



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION, A MEMBER OF F.O.H.T.A.

BOX 66, SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 5L2

No: 30

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SPRING 1985



" SHALL WE STOP HERE FOR LUNCH ?"
DRIVING LAKE – ECHO RIDGES SECTION

ACTIVE PEOPLE

There are many members who have put in a lot of work, and I hope they won't be too hurt if they aren't mentioned. I'm sure that the Casque Isles club are going to miss that one person whirlwind Heather Jessup McGrath while she is studying in Winnipeg. Lorne Bourke will be the main contact there at this time.

Another whirlwind of activity over the past year has been Delmar Ellis from Sarnia, who has walked more of our trail than many local members. In one day last summer, he hiked from Gros Cap to east of Highway 17 along the Voyageur Trail. He has also reblazed the shorter loop at Whitefish Falls near Espanola. It is unusual to find so enthusiastic a hiker from southern Ontario working on our trail. Delmar has also written to inform us of his ambitious excursion planned for next summer (no formal date yet). He intends to canoe and hike the Rideau Canal/Trail by canoeing a section of the canal and leaving the canoe to hike back for the car before proceeding on. He would be happy to have some company and anyone interested should drop him a line (1521 Colborne Rd., Sarnia Ont., N7V 3M1).

Ian Hamilton is not known to many members, but he has been quietly sorting and plotting up all the landowners on maps so we can now easily determine who owns the property on each section of trail. Does your section of trail have a similar map? If so, Ian would like a copy for the central records (c/o box 66).

Brian Williams and the new Saulteaux executive have done an excellent job in the revitalization of the Saulteaux club.

Mr. John Scott has expressed the intention to hike all of the completed trail around Lake Superior this summer. John welcomes any hikers who would care to join him for a portion of the hike. Please write him at Box 382, Rainy River, Ont., POW 1L0 if you are interested.

NATIONAL TRAIL

Several members of the Voyageur Trail Association have attended Hike Ontario meetings over the past 13 months. There has been enthusiastic discussion about a province long hiking trail which could then become part of a trail stretching from coast to coast across the country. The Voyageur Trail would be part of this route which will usually be on trails in existence wherever possible. There was a general feeling that such a "vision" can come to fruition if the concept of hiking can take on a higher profile in society in general. The vision involves hikers and interested people becoming active in a public support sense. Hiking needs to get into the media. The point was made that money is available to support such causes if public support is there.

The concept of a national hiking trail was discussed recently in an issue of 'Hiking'. Of particular interest was the idea of a national relay hike.

It should be mentioned that the concept of a national trail is only in the discussion stages now. Landowners have not yet been approached and no trail has been built except where clubs and parks have constructed their own. A National Trail group has been formed.

If you wish to become involved in such a trail, or if you wish to present an opinion, Brian Williams is one of the Hike Ontario (formerly FOHTA) representatives in our club. In addition, we are represented by Paul Syme in the National Trail group. Drop one of them a line through the club.

SOME COMMENTS ON USE AND OVERUSE OF THE TRAIL

Jack Smit has made some observations that are interesting in view of recent information that suggests that parts of some trails in the province are being

overused. He states "It was raining heavily and the sky was dark. After a rainy summer, wet bush overgrew the trail. It was very difficult to follow. Then I came to a spot where we had worked in the spring. Five foot ferns were growing in the middle of the trail." Perhaps our trail is getting overuse from plants.

Jack made the point that local clubs have to mark trails well or the result can be disastrous for inexperienced hikers. He also states that once a trail is established, it needs many person trips to keep it clear. Can outdoor events somehow be more focussed on the trail in areas where the trail exists? Also, can the idea of the trail as a wilderness adventure be better sold to visitors? It is also possible that with a little more effort, more sections will be completed and the trail will become more useable and used.

NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome is extended to the following new members (phone numbers are listed for the benefit of local clubs):

ASSOCIATION

- 886 Sheila Beckerton, Sault Ste. Marie
- 887 Ross McLean, Guelph
- 888 John & Joy Wood, Thunder Bay
- 891 Kurt Ramig, New York State
- 894 Ralph Booth, Toronto
- 899 Craege Mcquarrie
- 1001 Jean Cooley
- 1002 John and Jill Leslie
- 1003 John A. Scott

BIKONG CLUB

- 892 Kaye Menard (356-7198)
- 893 Henry Provencher(356-7816)

SAULTEAUX CLUB

- 881 Alan & Helen Ballak (942-6620)
- 882 Gisela Nolte (254-2849)
- 883 Bruce Cranston (253-8122)
- 884 Charles Walker (759-6151)
- 885 Mrs. Rita & Paul Adams (254-2068)
- 890 Brian Coulas (256-5182)
- 895 Fran Aspinall (254-5839)
- 897 Alan Comfort (949-1522)

CHANGES

Marcel Gingras is now living in Chilliwack, B.C. Ron Lee Kam has moved to St. James St. in Thunder Bay. Rita Bertoli now lives on Caesar Road in the Sault (949-9277). Anne O'Connor has moved to Mark St. in the Sault. Paul Chapman now resides on McNabb St. in the Sault. Jack and Virve Squire were missed on the last membership list and are at 942-2370. Steve Dominy can now be contacted through 253-7541.

HAVE YOU HUGGED A TREE RECENTLY

I must confess that up until recently, I was a downhill skier, but after my ten year old downhill son returned from a school outing and said he quite enjoyed cross country skiing, I thought it must be time to discover for myself the joys of this form of exercise. Circular tours of Kinsmen Park didn't appeal to me, so I thought that the best way to start was to join the March 2 VTA outing led by our own expert Tom Allinson. He assured me that as a downhill skier, I should have no problem.

It was a beautiful sunny day, obviously a good day for bushwhacking on the icy snow in the Gros Cap area. Tom is an avid bushwhacker because as he puts it, "skiing isn't quite the same unless I'm a bit lost".

Soon after setting off, I learned how to fall over backwards onto my pack-sack (on the icy road before putting skis on). We then spent half an hour getting a pickup truck out of a snow-bank. It was neatly parked at right angles to the road with front and back ends both firmly stuck in the snow. The rescue mission went splendidly until the driver started to back the truck down the hill and it slid until the frozen snow-banks caught the drivers open door, practically tearing it from its hinges.

We were then away and skiing. The first and most important lesson to learn is how to stop. I am most indebted to the group for their excellent and frequent demonstrations of the various techniques used when your skis don't have steel edges. Brian Williams illustrated the art of going down onto bended knees. This is tricky to perfect as you should land facing east towards Mecca. Steve Taylor ably showed us the forward fully prone fall stop. I found this to be somewhat beyond my rather limited capabilities. Tom Allinson seemed to prefer the sitting down sideways technique which is sometimes accompanied by bending a ski pole. My favourite methods were artfully demonstrated by Donna Kidd (sitting down on your backside or hugging a tree). I was able to get lots of practice and became quite experienced at these techniques.

My initial fears about being left kilometers in the rear proved to be totally unfounded. The experts were too busy demonstrating these stopping methods. It is also difficult to go fast when one is winding off the beaten track past all of those gorgeous maples that seem to be begging to be given a loving hug.

We did, on a few occasions, ski along the Voyageur Trail which was recognizable by the knee-high blazes. We also stopped to admire Tom's direction signs at the three way junction of the trail to Gros Cap, Red Rock, and Iron Bridge. Remarkably, these were not embellished with bullet holes. We saw some birds, squirrels, animal tracks (possibly skunk)

and the inevitable wooden hut and lunch time sitting log. The last two were cues for picture takers. We also made frequent closeup inspections of tree bark and crusty snow.

I recommend giving cross-country skiing with the Voyageur Trail group a try next winter. You will see some beautiful countryside in its winter state, made more memorable by the company of fellow VTA members. You will probably be given ample opportunity to hug some trees.

Patrick Capper



EDITOR'S NOTE

Information to be published in the fall newsletter should reach me by September 10 at the latest. The VTA Newsletter is there to provide information received that is of potential interest to hikers. It is only as good as the information received. More material from more writers adds diversity

to the paper and is always welcome. If you have a trail tale or anything that may be of interest to other members, don't be shy. Pass it on for consideration in your newsletter.

