



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

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Editor: Virve Manniste Squire

Winter 1990-91



COLD WEATHER HIKING

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ON THIS ISSUE'S COVER: Caps and mittens worn by the hikers suggest cold weather day tripping. The group is on a rocky outcrop in the Desherats Section on a fine November afternoon.

**** ATTENTION MEMBERSHIP ****

If you have forgotten to renew your membership this year, this will be your last issue of the newsletter. Check your address label - your current year of membership is in the top right-hand corner. The number 96 on the label indicates paid up membership and will ensure that your copies of the newsletter and club information will arrive.

VTA EXECUTIVE:

- PRESIDENT
- Steve Taylor
- PAST PRESIDENT
- Peter Stinnissen
- 1st VICE-PRESIDENT
- Jesse Latendresse
- 2nd VICE-PRESIDENT
- Susan Graham
- TREASURER
- Dieter Ropke
- GENERAL SECRETARY
- Larry Bringarten
- MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
- Patrick Capper
- TRAILMASTER
- Bill Robinson
- LANDOWNER LIAISON
- Paul Syme
- HIKE ONTARIO REP.
- Patrick Capper
- EDITOR
- Virve Mannaste Soaitie

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 15 - Hope for snow as the first ski of the season heads out to the Gros Cap area. Meet 10:00 a.m. Market Mall. Steve Taylor - Leader.

Dec. 19 - Annual Year End Outing for Snow Shoe enthusiasts only. Meet 10:00 a.m. at LeMarche Dairy's Gas Bar and Patrick Capper will take you to this year's mystery location.

Jan. 19 - Explore ski trails enjoyed by our Michigan members in the Canada Lakes area. Meet 9:30 a.m. Collegiate Sports parking lot. Tom Allinson - Leader.

Feb. 9 - Explore the Bellevue treacher area without loppetours. Meet 9:30 a.m. Market. Tom Allinson - Leader.

Feb. 24 - For a truly unique experience, ski to the Adawa Rock Photographs, weather permitting. Meet 8:00 a.m. Market. Bill Robinson - Leader.

Mar. 5 - Steve Taylor will lead us into the "Canyon" north of Mattleton Lake. Join

Peter Stinnissen has stepped down from his position as President of the VTA. Thank you to Peter for his very productive four years in this position - and good luck to Steve Taylor who is our new President. In accepting his new position, Steve has turned his position as our Hike Ontario Rep. to Patrick Capper. Our Association now has representation on the Executive from our newest trail club - Jesse Latendresse of Elliot Lake is now in the position of Vice-President. All other positions remain the same.

us for a beautiful outing to an area that is one of the best kept secrets in town. Meet 10:00 a.m. Market Mall.

Mar. 17 - Tom Allinson will lead the last ski of the season into the Carpin Beach Road area where snow can still be found when spring is observed everywhere else. Meet 10:00 a.m. Market Mall.

**** PLEASE NOTE ****

All hike leaders are unpaid volunteers. Participants are encouraged to join us but please do so at your own risk. Pack a lunch, spare clothing and extra socks. A spare pole basket, a ski tip and bits of wire should also be part of your winter day pack. Ski equipment in the backcountry can make skiing out difficult.

Car pools are formed at the meeting places. If you are without a vehicle, you are always welcome to ride with me.

REMEMBERING FATHER MEGAN

Charter Member Father Arnold Megan died recently. Dieter Ropke fondly remembers Father Megan with a few words.

One of a kind, intrepid, these all full of joy, Father Arnold Megan will be remembered for his irreverence, his dry chuckle and mocking grin so full of mirth.

It was vintage Father Megan who pulled out and shared a green plastic Mylarla antacid bottle on a hiking trip to Cockburn Island. The bottle

was full of whisky. When asked about his generous supply of such bottles, he revealed that one of his colleagues had a severe stomach ailment, and in his own words "I just told him to keep up the good work" (so he could get the empty bottles for hiking).

