caribou and musk ox from those who would invade their space to drill for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We only recently learned that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker survived 40 years of intensive logging and is still living in the southern bottomland forests of the Mississippi River. We are challenged now to ensure that those few birds are protected and allowed to increase their numbers, lest we give witness to their demise again.

These are basic ecological truths. The names of places and players may have changed from Olson's days, but the struggle is the same. Olson's writing, and indeed his legacy of wilderness protection and land stewardship,

serve as a reminder of all this, and as a symbol of hope for success.

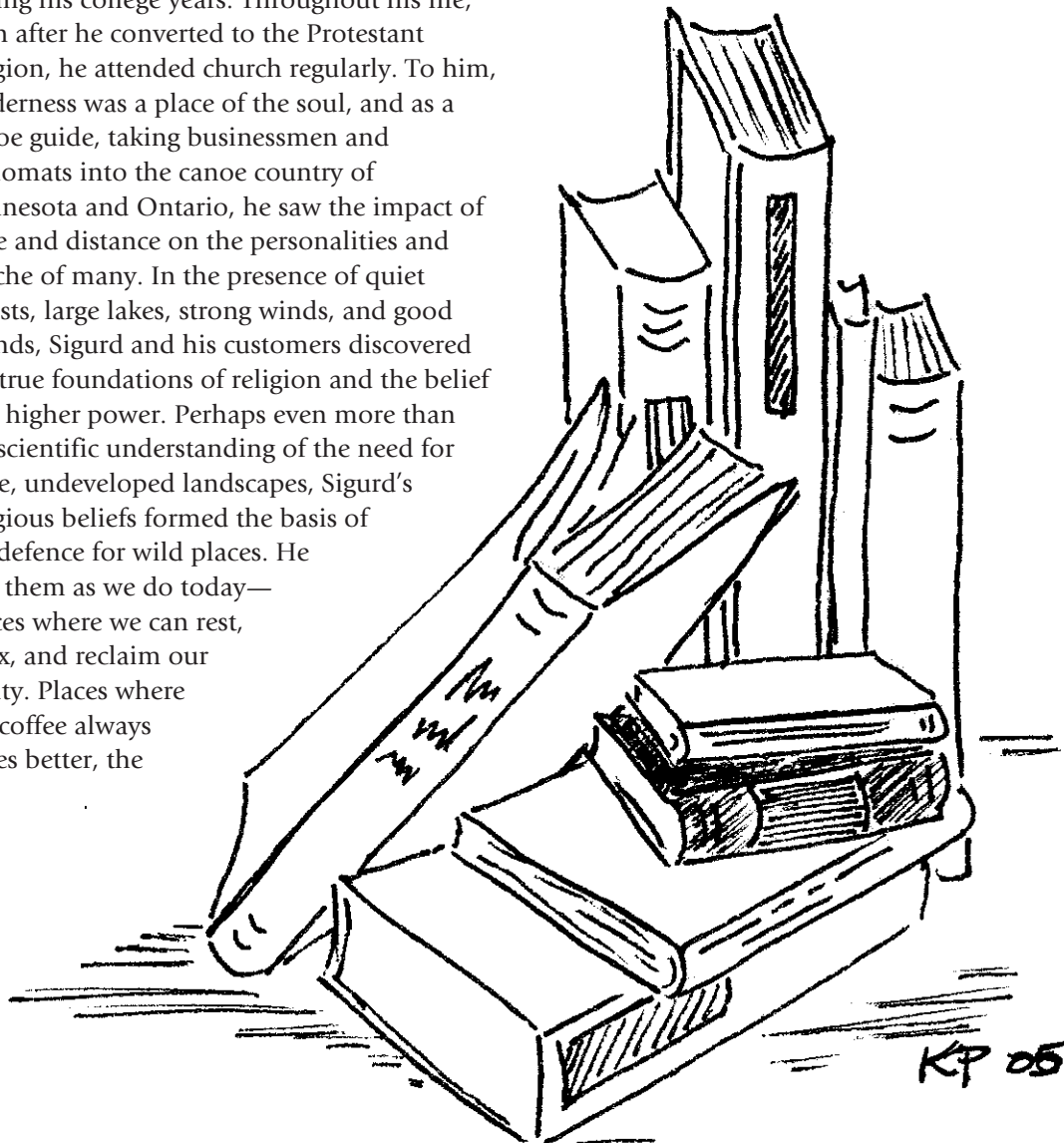
Spirituality

Life in the wilderness can be a continual contemplation and communion with God and Spirit of those values echoing within us all, values born of timelessness, mystery, the great silences, and an ancient way of life.

Sigurd Olson was a religious man. His father was a devout Baptist minister, and Sigurd himself considered becoming a missionary during his college years. Throughout his life, even after he converted to the Protestant religion, he attended church regularly. To him, wilderness was a place of the soul, and as a canoe guide, taking businessmen and diplomats into the canoe country of Minnesota and Ontario, he saw the impact of time and distance on the personalities and psyche of many. In the presence of quiet forests, large lakes, strong winds, and good friends, Sigurd and his customers discovered the true foundations of religion and the belief in a higher power. Perhaps even more than his scientific understanding of the need for large, undeveloped landscapes, Sigurd's religious beliefs formed the basis of his defence for wild places. He saw them as we do today—places where we can rest, relax, and reclaim our sanity. Places where the coffee always tastes better, the

jokes are free-flowing, and the friendships take on a bond that is difficult to create in our more urban settings.

Sigurd Olson also had a great love for history, especially as it related to the fur trade and the great canoemen of the 1600s and 1700s—the *voyageurs*. Sigurd's deep appreciation for the "frontier," and the primitive life-ways of those who came before us showed in much of his writing. We still see that influence in many contemporary writers who follow these historic routes—the Oregon Trail, the journey of Lewis and Clark, and the Corps of



