



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

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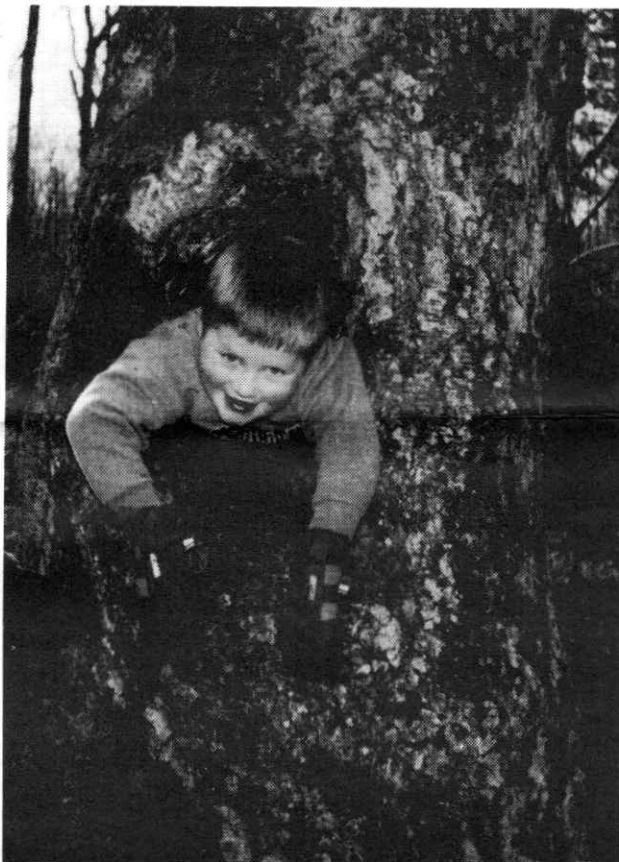
EDITOR: Virve Männiste Squire

FALL 1995

PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Steve Dominy

It has indeed been a busy summer! The hot, dry weather didn't slow down activity by the VTA. In fact, it probably helped increase activity as there seemed to be fewer biting insects around than usual.

Efforts in the spring were focused on revitalizing Clubs in the eastern region. I presented evening slide shows in Blind River and Elliot Lake in May. Vice-President Dan Wheeler and Publicity Director Gayle Phillips attended both sessions. Several other Board/Executive members attended the Elliot Lake event. Objectives of the presentations were to increase awareness of the Voyageur Trail, and to try to attract new members to join and to encourage them to participate in the local Club, or revitalize a dormant Club. Attendance was 15-20 people at each event, with a high level of interest shown by the audience. The VTA display was erected and publications, tools, and equipment were put out on tables. Small door prizes were awarded to three lucky people each night. Two attendees participated the following day in a hike organized in conjunction with a Board of Directors meeting in the Espanola area. Attendees will be sent notices of the local Ontario Hiking Day (Oct. 1) event in their area, as a follow-up to the meeting.



Angus Bendeveridge checks out a tree, from the inside out!

Photo by Patrick Capper

These events provided a focus for some media coverage for the VTA. We received good publicity in the Blind River and Elliot Lake newspapers, and Gayle Phillips and I were interviewed by host Barry Mercer on the *Just After Four* show on CBC Radio (Sudbury). In addition, posters were put up around the local communities advertising the events. Combined with extensive distribution of the VTA brochure, and a week-long display in Station Mall in April, we are becoming better known around Northern Ontario. This is largely owing to the efforts of Gayle Phillips, who is doing a superb job.

In September, Gayle set up a display at the Tourist Information Centre in Sault Ste. Marie. Also, our mobile display will travel to Terrace Bay and Nipigon, in conjunction with publicity events in those areas. Despite these well-intentioned efforts, our best advertising will always be the word-of-mouth variety. The more members talk it up with friends and neighbours, the quicker our membership will grow.

Welcome to Ray Cormier who has volunteered to be our Sign Maker. We have been loaned a sign engraving machine (many thanks to the Canadian Forest Service), and Susan Graham has volunteered to find a space in her garage for it.

Ontario Hiking Day (Sunday, October 1) provides an excellent opportunity to invite prospective members out on the trail. This is the day when hiking organizations across the province make extra efforts to encourage the general public to explore the local trails in the company of knowledgeable hikers. Hikes are planned for a number of trail sections, so mark it down on your calendar.