GIVE THE GIFT OF HIKING

We have recently had general greeting cards prepared with the Thunderbird logo on the front. Should any member like to give a gift membership to a friend, we would be happy to send a card with your greeting handwritten inside.

PARTIES

Anyone wishing to volunteer for a work party this summer should contact a representative from the nearest club, or drop a line in the association mailbox and you can be pointed in the right direction. In the Sault area, Paul Syme will be working on a schedule and can be contacted at 254-4791.

\$\$\$ FINANCIAL NEWS \$\$\$

Our March bank balance has ranged from a high of \$2,036.16 in 1977 to a low of \$554.00 this year (nine year average of \$1,259), despite funding from Hike Ontario for printing "Outlook". The cost of stationery and stamps for our newsletter continued to be a significant expense. Other major expenditures were \$143 for a new supply of VTA crests, \$524 for VTA pins, \$400 for a bronze plaque to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Saulteaux Section in September of this year, \$111 for the acquisition of Gestetner equipment to print our newsletter, and \$247 for revision and printing of the VTA brochure (the supply of old ones became exhausted). The Hike Ontario contribution, for which we are grateful, amounted to \$240.

If we are to retain reserves sufficient to finance eventual reprinting of the guidebook and for other objectives, we will have to show restraint for 1985. DONATIONS TO THE VTA ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED and a receipt for income tax purposes will be sent promptly.

Dieter Ropke

LEAFLETS THREE AND BERRIES WHITE, LET THEM BE AND TAKE FLIGHT

Poison ivy (*Rhus radicans* L.) is a plant that all hikers should be able to recognize. Along the Voyageur Trail, I have seen it adjacent to a side trail at Gros Cap and near the trail in the Thessalon area. Hikers may see this plant typically under partial shade in somewhat sandy areas or on gravel. It occurs in a wide range of moisture conditions. You are less likely to find it further north, particularly from Wawa to Nipigon, but on the other hand, it is quite common just east of the Sault. Carpets of poison ivy can be found on St Joseph Island.

Spreading by seeds and sucker shoots, poison ivy is a woody perennial which grows as an upright plant to about knee height in our region. In southern Ontario, it is present sometimes in another form which can form extensive vines reaching into the tops of trees.

Leaves are alternate, consisting of three stalked leaflets, sometimes with wavy or toothed margins. In the spring and early summer, the young leaflets are limp and reddish or bronzy, but later they turn green and occasionally glossy. The top side is hairless. In the fall, they turn a variety of colours and are tempting to the unwary for leaf arrangements. In late spring, clusters of small yellowish flowers develop, usually at the base of the petiole of the lowest leaf.

The hard berry-like fruits form in late summer. They are green at first, but eventually they turn white and are useful for diagnosing the plant at this time.

Common plants along the Voyageur Trail which can be confused with poison ivy include wild strawberries, raspberries, and dewberries. These plants usually have smaller, often hairy leaves and hairy or prickly stems and single flowers. Young sarsaparillas resemble poison ivy but the leaves (actually, compound leaflets) all arise from the same point. These leaflets divide into five parts when the plant is mature instead of three. Trilliums also have the foliage divided into three parts, but the plant really looks nothing like poison ivy.

The poison ivy rash is caused by contact with an oil present in the plant. Infection may occur in any season, even with contact with woody stems in the winter. The greatest number of infections occur in the spring when the leaves are tender and oil is secreted easily. Fall infections are also common. Poison ivy infection can also be obtained from handling clothes and pets which have been in contact with the plant and have picked up some of the oil. Poison ivy should never be burned as oil vapour in the smoke can cause severe infection.

The first symptoms of infection usually take the form of reddening of the skin accompanied by a slight itch. This can appear anywhere from a few hours to several days after contact with the plant (usually a day or two). Itching increases and watery blisters appear which may burst and become irritating oozing sores, which dry and form scabs. A severe attack can upset general health. Whether or not you get poison ivy on contact with the plant depends on several factors including degree of contact with the plant and time of year. Sensitivity varies from person to person and from time to time for a given person. Just

because you touched the plant once and didn't get infected doesn't mean you won't get it in the future.

