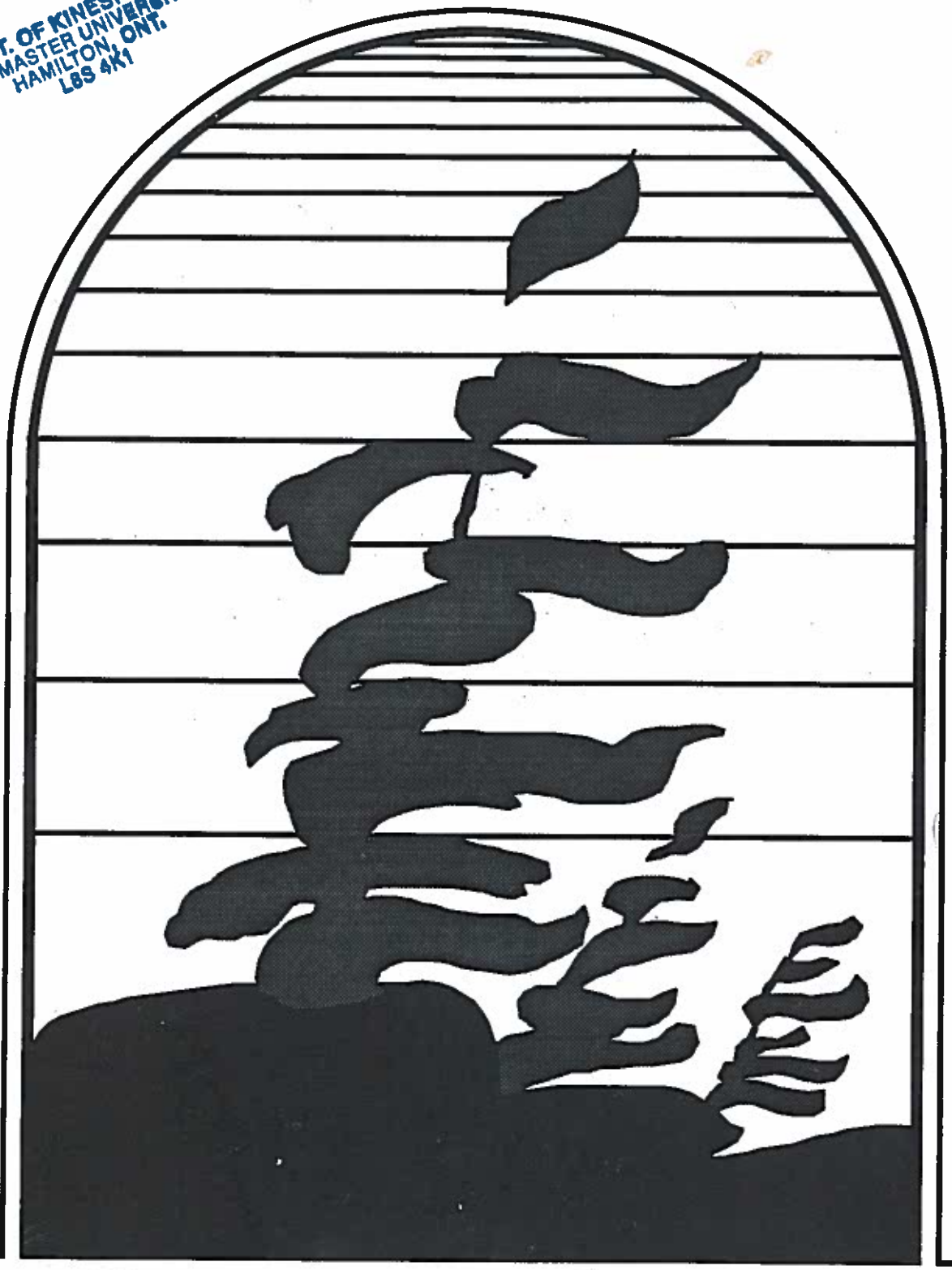
DEPT. OF KINESIOLOGY
McMASTER UNIVERSITY
HAMILTON, ONT.
L8S 4K1



The Journal of COBWS Education

June 1991

Volume V, number 1

Table of Contents

Introduction
by Ken Victor — 2

COBWS Founder Looks Back
by Bob Pieh — 3

Community: Past and Future
by Wendy Pieh — 6

The Circle of Community: A Personal Reflection on COBWS History
by Charles Luckman — 8

The Role Community Plays in Attracting Returning Staff
by Paul Landry and Matty McNair — 10

Community-Commonity-Common Unity
More Than a Play on Words
by Moon Joyce — 11

On COBWS and Community
by Daniel Vokey — 18

The Toronto Office and the COBWS Community
by Stephen Fontaine — 23

Letters to the Editor — 24

Call for Articles — 25

The Journal of COBWS Education is published by the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School, P.O. Box 116, Station S, Toronto, Ontartio, Canada M5M 4L6 (416-787-1721).

Table of Contents

Introduction
by Ken Victor 2

COBWS Founder Looks Back
by Bob Pieh 3

Community: Past and Future
by Wendy Pieh 6

The Circle of Community: A Personal Reflection on COBWS History
by Charles Luckman 8

The Role Community Plays in Attracting Returning Staff
by Paul Landry and Matty McNair 10

Community-Commonity-Common Unity More Than a Play on Words
by Moon Joyce 11

On COBWS and Community
by Daniel Vokey 18

The Toronto Office and the COBWS Community
by Stephen Fontaine 23

Letters to the Editor 24

Call for Articles 25

The Journal of COBWS Education is published by the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School, P.O. Box 116, Station S, Toronto, Ontartio, Canada M5M 4L6 (416-787-1721).

Introduction

By Ken Victor, Guest Editor

COBWS at its best is a school for community. Not just a school for wilderness skills or self-esteem, or solitude—though of course it contains all of those—but a school whose most unique gift is its willingness to allow staff and students to practice what it means to "live community."

But living as a community - the Outward Bound community we hope each brigade becomes - is no easy task. I define "community" as something quite concrete, grounded in the very stuff of Outward Bound courses: we ask our students, and the brigades they join to "accept responsibility . . . for the consequences" of their decisions and behaviors, to engage in cooperative action to resolve conflicts, to communicate openly, to work within a framework of mutual trust and respect.

Equally as difficult is to apply these lofty course objectives and live them as an institution—staff to staff, day by day, issue by issue. If COBWS has found its best self in striving to model, as an institution, what it professes through its curriculum, then those high standards have at times highlighted our shortcomings and failures as a community.

And there have been shortcomings and failures. Yet, after a difficult community meeting, or after acknowledging again the strained trust between different parts of the institution, I come back to admiring our attempts to achieve community. It would be easy for COBWS, due to cynicism or weariness, size or age, to leave behind its commmitment to community and to pursue its development as an organization without regard to such a standard. After all, community at COBWS has faced—and will continue to face—real challenges.

In offering both the rich history of community at the school and some of the reflections staff have done regarding that community, this issue of The Journal will hopefully help COBWS renew that most unique commitment. As well, I'd be pleased if it helps COBWS continue to draw staff who seek to learn and practice community and who, in their learning, will help their students take whatever steps they can towards building and maintaining community in their own lives.

Finally, to those of you who wrote articles for this issue, thanks for both your words and your patience. The delay of publication was in every way unintended, and yet fortuitous: this issue of the COBWS JOURNAL OF EDUCATION seems more timely than ever. When the idea of an issue on Community was announced, it was in a radically different world than the one we now inhabit. A world of the Berlin Wall, of Apartheid, of a dark Eastern Europe. And yet, as I write, only a short year and half since the Berlin Wall has crumbled, the struggle for a larger global community is again undecided. While Apartheid is being dismantled, the Mid-East burns, and the Baltic Republics are struggling to survive. It's never been clearer that what Outward Bound offers is deeply needed—a place where people can come together to practice the difficult task of living together under hardship, with challenges, with uncertainty, and where, in the midst of their difficulties, people are encouraged to choose connection rather than separation, trust rather than suspicion, openness rather than fear.Δ

Reflections

by Bob Pieh

THE COBWS JOURNAL OF EDUCATION talked with Bob Pieh at the Third Outward Bound International Conference in New York, September, 1988. Bob received the 1988 International Conference Service Award "in recognition of his creative energy and outstanding service as founder of two Outward Bound Schools and as a caring servant-leader to youth."

Bob spoke at length about community, its relationship to Outward Bound, and how it has had a significant role in both his personal and professional life. He was on the faculty at Antioch and Queens, and founded both the Minnesota (Voyageur) and the Canadian Wilderness Outward Bound School in northern Ontario.

BOB PIEH

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AS A YOUNG MAN

When I was a senior at Madison Central High School, my father died. It was the height of the depression; it was pretty much a shakedown for the family, my mother, my sister, and I. What happened was that the kids at school got together, all 28 in the senior class, and asked their fathers if they had any work for me, and various things came up. The guys at the golf course who I caddied for called me more often and tipped me more, I got more lawns to cut and snow to shovel. There was quite a closure of effort to help me, which really got to me in terms of what's possible within groups as they're sharing and feeling comfortable with sharing, not only for the recipient but for the others.

There are a lot of things that I think my high school prepared me for. Madison Central High serviced the suburban groups, who were the elite, and also serviced the town, which was lower class economically. There was quite a bit of rivalry that expressed itself in amateur sports and so on. I was a good student—in fact, straight A's— and an athlete, which was an unusual combination and so I knew people in every section of town: I knew the south side who hated the Italians; I knew the Italians because of my part time work (running the softball and basketball league); the Irish I knew too, and all this created a lot of acceptance of me by a cross section of people. What I'm driving at is that one of the things that pleases me is that my roots in community go way back, and when I needed a boost, I got it.

As I look back, I know there was a lot of help, support, and recognition given to me. That kind of support, and that kind of base, I think created in me more understanding of all the segments of a potential community.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

When I was at the University of Wisconsin I met Art Thompson, who had a tremendous influence on my life. He was the head of the Physical Education department, and every noon, he and others got together to do gymnastics. I couldn't believe what they were doing, and he invited me to get involved. We built a strong relationship, he became my substitute father . He taught me about the natural environment, and how physical activity lended itself to much larger concepts, like those of community and personal growth. Later, at Antioch, I was able to use these ideas to bring faculty and staff together on the playing field, and work out their conflicts through healthy and fun competition.

