



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

Happy Holidays!



No. 86 WINTER 2003/4

EDITOR: Cheryl Landmark

LAYOUT BY: Gayle Phillips

Published by the
VOYAGEUR TRAIL
ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 20040
150 Churchill Blvd.
Sault Ste. Marie Ontario
P6A 6W3

Toll Free 1-877-393-4003

e-mail address:
voyageur.trail@sympatico.ca

INFORMATION LINE
705-253-5353

Select message No. 9999
on your touchtone phone

Visit our web site at:
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/voyageur.trail>

A member of
Hike Canada En Marche,
Hike Ontario,
Ontario Trails Council, and
Trans Canada Trail.



INSIDE

Saulteaux Club News.. 4

And the Winner Is..... 4

Outing Schedules.... 5-6

Bruce Mines is 1st..... 6

Agony & Ecstasy..... 7

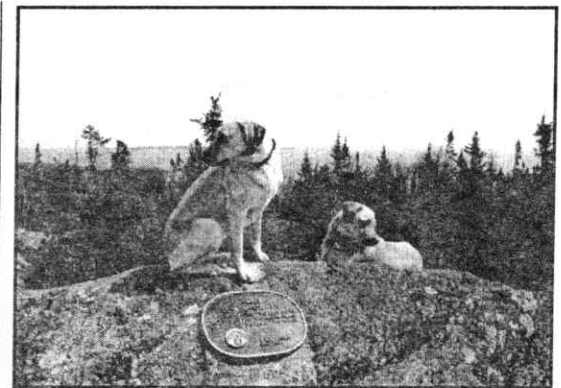
Annual Report..... 7

And much, much more!

THE TWO FACES OF MOUNT GWYNNE: IMPRESSIONS OF A DAY-HIKER *by Kas Stone*

Mt. Gwynne, at 260 metres above the level of Lake Superior, is the highest point along the Voyageur Trail. For the day-hiker, reaching the summit is a challenge, not only because of its elevation, but also because of its remoteness. Located 5 km south of Hwy 17 and the nearest town, Schreiber, Mt. Gwynne has no easy access. The Schreiber Beach Road to the west and the Worthington Bay Road to the east are so rutted and muddy that they are no longer passable, except by all-terrain vehicle. So, from either direction, the starting point for a day-hike to Mt. Gwynne is near the highway, and, especially on the western side, it is a long day's hike from there. (Editor's Note: Shuttles can be arranged by contacting the local club.)

I have climbed to the summit twice. On my annual spring hiking holiday last year I approached it from the west; this year from the east. And although the objective was the same, the hikes, and the feelings I had about the mountain, were entirely and surprisingly different! I have put together the following summary for anyone wishing to tackle Mt. Gwynne as a day-hiker, which combines practical, how-to information



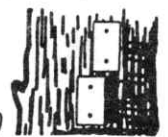
These "two faces" belong to Kas' dogs.

about the two approaches and my personal impressions from each direction.

The Western Face of Mount Gwynne

From the west, parking is available in a small gravel area off Subway Street in Schreiber just after the road passes under the railway bridge. Proceeding on foot from there, walk west beside the railway line past half a dozen houses, then south along the Schreiber Beach Road. The road quickly becomes a rough track which descends for 2.3 km through a wooded valley to join the Voyageur Trail at Schreiber Beach, a crescent of sand and smooth rounded cobbles.

Turn left and walk along the beach to its eastern end, where the trail turns inland. It follows Cook's Creek upstream for several hundred metres, past little waterfalls and pools, then crosses the creek by means of a small but impressively constructed suspension foot-bridge. On the other side there is a scramble up a steep, moss-covered cliff onto higher ground, where the landscape alternates between damp, forested glens and rocky outcrops, as the trail continues gradually to climb.



(Continued on page 2)

When does your VTA membership expire?
Many members have to renew at the beginning of a new year.
Do YOU?
Check the date printed on your VT NEWS envelope label!
VTA Membership Secretary
705-949-4105

THE TWO FACES OF MT. GWYNNE *(Continued from page 1)*

There are several lookouts during the ascent, with increasingly impressive views at each rise in elevation. The first two (un-named) lookouts, on beautiful pink granite dappled with green lichens, face westward over Collingwood Bay. The third, the Albyon lookout, is at the top of a steep cliff at the end of a 1km side-trail, and has a large talus field below and magnificent views to the west and south. Between the un-named lookouts and the Albyon lookout the trail passes Fourth Lake and numerous small ponds, many of them created by industrious beavers whose dams have diverted the creeks that spill down the hillside. A short distance beyond the Albyon lookout trail, the final 200-metre side-trail exits to the left, bringing the hiker huffing and puffing to the summit.