If you find yourself in poison ivy, washing yourself repeatedly with soap and water will reduce the chance of infection. Clothing which may contain oil should be thoroughly washed repeatedly or discarded. If infection does occur, a doctor should be consulted. Don't scratch and don't apply oily ointments or liniments to the infected area. Cool baths containing epsom salts may relieve itching. Apparently, applications of Potassium permanganate or Aluminum acetate has been recommended in recent years. Some people swear by the juice from the spotted touch-me-not (also called jewelweed), which is common in seepage areas throughout most of Ontario. Again, it is best to consult with your doctor though.

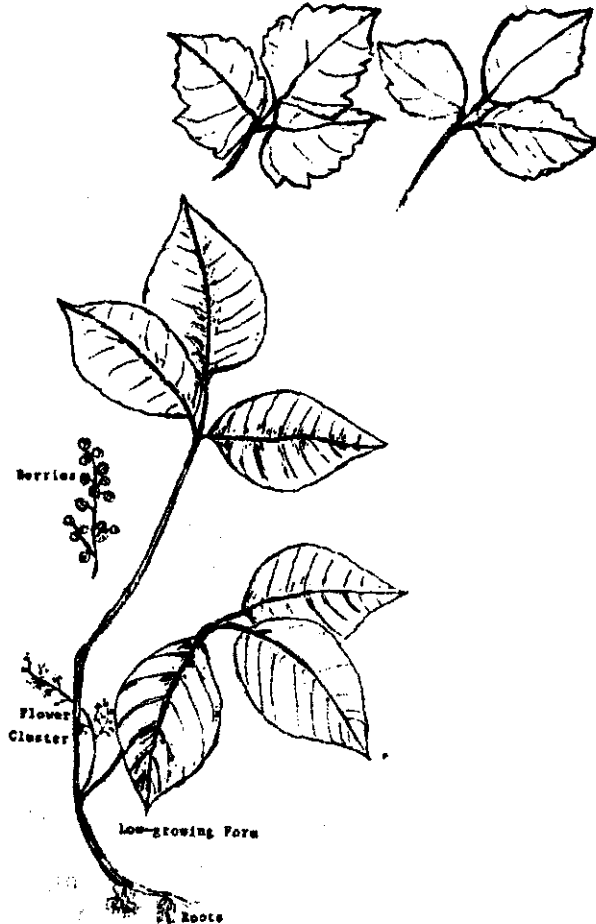
I'm not sure whether to believe some of the things I've been told or have read about poison ivy. For example, one naturalist told me that since poison ivy creates a dermal condition, as long as you don't touch the plant to your hands or lips, you can eat it. If anyone wants to try eating some, I'd be interested in hearing the results, but you won't catch me trying poison ivy salad. I've read that zinc is supposed to provide a defence against poison ivy. Thirty milligrams a day is supposed to prevent infection on contact. Buttermilk and clay mud-packs have been suggested for relief from itching. Some of the cures sound worse than the infection.

Poison ivy is not all bad. The pollen is used by a number of insects. Bees can even make a tasty honey from this pollen. Berries are eaten by many species of birds and the leaves provide food and shelter for many species of animals. The plant provides cover and roots anchor the soil in some disturbed areas, thus preventing erosion.

The first prevention for poison ivy is to learn to recognize it and then to stay away from it. If you do see it, point it out so that others may learn to recognize it. Also, warn people of its presence if you expect them to be in the area.

Steve Taylor

Note-The picture and some of the text came from the Fall 1984 edition of the Rideau Trail Newsletter and were compiled by Moira Drummond.



Poison Ivy and Leaf Variations

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

There are still quite a few members who have not renewed for 1985. If you are in this category, please note that this is the last newsletter that you will be receiving. We hope that you will consider renewing with us.

GO TO BLAZES DAY

The annual Go To Blazes Day is on May 11 this year. Each club is responsible for organizing its own activity. Let's push for a good turn out through the association to clean the winter damage off of the trail and get things in shape for the 1985 hiking season. Last year, the Casque-Isles Club outdid everybody. Let's hope that other clubs can take this as a challenge this year.

