



# 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. 40

EDITOR: GUY K. M. SMITH

FALL 1988



HIKING IN HARMONY  
FRIENDSHIP AND TEAMWORK

**On This Issue's Cover...**

People helping people, in the spirit of cooperation -- the easy way to cross the Baldhead River (Orphan Lake Trail, Lake Superior Provincial Park). The image also reminds us of the tradition of volunteer work, essential to the operation of the Voyageur Trail Association. Please consider how you might strengthen your VTA Club through devoting your time and talents.

**1988 VTA EXECUTIVE**

President	-Peter Stinnissen
1st Vice President	-Vacant
2nd Vice President	-Paul Syme
Treasurer	-Dieter Ropke
General Secretary	-Kristine Stinnissen
Membership Secretary	-Patrick Capper
Newsletter Editor	-Guy Smith

**UPCOMING TRIPS****Saulteaux Club**

Saturday October 29 Hike Shaw Dam to Chapleau Highway. Approximately 8 km. Moderate. Meet 8:00 am at the Churchill Plaza\* near the gas bar. Bring a lunch and wear appropriate clothing and boots.

Saturday November 19 Hike a section of the North Country Trail in Michigan. The terrain is relatively flat. The trail is overgrown in places which makes for interesting hiking. Distance 10 km. Meet at Bank of Commerce at Huron and Albert, near the

international bridge, at 9:00 am. Bring a lunch.

Saturday December 10 Hike Walls Lake road to Airport Road extension. About 9 km. Moderate. Meet at Market Mall by the gas bar at 10:00 am. Bring a lunch.

**1989**

January 14 Ski Gros Cap area. Meet at the Market Mall by the gas bar at 10:00 am. About 8 km. Bring a lunch.

February 4 Ski outing, Bellevue Trestle area. If weather is suitable, we will ski over a series of lakes and return via Legge Lake Road. About 9 km. meet at the K-Mart Plaza by the gas bar at 9:00 am. Bring a lunch.

March 4 Bushwack on skis (or snowshoes) the Nettleton Lake area. About 10 km. Meet at the Market Mall by the gas bar at 10:00 am. Bring lunch.

\*Churchill Plaza- Trunk Road just east of the Trunk Road-Wellington Street intersection.

Market Mall- Second Line west at Farewell Terrace

K-Mart Plaza- Great Northern Road and Northern Avenue, north-west corner

**\*\*\*Please Note\*\*\***

All hike leaders are unpaid volunteers. Participants do so at their own risk. You should bring a change of clothing and spare socks for winter trips.

Car pools are formed at the meeting place. If you don't have a vehicle, don't worry, you can travel with someone else.

**DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE TRIPS TO ADVERTISE IN THE NEWSLETTER?** Send your information to Guy Smith, Editor, by December 30, 1988.

### TRIP REPORT

#### **Michipicoten Club**

This club, located in Wawa, had an active hiking year with a full slate of summer hikes. Most hikes were well-attended, ranging from 4 to 12 hikers per outing. The trails included a variety of terrain and difficulty from Wawa to areas east and south.

The highlight of the season was the overnight backpacking trip on the Lake Superior Provincial Park Coastal Trail. Four members hiked the 8 kilometres, from Gargantua Harbour to Rhyolite Cove in half a day, taking much time to relax at the scenic lookouts along the way and to explore the ignimbrite rock formations\* near our campsite at Rhyolite Cove. Mishibishu, the great Indian God of Lake Superior, cooperated by sprinkling us with some cooling sunshowers which doubled as a perfect backdrop for the mandatory sunset photograph.

This first backpacking trip left us with some fond memories: Dorothy's home-grown vegetables, Louisa's packsnack, Bob's pop can excursion below the cliffs, and Pete's steps.

The Michipicoten Club participated in a number of non-hiking ventures. We were once again able to sponsor the publishing of 30,000 copies of the Lake Superior Provincial Park tabloid newspaper and hope to gain some new members through this project.

