



May 2007
Newsletter

Toronto Outdoor Club

1,000 members and growing!

We can now proudly say that our club has over 1,000 members! At time of publication, we had 1,153 club members. This month we say hello to Darrel Nantais, the latest edition of our member profile. We also have the third edition of *Examining Our Environment*, the TOC's environmental column, and an article from our team leader of safety & gear about our new difficulty rating system for trips. As always, I can be reached at info@torontooutdoorclub.com if you have any questions, comments or ideas.

Cheers,

Deb (TOC PR & Communications Officer)

New trip difficulty rating system

By Jenn P

The TOC Volunteer Safety and Training Team have been hard at work this spring. In March, we were proud to offer a full weekend of First Aid and CPR training to volunteers and members. Through the course offered by Lifesaver 101, attendees learned how to treat a variety of injuries and illnesses, from minor to severe, and what to do in an emergency situation. There will be a second First Aid and CPR course run sometime in the fall for those who were unable to attend, and we are also in the planning stages of organizing a Wilderness Survival course for next spring.

There are also several opportunities to learn Orienteering currently posted on the calendar.

The Volunteer and Safety Training Team have also recently reworked the event difficulty rating scale for backpacking and canoe trips. Tailored specifically to the Ontario wilderness, the new rating scale aims to provide a clearer, more accurate description of various levels of events. Designed to be easy to read, we hope to provide both members and coordinators with a more detailed and easily understood system of classification for backpacking and canoe events.

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Examining Our Environment

A TOC Feature Column

By Jenn M

In the last newsletter, this column gave an overview of leave no trace principles and why they are important to the environment and to us as users. This newsletter we'll look at the first two leave no trace principles in greater detail.

1. Plan ahead and prepare

This sounds obvious, but it there are a lot of details a trip planner has to consider.

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TOC BULLETIN BOARD

Photos from events

If you have photos from the event, please remember to send them to us for posting on the TOC web site. **Send your pictures to photos@torontooutdoorclub.com** in 640x480 or 750x500 pixel resolution - do NOT send original high-res photos.

Event Reminder:

TOC 2nd Annual Picnic

All TOC members are invited to attend the second annual TOC picnic at the Toronto Islands on Saturday, June 16, 2007. The festivities will begin at 1 pm and run until the last ferry back to the city. This is a great opportunity to meet the volunteers and other members. We will have a potluck picnic and access to a fire pit (so don't forget those marshmallows!). You can go to the beach, take the kids to Centreville, ride a bike around the Islands, and lots more...

(Examining Our Environment, continued from page 1)

Before you head out, on a day trip or backcountry trip, stop to consider the regulations governing the area - whether they are with respect to access, camping locations, fire regulations, or removal of waste. Also consider the size of your group and the impact this will have, as well as the time of year you're going on your excursion - are you going during a high use time when the ecosystem may already be stressed? You should also consider the ecosystem where you are going, and the time of year you are going on your trip, to ensure you are dealing with waste properly and are prepared in such a way you don't need to impact the land for warmth or shelter etc. Make sure to bring proper equipment with you, as this will assist in making your trip no or low-trace (i.e. do you have stoves to cook with rather than using wood), and be sure to plan your meals in advance and repackage food to cut down on garbage and leftovers. Leave your route plan with someone and ensure that your group will be able to stay on trail and minimize any off-trail impact.

2. Camp and travel on durable surfaces

Hike on existing trails; they are designed to minimize impact from large groups of hikers passing over. Hike in single file to avoid widening the trail, and in wet areas or in the muddy season, be prepared and wear gaiters so you can still walk through the centre of the trail instead of around the sides or off trail. Take breaks in areas where you won't be trampling sensitive plants. If you do have to travel off trail, take note of the surface - rock, sand and gravel are quite durable, and the impact of walking on ice and snow is temporary. Different vegetation will respond differently to being hiked on (but keep in mind, that even on trail, tree roots, especially cedars, are very sensitive to being stepped upon).

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Camping can be enjoyable and safe for the environment when you practice the Leave No Trace principles.

Ombudsman's musings

By Dominic Amann

From time to time, members and volunteers have different opinions about certain issues, such as the no-show policy, the appropriateness of behaviour on events, what procedure must be followed for people who want to volunteer, etc. Until now, our president Steph has simply consulted people on an individual basis, and made her decisions from her personal consultations. This system has worked until now, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and our president. However, as the club crosses the 1,000 member mark, the sheer volume of work is increasing, and Steph felt that one particular area was ready for a change: minor dispute resolution.

Resolving disputes within the club

As ombudsman of the TOC, when a dispute arises within the club, I am responsible for listening to the original complaint, getting both sides of the story, and relying on event coordinators, information available on the club's website, and other data to support my research.

Once my research is complete, I present the persons in dispute with a position statement. If the correspondents agree to accept the statement, then my job is done. If they cannot agree, I then make the situation known in detail, along with my recommendations to the club president and vice presidents, and work with them to achieve a consensus. If this is agreed, then the decision is made, and the correspondents must accept the club position. If there is no consensus, then the President will have (as now), the final say.

When making decisions about disputes, the foremost consideration is the well being of the club. The individual satisfaction of its members and volunteers are vital.

The TOC Philosophy

Another important tool which is under development right now is the TOC philosophy. This concept document is being developed to state the philosophy of the TOC in a general form. We would like to get input from all the volunteers in the club on the development of this document, which can be found on the Forum in the volunteer section.

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Member Profile: Ten Questions

This month marks our fifth member profile in the newsletter. Our feature member for this month is **Darrel Nantais**.

If there is someone you'd like to see profiled, email Deb at info@torontooutdoorclub.com.