1985 HIKE SCHEDULE

SAULTEAUX CLUB TRIPS

Please note that members from all of the VTA clubs and the general public are welcome on any of these trips. Also note that all trips are lead by unpaid volunteers who are not responsible for accidents, etcc. should they occur. Most hikes cover some rough terrain (rocky, hilly, or wet ground). Weather conditions can change very quickly, even in the summer, and weather conditions in town are often different than those out of town. It is up to each individual to be prepared. Bug repellent is recommended for late spring and summer hikes. If you are unsure of what to bring, drop the association a line. For more details on most trips, contact Tom Allinson at 256-8742.

April 28-Hike along the trail in the Airport Road, Goulais Avenue area. Meet in the Stedmans Plaza parking lot on Second Line W. beside the gas bar at 10:00 A.M. sharp.

May 20-Monday (Victoria Day). Start the day with a trek before your family feast. Meet at 10.00 A.M. beside the gas bar in the K-Mart plaza parking lot, Great Northern Road. Hike will be in the Kinsmen Park-Mabel Lake area. If the group is ambitious, we could make this one about 20 km return.

June 15-Outing to Pancake Provincial Park. We plan to do a beach walk and hike the nature trail. This should be a relatively easy day of walking (6

km). Bug dope probably essential. Meet at 9.00 A.M. beside the gas bar in the K-Mart plaza parking lot, Great Northern Road.

June 28 to July 1-Long weekend trip to Pictured Rocks in Michigan. Drive to Munising Friday evening and camp in commercial campgrounds. Saturday, jockey cars and then hike from Little Beaver Lake to Chapel Beach (appr. 9 km). Sunday, hike from Chapel Beach to Mosquito Bay (8 km). Monday, hike to Miners Beach (5 km), sightsee Miners castle, pick up cars and drive home, viewing log slide and sand dunes along the way. Hikers will get to see the south shore of Lake Superior which is less rugged than the north shore but, none-the-less, has a beauty of its own. Coloured sandstone formations are a feature of the Pictured Rocks area, including Miner's Castle. We will see Twelve Mile Beach which is an unbroken sand and pebble beach.

We have to know who intends to go quite early as permits are required. Also, there is a limit of 20 people allowed on group campsites. Please let Tom Allinson know by mid-June if you wish to go (705-256-8742).

July 13-Hike Two Horse Lake to Coffee Creek Falls. Ambitious hikers can climb the scenic lookout sidetrail at the falls. Meet at 9:00 A.M. beside the gas bar at Churchill Plaza, Trunk Road.

July 27-Hike Orphan Lake Trail in Superior Provincial Park. Stop for wiener roast and swim at Batchewana Bay on the way back to the Sault. Meet at 9:00 A.M. beside gas bar at K-Mart plaza. Michipicoten Club members may be interested in this one too.

Aug 17-Clubs east of Sault Ste Marie take note. Hike Saturday in Shaw Dam area north of Thessalon. Eat and swim in Thessalon Park. Meet at 9:00 A.M. beside the gas bar at Churchill Plaza.

Labour Day Weekend-Anyone interested in a canoe trip, please contact Steve Taylor at 253-7541. Will likely canoe east of Sault, but details are not yet finalized.

Sept. 28-29-Fall colours camping at Stokely. We plan to hike a 20 km. loop and camp overnight. Call by Sept 25 for details on transportation, etc. Contact Brian Williams or one of the Steves at 253-7541.

There will be a few more fall trips. Ontario Hiking day is October 6.

OTHER CLUBS



TREKKING IN EUROPE

A delightful brochure outlining hiking trips in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal (including some cycling trips) can be obtained by writing to Hiking International Ltd., 7 Blue Boar Street, Oxford OX1 4EN, England.

CHECK YOUR ADDRESS

We have recently computerized our mailing list. In the process of typing it into the computer, it is likely that some mistakes were made. If we have made a mistake with your name and address, please let the membership secretary (Steve Dominy) know.