Our "on-again, off-again" boat trip to Michipicoten Island for a weekend of leisure did not go off, but everyone was so excited at the

prospect of a weekend on the island that we certainly will resurrect the idea again in 1989.

As well, our planned sponsorship of a Community Wildlife Involvement Program project to transfer 15 woodland caribou from Terrace Bay to the Gargantua Harbour area in Lake Superior Park, was postponed until 1989 by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

With the arrival of fall in Wawa, it is time to wind-down from our hectic summer pace. Some of our members will be travelling. Agnes and Max Ostermeier are visiting Switzerland, Austria and Germany, while others are taking time off for some healing - good luck Phil Egan. The rest of us, whether we are recently retired, such as Pete O. and Eddie K. - or returning to our normal routines, we are already looking forward to next year's promises.

If anyone is interested in participating in our events when up our way, please keep an eye on this newsletter, or contact Dorothy at (705) 856-2226 or Pete at (705) 856-4270.

-Pete Stinnissen

\*Editor's note: Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines "ignimbrite" as: a hard rock formed by solidification of chiefly fine deposits of volcanic ash.

#### **Saulteaux Club**

The spring hiking season got underway in the Saulteaux Club on April 16. A group of about 17 hikers enjoyed sunshine as Tom Allinson led them down a ravine to a picturesque and secluded rocky bay for lunch. Marshmallows were either eaten or burnt over a fire. The trip then proceeded up past a lovely set of water cascades.

On May 7 of this year, the Saulteaux Club combined with the Sault Ste Marie and Region Conservation Authority to give a hike in the Crystal Creek area. The Saulteaux Club provided the leader, Steve Taylor, and the Conservation Authority provided the hotdogs and drinks afterwards. The day was sunny and pleasant, and a large turnout of about 30 people came out to check the progress of spring. The people were from almost all age categories, and many youngsters were present to liven the proceedings. Hikers assembled at the Sugar Shack and then marched out by Mockingbird Hill farm, where we were briefly fenced in while trying to head east. Fortunately, the horses were in the next field. After we escaped from the farm, we headed east and downhill and came to Crystal Creek Falls from the blue blazed side trail of the Voyageur Trail. The climb uphill to the Sugar Shack made everyone appreciate the refreshments at the end.

The next day, 12 hikers headed into the Echo Ridges Section for lunch with the herons. The maple woods at this time of year are bug free and beautiful. The warm sunlight provides the energy for the spring floral display of Trout Lilies, Spring Beauties, Trilliums, Goldthread, False Solomon's Seal, Yellow Clintonia, Violets, and other visual treats. This trip was a bit more ambitious than that of the day before, but all were up to the challenge. Several stops by the lakes along the way made the trip from Wilson Lake to One Horse Lake easier. We dined near a heron rookery, but stayed far enough away so as not to disturb the Great Blue Herons more than the ravens were. We were thoroughly entertained by the antics of these ungainly birds as they sat near their nests in the top of trees and lashed out at the

pesky ravens. Their vocalizations sounded like monkeys.

The summer of 1988 was not easy for hiking because of the extreme heat which occurred. The heat took care of the bugs, but it made aquatic events much more enticing. Forest fires were evident on one trip. We couldn't light fires because of the fire ban, but then, we could have heated food on the rocks on some days. Nonetheless, several trips did take place. The July evening hike at Gros Cap was well attended with good weather, but the Saturday hike in mid-July did not take place because of community day and hot humid thundery weather.

-Steve Taylor

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* THIS SPACE COULD BE YOUR'S \*  
 \* FREE OF CHARGE, FOR REPORTING ON\*  
 \* YOUR CLUB'S OUTINGS \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Just send in your report to "Guy Smith, Editor, VTA Newsletter, Box 66, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, P6A 5L2" Deadline, December 30, 1988.