AN ASIDE ABOUT THE WAR

I was on a PT Boat in the Phillipines during the war. One of my jobs was to arrange housing when our squadron would arrive at an island, and I always took care of the enlisted men first. I also arranged the food, and, again, I put the enlisted men first on the list. The officers couldn't understand why suddenly the enlisted men were performing better, seemed happier and more contented. I learned a lot from that.

ANTIOCH

I got hooked on group dynamics at Antioch. Doug MacGregor, the new President, brought along with him a colleague from MIT, Nick Knickerbocker. Knickerbocker became a buddy of mine, and we taught group process together. I was able to tap their excellent knowledge of group dynamics, consultation, and taking responsibility for decision making. MacGregor revolutionized the efforts of the college to involve students and faculty in government, which was in the college charter. He and Knicker-

bocker were a powerful example for me.

MINNESOTA OUTWARD BOUND AND COMMUNITY

By the time I started MOBS, I was sold on the concept of community. That concept influenced my attitude in terms of administration, stressing the importance of adequate consultation, listening to grievances, etc. A director can prevent community, or enhance it. So one of my roles was to be sure that people were understanding themselves, that issues were addressed fairly and openly. I had to be open to criticism, and to admit my mistakes. We had to look at mistakes so they wouldn't happen again. We did, as you probably know, have that drowning death the first summer, which really shook us badly.

The site for the community was ideal in terms of its natural beauty. Sigurd Olsen, a friend of mine and one of the reasons we acquired the property, used to come out to bless the groups in his own way before they went off on their big journeys, the expeditions. That was good. We had Rena Weisinger as our head cook, who was everybody's mother, and an ex-trapper, John Sansted, was the site manager. Art Thompson, my mentor and teacher when I was a student at the University of Wisconsin, a great swimmer, was our waterfront director. He would go out to the dock in the evening and the harmonica would come out, so there was that kind of lightness. It didn't mean that there weren't times when I had to make a final decision, but at least they'd listen to each other, and I'd listen to them.

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT QUEENS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

I was invited to join the new Faculty of Education at Queens, and to write my own ticket. It was almost too good to believe. The two deans agreed that we were going to have community service as a requirement, and the three of us had almost a year to prepare before the school opened. I didn't have to adroitly explain the things I wanted to do—human relations, group process, using the outdoors for teaching, community service.

Everyone who enrolled in the Faculty of Education would do a term of volunteer service in the community as a part of the curriculum, and this was attractive to them as a way to explore service before you got too far down the road. My job was to make the contacts, in schools, social service programs, and the local prisons. Students were expected to put in so many hours per week, to keep a journal, and to discuss it with their faculty counselor. It was a great success, and a real help to the involved organizations.

COBWS ORIGINS

I started the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School because it seemed needed. I didn't want to call it OB Ontario, because that was not a big enough name. I had learned things from starting the Minnesota OB School—I was going to say that I have an addiction to OB, but I don't feel that's it—but I believe very much in OB, if effectively organized. It can make a major difference in the short term — people can learn to motivate themselves, and to develop a deeper capacity for relationships, which also means that people can get reinforcement for their growth.

Plus, it seemed to me that the deserted government site on Black Sturgeon Lake was perfect. Our family used to go on canoe trips in that area, and we went past this place which had been, at times, used for forestry research and odds and ends, and it seemed a natural. Plus, I had gained so much from Outward Bound, it's fun, it's really fun, and I had sufficient contacts at Queens to make the recruitment of staff fairly easy.

It took some time and red tape to obtain the site. We got some support from people in government, and we guaranteed them a type of development that would enhance the site, and so on. I didn't want COBWS to be as developed as MOBS, and anything that was developed I felt should be a product of the community, even to the extent of electricity and plumbing. I wanted it to be developed naturally, in harmony with the environment.

As far as staff goes, there was a lot of choice from the Faculty of Ed people. We had a shakedown; I knew the staff, they knew me, and we had that to build on, so it was easier to handle issues and to reinforce each other.

THE CHARACTER OF OB STAFF AND THE DYNAMICS OF FORMING COMMUNITY

I wanted people with emotional maturity, so there wouldn't be any hangups that would get in the way of communication. Maturity is first with oneself, accepting the fact that we've all got our problems. I see having patience as an aspect of maturity, of not interfering too soon in a situation where there's learning happening, where if you do interfere, you stop the learning. I was also happy to get breadth—someone who was a photographer, someone who liked to paint, someone musical, and it was nice to have someone who knew the difference between a hammer and a chisel. We sure needed that our first year!

At little shakedowns in groups, at staff training and otherwise, you'd be asked, "If you could change something about yourself, what would you change? If it is possible for you to change, would you like our help?" The idea was that we'd like to

help, we'd like a community where people help each other and don't resent it, and, if you don't hear us, is it okay to go ahead and pin you down rather than getting mad and cussing. We all need help, and we'll go a lot further if we have help, but our help can't be typical. You can't tell people what to do. You can only say, "Have you thought of trying...?", which means the option's yours, recognizing the limitation that there are some things about you that I don't understand, but that's not your problem, that's my problem, and I'd like to understand, and I'm interested. It's much easier then to let it hang out. It means that others aren't going to be as irritated as they might be by that bad habit because they know you want to change. It's possible, it seems to me, to get people to talk about how they'd like to change—some people think I'm too risky here—but if people don't talk, that's a clue too, that they're not ready. A capacity for growth, and a willingness to accept that growth is a community effort—that kind of openness I valued.

The other thing that struck me, and still does, is people hearing each other. People think that they know what you're going to say next, so they don't hear what you do say. The also don't pick up things that you might want to get out but that aren't easy to get out. My feeling is that if someone can't listen, it's hard for them to learn anything! And if someone working with a group can't listen, how are they going to hear the group? They might stereotype a group based on inadequate evidence because they haven't heard the group.

Mutual understanding, acceptance, knowing you well enough to know what you've got to give, and also knowing where you are in terms of areas where you may need help are basic ingredients to becoming a community.

DECISION MAKING AND COMMUNITY

Whether the staff or the administration made a decision depended on the implications of the decision, because I had ultimate responsibility, and it would be myself and the trustees who would face the music. This did not mean that the administration was superior, but that staff and administration have different responsibilities. If I had questions about a decision being made, I would question the analysis, point out holes, not question the persons involved but the decision being made. If the decision in the end made sense, perhaps I would want to implement it gradually in order for it to succeed.

It was very important that no one make dictatorial, bull dozing, or insensitive decisions. In a community you can play power games, and that needs to be challenged. When groups came to me with a tentative decision, I would ask, several times, if they all agreed. Usually I had a hunch about things we might need to reconsider before making a decision that we would all have to live by.

COMMUNITY, SCHOOL SIZE, AND RELATIONSHIPS

Size can effect community because the interactions are affected by size, and a lot depends on the nature of the interactions. Some OB Schools in the States strike me as getting very big, and I'm a little worried about that, things can get lost. Even if the director is an advocate of community, things can get so big that there isn't the chance for the kind of communication that adds muscle—jointly imposed—to what the expectations are.

If things get too big, people don't have time together, especially staff, and they are our primary resource. Nor does the administration have time, and I think that that lack of time sets up a tone and procedures that do not reinforce community, which I would fight for because I think it is essential.

For example, despite the efforts to have a good staff and an effective staff, sometimes a kind of weeding is needed—altering a staff's role or suggesting that maybe this isn't the place for them. I need to have time with you, to sort things out, to be together not always in the office, but around, to be able to say to you, "I get the feeling your interests are elsewhere," or whatever.

In a community, these things can happen. If you have a record of consistency and caring, then you don't have to beat around the bush when you're raising a problem with someone. I resent it when people beat around the bush with me, I tend to say, "For chrissakes, let it hang out. If it's wrong, I'll let you know; if it isn't, I assume we've both got a problem." In a community conflicts can be effectively resolved.

Another thing about a community is, when you have a mature staff, then there are several people to whom less experienced staff feel free to go. They may be scared or confused, or have had a near miss that they are afraid to tell me about. Yet they need advice, and can trust that more mature staff member to maintain their confidentiality, and to give them support. In an atmosphere of trust, an important aspect of community, these interactions and relationships can be fostered. Someone can say to me, "Bob, did you know so and so..", and I can make myself available to that person, take a walk, go for a canoe ride. I myself must be trustworthy and not judgemental, which fosters a kind of exchange and openness that you don't often see. Δ

Community: Past and Future

by Wendy Pieh

Certainly when I think of COBWS I think of community. By community I mean a place where an individual can feel an appreciated part of a greater whole, acknowledged as a valuable and contributing member, with a sense of freedom to explore, grow and take on increasing responsibilities.

When we began COBWS at Black Sturgeon, community was not a word that we were using in terms of what we were trying to establish. I had a strong personal bias toward the staff living Outward Bound, being models for what we were trying to offer students. As well, I believed that only when given choice and freedom would instructors take responsibility fully and benefit from a sense o f really making courses happen. My father did a lot of personal growth work with us in groups, and we built pretty impressive levels of trust.

When hiring, I don't think that either of us looked for the normal profile of an Outward Bound instructor. For instance, I hired Mary Morgan because of her smile and travels, Oliver LaRocque because I couldn't figure out his laugh, and Bill Templeman because of his commitment to integrity. Hard skills were essential of course, yet more was required.

We also had no money, and had to rely on each other extensively to get through. The first summer we had no vehicles to start out, and borrowed them from neighbours, families and staff. We hauled people around in an old rambler and some big old other car, as well as using our neighbour Einer's van, which could actually pull a trailer.

Our isolation was also a factor, with us having to turn to one another to get social needs met. We would sometimes pile into a few cars and go down to the Dorion, where Moon Joyce would get the whole place doing the bunny hop.

At the end of that summer my dad and I looked at each other and said, "Yup, organized chaos, just the way we like it."

It wasn't until a couple of summers later that I began to take note of and appreciate the community that was developing. When we started community meetings, thanks to a disgruntled Fritz Lehmberg, the commitment from staff to participate in discussing issues and concerns, and to making decisions together absolutely astounded me. We all felt not only great ownership and pride in COBWS, but also equally important in its future. We had a highly functioning community (even though Andy Orr and Wendy Talbot could not come to terms about dogs - I really think the issue was about height.)