Discovery—and share their experiences through the written word.

Intangible Values

The conservation of waters, forests, mountains, and wildlife are far more than saving terrain. It is the conservation of the human spirit which is the goal, and that is what is meant by the good life, one with the opportunity to find peace and quiet somewhere beyond where they happen to live.

Sigurd's writing about intangible values is closely tied to his religious beliefs in that they are both feelings and experiences that cannot necessarily be quantified or touched, but they are strong and unshakeable just the same. The feelings evoked by the blessed silence that Sigurd experienced on a remote lake were the same as those he felt when snowshoeing along the forest trails behind his house, or upon entering a cathedral in some large city.

This theme, perhaps more than the others, is a common one in contemporary writing. We still look to canoeing, hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing not just as recreational pursuits, but as something more that we cannot always put our finger on.



Sure, we like to see the big buck and catch the wily trout, but there is also something about just being out there. The smell of pines after a rain; the colour of leaves in the fall; the sound of bird song in the early spring, and of rivers, full of melt water, rushing past rocks and logs—all fill us with some incredible sense of joy. These feelings are difficult to capture anywhere else, doing any *thing* else. They are the intangible values that really motivate us to get outside, push off in the canoe and just disappear for a few hours or even for days at a time.

The important thing is to go. GO! And take some Olson with you. *Reflections from the North Country* is perhaps Olson's most philosophical work; *Open Horizons* is his autobiography. *Listening Point* showcases Olson's land ethic as he describes his cabin on Burntside Lake. *The Lonely Land* represents classic adventure literature and *A Wilderness Within* is a powerful and revealing look at Olson and his considerable influence by biographer and University of Wisconsin Professor David Backes.

Web Resources

www.uwm/Dept/JMC/Olson
www.northland.edu/Soei

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Values: “Mountain Track Marks” In Youth Work

by Maria Bartmanska

Note: This article originally appeared in Variety, a Czech Republic publication. It is reprinted here with permission.