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"THE V.T.A. NEEDS YOU!" - Sounds like a slogan for an army recruitment campaign? Well, actually, it is -- for the Voyageur Trail army of volunteers. We need your energies to help run the Voyageur Trail Association. Here's who we are looking for:

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

Age -no limit  
 Sex -no barrier  
 Interests -the great outdoors

Special skills -none required, although enthusiasm

and a sense of humour  
are an asset

**Training** -on the job and at your  
own pace

**JOB SPECIFICATIONS:**

**Hours of Work**

-no limit and dependant on desire  
of successful applicant

**Starting Wage**

-free coffees at Steve Taylor's  
place

**Duties**

-to help make the Voyageur Trail  
the longest continuous trail in  
Ontario

**Positions Available**

-club representatives,  
administrative trainees, publicity  
boosters and a volunteer  
appreciation coordinator

Leave your mark on this planet  
-- sign up as a volunteer. For  
more information ask your club  
president or call me in Wawa at  
(705) 856-4270, evenings.

Have a good Fall season.

-Pete Stinnissen  
VTA President

**NOTICES TO SAULTEAUX CLUB MEMBERS**

Would all Saulteaux Club  
members (and former members) who  
have in their possession any VTA  
tools, excluding paint kits, but  
including any hand pruners  
associated with the paint kits,  
PLEASE return them as soon as  
possible to Paul Syme, either at:  
49 Huntington Park, Sault Ste.  
Marie, 942-9606, or, at the Great  
Lakes Forestry Centre, 1219 Queen  
Street, Sault Ste. Marie, where I  
work.

We are re-cataloguing all  
tools and need them for this

purpose. If you are maintaining a  
section of trail and are using  
tools for that, let us know when  
you return them, and we will return  
the tool(s) to you, sharpened and  
tuned-up.

Also, I wish to obtain some  
1-litre or 1-quart paint cans,  
reasonably clean, for dispensing  
paint to people who are maintaining  
sections of trail.

I am pleased at the response  
to my earlier request for gallon  
pails and wish to express my  
appreciation to those who  
contributed.

The need for the smaller cans  
is rather desperate. If you have  
any (they can have dried paint on  
the sides or bottom; they don't  
have to be immaculate!), would you  
please call Paul Syme at: 942-9606,  
or deliver them to my house at: 49  
Huntington Park, Sault Ste. Marie,  
or at my place of work, the Great  
Lakes Forestry Centre.

Thank you for your anticipated  
cooperation and assistance.

-Paul Syme  
Trailmaster

**FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK**

We have recently exhausted our  
first batch of lapel pins and we  
have now received a new supply from  
a different manufacturer. The new  
pins are of better quality and not  
so likely to fail. The stud is  
stronger and reinforced at the  
point of attachment. We think you  
will enjoy these superior pins.

-Dieter Ropke  
Treasurer

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* **"HIKE FOR THE HEALTH OF IT"** \*  
 \* **The Third Ontario Hiking** \*  
 \* **Conference** \*  
 \* **May 19 to 22, 1989** \*  
 \* **University of Western Ontario,** \*  
 \* **London, Ontario** \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

If you would like to get involved,  
 contact a member of the VTA  
 Executive, or the following  
 conference organizer:

M. Davidson  
 1483 Roland Crescent  
 London, Ontario  
 N5Y 1E6  
 (519) 660-0942

#### TRAIL MIX

-The Conservation Council of  
 Ontario announces the new edition  
 of "The Woodsman's Code". The  
 pamphlet has been rewritten and  
 reprinted in a format which should  
 be easier to read. It provides a  
 brief summary of sensible outdoor  
 behaviour that can minimize  
 degradation of our natural areas.  
 Copies are available free of  
 charge, as long as copies last,  
 from:

The Conservaion Council of  
 Ontario  
 Suite 202, 74 Victoria Street  
 Toronto, Ontario  
 M5C 2A5  
 (416) 362-2218

-Did you know? -that of all the  
 major hiking trails in Ontario,  
 the Voyageur Trail has the  
 greatest amount of trail along the  
 top of beaver dams. Also, the  
 Voyageur Trail has more of its  
 length beside the Great Lakes than  
 does any other trail in the  
 province. Lastly, can you guess  
 which trail has the greatest  
 percent of its length further than  
 2 km from road access points?

(Major hiking trails are those  
 maintained by Hike Ontario clubs).