Testing Grounds

Once we realized that we did indeed have a very special community, we worked hard to perpetuate and protect it. When the new director, Ali McArthur, arrived, he couldn't understand why we would do things with conscensus when other ways were easier and more structured. He and I would discuss things for hours, always with me gaining his acceptance as well as his skepticism: "I mean, Wendy, what will happen when the balloon bursts, when the going gets really and truly tough. Do you think that your community will last through that?"

COBWS faced several major tests, wherein we displayed our community at all levels. The first was when the financial crisis occurred and we asked staff if they could make any donations. Several staff did, including Rob Linscott. Imagine when, two months later, he received his pay check, only to be told please not to cash it! I received only support from staff through those rough times, with never a complaint.

A second test was the drowning of a young student. When he drowned, we pulled together into a unit where I could hardly even see the line between myself and someone else. It's hard for me to write about it even now, as I feel back to the support offered by the community. That one made a convert of Ali; his skepticism evaporated.

A third test happened after I left, which I can only relate from hearsay. That was when the school had to be evacuated due to fire burning its way through

the forests. Everything was packed up and moved in a few hours, with no one complaining or worrying about who was doing what. It just dot done, and done quickly.

Future Possibilities

From what I can understand, the COBWS community is now facing another major challenge, due primarily to expansion and growth. I make the assumption, hopefully correctly, that everyone involved with COBWS wants to preserve the sense of community that has developed. More than one visiting director from other schools throughout the world told me that COBWS was Outward Bound in its essence and a great deal of that has to do with community as I've defined it.

COBWS has hung in there as a powerful community for a long time, and it will take some doing to lose that sense of community. I'm sure that I have stars in my eyes, at least to some extent, yet, every time I'm back, the same feeling pervades. However, there are a few things to think about.

If you accept my definition of community, then it also becomes apparent that none of those characteristics are dependent upon a small size or the intimacy of location. An individual can feel an important and crucial member of a community that is very large and distant.

The first, foremost and primary step in promoting that feeling is through the continuing development of trust. Of course there are a myriad of ways to develop trust - the basic one to those of us at Outward Bound is trust built through common experience. In a small, intimate community that is fairly easily achieved. It may have to be more consciously structured in the larger and more complicated community that is evolving at COBWS.

Incredible efforts at communication are also essential. When the communicators are spaced far apart, with differing perspectives, misunderstandings invariably occur. If there is a basic level of trust, and structured ways to clear up misunderstandings, different aspects of the community will work toward understanding, not misunderstanding, one another. Effective communication will have gigantic payoffs.

Forgiveness is also important, almost as important as owning one's contributions to the problem. It could be easy in the complex community that COBWS is becoming to blame each other through misunderstandings and confused issues around trust.

With some concentrated effort in the areas of trust, communication, and forgiveness, COBWS should be able to absorb and positively influence a growing and diverse community.Δ

The Circle of Community
A Personal Reflection on COBWS History

by Charles Luckman

The fire that threatened the school during the dry summer of the Mt. St. Helens eruption (1980) was another test for the Outward Bound community. Fires swept through the canoe country of northwest Ontario threatening several June brigades. Two days before the start of the July courses high winds pushed a fire to within two miles of Homeplace on Black Sturgeon Lake. In several hours, working rapidly, we sank the canoes in the lake, loaded equipment and food into every available vehicle, said a couple mantras, left a few amulets, and drove in a long dusty caravan into the night down Black Sturgeon road to the rock site where the equipment and food was piled in a heap. When I called Alistair McArthur, the school director, the next morning and told him the news, he paused, and then asked "Can we run the courses?" I said our course area was closed, our equipment was in a heap, and we had no phone or base of operations. "We can't refund the course tuition," he said,"we've already spent it. We'll go tits up for sure this time."

I said I'd confer with the staff and get back to him in an hour. Alistair also said that the school phone was ringing "bloody awful" because the fires of northwest Ontario were played every night on the television screes in Toronto and people were worried about safety. Last summer 13 students had drowned because of hypothermia on Lake Timiskaming, and the public would not stand for another disaster. "If we can't guarantee reasonable risk and safety, we close the school," Alistair said.

In two days the July courses were to start. It looked bleak as I walked back to the staff who were having breakfast and playing hacky sack. Within an hour the pay phone at the Dorion Inn became our temporary operations center. Within six hours we were at Lakeside University's gymnasium sorting equipment and food, and manning the outside pay phone 24 hours a day as our emergency center. Students were to arrive in a few hours; where to go for expedition? The Minnesota Outward Bound School and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area responded to our calls and when the July students arrived they were on their way to the States for their Outward Bound adventure. The Homeplace community's ability to collectively and openly communicate needs and concerns, and then efficiently problem solve, was the key, I felt, to our success.

Because the power of thought has the capacity to control events, the positive attitude of the Cobwebs community not only saved the school in 1980, but in the early years of the school as well, when the financial viability of the school was in question. The power of thought was also evident in our desire to create "good karma" whenever or wherever we could. We felt that our collective good intentions (naive though they may have seemed to outsiders) had more power than our creditors, our deficit, our low student numbers; that our collective action to actively give something of quality to the world and each other was more powerful than market forces and the balance sheet; even more powerful than a fire which stopped two miles from the school when the winds "miraculously" shifted direction by 180 degrees.

Community, in contrast to the individual, reflects ecology. All of us, plants and animals, breathe the same air and are nourished and sustained by the same mother, the earth. Since the 12th Century, when people began to fence land and exclude others, western culture has emphasized the rights of the individual over that of the collective. Some of this has been helpful in establishing a bill of rights with political leaders and the political majority. Individualism, however, went too far when it lost its awareness of the interdependency of all life. The environment, especially, has suffered from individual selfishness. The Cobwebs community, when it was initially created, was hearkening back to a primordial time when belief in community was part of the culture before individualism became rapacious. Instead of focusing on the linear and the individual, COBWS took the spirit of service one step further than other Outward Bound Schools, choosing to focus instead on the cyclic aspects of community as it is reflected in the circle (that wholeness is the starting

point and not the part). The decision making process of consensus was patterned to mirror the needs of the whole and the individual. This was similar also to how the brigades made decisions in the field. This experiment in community leadership was perhaps unique at the time when other Outward Bound schools were typically patterned on a leadership pyramid similar to the military. I believed that the Cobwebs experiment in community begun by Bob and Wendy Pieh, and attracting like minded people from around the world, was a healthy and much needed redefining of Outward Bound.

Native cultures have symbolized their kinship with life in all its various forms through their language. They also have reflected the regenerating, renewing, and reproductive power of the earth community by their emphasis on the woman and the feminine (most native cultures are matrilineal). The power of thought and language was an important part, as I've already noted, to the Cobwebs community, but so was the focus on woman. As the Cobwebs community at Homeplace was unusual for stressing consensus and collective decision making, so was COBWS in the beginning different from other Outward Bound schools (which were male dominated) by being woman centered, reflecting the true nature of ecology and community.

When I first arrived at Homeplace on Black Sturgeon Lake in April, 1979, I was pleasantly surprised to find the school run by women. Wendy Pieh was the Program Director and center of this seemingly matrilineal community. Like no other Outward Bound school I have ever seen or heard of, women were empowered to be themselves and to take at least an equal share of the decision making. The three course directors were women (Wendy Talbot, Sue Miners, and Gino Godwin); Bertha Bumchuckles soon arrived to run the kitchen; and Mary Morgan and Moon Joyce helped keep the music and laughter ratio high. (I should mention parenthetically that the Cobwebs community stressed a celebration of music. Few staff had casettes or stereos. The making of music was a vital part of everyone's daily routine, and I attributed this to the feminine energy pulsating through the community).

When I arrived in Toronto, I was surprised at first by how male dominated the Board of Trustees was in contrast to the leadership at Homeplace. By the early 1980's however, women were taking a vital role on the Board as well: Joanne Raynes as chairperson, and Susan Gibson and Alice Casselman as early Board members.

My favorite memory of Cobwebs community came at Christmas, 1981. I was left alone after winter staff training to take care of the sled dogs. The battery phone wasn't working very well because of the extreme cold. I wanted to reach out and celebrate somehow with loved ones. A ski down the lake only seemed to highlight my aloneness at this gregarious time of year. My thoughts slowly turned to the doggies as it was time to feed them.

"The doggies. Hurrah! I'll cook the Christmas turkey for them," I thought. When dinner was ready I brought them into the dining hall, tied napkins around their necks, and with Nancy at the head of the table, and Sam on my right and Chip on my left, had a memorable community meal that was like no other. Δ

The Role Community Plays in Attracting Returning Staff

by Paul Landry and Matty McNair

This paper presents some ideas on the value and role of a community within an Outward Bound program in the hope of stimulating further discussion on the topic. First, I want to explore the value of a model community according to how I think Kurt Hahn saw it. Second, I will discuss how returning staff and senior staff are attracted to such communities as places to work and live.

I will begin by defining community within the context of Outward Bound. I would like to point out that emphasis on community is not new to Outward Bound. In fact, Kurt Hahn was profoundly indebted to Plato for;

> "the idea that a human being cannot achieve perfection without becoming part of a perfect society — that is, without creating social harmony to sustain the harmonious life of the individual."1

H.L. Brereton, Hahn's Director of Studies at Gordonstoun showed how this view, shared by Hahn, compares to certain other educational priorities.

> Hahn, in his broadcast talk just after Gordonstoun was opened in 1934, said that there were three views of education, which he called the Ionian, The Spartan, and the Platonic. The first believes that the individual ought to be nurtured and humoured regardless of the interests of the community. According to the second, the individual may and should be neglected for the benefit of the State. The third, the Platonic view, believes that any nation is a slovenly guardian of its own interests if it does not do all it can to make the individual citizen discover his own powers. And it further believes that the individual becomes a cripple from his or her own point of view if he or she is not qualified by education to serve the community.2

In tracing the philosophical roots of Outward Bound, one can begin to see the fundamental relationship between personal development and the awakening of an individual's collective concern for the community. For Outward Bound students this relationship comes to focus within the context of their group. For staff, the same dynamic principle exists within the context of the school community. In both instances the individual is responsible to a larger whole.

