

Sept / Oct 2007
Newsletter

Toronto Outdoor Club

Note from the outgoing President:

Hi! My name is Stephanie and I'm the president and founder of the Toronto Outdoor Club. I spent some time in Calgary a few years ago and while I was happy to return to the place where I was born and raised, I was also sad to leave behind my friends and all the great times that I had through the Calgary Outdoor Club. I knew the concept would work in Toronto, and that we needed something like it in Toronto, so with help from Rhonda Scheurer, the founder of the COC, I officially unveiled the TOC on June 1st, 2005.

The first few months were hard. Torontonians just didn't trust the concept of a fully online interactive outdoor club. Get in a car with strangers? Trust these people to keep my personal info away from spammers and 'net researchers? It's NOT a meat market? But us early volunteers must have put many cynical urbanites at ease, because slowly we started to gain members who kept coming back for hikes, for bike rides, skating and winter sports, for movies and outings. Some of these members were so enthusiastic (or naïve?!?) I easily convinced them to be volunteers. Or, voluntold, as they refer to it.

Along the way, we created a team of volunteers that understood and adopted my vision and philosophy for the club, and carried that forward to their own

own events, attracting new members and adding more events and ideas to the club. Many of our newest members have been to 5 or 10 or more events and have yet to meet the "president". I sometimes go out to events just as a participant and have members encourage me to attend more events – because it's a great club to belong to! I love getting this kind of feedback, it means that the club attracts great people, not the work of any one person.

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Examining Our Environment

A TOC Feature Column

By Jenn M

Leave no trace - continued

This is the final installment of the column's leave no trace/low trace principles. The TOC sends out camping and backcountry trips throughout all seasons, but as the colder weather comes, please also remember to apply no/low trace principles on day trips. This column will cover campfires, respecting wildlife, and consideration of other land users.

Campfires

While almost all of us enjoy them, please remember that campfires do heavily impact the land.

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If you're car camping, buy firewood and kindling and use this rather than searching the land around the campsite for wood (it's likely already been stripped clean). If you're in the backcountry, take only dead or downed wood and remember in the winter that you may not be able to tell if a tree is dead or simply without leaves (do not take down deciduous trees!). Consider instead of a fire using the campstove - even taking wood from the forest floor does affect the ecosystem, be aware of your impact.

Only have campfires within the designated fire ring. If there is no fire ring, build one carefully on bedrock so that sparks and coals cannot easily get out, and so that there are no root systems underneath the campfire - this is an incredibly common way for forest fires to start when people think they've put the fire out. As a child, I was taught to avoid this by making 'fireplace soup' (you should be able to stir the coals which are in a soupy/stew-like state, and the rocks of the fire ring should be cool). People often worry this makes it too difficult to start a fire in the morning, but through years of tripping without a campstove when I was younger and relying on fire for all our meals, there was never a problem; starting a fire the next morning with this method is no different than starting a fire when you first arrive at a campsite and is easily done with the most basic of fire-starting skills.

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The mouth of the Michipicoten River and Driftwood Beach Provincial Park taken at Naturally Superior Adventures.

(Note from the outgoing president - continued from page 1)

Recently, I have not been 'in the loop', but I've been busy behind the scenes. During this year I have been lucky to have the love and support of many friends, most of whom I met through the Toronto Outdoor Club. Half of the wedding party were friends of ours that we met through the TOC!! None of us would have met had it not been for the TOC, all came to the TOC for different reasons and needs, from different backgrounds and lifestyles. And our circle keeps on growing as the TOC keeps bringing in the most wonderful people. It's been a fantastic year.

However, it's time to pass on the reins to someone else. Some members have expressed concern that if I'm no longer the one 'in charge' the club will change and lose that special thing which makes it so unique. And maybe some of you are thinking 'well, it's about time!.' But, I've been working hard with a group of committed and enthusiastic individuals to make sure that the transition is as seamless as possible. And even more so, we'll be bringing on new ideas and trying out new concepts that will make the club bigger and better without ever losing focus on the unique TOC philosophy that makes the club special to our members.

Some of you may have noticed that we have had open nominations for all of our officer positions in the TOC forum. We didn't have a huge response, but we did have one nomination for president - Jenn Pammett. Jenn's first hike was Rouge Valley, on Good Friday in 2006 and since that time she's been working tirelessly for the club's benefit. She even drove out to Calgary this summer to spend two weeks with the COC. Her organizational skills and enthusiasm and club spirit show up in all her interactions. I think she'll be a wonderful new president of the TOC.