Thanks to Steve Taylor, our  
 resident trivia expert, for these  
 interesting facts.

-An article in "The Sault Star",  
 dated July 27, 1988, reported on a  
 case won by environmentalists in  
 Vancouver. A B.C. Supreme Court  
 judge ruled that environmentalists  
 could build a trail in the  
 Carmanah Creek Valley on Vancouver  
 Island's west coast. The area is  
 Crown Land, and contains stands of  
 huge old-growth Sitka Spruce,  
 including the "Carmanah Giant",  
 reportedly Canada's tallest tree,  
 at 95 metres in height. The land  
 is also the site of Tree Farm  
 Licence No. 44, held by the  
 logging giant, MacMillan Bloedel.  
 The company lost its bid for an  
 injunction against trail building  
 in the valley. The Carmanah Creek  
 Valley is adjacent to Pacific Rim  
 National Park.

-The Government of Ontario  
 encourages your input into the  
 Lake Superior Provincial Park  
 Master Plan Review. Your input on  
 the Park's goals, objectives,  
 policies, and development  
 proposals, will ensure that the  
 views of interested park users are  
 considered in the planning  
 process. A public tabloid that  
 outlines phase 1 of the 4-phase  
 plan is available for \$2.00 from:

-Lake Superior Provincial Park  
 Offices and Gatehouses

-Ministry of Natural Resources  
 Wawa District Office  
 Box 1160  
 Wawa, Ontario  
 POS 1K0

AMUSING ANTICS AND QUOTEABLE QUOTES

Isn't it true that outings on the trail can spur curious antics and amusing, even profound remarks? Here is your opportunity to share such flashes of latent brilliance with VTA members. Submit your accounts of interesting things that your friends have said and done while hiking on the Voyageur Trail. (Please use your discretion, and remember, the Editor will screen all submissions). Yes, the trail can be the birthplace of ideas. We might not change the world, but we may have some fun and generate some innovative thinking.

Starting this column are some quoteable quotes, as recounted by Steve Taylor:

- In blistering heat and swarming deerflies on the July 1 backpacking trip: "look at all of these flies and I'm not even dead yet!"
- While looking at pond life and plant life on the September 24 Hike: "nature is great but it feels awful sometimes."
- While compassing through the bush on the July 1 backpacking trip: "I don't think we're lost but the rest of the world is."
- On the backpacking trip, as we all listened to the whip-poor-will at dusk: "how nice, a whip-poor-will!"
- On the backpacking trip at 4:00 in the morning, as we listened to the whip-poor-will that had been singing since dusk: "can we shoot these things?"
- On a hike close to the Sault on May 15: "when you hike near steel plants are there more ironwoods?"

Do you remember making any of these quotes? Remember, when you hike with the Voyageur Trail Association, you could be on Candid Camera.

JACK SHIT BLAZES TRAIL

This summer on the July 1st weekend we completed the last link of a trail linking Highway 108 and the trail leading to the McGivern Township line. This is a point to point straight line distance of roughly 25 km. This section of the trail is without road access except for the two ends. A group of hikers then walked from one end to the other. This was the culmination of five years exploration and work. Was it worth it? ...Yes when the blue ribbons finally met even the frustrations of exploring unsuitable areas added to the contentment.

Many others have done more trail work and more organizational work in the club than I. Nonetheless, I wish to share my pride and experiences. It was mostly the work of one person to maintain the momentum of exploration, location and clearing. I was assisted by Mike Wittman, who has done considerable clearing, and whose good sense of direction located some of the straightest sections of trail. The final link of this trail led to consideration of group dynamics. From observing other groups I have come to the conclusion that having a small membership is probably not due to a) bad breath or, b) severe character defects. When turnout is small one's imagination can run wild. To preserve one's sanity, a sense of humor is necessary. One person I know at work showed an interest in the club but never came. She then went on a long hiking excursion in New Zealand. Is easy access and low cost a hindrance to our trail?