Outward Bound today, as an organization can and should create communities that strive to set an example of, to quote Plato: "a perfect society". One might say that it is not enough to simply espouse the traditional Outward Bound values. The calling is to internalize the thrust of Outward Bound and integrate that into our daily living within the context of community.

I am a firm believer that human beings are continually striving for a higher level of consciousness and a deeper spiritual awareness. If this is true, then human beings would naturally gravitate towards communities which embody this same striving. I believe this happens on a conscious level with some people and an unconscious level with others.
It would follow then, that staff who work for a program or a school with a strong, supportive community, one which embodies the ideals of personal growth and the development of the self, would be predisposed to returning to that community.

This has been our experience at the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School. Through emphasizing the growth and development of a harmonious society for community members, we are able to increase the number of returning staff and maintain a large pool of senior staff. This is imperative if we wish to carry on the philosophies of Outward Bound and insure a high level of program safety and quality.

As a leader in such a community, I must emphasize continually the importance of the community through all my interactions with staff and students. My major responsibility then becomes one of fostering an environment where creative people will strive for growth.

Again, I strongly believe that Outward Bound is a place of growth for students and STAFF. Through being part of a community which lives and embodies values such as compassion, openness, emotional risk taking, empowerment and a striving for a better understanding of the self, this small society becomes a catalyst for the growth of its members: the Outward Bound Staff.

I am eager to explore some of the ideas stated above. Again, I hope this paper will stimulate some discussions which, in the end will help us understand more of what Outward Bound is all about. I will end by quoting Ian Yolles, former Executive Director at COBWS. The quote is part of the introduction to our Staff Handbook.

> OUTWARD BOUND is a dynamic living/learning process; a catalyst for personal growth and change. It has a remarkable history, one that has created equally remarkable people. As a staff member at the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School that history is now yours. Each successive year of the school's operation brings a new configuration of people who, in turn, bring new vision and experience. We may refer to our history but we are obliged to reinvent, over and over again, our future. That process begins with the asking of questions, the stimulation of dialogue, and the critical examination of our most basic purpose, intentions and assumptions. The domain of our questioning, like our educational endeavour itself, is infinite in scope. Our collective enterprise includes issues related to safety, educational theory, philosophical paradigms, environmental ethics, spiritual communication and a host of others.3

1. "Sketch of a Moving Spirit: Kurt Hahn",Thomas James, 1980.
2. "Gordonstoun", H.L. Brereton.
3. "The Instructor Handbook" Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School.

Community-Commonity-Common Unity More Than A Play on Words

by Moon Joyce

> "How does the spiritual become political?" This is a deadly question. I think it is one that can only be answered from the position of standing in the centre of a circle and embracing every direction at the same time.1

What is common in community? What assumptions do we make about our commonness? And how does the perpetuation of those assumptions exercise 'power-over' and interfere with the processes of accurate, equitable and just communication in our relationships within community?

I begin this exploration with the concept of language. I have three reasons for exploring the question of language commonalities and differences:

1) As we struggle to "communicate", we cannot assume that we are heard and understood in the language, words, and metaphors with which we speak. We communicate our understanding of community through words and language.

To assume that our language is common is to render diversity of knowledge, experience, mythologies, values, and worldviews invisible. Learning to communicate requires an acute ability to listen. In a sense, learning to be a listener is a very complicated and intense form of training.To truly be able to hear what someone else is saying who is different from myself, I must educate myself as to the language of the speaker in all the richness of it's specificities and sensibilities. What would such a commitment on the part of the whole community or commu-

nity of communities look like?

The time we give to a person and the depth of attention we pay to her/his words and feelings are measures of the worth we accord her/him.2

This takes an extraordinary commitment to pay concentrated attention, to honour and respect the differences we each face, (for differences are shared - they are not unilateral as in "I'm normal and you're the one that's different) and to take the responsibility to educate myself without depending on the grace and energy of the one to which I wish to hear to be my teacher.

2) As history has been written by the "winners", so too, language has been crafted and policed by its "owners" through a sort of linguistic capitalism that structures and enforces a value laden hierarchy of knowledge, and consequently, a value laden hierarchy of power. (You might ask yourself "Who writes the dictionaries?")

3) As we struggle to unveil the assumptions around what is common in our daily experience within community, an investigation into the complexity of diversity and power differentials in language should also lead us to question assumptions around other aspects of what we normally consider as common in our living community and how diversity and the power and potential of diversity and difference is rendered invisible, silent, and disempowered.

Lest this seem despairing and disempowering, it is of great solace to me to be reminded by my friend Tziporah Russell (a former editor) that pockets of resistance and the inevitable groundswell of folk-language/popular culture —language of the people—has resulted consistently throughout the evolution of the English language in words pushing their way through and past the channels of linguistic control to be birthed into "common usage", as dictionary authors so quaintly refer to the phenomena of underground, actually ground-level/grass-roots/radical language formation. Note here how the term "common usage" is both value laden with class inference and insidiously and ambiguously derogatory.

We assume language in our community to be common, with the rare exception of our Francophone members. But is this so? Even as I write, I know that my speaking and hearing comes from a vocabulary that has been constructed from the subjective knowledge of others - the English language, and that my choice of words is from a pool of words that I have not created. Any meaning that I give to words is meaning derived from my own subjective knowledge which is then matched as closely as is possible to some pre-existing word. For example, when I use the word home, it has a meaning for me that is likely very different from every other person's knowledge of that word. The dictionary itself is not neutral in its definition of the word - for it has been constructed over centuries by the owners and principle definers of the English language. I thus measure my knowledge—my learned, holistic, embodied experience of the word *home* —against the Oxford Dictionary definition and recognize some intersections of superficial commonality, but I also discover large gaps of definition and meaning along with contradictions. This occurs even while I am a member of the dominant culture that is invested in this language. I locate myself as a white, anglo-saxon, female, educated, middle-class, able-bodied, middle-aged, fat, childless, lesbian.

What is most important to me lies in that which is different. As a lesbian, my knowledge of home is constructed through my holistic, embodied, lived experience with family. My family is constructed in such a way that is not only invisible in this culture but also ignored, feared, de-valued, and persecuted. When I hear the word home used by a non-homosexual, then I can be almost certain that we are talking about two very different concepts. My hearing of his or her use of the word home is a definition of a heterosexist home and more closely resembles the dominant culture's dictionary definition. Even if I am to speak of my home as a lesbian, there is no guarantee that a non-lesbian will have a concept of what that means and will automatically assume that its "just like one of our homes except lesbians live in it." Thus my language and my knowledge is rendered invisible. By non-lesbians denying my difference, my truth and my knowledge are rendered invisible and consequently denies their value - I am, in essence, de-valued.

I find that my "mother tongue"—and there's another hotbed of interpretation—is not as common as I formerly believed. I have learned that in the most significant ways; in the places of my difference, that this language is not mine. I feel as though I use it as a serf uses the land of the land"lord" - wholly dependent upon it but with no claim to the decisions of it's usage. It is what I have been born into—my "heritage", but I am merely renting it. Not only this, but I must obey it's rules of usage and it's grammatical laws in order to be heard and seen as acceptable by those who maintain control in our society over what is acceptable to be seen and heard. Any deviance, diversion/difference is un-acceptable, unwelcome, seen as un-kempt, un-kept, un-known, and un-worthy. (Unworthy of course with the exception to how well it might reflect and flatter the dominant

view) Thus my lesbian language/knowledge/culture/worldview is acceptable only so far is it reflects and reinforces the language/knowledge/culture/worldview of the dominant 'Oxford English' culture that I live in; that, plus the acceptability of my difference as long as it remains non-threatening or scary.

> "Language is a value system. It's not neutral. It's a *value system* created and maintained by patriarchal, white, middle-class, heterosexual, educated people who generally tyrannize the rest of the world."3 (italics mine)

My discussion here of language has been birthed from the painful gestation of embracing and learning to love the richness that I reclaim as my own, within and because of my own diversity and difference from the dominant society that I live in, and specifically, in the communities through which I live, work, love, and battle. This reclamation is the result of conscious efforts to resist, name and externalize the internalized oppressors within.

Difference in Power is Not Necessarily Oppressive But All Oppression Comes from a Difference in Power

What happens when I overlay the template-structure of this exploration of community and communicaton over categories of difference other than sexual orientation? Categories including:

- race
- languages other than English
- ability (physical, mental, emotional, intui tional)
- spiritual practise and/or religion
- physical size, shape, and appearance
- gender
- nationality and culture
- age
- class
- legal status

With each of these categories there is a *subculture* with all its differing specifics and sensibilities of language, knowledge, values, and worldview. Each subcultured category is, to varying levels of intensity, valaued or devalued and assigned a degree of *power* and *worth* in a world that is patriarchal, hierarchical , capitalist, and generally immersed in the politics of domination. Such politics and infrastructures create a complex grid of oppressions.

Oppression is the systematic and pervasive mistreatment of individuals on the basis of their membership in various groups which are disadvantaged by the institutionalized imbalances in social power in a particular society. Oppression includes both institutionlized or "normalized" mistreatment as well as instanes of violence. It includes the invalidation, denial, or the non-recogniction of the complete humanness (the goodness, uniqueness, smartness, powerfulness, etc.) of those who are members of the mistreated group.

The perpetuation of oppression is made possible by the conditioning of new generations of human beings into the role of being oppressed and the role of being oppressive. In a society in which there is oppression, everyone (at one time or another)is socialized into both of these roles. People who are the target group of a particular form of mistreatment are socialized to become victims: people who are the non-target group of a particular form of mistreatment are socialized to become perpetrators—either in a direct, active form or in an indirect, passive form. Neither of these roles serves our best interests as human beings.4

Oppression has a multiplier effect when an individual is a member of more than one target group. It is important therefore to be clear about where one is located in terms of target groups before assessing power differentials and roots of oppression. If, as a lesbian, I am also south Asian and a non-landed immigrant, each of these defintions carry potent social and political implications. They also point to the reality that a person's location or position is complex and multi-dimesnional. Thus, simplistic analyses are virtualy impotent and potentailly dangerous in addressing the problems that oppression poses. Addressing anti-oppressive strategies are not impossible, but caution and clarity must be inherent in the processes.