Youth work can be compared to going up the mountain—you are going up the slope, the path often crosses with others and sometimes it is so difficult to be made out in the forest that you don't know where it leads. Where to go? The mountain track marks show you the way and lead to the top. In youth work these are values which direct you in a way to achieve the goal—youth well-being.

Values in youth work is an enormously vast topic. Therefore, I chose several of them to reflect on—which may be an introduction for readers to further considerations.

Wise Attractiveness

As young people are looking for interesting and involving ways of spending free time, it is essential—while planning some kind of work with youth—to make it attractive for them: to provide them with a good deal of fun. Certainly, it must be checked out first, what the target group of young people is interested in, what they like etc. to adjust the character of activity to the needs of young people. But it is not only the possibility to have fun which youth workers should provide youngsters with—the core point is that it has to be wise. As one of the goals of working with youth is developing young people, fun apart from entertaining should be the means of teaching, passing on values, broadening horizons etc.

Openness

The goal in youth work is also activating young people—encouraging them to do new things, to cooperate with others, to create ideas etc. Therefore it is needed to motivate

young people to be active, to think of ideas, to create parts of the project which is running with them etc. One of the means to achieve it is being open for young people's ideas, visions of the project, needs etc. It gives young people possibility to participate actively in the project, to feel that what they think is important, and to let them know that their input is desirable and precious. Moreover it is good for youth workers to realize that not only can they teach young people but also young people can teach them. And that's openness which enables it.

Personal Relationship

To work with youth effectively it is important to try to establish a personal relationship based on trust, equal treating, just, honesty and sincerity with them. The acceptance of variety, diversity of young people as well as of the difference of their preferences, interests and likes from youth worker's ones is also vital. Moreover it is helpful—while being a kind of teacher for young people—to try to be a friend for them—not to let them feel psychological barriers in talking to youth worker, not to present ourselves as having upper status because of being people who organize the project, activity etc. Of course, it must not be mistaken with the lack of respect which is essential for both sides—for youth worker as well as for young people. What does a personal relationship give in youth work? It enables effective communication, cooperation and better responding to needs and problems of young people.

To Demand Active Participation or Not?

The above question can be the hard dilemma for youth workers. While working with youth they try to achieve some goals with them. Cooperation demands input from each of engaged partners. In the same time however