The number one lesson is that each member is important but much can be done while waiting for membership to increase. Patience and repetition are key words in building membership. Repeated Newspaper articles are necessary but come in second place compared with personal contact. The Ministry of Natural Resources and the

media have been very helpful, but trail use and membership are the basis on which we will deserve support. With our local club we have had a chicken and egg dilemma. Without a completed trail it is difficult to advertise and recruit members and without members it is difficult to work. Without walkers the trail grows up almost as fast as new sections are cleared.

However, the potential to promote the trail once completed is tremendous. Hiking in the states has mushroomed and an advertisement in an American hiking magazine might triple the number of hiker-miles walked. As a training ground for scouts and guides, up to preparing for major expeditions, the trail is ideal. Anyone interested in going with a group on a wilderness adventure would do well to build endurance, test equipment and group cohesion with a practice run on the trail (wilderness with the safety of a defined trail).

To build membership and because I like to cross country ski we are building a parallel ski trail using parts of the hiking trail and swamps and lakes. For reasons of safety and speed several skiers breaking trail are a good idea.

After many outings where it was difficult to find parts of the trail, we learned a new technique: a) take a compass bearing in the spring or the fall to a point as far away as possible, b) clear brush until the point is reached, c) look back to where you started and continue cutting trying to always keep starting point and blue ribbons in view. This makes for a straight trail with fewer blazes, easier to follow under all weather conditions, and easier to ski. Taking the trail up a steep location adds adventure and reduces all terrain vehicle damage.

This past weekend I tried to follow the trail from one end to the other in one day. It rained and slowed us down. We took time to

a log on a crossing. With leaves, small branches, a few ribbons missing, insufficient stone cairns, a few crooked places, etc., the trail took considerably longer to follow than predicted. (My apologies to Steve Taylor and the group hiking this summer). It ended up that it was safer to spend the night with a fire and a balsam branch shelter (not right on the trail site but ¼ mile away). Once again it was truly the adventure trail.

The work you as a member may do can be considerable and often without many helpers. Does this mean that we have to consider our participation a hardship that has to be born in solitude? Not at all! There is little that is more fun than getting "lost" in the bush with a compass. I spent a week in May alone on the lakes with the ducks and the beavers, flagging and clearing kilometers of trail, cooking on campfires and catching lake trout. The rare feeling of deep relaxation and accomplishment I will treasure always.

I am looking forward to next May when I will straighten a few bends, remove a few branches and cut the stubs to make the trail ready to advertise: "open for business". Anyone wishing to come along is more than welcome.

-Jack Smit  
Elliot Lake, Ontario  
Penewobikong Voyageur Trail Club

#### NOTICE TO ALL VTA MEMBERS

You may now pay your 1989 membership fees. Make cheques payable to the Voyageur Trail Association and send to:

Voyageur Trail Association  
Box 66  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario  
P6A 5L2

-\*\*\*PLEASE\*\*\* pay your membership dues for 1988 as soon as possible,



to keep the association on good financial footing for the balance of the year. If your copy of this newsletter has a stamp on the outside that requests you to pay your 1988 fees, you must pay in order to continue receiving the VTA Newsletter.

### 1988 VTA ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting will be held on October 22, 1988 at the Courthouse in Blind River at 1:00 pm. The VTA Director's meeting will be held at 10:00 am that day at the courthouse. A short hike will be scheduled in Blind River that morning for those attending the Annual Meeting but not the Director's Meeting. Following the Annual Meeting, there will be short hike to Cataract Falls.

A car pool is arranged to transport members to Blind River from Sault Ste. Marie. Meet at the Churchill Plaza parking lot, near the gasbar at 8:30 am, October 22.



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### BACKPACKING IN JULY A HOT TICKET

Sometimes a backpacking trip proceeds smoothly and everything clicks into place as planned. These trips are pleasant. Then, there are those memorable trips.

The July 1-3 backpacking trip will be long remembered by all who attended. Larry Gringorten, John Berry, Dieter and Erika Ropke, Virve and Rachel Squire, Steve Taylor, Lisa Purdy, Barry Cooke, Donna Weeks, Reidia Larsen, and Brian Zaviz formed a spirited crew who participated in a trip that was certainly interesting for all kinds of reasons.