Try to imagine, if you will, how differences become invisible. They become invisible when I, in whose vested interest it is to maintain the status quo or the illusion of unity and commonality in community, am threatened and uncomfortable with differences while simultaneously wanting to appear accepting, liberal, non-prejudiced, tolerant, and even celebrant but resist the painful work and responsibility of learning about the "other"5: learning how to be present with the other and to educate myself enough to be able to truly hear the other and thus be in authentic relationship. For those who bear the daily cost of being "other" and invisible in their differences, this oppression erodes confidence, identity, and self-esteem.

Where does the unity of community then come from? and who pays the price in upholding the pretense of commonness? (common values, common

vision, common interests, common goals) Who continues to be expected to overlook differences, blend in, cooperate with the community, bend in consensus, give in, go with the flow? It is those who are kept most invisible, silenced, disempowered by being least valued. It is those whose difference is most feared and furthest away from the dominant culture. The cost is self-censure, closeting (a term from homosexual culture which means to stay voluntarily invisible rather than struggle to be seen, accepted, and included), and the loss of self to the "common good". This does not create unity but homogeny. And those who suffer the most by being homogenized are those who must deny and be denied the expression of their complete richness and complexity of self.

Because we, as human beings fear what we don't know and don't want to know:

> "Fear blurs our vision. When we are afraid, we cannot perceive the specifics of difference. We can only perceive fear."6

Unless this particular source of fear is named, made visible and kept visible, it can be easily avoided and discounted as an "irrelevant", "peripheral" or "sundry" issue. Worse than this, it can be labelled divisive and counter-productive and thus is shunned and denied. This particular strategy of denial is most dangerous as it creates a climate where conflict is perceived as negative and forms of resistance and growth are silenced.

There is a belief...that when you resist something, you give it energy, you create it. This is a simplistic misunderstanding of how energy works. It confuses resistance with denial. *When we deny something, we create it* - or at least we create conditions in which it can grow and flourish, precisely because there is no resistance. In Nazi Germany, it was not the resistance to fascism that allowed the spread of Anti-Semitism and led to the death camps, it was the widespread denial, the refusal to admit that such things could happen. It is not resistance to the possibility of nuclear holocaust that will bring it about, it is denial. 7 (italics mine)

When I deny my differences I deny the most significant aspects of myself and those aspects come to be devalued and feared. All this is not to say that commonalities do not exist - they do. The COBWS community is predominantly homogeneous (white, middle and upper-middle class, heterosexual - especially males, physically able, 20-30 years old, childless, Judeo-Christian upbringing, North American, and formally educated) All and all, this profile is very privileged, particularly when compared to the rest of the world. Ironically, it is this possession of privilege that is one of our most common experiences. This is not a new discussion in our community, but privilege is one of the topics that tends to be avoided because it creates any number of uncomfortable and unpopular reactions: guilt, denial, shame, fear, paralysis, conflict. Privilege is a commonality that tends to stay invisible because of a fear that says, "What would it look like if I didn't have these privileges? What would I have to give up? Share? Create space for? Sacrifice?"

Being privileged does not mean that we have escaped injury or deprivation in our lives. Indeed we are all wounded people. In a culture that abuses and exerts power-over children, silences, and renders them invisible, we have all learned about oppression and power politics in relationships. We have been raised in a world of estrangement that is crazy-making.

Younger self is trained by the culture to believe that everything it feels is wrong. We are raised to compete with others from the moment we can speak, and yet taught that good people are not competitive. We are raised in a climate of violence, in which force is the national answer to every question, yet taught that anger and aggression are nasty. We are trained to feel that we are worthless unless others give us approval.8

Is it any wonder that, when we get scared, we will identify with and seek to be protected by those we perceive to have the most power in our world? We learn from childhood who has the real power in this world. We then go about learning how to get access to that power in order to survive and thrive. With this knowledge I do battle with my conscience: "Will I resist siding with the powerful, the "winners", questioning the injustices proliferated by those exerting 'power-over', or will I collaborate with it, defend it, protect it from scrutiny and criticism, and thus ensure its health and perpetuity?"

Having the luxury of hindsight, I look back to the summer of 1988 and remember clearly the resistance and backlash that occurred in the community as we began a formalized exploration of the phenomena of oppression based on gender. We called it "Gender Issues". This title in itself served to hide the true issue that we were—and continue to be—addressing: that being, in passive language, *the systematic and daily oppression of women*. However, even this term masks and protects the identity of the oppressors. In active language, the term would be more accurately named *the systematic and daily male*

oppression of women.

> As of Staff Training 1990, the manifestation of 'Gender Issues' has now been taken up under the umbrella of 'Emotional Safety Issues'. But still, the root of the dangers faced by the oppressed are not identified and are effectively kept hidden: the root being various forms of oppressions - misogyny, homophobia, racism, classism, abel-ism, etc. As Outward Bound instructors we find it comfortable to address physical safety issues as 'risk management' - thus identifying the root causes of danger. But we fail to apply concepts and practises of 'risk management' to root causes of emotional safety issues - precisely that being oppressive and dangerous attitude and behaviors.9

What I found particularly painful during the season of 1988 were the complaints of women and men over the issue - calling it divisive, a threat to the community, irrelevant. Women who, for whatever reason - avoidance, fear, internalized misogyny, identification with the powerful - pleaded, "We're all just people here. It's not a male-female thing. We're all the same." How painful this was, as once again, male-supremacy was protected, those of the oppressed group who had made themselves vulnerable and expended enormous amounts of energy to bring visibility to the issues were silenced, their acts of resistance scorned, and themselves marginalized. However, since that time, many of those same women have reversed their perspectives and have engaged in the struggle to gain insights into oppressions by gender (feminism) and pursuing self-determination as women. This is a difficult but hopeful process that embraces difference, makes it visible, and values it. It is learning that oppression is violence.

We confuse conflict with violence, yet the two are not synonymous. Violence is not anger; not shouting; not a feeling; a mood, or any specific action. I define violence as the imposition of power-over. The manager who imposes a speed-up on the line may be inflicting violence, even though she/he is soft-spoken and smiling. The Dene women who points her rifle at the government officer who is trying to force her off her land is resisting violence. Resistance causes conflict... Whenever we try to cause change, we can expect conflict. If there is no resistance to change, nothing is truly changing. 10

When conflicts arise from examining questons of oppression due to power differentials and targeted groups, there is often a tendency to avoid ownership of the problems and issues that oppression brings to the individuals of those groups and to the community as a whole. Individuals who keep raising the issues (as members of a target group or as an ally to those targeted) in an attempt to keep them visible and resolvable but often encounter disinterest, denial, and even hostility: "That's your problem, not mine." "Why do you always bring it up?" "Gender Issues again? I'm tired about that old topic. Besides didn't we deal with that last year?" "There he goes again on his thing about diversity."

I think its important to be aware that, if an issue needs to be raised, there will be a very good reason for it and it will almost always be raised by the individulas who are most affected by the issue and least supported for their opinion. In true community, issues of oppression are shared issues. By refusing to share ownership and responsibility for oppressive conditions and behaviors in community (due to fear of involvement, commitment to change, etc.) the individual of the targeted group(s) or the ally who has struggled to bring visibility to the issues will most certainly suffer isolation, estrangement, criticism, or even experience being scapegoated.

It is my belief that Outward Bound was founded, exists and functions in a world that is racist, classist, misogynist, and addicted to models of domination. A few workshops and articles on racism, poverty, or male violence against women, children and less powerful men does not mean that "we have dealt with the issues." It only means that we have acknowledged their presence, made them visible in our consciousness. These "issues" are with us every day, they are in the air we breathe, and it is likely that they will be with us for some time to come.

The Magic of Immanence - It's An Inside Job

Starhawk, psychotherapist, author, political activist, and witch offers the following definition of magic and immanence: magic is the ability to change consciousness at will and immanence is the concept of power from within (potential and personal power), power to (abilities and capabilities), and power with (the concept of collective and cooperative power and action. The concept of immanence is an alternative to the prevailing hegemonic concepts of domination — that being power over. eg. "Might as right" and "the poor will always be with us" (because we keep them there) etc. Rhiane Eisler (1987, 1990) refers to the application of the concept of immanence as the "Partnership Model" as opposed to the present "Dominator Model". But within these wonderful concepts there must exist a critical analy-

sis that leads to a continuing process of locating power in relationships and forms of oppression that are structured into our world at the interpersonal, intrapersonal levels of community AND within the structures and ideologies of our cultures, political, economic, educational and health institutions. For, to fail in doing so would allow the dangerous assumptions to prevail that would assume everyone has "permission" and equal opportunities to exercise their personal power. It is almost impossible to identify power differentials and abuses without looking at structures and systems of oppression that systematically limit opportunities of human actualization.

The challenge of learning how to use privilege to affect positive social change can seem overwhelming and even frightening. Privilege need not be experienced as an albatros of guilt that weighs down my spirit and energies. Privileges are capabilities. Rather than focusing on privilege and power-over (its negative side) I can choose to focus on its power-from-within (its immanence) and power-to. Privilege and powers and opportunities that come with privilege can be used daily to manifest immanence and affect change. An image that comes to mind is that of the ancient Egyptian Goddess Nut whose task it is to birth the sun in the morning, carry it across the heavens, and carry it to its inevitable death in the evening. Hers is the power and duty to enact the same task daily for eternity. Pictures of Her show a woman stretched out in full view from one horizon to the other, arching over the earth and all its creatures. From something as predictable and common as the circling of the sun, I can enact what powers I do have when I challenge myself with the question, "What can I do and what will I do with my privilege today?"

When valued and used with healthy intention and a spirit of joy, my capabilities and abilities can be liberating and lead to greater power and strength — especially when tempered by the trials of resistance against crippling guilt.

As we struggle through our training as instructors, we learn compassion, cooperation, and can truly sense a spirit of unity as a result of those shared experiences. But before I can experience and claim a sense of unity in community I must engage myself in my own struggle to learn about my privilege and membership in the dominant and dominating culture and, consequently, what that means to me as an educator and woman in community. To do this requires an unlearning of my oppressive attitudes and behaviors. It requires that I clarify and name that which is truly common and shared from that which is different and must be respected and given the space to be. It requires that I take responsibility for my strength and my power while at the same time ensuring that there is a space created and maintained for others to be fully visible in order to claim and use their own power-from-within (immanence) Finally it requires my commitment to the tasks of learning new skills of being an ally and of working with and across differences.