Name: Darrel Nantais

Nicknames:

Nantana (no real meaning just derived from my last name during childhood, kinda stuck), D (used in Japan by Japanese who have a lot of trouble with R vs L pronunciation).

TOC member since:

I've been a TOC member for about five months, I got involved because I love the outdoors, sports and relocated to Toronto (needed to get involved in something).

Favourite TOC event so far:

Although it was not an outdoor event, my favorite TOC event was the Yuk Yuks comedy night. It was really a good time: good people and hilarious comics.

Hometown:

Penetanguishene, a great outdoor town about 45 minutes north of Barrie. I moved to Toronto in October 2006. Between Penetang and Toronto, I lived in Hamilton during university and Japan (for 3 years) while teaching English.

Other non-TOC hobbies:

I love running, hiking and biking and the TOC events but competitive sports are my true love, especially hockey, soccer, baseball, and squash. I also spend a lot of time reading and have recently taken up cooking.

Which one item could you not live without on a day-to-day basis?

Sadly right now with a broken foot its my crutches, but normally it would have to be my bike, I can't sit still and a bike is a great way to explore the city, be active and have fun.

If you had one day to spend however you liked, cost being no barrier, how would you spend it?

I would wake up after 8 or 9 hours of sleep, grab a fruit and yogurt shake for breakfast and go for a relaxing bike ride on a paved trail or empty road to a park where my soccer team was playing a game that only ended when I wanted it to. Then meet up with some close friends for a steak dinner at a BBQ. Watch a live sports event (Senators vs Sabres or Suns vs Mavs or something like that). End the night at a pub having a few pints and engaging in some stimulating conversation.

If you could be someone else for a day, who would you be and why?

I would want to be Tiger Woods. He dominates his sport like no other individual in my era. Considering the fact that (as anyone who has tried it knows) golf is such a difficult game to be consistent at, his accomplishment is unparalleled in my mind. He also gets to enjoy some of the most beautiful places in the world while competing and doing what he loves.

Finish this sentence: The best thing about being outdoors is...

...you are free from constraint, outside is ultimate freedom and you can feel yourself gaining energy and vibrance with each breath of fresh air, especially if you are stuck inside in an office or factory during the weekdays.

Here's Darrel in Shiretoko, Hokkaido, Japan:

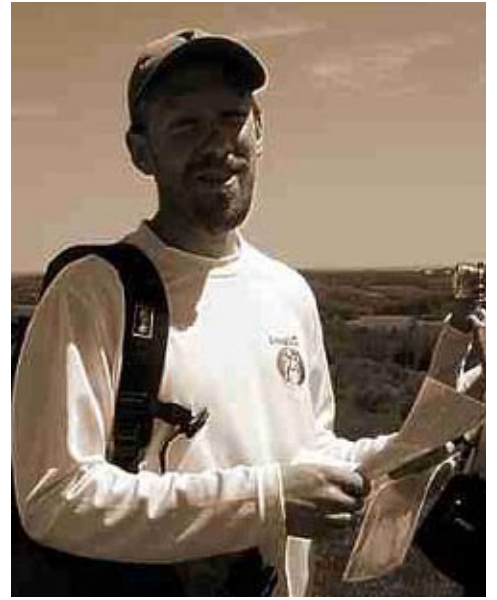




Cambridge to Paris bike ride



Short Hills loop



Primrose & the Boyne river valley



Terra Cotta side trail loop hike



Hamilton West to Jerseyville bike ride

May 2007 Events



Stratford Festival - King Lear



(Examining Our Environment - continued from page 2)

When camping, if you are in an impacted area, it is better to choose that area to camp on than one that has not already been disturbed, even if the impacted site does not fully match leave no trace guidelines. Be sure to pack out all garbage though, and leave the site better than you found it. Camping in undisturbed areas will not be discussed in this article; unless you are highly skilled this should not be done, and instead you should ensure you are picking a trip route that allows you to arrive at an existing campsite.

As has been noted, the heavy camping and outdoors season is upon us, and it would be great if TOC members could help lead the way in respecting the land in a low-impact manner!

Questions? Email Jenn M at jenn@torontooutdoorclub.com

Want to get in touch with the TOC?

Here are some email addresses to write to:

Steph, TOC President

pres@torontooutdoorclub.com

Erik, VP and Treasurer

erik@torontooutdoorclub.com

Hassan, VP Safety and Operations

hassan@torontooutdoorclub.com

Deb, PR and Communications Officer (& newsletter)

info@torontooutdoorclub.com

Visit www.torontooutdoorclub.com/aboutus/officers.asp

(New trip difficulty rating system -- continued from page 1)

If you have any requests, suggestions or questions for the Volunteer Safety and Training team, please direct them to jennp@TorontoOutdoorClub.com

Upcoming Events

Jun 1 2007 - Car Camping: Killbear Provincial Park

Jun 1 2007 - Camping at Bruce Peninsula National Park (Backcountry) (Difficult)

Jun 2 2007 - Birdwatching for Beginners

Jun 2 2007 - Multi Event: Part B - Hike - Sandbanks (Easy to Moderate)

Jun 2 2007 - Riverdale Art Walk (and dog romp)



Short hills loop

(Ombudsman's musings, continued from page 2)

Once we feel the document accurately reflects the sentiment of the club, it will be made available to all member.

When it all goes south

As ombudsman, I have no power to punish, but the club already has policies about certain issues. For example, too many no-shows results in a member being barred from the club. In these instances, the ombudsmans will only act as a fact finder and mediator. In the end, it is up to the club's senior officials to take the disciplinary action the situation warrants.

If you have comments or questions about the ombudsman role or anything you read in this article, please contact Dominc at

Ombudsman@torontooutdoorclub.com

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