We were prepared for a potentially difficult trip with a short piece of bushwhacking by compass as we all gathered in Blind River on Friday morning and spotted cars at both ends. One end was at the West end of Magog Lake near Blind River. The other end was on Highway 108. In between was a short stretch of Voyageur Trail to Intersect Lake, and a long stretch of future Voyageur Trail. Much of the intended route had been blazed and cleared through the efforts of Jack Smit, but we were warned that bushwhacking could be necessary between McGiverin Lake and Intersect Lake. The route, which was about 25 km in length, is depicted on the accompanying map.

The first few hours of the hike took us through some beautiful oak forest in the Penevobikong Section to a lunch spot on Intersect Lake. We lounged about in glorious sunshine before leaving in anticipation of reaching McGiverin Lake by supper. Who would have thought that we would be wishing for clouds by Sunday and that we would camp that night by some beaver ponds west of McGiverin Lake.

Shortly after leaving Intersect Lake, we came to the end of the Penevobikong Section, and the end of the blazing. There was flagging to the southeast, and a big clot of flagging that seemed to point in the right direction to more white blazing which headed off to the northeast. Jack Smit had said that he would try to flag

trail to McGiverin Lake ahead of our trip, but that he might not finish. It turned out that he did, and his flogged trail went to the SE at this point. We took the trail to the N. I made the mistake of thinking that the clot of blazing was there to point our direction, and that Jack's trail would take off to the SE further along if completed, despite comments from Donna and Roddie that we should investigate further.

After about 15 minutes, the white blazing led to a spectacular lookout to the North, and then proceeded downhill into thick bush where it ended. At this point, there were two possibilities. One was that the blue flagging further back was Jack Suit's trail. The other was that Jack never finished his trail and that we would have to bushwhack.

We were adventurous, and opted to bushwhack to McGiverin Lake, about 5 km as the crow flies. Unfortunately, we weren't flying. Much of the country in this area is a mixture of steep exposed bedrock knobs, forest, and beaver ponds. The beaver ponds and rock outcrops tend to be aligned in a north-south direction. This meant that we had to compass around the beaver ponds and over all of the rocks. We did stop to see a beautiful Rose Pogonia, and some of us startled some sandhill cranes, but for most of us, the numerous beaver ponds will be the memory of that day.

Finally, after much meandering, we found an acceptable campsite by some ponds and realized that it was time to camp. This site was pretty enough, with ponds meandering around several pine-clad rocky points, but the water was shallow. John, Dieter and I swam anyway. The Saturday objective was to reach McGiverin Lake. Barry pointed the way with his compass while I looked at the map. We didn't know exactly how far we had

to go, and I suspect that a few hikers didn't know if we were going in the right direction either.

Steep climbs were the order of the morning, and high hilltops provided Brian with the opportunity to show his Tarzan routine in the trees as he looked for McGiverin Lake. After a few hours, we came to the lake exactly at our target spot. I had confidence that we would reach the lake, but the accuracy of our navigation over the difficult terrain gave my bushwhacking confidence a big boost.

We all swam in McGiverin Lake and elected to rest there and stay the night rather than pushing on. McGiverin Lake was truly a beautiful spot, with a nice sand beach for a campsite. We watched water bombers heading for columns of smoke rising from the bush to the north. In the evening, we heard a Whip-poor-will calling from the skies over the lake. The sound lifted everyone's hearts at first. We soon considered the bird a nuisance though, as it continued to call all night.

Look in the Winter 1988/89 Issue for the fascinating conclusion to Steve Taylor's account of this adventurous VTA backpacking trip.

Also coming next issue, a colourful portrait about hiking and backpacking in the Colorado Rockies, by VTA member Donna Weeks.

THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS is published three times per year. Your articles and news submissions are always welcome! Submissions for the Fall Issue should be given to the Editor by December 30, 1988. Send to Guy Smith, c/o VTA, Box 66, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, P6A 5L2.