Unity is not in sameness. Unity is in the struggle to work and create with our differences. And community is where we get to do this. And it will be magic.

> Magic is the art of turning negatives into positives, of spinning straw into gold. In the act of resistance we can spin the gold of our vision, can join together in ways that embody new stories, new forms, new structures, based on immanence.11

Moon Joyce
Toronto, March 1991

I would like to thank Louise Karch for the valuable insights and editorial suggestions she contributed to this article. My thanks also go to Ken Victor for his sensitive (and sensible) editorial input and to Ginger Mason (formerly Bertha Bumchuckles) for her years of vision and persistance with many of the issues addressed here. She fed this community very well indeed.

N.B. Articles that have been cited in this paper will be made available to the Pieh Library at Homeplace under the title: Outward Bound Journal of Education - Reference Materials. Books, however might not be available.

References:

Brittan, Arthur & Maynard, Mary 1984. *The Family as a Site of Oppression* from Sexism, Racism and Oppression Basil Blackwell Pub. London

Cameron, Barbara *"Gee, You Don't Seem Like and Indian From the Reservation"* from This Bridge Called My Back Moraga, C. & Anzaldua, G. (ED.s), Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, New York 1981

Davis, Angela 1984. Women, Race and Class Random House Pub. New York

Eisler, Rhiane 1987. The Chalice and the Bible Harper and Row., San Francisco

_____ & Loye, David 1990. The Partnership Way Harper Collins Pub., San Francisco

Frye, Marilyn 1983. The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory: *On Being White: Thinking Toward a Feminist understanding of Race and Race Supremacy.* pp 110-127 The Crossing Press Feminist Series, The Crossing Press, Pub., Trumansburg, N.Y.

Lorde, Audre 1984. Sister Outsider The Crossing Press Feminist Series, The Crossing Press/Freedom, Pub., California

Maracle, Lee 1990. Oratory: Coming Theory *Gallerie: Women Artists' Monographs;* Gallerie Publications, Vancouver

Narayanb, Uma - from *Working Together Across Difference: Some Consideration on Emotions and Political Practise* Hypathia, Vol. 3 No. 2, 1988.

Peck, M. Scott 1987. The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace Touchstone Books, Simon and Shuster, Pub., New York

Rich, Adrienne 1980. *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience* Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Summer 1980 Vol. 5 No. 4

Rockhill, Kathleen 1986. *The Chaos of Subjectivity* - transcript of a lecture delivered at the Ontario Institute For Studies in Education (OISE), April 7, 1986 for the "Popular Feminism Lecture Series" Canadian Women Studies/ Les Cahiers de la Femmes, Vol. 8 No. 4

Starhawk, 1982. Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics, Beacon Press, Boston

_____, 1987. Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority and Mystery Harper and Row, Pub., New York

Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures, Various authors. Edited by *The Telling It Book Collective*: Sky Lee, Lee Maracle, Daphne Marlatt, Betsy Warland. From the conference proceedings of the "Telling It" Conference, Vancouver, 1988. Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver 1990

Yamada, Mitsuye *Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster: Reflections of an Asian American Woman* from This Bridge Called My Back Morage, C. & Anzaldua, G. (ED.s), Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, New York 1981

Yamota, Gloria *Something About the Subject Makes it Hard to Name,* from Making Face, Making Soul: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color, Gloria Anzuldua, (Ed.) Anna Lute Foundation Books, San Francisco 1990

Endnotes

1. Maracle, Lee 1988 Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures, *Just Get in Front of the Typewriter and Bleed,* pp. 40 - 41 from the conference proceedings of the "Telling It" Conference, Vancouver, 1988. Edited by *The Telling It Book Collective;* Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, 1990
2. Starhawk, 1982 Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics Beacon Press, Boston p. 99
3. Warland, Betsy 1988 Ibid'; from the chapter entitled "f.) is sure" p. 34
4. Sherover-Marcuse, Ricky unpublished paper, *Liberation Theory: A Working Framework* from the Unlearning Racisms Workshops 6501 Dana, Oakland CA 94609
5. The use of the concept "other" that is referred to here comes from an article by Uma Narayan entitled: *Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practise* Hypatia, Vol. 3 No. 2 1988 Passed on to me by Martha Bell, this article offers an excellent theoretical framework for beginning discussions on assumptions of centrality and marginality.
6. Warland, B., p. 35
7. Starhawk, 1982 Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics p.98
8. Ibid; p. 105
9. Karch, Louise from a conversation - April 1990
10. Ibid; p. 98
11. Ibid; p. 99

On COBWS and Community

by Daniel Vokey

What does "community" mean for COBWS? Elsewhere 1 I have argued that affirming the value of community is a necessary part of our educational mission. I also began to explore what "community" might mean 2, and what its affirmation implies for the design, implementation, and evaluation of our courses; for how staff are hired and trained; and for how we organize ourselves as a school. In what follows I will continue that discussion by proposing that to be for community is to be against oppression. I will present an analysis of oppression based on the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, and then look at some of the ways COBWS is already working against it. As always, I hope this paper will stimulate discussion and and help us better understand and fulfill our mission.

The way I understand it, we are committed to community because we recognize that we must practice what we preach. We realize, in other words, that if we wish to promote such values as self-reliance, care and respect for others, and compassion, then our day-to-day relationships at COBWS, its administration, and its organizational structure should model those same values. We strive to live our Outward Bound ideals not just to be consistent, but also to help us learn what those values mean, and to create the proper environment for our own personal and professional development (in education, it seems these two can hardly be separated).

It also seems to me that, if we are dedicated to promoting and to living out our traditional values, then we are also necessarily committed to removing obstacles to realizing those values.3 I think that to be for community is to be against oppression, then, because I believe that oppression is a major obstacle today to people — including ourselves — living lives of self-reliance, care and respect for others, and compassion. This suggests that we need to understand what oppression is, and how it works, in order to have a realistic grasp of what we are up against in pursuing our educational mission.

What do I mean by "oppression"?4

In Paulo Freire's terms, "oppression" refers to any unwarranted restriction by an individual or group on the potential freedom of other individuals (1970, pp. 40 - 42). Oppression thus includes military conquest; economic imperialism; class conflict; gender, race, ethnic, or any other form of discrimination; any kind of physical or psychological abuse; and any form of indoctrination. In Freire's eye's, oppression is a violation of the human spirit, and a denial of human interconnectedness. It is a violation of the human spirit, because it is through making responsible decisions that people fulfill their unique potential as humans, and oppression robs people of real choice (1970, pp. 45, 73). It is a denial of human interconnectedness, because in removing or limiting their choices, oppression treats people like objects. For Freire, people can only fulfill their potential in and through authentic relationships — in community, one might say — therefore oppression **dehumanizes** both the oppressors and the oppressed (1970, pp. 28-29).

Freire makes two important distinctions concerning different forms of oppression. The first distinction is between its shrewd and naive forms (1970, p. 130; 1875, p. 122). Shrewd oppression consists of all the various tactics — including physical violence, intimidation, economic sanctions, manipulation of opinion through the media, etc. — used intentionally by individuals or groups to maintain their positions of power. Naive oppression results when the actions of even well-intentioned individuals or groups reflect oppressive attitudes, beliefs, or patterns of behaviour. This distinction thus proposes that **oppressive situations perpetuate themselves by conditioning the attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour of those who lack critical reflection.**

The second (and related) distinction is between external and internalized oppression. It cannot be overemphasized that oppression works not only through the overt actions of one individual or group on another, but also through the internalization **by both oppressors and oppressed** of life-denying attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour. According to Freire (1970, pp. 30-31, 150-156, 162-163), one of the greatest obstacles to human emancipation is the internalization by oppressed people(s) of the values and beliefs of those who dominate them, including the belief in their own worthlessness and

helplessness. This is because their belief in their ignorance and powerlessness can prevent the oppressed from having enough confidence to struggle on their own behalf, or from even realizing the injustice of their situation. That the oppressed are thus "submersed" in their oppressive situation represents a violation of their human potential, precondition of freedom and responsibility (1970, pp. 36. 73; 1985, p. 50).5

Freire's analysis of oppression is based primarily (though by no means exclusively) on his experiences in the Third World, including Brazil, Chile, and parts of Africa. Oppression in the industrialized, Western liberal democracies is perhaps somewhat more complex. I would add three points. One, most people are subject to multiple oppression, that is, they are more subject to two or more kinds of oppression because they belong to two or more oppressed groups. This is particularly true of women. Two, people cannot be simply divided into two groups, "oppressors" and "oppressed". It is probably more accurate to say that most people both oppress others (including themselves) and are oppressed as well. Three, oppression is not so much the result of the conscious designs of specific groups or individuals as of certain unequal relationships structured into our concrete social context and reproduced in our culture. An example here would be derogatory racist, ethnic, and gender stereotypes which perpetuate negative attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour directed at specific groups of people, and which perpetuate their disadvantaged social positions.6

In sum: Oppression in all its various forms — shrew and naive, external and internalized — represents a serious obstacle to the realization of COBWS's educational mission. Consequently, strategies for removing and reversing oppression must be part of our educational practice. This latter responsibility requires COBWS to continue and strengthen the Outward Bound tradition of critical social analysis.7 This does not mean standing on soap boxes in the marketplace and loudly denouncing some group or another. It simply means trying to understand better what specific aspects of our concrete social context pose obstacles to particular objectives of our educational mission, and how they might be turned around or eliminated.

Confronting the facts of oppression is a risky business. The most obvious risk is the possibility of being squashed by those who are threatened when oppressive relationships are uncovered. 8 However, there are other, less obvious risks that I think should also be acknowledged. The first risk is of being overcome by guilt. Feelings of guilt may be an appropriate response to the realization that one contributes to, or at least benefits from, oppressive relationships. However, my experience suggests that we can only tolerate feeling guilty up to a certain point, after which we either become paralyzed or repress the source of our guilty feelings altogether — hardly effective alternatives. One way of managing this risk is to consider that much of the oppression in which we participate has a long history, and is not necessarily something we have chosen. Recognition that one is perpetuating oppressive situations, through internalized attitudes, beliefs, and habits and/or through participation in unjust institutions, can therefore be seen not so much as an occasion for guilt as an opportunity for change.