Jenn asked for a large support team, and we are lucky enough to have had several nominations for vice-president. We have no requirements to limit to the number of VPs, so we decided to bring them all on board, all of whom are equally as enthusiastic and concerned about bringing my full vision to a reality.

Finally, Erik and I are not going anywhere. Although the club will see even less of me over the coming year, I'll still be available and accessible as a VP in charge of long term planning and strategy.

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(Note from the outgoing president - continued from page 2)

I'm keeping my finger in the pie, although it won't be as visible as I have been to those of you that have known me over the years, but I will still be around to participate in club events.

The recent Annual General Meeting was a chance for you to hear some of the great initiatives we have underway as well as the introduction of our new 'executive'

team and volunteer structure.

Members also had the chance to meet the new leadership team, finally meet the (outgoing) president.

Please turn to page five for the complete leadership team for the upcoming year.

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Adventure Sports • Travel • Social
TORONTO
Outdoor Club
PHOTOS FROM RECENT TOC EVENTS



Cheltenham Badlands Hike



Sherman / Tiffany Falls



Habitat for Humanity: Elliott House Restoration



Toronto FC vs. New York Red Bulls



Above: TOC Ultimate Frisbee

Left: Algonquin Fall Colours Extravaganza



Above:
Georgian Bay
Islands National
Park



Above and
Right:
Car camping in
Algonquin Park

(Examining Our Environment, continued from page 2)

Respecting wildlife

Enjoy watching wildlife from a distance rather than stressing the animal(s) by attempting to get too close or trying to interact. Leave nest and den sites alone and undisturbed - this is especially important for animals like bears in the winter - movement near their den or the inspection of it can wake them slightly and cause their metabolism (which had dropped for the winter to preserve energy requirements) to rise, and can make it far more difficult for them to survive the winter. Store all food, trash, and other items with smells away in either a car or in the backcountry, suspended in a bear hang. NEVER feed animals; you may think this is cute but it conditions them to beg from and become reliant upon humans as a food source and encourages destructive behaviour around food stuffs.

Consideration of others

Be aware that there are other people using the same trails, canoe routes, and land that you are. Leave it for them how you saw it, or even better (i.e. pick up trash). Be courteous when encountering others (represent the TOC!) and be aware of noise and proximity when using trails or camping.

A note about dogs - remember that just because you love your dog doesn't mean other people do. Keep dogs on leash at all times on trail - when they run ahead not under your control, they very easily interfere with other trail users experience and with wildlife. I think a trail runner I once met, when told the off-leash dog that they had just encountered was friendly, said it best: "That's what the owners of the last two dogs that bit me said." Respect other people, and respect that your dog, however reliable, may react unexpectedly in a new or strange situation, especially if you are somewhere back on the trail.

One final note - the fall is prime storm-watching season on Lake Superior, and Naturally Superior Adventures, located right on Michipicoten Bay on Lake Superior, offers TOC members a 5% discount - go to <http://naturallysuperior.com/toc>.

Both the camping and bed and breakfast experience at Rock Island Lodge (run by Naturally Superior) are astounding, and Michipicoten Bay (threatened with quarry development - for more information, visit the website of Citizens Concerned for Michipicoten Bay (<http://www.ccmb.ca>) to find out all the work they are doing to protect this amazingly beautiful site used by hikers, canoeists, and kayakers as well as the local community) is absolutely beautiful - Superior storms are awe-inspiring, and worth watching.

Contact Jenn M at jenn@torontooutdoorclub.com

(Note from the outgoing president - continued from page 3)

Here is our official leadership team (aka "the Executive") for the upcoming year:

President:

Jennifer Pammett

Vice Presidents:

Alison Munro

Jim Olchoway

Jason Mazariegos

Jennifer Mullen

Erik Sonstenes

Support our sponsors and partners:

5 Peaks Trail Running Series

www.5peaks.com

Alpine Rafting Company

<http://alpinerafting.com>

Andwa Consulting

www.andwa.com

Canoe Algonquin

www.canoealgonquin.com

Lyon & Butler Insurance Brokers Ltd.

www.lyonbutler.com

Sheer Elegance Event Planning

www.sheereleganceevents.com

TOC Clubhouse: Chalkers Pub

The TOC's post-event gathering spot is Chalkers Pub (www.chalkerspub.com), located at 247 Marlee Avenue (a 2-minute walk from Glencairn subway station).

It's a great place to share stories and meet new members coming back from other events. Chalkers has pool tables, a patio dining area, and a great deal: if a volunteer is with your group, the entire group gets 15% off food orders, as well as free pool.