



# VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

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THE OPENING OF THE THESSALON SECTION 1978 10 01

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## OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE THESSALON SECTION

Sunday, Oct. 1, 1978 was a very special day for the Thessalon Voyageur Trail Club, marking the official opening of a large section of its walking trail between Rydal Bank and Iron Bridge. The day was made possible by the work of a small group of Thessalon and area workers and the assistance of the Sault Ste. Marie Club in opening up the western reaches of the trail. About 40 people showed up for the official opening featuring a ribbon cutting ceremony by the reeve of Thessalon Township, Donald McKinnon.

The site chosen for the ribbon cutting ceremony was on one of the most interesting and spectacular sections of the trail, located at the Bridgeland River crossing at the Shaw Dam. This dam is one of the most unique in Ontario being a solid masonry structure spanning a narrow defile in the river valley between rugged granite cliffs. It was built in 1931 on the site of an old wooden logging dam established to facilitate driving saw logs down the river almost 100 years ago. The original structure was known locally as the lower MacArthur Dam.

After coffee and doughnuts and the ribbon cutting ceremony, presided over by the president of the Thessalon Club, Jack MacDonald, the group was guided across the dam by the trail captain, Don Fulton, over a section of the trail that terminates at the Shaw Road. This section of the trail leads southward over a rather precipitous cliff overlooking the lake created by the dam. It was used as a water reserve for the old power house at Little Rapids. Seventy-five years ago if one had looked down on the area where the lake now stretches to the west, one would have seen a broad flat sand plain, dotted with pine stumps from which a rich harvest of white pine logs had been recently cut. In the middle of the plain stood a set of log buildings called the Horse Camps, near the river.

The trail to the south winds down from the bluff across a flat area where beaver have created a series of dams on a small stream. This is the area where a young girl became lost in 1880, during the early years of settlement of Kirkwood Township. It was her first and last day at the little log home her father had built in the forest because she succumbed there in spite of the efforts of searchers to rescue her.

Large pine stumps along the trail that have withstood the passage of time for many decades are mute evidence of the magnificent trees that once grew along much of this section of the trail.

The Autumn colours added greatly to the pleasure of traversing this interesting area and the visitors from Sault Ste. Marie, Blind River, and those who attended the official opening from the Thessalon Area all experienced another enjoyable day on a part of the Voyageur Trail.

Editor's Note: While news items are not credited, many readers will recognize the style of the above from other works, such as Shantymen and Sodbusters, by the same author.

## VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION WINTER ACTIVITIES 1978-1979

- Jan. 1 NEW YEAR AWAKENER: A two hour walk (or ski or snowshoe  
2 p.m. hike if snow levels are suitable) to clear away the New  
Mon. Year's after-party grumps and start of 1979 in a happy,  
healthy way.  
MEET: North end of Carpin Beach Road, near 3rd line.  
LEADER: Tom Allinson. Phone: 256-8742.
- Jan. 28 ECHO RIDGES TRAIL: Snowshoes only. This will not be  
1 p.m. suitable for skiing. A 2-3 hour hike and back to the cars  
Sun. by 4 p.m. We hope the local area people will take advantage  
of this Sunday afternoon walk.  
MEET: At junction of Hwy 638 and Lonely Lake Rd. (Rd into  
Tower Lake)  
LEADER: Barry Hansen. Phone: 248-2897
- Feb. 11 MOONLIGHT SNOWSHOE HIKE: Nettleton Lake area. Since this  
6 p.m. is a popular snowmobile trail it may be packed enough to walk  
Sun. without snowshoes. Everyone enjoyed it last year. You'll  
be home early.  
MEET: North end of Goulais Ave., near Camp Korah.  
LEADER: Bert Dearing. Phone: 256-7796.
- Mar. 10 DESBARATS TRAIL: Snowshoe hike. Bring lunch. A chance for  
10 a.m. the Bruce area people to see where the trail goes.  
Sat. MEET: Bruce Mines school at the flashing light-Hwy 17E.  
LEADER: Bill Gunn. Phone: 785-3488.

LATE WINTER: Overnight in the north woods for winter fun in the  
snow. The plan is to go to a resort cabin along the Chapleau  
Highway near the V.T.A. trail. Place, price and practical  
details will be proved out according to the participants.  
Please call before Dec. 31 if you plan to go:

Paul Syme: 254-4791

Deiter Ropke: 253-8375

Rita Bertoli: 253-2726

Eve Kersey: 253-1517

## A NEW TRAILMASTER

Rev. Arnold Megan was appointed Trailmaster at the 1978 Annual General Meeting. Rev. Megan's vast first-hand knowledge of the territory through which the Voyageur Trail will eventually run makes him eminently suited for this position. Our new Deputy Trailmaster is Tom Allinson, a dedicated trail builder from 'way back. We wish to welcome both these people to their new positions. At the same time, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to Ralph Wood for his advice, interest, and dedication as our first Trailmaster. Ralph is taking up new scholastic pursuits in southern Ontario and will remain as our FOHTA representative.