A second risk is of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task facing those struggling against both external and internalized oppression. When we consider all that we are doing to ourselves, each other, and our world, it is not surprising that even school children today sometimes manifest depression and apathy born of despair for the future. Here the words of Bill Dyer come to mind, quoted by Dave Thompson as saying "I am only one, but I can make a difference. I would rather light a candle than curse the darkness".9 As in dealing with guilt, the challenge here is to tread the narrow path between complacency and despair, by managing the tension created by the gap between what is and what could/should be. Critical reflection needs to be balanced by celebration of human goodness, and hope nourished by stories of successful struggles.

A third risk in confronting oppression is of being accused of moral arrogance. Such accusations seem to presume that, if people engage in social criticism or raise moral concerns, then they are claiming a sort of moral superiority because you can only criticize from "high moral ground". I do believe that it is important to worry about the log in one's own eye more than the speck in someone else's. The risk of moral arrogance is real, to the extent one exempts one's own perspective from critical reflection. However, it is neither necessary nor desirable for a social critic to stand above those she or he is questioning. On the contrary, the most effective social critics generally speak to their own community from within it, criticizing social practices against that community's own values and beliefs.11

To bring the matter closer to home: As a white, anglo-saxon, Canadian, straight, male academic I belong to the privileged elite of our day. In raising questions about practices which I perceive to be sexist or racist (for example), I cannot and do not

presume to be free of the sexist and racist attitudes, beliefs, or habits I have internalized. Nor can I deny that I participate in the very social structures that I question. Finally, I cannot pretend that I experience and understandthe consequences of oppression in the same way as those who suffer them directly. These limitations of my perspective require me to listen first, and I speak, to speak with caution and humilty. However, this does not disqualify me from testifying against the negative consequences of sexism and racism, known through my own and others' experiences. Nor does it prevent me from envisioning and working towards alternatives and hopefully more just social relations.

A fourth risk in opposing oppression is of being accused of hypocrisy. As with moral arrogance, hypocrisy itself is real hazard: it would be inconsistent not to attempt to live up to the same standards one uses to question social practices or structures. Yet it would be equally mistaken to refrain from social criticism until one attained perfection. Efforts to change social systems (as opposed to demolishing them) usually involve working within them, and participating in their contradictions and inconsistencies. Again the challenge seems to be to walk a narrow path: here the thin line between being irrelevant and selling out.12 Or, to change the metaphor, perhaps the challenge is to enter the mainstream without being swept away by the current.

So what then can we do? What does this analysis of oppression imply for the pursuit of our mission?

My first point is that, where oppression is systemic, it will only be substantially reduced by reforming the systems and/or structures which perpetuate it. To put the same thing another way: where the very structures of our social systems incorporate and perpetuate unequal relationships, changing those relationships requires changing social structures in a fundamental way. This point was originally made in the classic Marxist analysis of class relationships, but since has been extended to other forms of systemic discrimination.13 My recommendation here is that COBWS continue to promote discussions on the international, national, and School levels about how working with individuals and groups can contribute to broader social change. 14

My second point is that there is no such thing as political neutrality. To remain silent in the face of systemic injustice is to support the status quo, by contributing to the illusion that the oppressive situation is "normal". This raises the question — hotly debated at the Third Outward Bound International Conference — whether, and if so to what extent, Outward Bound should take public stands on politically-sensitive issues. Now, it does not immediately follow from what I have said that Outward Bound Schools should individually or collectively take sides in public political debates. It could be argued that the organization does not have the time or resources to analyze such issues adequately, and it would be irresponsible to take sides prematurely. It could also be argued that taking controversial stands would harm Outward Bound's ability to reach people, by alienating funding agencies and potential participants. In light of these considerations, I propose that COBWS keep the "political participation" debate on the Outward Bound agenda until such time as it is clear whether or not the advantages of avoiding political controversy outweigh the potential benefits of public commitment to the larger social implications of its values.

All of the above is very fine, one might say, but time and resources are finite. At what point will agonizing over "the big picture", or anxious navel-gazing, interfere with our ability to offer quality courses? The analysis above suggests that, to the extent an educational organization lacks critical reflection, it runs the risk of working at cross-purposes to its own objectives. It would be moral arrogance indeed to assume that COBWS and its social context have no need for on-going self-scrutiny! Critical reflection is not just a luxury to be shelved along with the black olives when funds are scarce. However, the fact of limited resources does underline the need for priorities. With this in mind, and recognizing that we cannot do everything at once, I think it makes sense to start by looking at how COBWS could continue and expand what it is already doing to oppose oppression. My specific suggestions are fourfold:

One, that COBWS continue the effort (exemplified by the 1988 spring gender-workshops) to explore how the internalization of oppressive attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour can impair our effectiveness in working both with participants and each other. Needless to say, this implies a commitment by the individuals involved, and the organization, to change. For example, given the decision to reduce pre-course planning time by one day, it is possible that Course Directors (excuse me, "Program Managers") will have a larger role to play in facilitating conflict resolution. Should this turn out to be the case, the ability to deal with (or better, prevent) tensions due to gender, racial, ethnic, or homophobic prejudices will be an important consideration in hiring and training for these positions.

Two, that when working with different racial, ethnic, or socio-economic populations, COBWS continue to

question whether we are not practicing a form of "cultural imperialism" in promoting some of our more culturally-specific values. For example, is the strategy of selecting individuals from a community and training them for a particular kind of leadership role consistent with that community's own style of leadership? 15 Similarly, I suggest we continue to question how many of our models — e.g., of human development, of leadership, of communication, of decision-making, of spiritual growth — are rooted primarily in men's experiences. Do our courses do justice to women's experiences? The Journal of COBWS Education articles on gender-issues, and Suchy's research on how courses affect men and women differently, are good examples of this kind of questioning.

Three, that COBWS continue to investigate what specific oppressive conditions make it difficult or impossible for particular populations to transfer their accomplishments at COBWS back to their concrete social situations. This would include recognizing not only the external manifestations of oppression, such as poverty, physical violence, and lack of access to cultural resources (including quality education), but also its internalized dimension. We need to ask what specific oppressive beliefs and attitudes are reinforced in those contexts, and how can they be counteracted. 16 Examples of positive steps toward these objectives are the moves to encourage continuity of staff, with the appropriate background and expertise, in such programs.

Four, that COBWS continue to work towards proportional representation of minority groups, and equal representation of women, at all levels of the Outward Bound organization. This would include efforts to appreciate what aspects of the organization perpetuate unequal participation. Trying to look after another individual's or group's best interests is no substitute for asking what prevents them from representing their interests themselves.

I would like to end where I began: with the affirmation of "community" as the commitment to practice what we preach. Community has often been cited as a crucial part of what makes COBWS an empowering educational experience for both participants and staff. In other words, commitment within COBWS to relationships of honesty, openness, mutual respect, and compassion has been an integral part of our ability to fulfill our educational mission. Indeed, I have been concerned with oppression here and of human interconnectedness, wherein lies the heart of Outward Bound. I emphasize this dimension of community because I believe that Outward Bound's ability to meet the challenges of the months and years ahead depends upon our willingness to continue to dedicate time and energy to quality relationships in the face of more tangible demands upon our scarce resources. Δ

Bibliography

Brereton, H. (1970). Kurt Hahn of Gordonstoun. In H. Rohrs & H. Tunstall-Behrens (Eds.), Kurt Hahn (pp. 39-66). London: Rou ledge & Kegan Paul.

Bowles, S. & Gintes, H. (1976). Schooling in capitalist America. New York: Basic Books.

Coffin, W,S., Jr. (1988). Justice, not charity. Presentation to the Third Outward Bound International Conference, Cooperstown, New York, January 18-20, 1988.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Herder & Herder.

Freire, P. (1985). The politics of education. South Hadly, Massachusettes: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.

Martin, J.R. (1981). The ideal of the educated person. Educational Theory, 31(2), 97-109.

Morgan, K.P. (1987). Women and moral madness. In M. Hanen & K. Nielsn (Eds.), Science, morality, and feminist theory: Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 13 (Supplement), 201-226.

Raywid, M.A. (1989). Community and schools: A prolegomenon. In J.M. Giarelli (Ed.), Proceedings of the Forty-Forth Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (pp. 2-17). Normal Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society.

Vokey, D.J. (1987). Outward Bound: In search of foundations. Unpublished master's thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

Vokey, D.J. (1988). Gender issues: A question of balance. Journal of COBWS Education ,4(1),

26-30.

Walzer, M. (1987). Interpretation and social criticism. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Footnotes

1. Vokey, 1987, pp. 46-48.

2. It is clear that the word "community" means different things to different people, and that some of those meanings are complementary, and others are not. Thus it seems to me that the important question is not so much "What does 'community' mean?", or even "What has 'community' meant in the past?", as "What shall 'community' mean for us?" It is interesting to note that mainstream educators are once again arguing (as John Dewey did many years earlier) that schools need to function as communities, and to promote the values required for community life, in order to meet their educational responsibilities. See Raywid, 1988.

3. A similar point is made in the Mission Statement of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, adopted March 25, 1988: "It is the responsibility of all members of the OISE community to be aware of the issues that confront education and to direct their energies toward improving environments for learning and overcoming obstacles to learning" (My emphasis).

4. In my article on gender-related issues (Vokey, 1988), I argued that our mission of promoting compassion requires us to work for world peace, which in turn requires us to oppose "warfare" in all its various forms. Andy Orr suggested to me that "domination" and/or "oppression" are better words for what I meant than "warfare". I agree, and have adopted those terms for this article, which is something of a sequel to the last.

5. Outward Bound usually speaks of the high personal and social costs of internalized oppression in terms of the harmful consequences of negative self-concepts. Helping people rebuild their self-concepts is important, but should not distract attention from the oppressive conditions which undermined their beliefs in themselves in the first place. That is to say, alleviating the symptoms is no substitute for addressing the causes. For a discussion of how explaining destructive behaviour exclusively in psychological terms can serve to obscure the social, economic, and political dimensions of individual problems — and thereby perpetuate an "individualistic bias" — see Vokey, 1987, pp. 30-37.

6. For an example close to home: The Toronto Star (January 17, 1989, pp. A1, A10) recently published an analysis of the systemic discrimination against blacks in the Toronto public school system as due in large part to the internalization of racist stereotypes by teachers and administrators (and subsequently by the students themselves). Restricted access to education perpetuates the unequal representation of blacks in positions of social influence.

