



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PLEASE RENEW MEMBERSHIP

No. 68 WINTER 1998

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SILVER JUBILEE!

by Cheryl Landmark

1998 marks the 25th anniversary of the Voyageur Trail Association!

The Association would like to encourage ALL member clubs to help celebrate this special silver milestone by planning an activity or series of activities. This could be anything from a weekend hike/get-together hosted by each club, to an official ceremony marking the opening of a new section of trail, unveiling of a new sign, etc. The details would be up to the local club.

In order to allow maximum participation by members from other clubs and the general public, these activities could be staggered throughout the forthcoming year. To assist the clubs, the Voyageur Trail News will advertise these events. The Jubilee committee and V.T.A. Editor require from you the date(s) and ideas for proposed activities before February 15, 1998.

Also, a special Jubilee edition of the newsletter is planned to be issued sometime during the summer of 1998. Ideas and submissions are encouraged and welcomed. You can help make 1998 a very memorable year!

Please contact the Editor at <cheryl.landmark1@sympatico.ca> or (705) 779-3409, or the publicity director at <voyageur.trail@sympatico.ca>.



On a sad note...long time Voyageur Trail Association member, Tom Allinson passed away in October 1997. Tom was extremely active in the Saulteaux Club area building and maintaining trail and will be sorely missed. See pages 4 and 5.

1998 VTA EXECUTIVE

No nominations were put forth at the annual Board and Executive meeting held on November 15, 1997. Aside from three positions (President, Trailmaster and Membership Secretary) which were left vacant at that time, all other Board members agreed to stay on for another term.

Vice-President (West) is Peter Stinnissen, Vice-President (Central) is Mike Landmark, Vice-President (East) is Dan Wheeler, Treasurer is Dieter Ropke, General Secretary is Ian Morrison, Publicity Director is Gayle Phillips, Landowner Liaison is Jack Donald, Hike Ontario Representative is Patrick Capper, Guidebook Committee Chair is Steve Dominy, and Newsletter Committee is Cheryl Landmark (Editor) and Gayle Phillips (Layout).

Since the meeting, Frank Brooks has volunteered to be Trailmaster and Virve Männiste Squire has agreed to take on the position of Membership Secretary, starting in January.

That leaves the President's position still open. If you are interested in this position, contact the Nominating Committee at <voyageur.trail@sympatico.ca>, or call Gayle Phillips, (705) 942-1891, Jack Donald (705) 942-1761, or Neil Ray (705) 649-0875.



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OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S REPORT *by Larry Gringorten*

After two years in the president's chair, I can look back with much satisfaction on numerous achievements by our volunteers. In my view, the best indicator of the overall success of the VTA has been the increase in hiking activities and the marked increase in participation by both members and the general public in these events. No doubt, this has been driven in large part by all the profile-raising activities of our publicity director, Gayle Phillips, central vice president, Mike Landmark, and guidebook editor, Steve Dominy. Notable among these activities have been their participation in trade shows, the establishment of the web site, e-mail and information phone line, and the issue of the new edition of the trail guidebook. In fact, the guidebook was so well received and sales so brisk that a second printing is required.

The startup of the new Harmony Club, reactivation of the Casque Isles Club, affiliation of the Land of the Nipigon Waterways Development Association with the VTA as an association member were other notable success stories.

New trail construction is up and, at the far western end of the trail, the Thunder Bay Tourism office has also expressed interest in establishing ties with the VTA and extending the trail. All in all, our house appears to be in order and the future looks good.

Nevertheless, I cannot shake an uneasy feeling that there are problems that could seriously undermine this rosy picture.

The turnover in membership has kept our numbers pretty well at the same level that it was 10 years ago and our volunteer base has remained quite small. The untimely death of Tom Allinson, one of our most dedicated and stalwart members, and the retirement of others from active participation in VTA activities have left a void that will be difficult to fill.

With a few notable exceptions, the executives of both the VTA and Saulteaux Club still consist of "recycled" volunteers. The elections at the last annual board meeting left positions either filled by the same persons by acclamation or vacant. Sensing the slight reluctance of some of those who volunteered to serve again, I wondered if the VTA was at the beginning of a downward spiral out of existence.

As a result of the expiry of my own term, the VTA is now without a president (a VTA bylaw, as well as new family commitments, prevent me from accepting a new term as

president) and the president of the Saulteaux Club has now expressed a wish to step down. If you have read this far, please consider yourself cordially invited to contact anyone on the executive to volunteer to help run this worthwhile association. We need new blood or one day it may be "last one out, please turn out the lights."

An unfortunate issue that developed during the last two years has been the necessity for the VTA executive to concern itself with liability insurance. In this increasingly litigious society, we have had to face up to the reality that both the association and its volunteers require protection from potential lawsuits. This has not only contributed to past fee increases, but has now also forced us to reassess the family/group membership fee and consider requiring participants to sign a waiver form at all VTA outings. The present insurance policy provides the necessary protection to VTA and member club executives, official volunteers and all hikers who are individually registered as VTA members, but not to others in a family or group, unless they have registered separately. The result has been the necessity to do away with our single-tier fee structure and impose an additional fee of \$3.50 for each family/group member who wishes to be officially registered as a VTA member and have the liability protection. The only saving grace is that it is optional and participants in VTA events can waive this insurance coverage if they wish. There was no other way to deal with the issue and keep costs to members to a minimum.

And so, I leave with guarded optimism and the hope that someone will step forward to take over the reins as president of the VTA as it begins its jubilee anniversary year.

(Oh, by the way, I volunteered to be vice president of the Saulteaux Club.)

See you on the trail.

Happy hiking.