From the top of the Schreiber Beach road to the top of Mt. Gwynne, including the side-trips to lookouts, is a hike of about 8 km, and much of this distance is over rough terrain. So, from this direction, Mt. Gwynne feels a wild and secluded place. The only evidence of human influence, apart from the trail itself, is an old camper-trailer at the edge of Schreiber Beach and the remains of a small wooden cabin at Fourth Lake.

The approach from the other direction is quite different.

The Eastern Face of Mount Gwynne

From the east, exit Hwy 17 onto the Worthington Bay Road about 4 km to the east of Schreiber and follow it for several hundred metres. There is a maze of small roadways here, used by gravel trucks coming and going from the quarries, so be sure to follow the 'main' road, which curves towards the right about 100 metres from Hwy 17. Conditions deteriorate soon afterwards when the road turns downhill, so park on the edge before becoming stuck in the mud and continue on foot. It is a 4 km trek down the valley to Lake Superior, where the road ends at a small gravelly beach on Worthington Bay. About 100 metres before reaching the lake, the Voyageur Trail exits on the right towards Mt. Gwynne. We will return to this exit shortly, after spending a few minutes at Worthington Bay. On the eastern side of the beach, across a small stream, the Voyageur Trail departs along the shoreline for Les Petits Ecris and Death Valley, the wild heart of the Casques Isles section of the trail. On the western side, cliffs with cave-like formations rise out of the lake, forcing the trail inland. Near the base of one of these cliffs, on a sheltered flat surface, can be found several faded red-ochre pictographs – evidence of the bay's importance to early aboriginal travellers. (Clearest amongst these pictographs is a figure that resembles, appropriately, a hiker on the Voyageur Trail!) More imme-



diately obvious at the edge of the beach is the debris of modern times – a cement foundation and an assortment of rusting machinery, the remnants of a gold mill that operated briefly at Worthington Bay in the 1930s.

Schreiber, and much of the peninsula upon which Mt. Gwynne sits, is formed from ancient volcanic rocks – lava that erupted through cracks in the earth's surface some 2-1/2 to 3 billion years ago and then solidified. Subsequent geological processes have changed the original rocks, compressing, eroding and folding them into more complicated forms. Chemically, rocks created in this way typically contain minerals of economic importance. Base metals such as copper, nickel, lead and zinc are common, and to the prospector there is also the tantalizing possibility of precious metals like gold. Copper and zinc have both been recovered in significant amounts from mines in the Schreiber area. And gold, although at a scale disappointing in comparison with the massive finds at the Hemlo mines further east, was discovered in the rocks of Mt. Gwynne.

The Voyageur Trail follows the track used by miners to transport ore for crushing and processing at the Worthington Bay gold mill from mine-sites on the mountain. Return about 100 metres from the beach up the Worthington Bay Road and exit left onto the track we by-passed earlier. The track winds steeply uphill for 1.5 km, levelling out briefly on the way up where the miners' camp once stood and now only a few pieces of rotting timber remain. It passes several piles of rocky rubble and old mine adits, including one large water-filled hole that gapes ominously to the hiker's right. The track ends at a large field of tailings guarded by a giant, rusting sieve.

Beyond the tailings pile, the trail narrows and continues over rougher ground upward through a gulley for 1/2 km. There the Mt. Gwynne side-trail exits to the right for the final 200-metre scramble to the summit.

From the top of the Worthington Bay Road to the top of Mt. Gwynne is a hike of about 6 km. But from this direction only the last kilometre feels wild. The long roadway down the valley to Worthington Bay, with all its ruts and puddles, speaks of muddy journeys by modern visitors. The pictographs on the Worthington Bay cliffs recall the travellers of an earlier time – the native peoples who drew them, and the European explorers and fur-traders who followed afterwards, seeking refuge in the bay from the wrath of Lake Superior. And finally, during the climb from Worthington Bay to the sum-

(Continued on page 3)