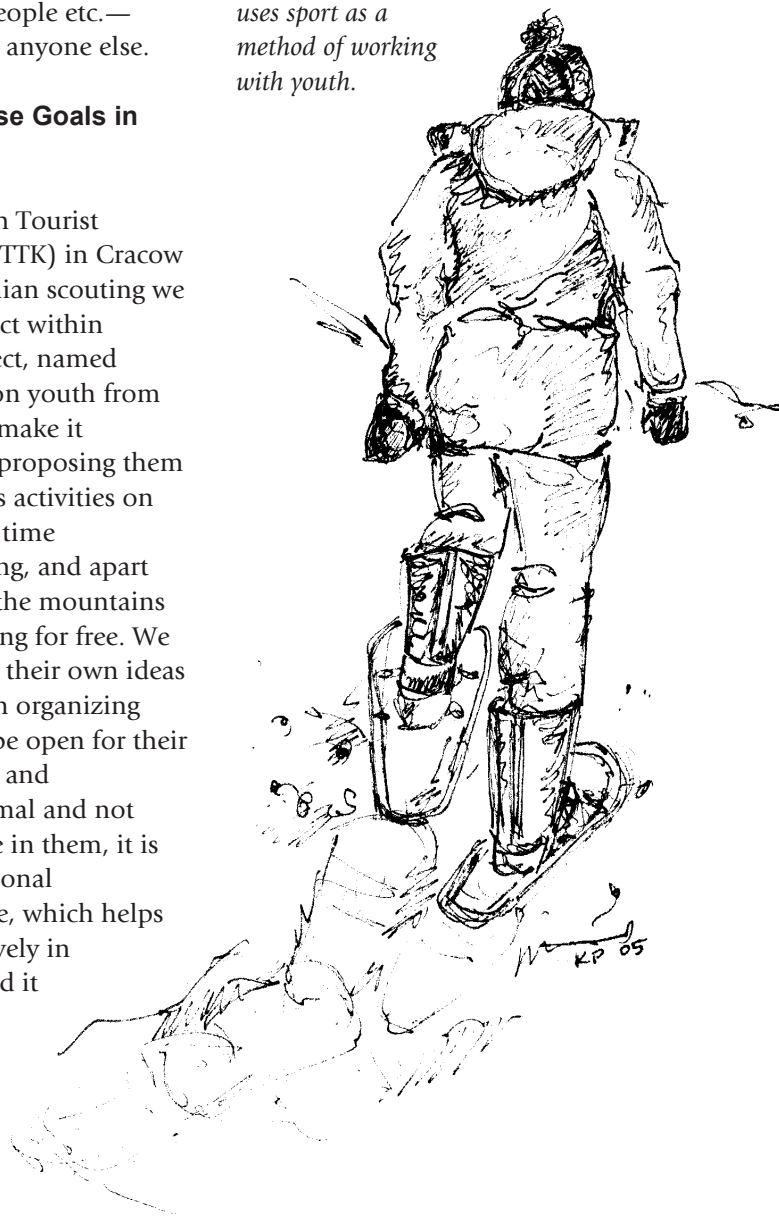
youth worker may create the situation when young people—forced to do something—resign from participation. It probably depends on a particular situation, activity, project and young people engaged in it, if to demand an active participation from them or not. The solution may lie in choosing encouragement to active participation from demanding it. It is the first of them that shows young people that their ideas and active work are important and needed and doesn't make them feel endangered by being forced to do something. What is more, youth workers should remember to demand first from themselves—in terms of preparation for activity, input, openness, motivating young people etc.—before demanding things from anyone else.

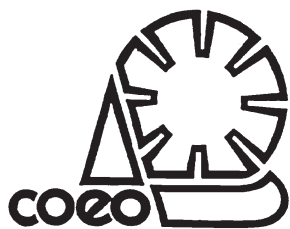
How We Try to Achieve These Goals in Poland

In the Circle no. 7 of the Polish Tourist Country Lovers' Association (PTTK) in Cracow with the partners from Lithuanian scouting we are currently running the project within YOUTH Programme. The project, named Learning By Doing is focused on youth from high schools. We are trying to make it attractive for young people by proposing them weekly workshops with various activities on the topics of tourism, ecology, time management and group working, and apart from them—weekend trips to the mountains and a summer camp—everything for free. We try to motivate them to give us their own ideas for workshops, to participate in organizing trips as well as we're trying to be open for their suggestions. Then, during trips and workshops—as there are informal and not many young people participate in them, it is possible to establish quite personal relationship with young people, which helps engaging youngsters more actively in the project. Finally, as we found it impossible to demand active participation from young people in our project we are encouraging them to do it, by running meetings in high

schools in the beginning of the project, inviting young people to workshops and trips by the internet, creating internet forum and asking for their own ideas in terms of the project.

Maria Bartmanska is a resident of Poland and a member of PTTK, a Polish tourist organization. Together with some friends, Maria organized a project called "Learning by Doing" that targets youths from local high schools. The project includes workshops, trips to the mountains, and an international camp. Maria is also involved in another initiative that uses sport as a method of working with youth.





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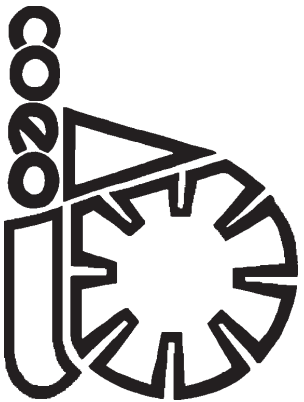
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