On a more recent hike and potluck supper on a hot July day, Father Megan failed to show up as planned. When we came out in the bush utterly exhausted, we were greeted by Father Megan in a lawn chair reading a book. By his side was a full cooler of refreshing drinks which he had brought for us. When he could not make it to the hike, he parked his contribution for the potluck, a 4-litre container of ice cream, in a fridge he found in a shed of the McGuire family (our neighbours). Asked whether he knew these people, he replied in the negative. They were not home when he called but the cook at St. Mary's College also went by that name and somehow he deduced that all McGuires were related sooner or later. It is fortunate that these people and their kids did not come home to discover the sweet contribution first.

Father Megan was also known for his love for fast cars and loud contemporary music. Young at heart, he had tremendous influence over many fine young people growing up under his care.

Father Megan we miss you, this place is not the same without you.

FORESTRY PRACTICES HEARINGS - VTA COMMENTS

On August 29, Steve Taylor represented the Voyageur Trail Association in making a presentation at the Class Exemption for Forestry Practices hearings which were held in Sault Ste Marie during that week.

These hearings are of vital importance to the future of Ontario's forests. The Ministry of Natural Resources has applied for a Class Exemption for commonly used forestry practices. If approved, it means that a lot of forestry operations on crown land will not be subject to environmental assessments. The Environmental Assessment Board is now gathering evidence and information with which to make a decision on this matter. The Voyageur Trail Association was invited to make a presentation before this board.

One thing noted by Steve and Bill Robinson (who attended the hearings also) is that all forestry operations must be public knowledge and if someone thinks that a certain forestry operation in an area is a problem, an assessment can be requested for that situation. Thus, if a portion of our trail is scheduled to be logged, the Voyageur Trail Association could potentially still have input.

Steve noted that we have received very good cooperation and information on proposed forestry operations on Crown Land from the Ministry of Natural Resources up to now. He expressed concern that this should continue in the future. He noted that if logging is to occur near the trail, the MNR usually places a buffer around

our trail as a condition for a company to be granted a cutting license. In spite of this, a portion of trail that was given a buffer was logged several years ago. The company was asked to restore the trail, but the ground had been so chewed up that VTA members had to go in later to reroute it. Steve felt that the penalty for violating a condition such as this must be severe enough that a company will not violate that condition either on purpose or accidentally. Concerns were also presented about blown down trees in buffers that are too narrow, and the potential problems of pesticide drift into buffers. Lastly, Steve suggested that consideration be given for a buffer of at least two kilometres in width around Lake Superior where no logging would occur. The reasons given were i) that the coast of Lake Superior deserves special attention because of its scenic qualities and hence tourism potential. Buffer areas should not be visible from the shoreline. Two kilometres would suffice in most areas. ii) the area near the lake is rich in natural diversity. Two kilometres of protected area is needed to preserve this diversity. iii) Much of our trail and proposed trail is within this area.

HIKE ONTARIO! NEWS

The Hike Ontario annual general meeting is being held at the Arboretum Centre, University of Guelph, on Sunday, November 9, 1990. It is a walking fair with displays, workshops and hikes.

keynote speaker is Doug Thomas, Past President of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. All club members are invited to attend. If you plan to attend, please contact Steve Taylor at 759-2480 or Virve Squire at 942-2370.

For the past 16 years, Hike Ontario' has been the umbrella organization for the long-distance trail associations. The VTA is one of their members.

Now Hike Ontario' is opening to individual members to help ensure that all walkers and hikers can be part of Ontario's planning process.

Hike Ontario' collects and distributes trail information, works with government and sister agencies, encourages workshops and events and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Membership costs \$15.00 and runs to the end of 1991. Any members interested in an individual membership may contact Steve Taylor at 759-2480 for further information.