7. I think it is important to remember that Outward Bound was one of Hahn's efforts to counteract the effects of what he perceived to be a "diseased" civilization. Brereton (1970, p. 48) describes Hahn "even in his eighties" as "still impatient that what he calls 'islands of healing' in an inflamed body politic are insufficient to keep pace with an ever more critical decline".

8. Australian OB Director Gary Richards recommended at the International Conference that OB play the Socratic role of "gadfly" — a stimulus for action that is neither too lazy (and thus easily brushed off) nor too irritating (and thus likely to get swatted) to get results. As the example of Socrates reminds us, however, there are situations in which moral imperatives take precedence over the calculation of risk.

9. It could be pointed out that those people in positions to change unjust social structures — to "make a difference" — are often those who have most benefitted from them. Again, perhaps the appropriate response to the realization that one has privileged access to scarce resources — the wilderness, for example — is willingness to use them for the broader social good.

10. During the conference entitled **The New Workplace Synergy: Releasing the Power of Men and Women Working Together** (January 18-20, 1988), Bryan Smith (President of "Innovation Associates") made a similar point about the need to manage the "creative tension" created by the gap between one's "Vision" and one's "current reality".

11. This point is made persuasively by Walzer (1987), who illustrates his case with reference to Amos (among others), the first and "possibly most radical" of Israel's prophets. Compare Coffin, 1988, esp. p. 37.

12. I should acknowledge that academics sometimes manage both.

13. Dr William Solan Coffin, Jr. spoke of the need for systemic change when he argued that "charity must not be allowed to go bail for justice". See Coffin, 1988, esp. pp. 36-37. For an analysis of how education perpetuates unequal class relationships, see Bowles & Gintes, 1976. For feminist critiques of systemic gender bias in social and educational institutions, see Morgan, 1987; and Martin,

14. Participation in Outward Bound International Conferences and support for this Journal are two ways in which COBWS already contributes to such discussions. Participation and support does and should include both organizational and individual initiatives.

15. My choice of this question as an example was prompted by a remark by Freire, and was not intended to single out any particular program.

16. The need for more follow up to Outward Bound courses was a recurring theme at the International Conference. See Coffin, 1988, p. 38. I expect that the kind of questioning represented by suggestions two and three will become even more important to the extent (a) COBWS implements marketing strategies designed to attract a broader mixture of participants to its public courses, and/or (b) the proportion of our long-term funding that is targeted for specific populations increases.

The Toronto Office and its Role in the COBWS Community?

by Stephen Fontaine

When Ken Victor asked me to help with the production of this issue of the COBWS Journal I didn't expect to end up writing a piece on COBWS' favourite topic, but in the process of putting all the elements together I realized there was a noticeable piece missing — the Toronto office.

I remember the first time I was at Homeplace, it was in early July in 1987. I had started working for Outward Bound one month before and had just finished a 9-day Adult course. In order to get to know the Homeplace staff and to get a better feel for COBWS I was going to stay on for a few extra days. After a tearful farewell with my brigade mates (I was convinced mine had been the best ever Outward Bound course and that Suzanne Bullock and Tim Moran had to be the best instructors in the system) I went to the South beach to sit in the sun, reflect on what I had just been through, and to keep out of the way. No one made any effort to make me feel welcome (everyone was busy preparing for courses or recuperating from being on the trail) so I felt neglected. Something was wrong, I was the new marketing director and I was visiting for the first time - someone, I felt, should've looked after me.

Eventually I wandered into the dining hall to see if I could be of some use. Bertha Bumchuckles handed me a knife and a bag of onions. She also put on an Aretha Franklin tape and proceeded to endear herself to me. I felt better and I was beginning to feel I was a part of something.

It wasn't until the following May that I returned to Homeplace. By this time I'd been on the job for more than a year, had gotten to know most of the instructors and felt that I was making a valuable contribution to the success of COBWS. (By then I realized that all instructors were not mythic, that they could lose their patience and be human. I had also seen the amount of work done in the Toronto office to ensure a safe, stable and vital operation.)

My second visit to Homeplace was very different from the first. From the moment I arrived I felt at home. There were people I wanted to see and spend time with and I got the feeling people were glad to have me there. I will always appreciate Sheila D'Amore's laughter, Bertha's martinis, Rick Tait and Suzanne Bullock's hospitality and Julia Marchetto's insights. I had earned my place. I was a part of the COBWS community. Over the year I had built some bridges between myself and the people at Homeplace that were pretty secure.

Despite the welcome I personally felt at Homeplace I did get the sense of a "them vs. us" scenerio between the Toronto office and Homeplace, which I could never comprehend. A "materialistic, uncaring motive" seemed to be attached to every action in the Toronto office. And the fact that this was happening during the last years of the now universally despised materialistic 1980s didn't help the situation. I think there is an understandable, but unreasonable dislike of anything to do with money on the part of the Homeplace staff (except for paychecks and benefits). Invoices, budgets, expense reports and enrollment revenues - these things take away from the day-to-day world of Outward Bound and set up a barrier between Homeplace and Toronto - where the bills come to roost. I wonder if this would change if we all worked out of the same location or if the Toronto staff moved to Huntsville?

Each subsequent visit, on the part of myself and other Toronto staff, has revealed different aspects about life at Homeplace and has instilled in us a great appreciation for what takes place on Black Sturgeon Lake each season, and, a more clear-eyed view of its imperfections. By the same token I think the increase in the number of instructors periodically working out of the Toronto office (Donna Sheppard, Ruth Goldman, David Thomson, Ken Victor, Darcia Kohuska, Lorne Tippett, Wendy Talbot to name a few) has reduced some of the false notions I believe existed about what happens on Fairlawn Ave.

The group of us who work in the office form a community. Each of us has a job to do yet we are all willing to assist each other when necessary. A great example is the annual Black Tie and Sneakers Gala. The responsibility for this mamouth undertaking

falls mainly on the shoulders of our fundraising director, Sally Burke, but leading up to and on the night of the event more than 25 staff and board members helped to make sure the event was a success. It's hard to get more urban than a roomful of corporate sponsors in tuxedos and evening gowns but the event is very "Outward Bound", with rappels taking place in once corner, the Acid River set up in another, and a low-V exercise happening in the middle of the room. Guests, many jaded from attending too many fundraisers, have a great time at Black Tie and Sneakers because, in addition to good planning, there is that wonderful spirit of COBWS community that permeates the event.

So whether we are talking about a great course or a new brochure or a fundraising event I think we are always talking about a great mix of talents that come together despite geography. I left Outward Bound for a brief time in 1989 to work for another non-profit organization, but in the end I felt the work we do at COBWS is more important, so I came home. Δ

Letters to the Editor

Dear COBWS:

I am sitting gingerly 31,000 feet in space somewhere over Alberta thinking about, what else, community.

Initially, when the request for articles discussing community came up I thought a literal deciphering of the word would conjure up some ideas. Let's see ...

COMM / UNITY
come unity

Isn't it neat how we can drop a letter and add another to create a new word. Yet another marvel of the English language.

Funnily enough, getting back to my airplane ride, I am heading to Vancouver from Regina to visit a few Outward Bound friends and to enjoy some "relief" skiing (as opposed to Saskatchewan skiing - flat and even flatter).

How about community and Outward Bound? Thinking back to the little town on Black Sturgeon Lake I have difficulty isolating the term community to solely that place. Yes, of course it is more than just the heart of COBWEBS; it is the soul. Yet, heading west to Vancouver reaffirms my feeling that our Outward Bound community goes beyond the physical location on Black Sturgeon Lake. It involves a huge psychological bond also. It is a bond of diverse personalities uniting together to build on common feelings and to share ideas. It is the 'coming' together of people; the 'unity'. It is the 'community'.

It is horribly cloudy our there. My landscape view is obscured by dreary rain clouds watering the nation. Saskatchewan was warm and sunny, hmmm. I am looking forward to my drive back up over the red earth of the Black Sturgeon Road next spring. I miss the sweet smell of Homeplace with all of its addictive energy and the brilliantly alive people.

The smiling amigo
Denise Martin

To the Editor:

The incident that best explains community at COBWS to me occurred when I designed an orienteering course. I expected people to be half interested — but when I asked, a whole pile of people were eager and willing to try it out — even in the rain! I really appreciated that keeness and desire to help.

Donna Sheppard
Instructor, COBWS

A CALL FOR ARTICLES

Outward Bound in the 1990's: Making the Links

Proposed Publication Date: May, 1992
Deadline for Submission: December 31, 1991

Outward Bound is rooted in Kurt Hahn's educational vision. Of that vision, we could say that it took a global perspective, it sought to promote world peace, and it reflected Hahn's critical view of the society he lived in. For example, the traditional Four Pillars of Outward Bound—physical fitness, craftsmanship, self-reliance, and compassion—were meant to be antidotes to the ill effects of a diseased society. I believe that, if Outward Bound is to make a significant contribution towards social transformation through education in the 1990's, it must keep renewing both its vision and its understanding of the society its working in. Where are the opportunities for furthering our educational mission? Where are the obstacles?

This issue of the Journal of COBWS Education is intended to help Outward Bound broaden and deepen its analysis of society by making connections with other perspectives on the potentials for education to effect social change. How can other theories and research and other educational programs make Outward Bound more effective? What are the potential links, for example, between Outward Bound and

environmental education?
Waldorf and Montessori education?
the work of Paulo Freire?
feminist theory and practice?
multi-cultural education?
the men's movement?
art therapy?
spiritual traditions?
various psychotherapies?

All submissions are welcome: essays, poetry, letters—anything that can be printed or photocopied. It would be helpful if any submissions composed on a MacIntosh or IBM computer could be sent both in hardcopy and on disk
(Microsoft Word for the mac and WordPerfect for the IBM would be great!) If you don't have the high tech available, inspirations scribbled on napkins are also welcome! It is my hope that all submissions will be reviewed by two other people besides myself, so if you would be willing to help with the reading please let me know. I invite all members of the COBWS community and the larger Outward Bound and experiential education communities to take this opportunity to share your experiences, your ideas, your concerns, and your dreams.

Looking forward to hearing from you...

Daniel Vokey, 8-148
Department of History and Philosopy
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor St. West
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1V6
(416) 923-6641, ext. 2285

2506
RE DISC