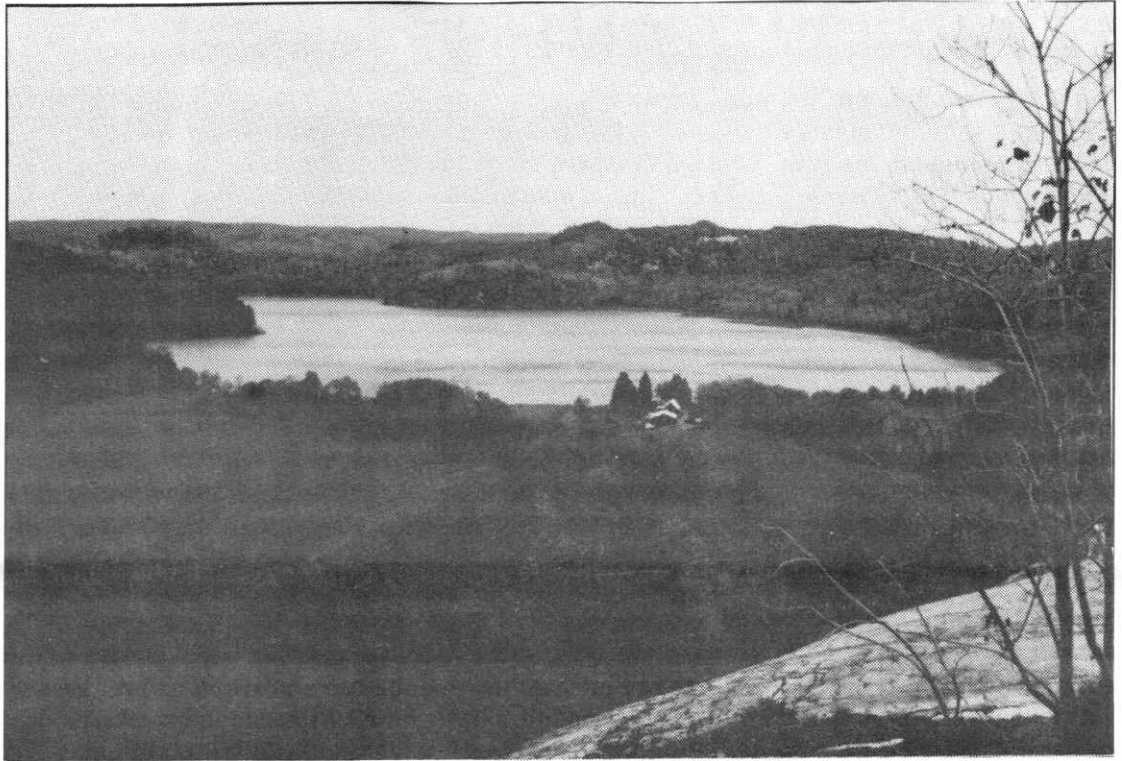
WHO WON? Whoever renewed their membership by January 1st, 1998 is eligible to win a beautiful piece of handmade pottery by Erika Ropke. Watch for the announcement of who won in the April edition of the VTA NEWS!

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An Ontario Hiking Day bird's-eye view from a lookout on the Desbarats Section of Voyageur Hiking Trail



ONTARIO HIKING DAY FAMILY OUTING

by *Steve Dominy*

On Sunday, Oct. 5, 1997, the fall colours in the Sault area were at their peak. The temperature was quite comfortable, and the absence of black flies and mosquitoes did not go unnoticed. It was under these conditions that a group of Voyageur Trail members gathered at the Market Mall parking lot to embark upon a 6 km. stroll along a portion of the Sauleaux Section. The participants ranged in age from just less than two to well beyond. The toddler was of course carried most of the way, but when on the ground demonstrated a great fascination with flowing water and cliff edges (Dad couldn't take his eyes off her for a minute). Three other youngsters in the 6 to 8 age range expressed a keen interest in dried puff ball mushrooms, and proceeded to poke at or step on every one they saw, often creating a cloud of spore dust. Leaf collections were also the order of the day. As for the four adults, they enjoyed lively and varied conversations. Topics included hiking, camping, canoeing and kayaking stories, and general "get-to-know one another" exchanges. A light rain shower near the end of the hike did little to dampen the pleasant experience. The one-way trip was felt to be a good way to explore the trail from Red Rock Road to Creek Road. The two lookouts were well worth the detour. However, the highlight of the day, at least for the little kids, was a stop at the donut shop on the way home.



CASQUE ISLES CLUB NEWS

by *Mike Scott*

We decided to hold a few events in the winter months, but have not determined dates yet. We want to do a snowshoeing event followed by a chili potluck after. We will plan our next meeting for March.

The Town of Terrace Bay found some extra money in their recreation budget which they decided to donate to the club. There were two conditions—one, that we use the money exclusively for trail maintenance and possible extension, and two, that we submit a report to the town council about what we did with the money. The amount is \$1,900. Deposited with the \$350 from the original Casque Isles club that Lorne Burke signed over to me when he left, we have a pretty healthy bank account. Dean Main suggests that we use the money from the town to hire a contractor to go through the entire trail, removing deadfalls, stumps, and brush, and putting up new blazes where required. I think it sounds like a good idea, and a good way to quickly get the trail back in excellent condition from start to finish.

I reminded everyone to either renew VTA memberships, or get them. Hopefully in March we'll be able to have elections. In the meantime, I have been declared Acting President, so that's a start to an executive, anyway. The last newsletter for 1997 should be out soon.

For more information, call (807) 824-2052, or e-mail to msscott@Schreiber.Lakeheadu.Ca.