HIKING IN THE WAWA AREA DRIFTWOOD BEACH TO TREETBY LAKE

In late 1989, the Michipicoten Section of the Trail was extended south from Bridget Lake near the Lake Superior shoreline to Noisy Bay. At that point, it connected with an old canoe portage out to the road near the Fenton-Treetby Lake canoe route parking lot. By midsummer of 1990, this trail was complete except for two sections that had only been blazed and needed patrol and brushing. I agreed to lead a backpacking outing along this

piece of trail on the August 4-6 long weekend. Virve Mannister-Squire, Rachel Squire, Steve Seaborn, Barry Cooke, Paula Jalvita and Richard Archer were willing guinea pigs for the latest of my ideas for a backpacking experience.

We met in the Rabbit Blanket Campground on the Friday evening. It was a warm, humid, cloudy evening and a storm appeared to be brewing, but nothing happened that night. Before heading out in the morning, we had breakfast and repacked some gear and food. Why is it that we always seem to leave half the gear in the car at the last minute? I gave a fiery demonstration of my Optimus flamethrower and then cooked breakfast on Virve's stove.

The journey began at the head of the trail at Fort Friendship near the mouth of the Michipicoten River. The first part of the trail was mainly uphill, along a creek, between rock walls, and over sphagnum, spruce and Labrador tea clad rocks. We poked around in a small cave part way up. At the top was a magnificent view of Driftwood Beach and Michipicoten Harbour. We then descended to the lake to eat lunch on the rocks along the shore. It was very humid and we were all perspiring. The sound of thunder rumbling over the lake encouraged us to eat our lunch short and continue on.

The rain began partway up a long uphill climb to Bridget Lake. We crossed a creek at the end of a picturesque pond which offered a view of the surrounding hills. The hills were now shrouded in mist, and we walked into this mist

as we continued to climb. For a while, a dark, thick conifer stand offered shelter from the rain, but soon it was raining heavily, punctuated by the occasional gentle rumble and one loud crash of thunder. By the time we reached Bridget Lake, we were all quite wet. Some of us had not bothered to put on a raincoat due to the warmth of the air, and those that had were wet due to sweat. Thus, the next hour or so was rather uncomfortable until the rain finally petered out and the mist disappeared.

Our path followed a wide trail on a ridge just west of Bridget Lake which was visible through the trees in places. Soon, it crossed a creek. We were into another area of Labrador tea, sphagnum moss and stunted black spruce, all on rocks. The trail was flagged and cleared here, but not blazed. It was nevertheless easy to follow. The problem was walking. We sank into the soft moss with our feet, and often staggered as we hit uneven rock underneath. Pachel with her shorter legs must have had a difficult time. We were high above the lake here, and there were a couple of magnificent views. After a difficult descent and climb, we were rewarded with a spectacular view of Smoky Point, which was to be our campsite for the night. The sky now had some blue holes and the point was being bathed by the sun. We then climbed down about 250 m to the point through a valley and through a couple of dikes, where the trail was surrounded by rock walls. This scenic descent ended the hiking for the day around 5:00 pm.

As we reached the beach,

we hung gear up all over the place to dry and some of us went for a swim. Tents were pitched on the rocky beach and supper was cooked and devoured. Richard commented on the scenic qualities of this area by noting that while he was taught to work with lines in his graphic arts class, nature worked very well with curves. We lit a fire, but we didn't keep it going for long as we were all very sleepy.

We were all rudely awakened in the middle of the night by a brisk north wind which came up suddenly. I got up to gather some clothing and fasten my extra tent lines to rocks. Barry had pitched his tent closest to the lake and the waves were spraying it. I wondered how he got any sleep.

The next morning, a chilly north wind blew into the campsite. It was an ideal morning for a quick, hot cereal and a hasty exit onto the trail.

The trail went into the woods and then came out at a postcard cove just south of Smokey point. Several wrens disappeared into the driftwood as we approached. Then we began a long difficult climb up through several spectacular rock chasms.

The trail at this point was cleared and flagged with blue tape but not blazed. We left Smokey Point in two groups and as we neared the top of the climb, I was still in the back group with Barry and Paula. The trail became flat, in fact it was the easiest trail we had been on so far. After about a kilometre, we arrived at a major two-lane paved highway. The hiking would have been