Gayle Phillips was also instrumental in arranging another CBC interview in August. This time Dan Lessard interviewed Andy Rockall and myself

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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on the *Just After Four* program. Andy was the British leader of the visiting trail blazers who constructed about 8 km of new trail in the Goulais River area (see "Blazin' Trails" article on page 7). He is a volunteer with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, an organization which has sent work parties in both 1993 and 1994 to help our expansion efforts. This year, the group was largely comprised of Southern Ontario volunteers, and I wish to extend sincere thanks to Jill Leslie of Hike Ontario for making the project possible.

The visiting work party achieved a couple of 'firsts' for the VTA. They blazed the first (and hopefully not the last) loop trail ever built by volunteers in our history. This is a pleasant walk through mature to semi-mature maple, birch and hemlock forest just south of the Goulais River (locally-known as the Mile Hill), and follows several old and newer logging roads, as well as some unroaded forest. The trail is a 'must do' in any season, although the views will be especially breathtaking when the leaves are off the trees. The loop is marked with yellow blazes, which we have decided on as a new standard. The second 'first' was the construction of a 32-foot section of pressure-treated boardwalk by this group. It was very educational to interact with this group and to see our trail through their eyes. Trails in the more populated areas face different challenges than we in the north, with overuse being a major concern.

The visitors certainly appreciated the spectacular scenery in the north, and commented on the warm hospitality provided by Chuck Peterson of Stokely Creek Lodge and members of the VTA. They commented that they would have enjoyed meeting more local VTA members. We will strive to encourage more locals to participate in future years (yes, Jill Leslie of Hike Ontario is already talking of organizing a return visit, and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) likely would include us in their schedule of international projects again, if asked).

Incidentally, for anyone interested in an international holiday volunteering on a conservation project, I encourage you to contact the BTCV. The 1995/96 brochure lists projects in 21 different countries (Canada is one of the most popular destinations!). The address is: International Conservation Working Holidays, BTCV, 36 St. Mary's Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0EU, England.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Keeping the Association moving forward requires the commitment of a large number of volunteers. Many work behind the scenes, clearing a few kilometres of trail, serving on the phone committee, maintaining the tools, distributing brochures, performing secretarial or bookkeeping duties, and so on. Others have more visible roles. Each and every one who has chosen to devote a few hours to help out is invaluable to the organization.

We are an association of volunteers, and to help recognize the efforts of those who help out we have established the *Stephen (Steve) Taylor Volunteer Appreciation Award* (see details on page 6), in honour of our past president.

Nevertheless, volunteers come and go. This year Paul Syme was forced to resign as Landowner Liaison Officer for health reasons. Naomi Donat, who had offered to help Paul, accepted a job in B.C. This is a critical position which must be filled as soon as possible. Anyone with an interest in helping should contact a member of the Executive for details on the duties.

We also have openings for a number of Committee Members to help out on the Publicity and Guidebook Committees.

Keep in mind that volunteers don't have to be current members. If you know of someone who might be interested in volunteering with the VTA, please pass their name along to a member of the Executive.



THE VTA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS:

Saulteaux Section - Gail Farewell; Diane Hertz; Shawn Richards; Karen Brown & Randy Wilk; Jan Duggan; Dennis Gorsuch; Oli Hohmann; Mike & Cheryl Landmark; Rick Sherman; Elena Wentz; Christopher Aslett; Vicky, Janice & Fran Irving; Susan Kennedy; Gunnar Kristiansen; James & Janice Miller; Mary Beth Russ; Victoria, Mark & Stormer Santana.

Association - Terry Claydon, Scarborough; Debbie Gaines, Oakville; John Granton, Paris, Ont.; Pierrette Martin, Levack; Rene & Lisa Jansen, De Wal; Marion MacLeod, North York.

Elliot Lake, Coureurs de Bois Section - Mark Budker; Paul Fuller; Sabine Attelin; and welcome back to former members Oscar Mahlmann and Valerie Nolan.

Blind River, Penewobikong Section - Fred, Gladys & Herb Hinton (Happy Holiday Cottages).



THE HEAVEN'S GATE HIKE THAT WASN'T

by Patrick Capper

Perhaps going to Heaven is going to be very difficult judging by the difficulty of going through Heaven's Gate.

In preliminary discussions with the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre it appeared to be very practical for a group of Voyageur Trail members to backpack on the newly marked Heaven's Gate Trail between the microwave tower on Highway 68 and Fort La Cloche.



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