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The Journal of OBC Education



April, 2001

Volume VII, Number 1





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Introduction

By Dave Sampson, Guest Editor

I'd like to start by introducing the *Journal of OBC Education* to new and old readers. The journal was previously published under the title "The Journal of COBWS Education", where COBWS represented the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School in Ontario. The last journal to be published was in 1993 (page 30). The new face is a sign of change and progress as Outward Bound evolves with changing times.

Between the initial work of this volume and its publication, there was an amalgamation of both the western and eastern schools in Canada, so naturally the title of the journal changed to encompass all of Outward Bound across this massive country from sea to sea. I believe it's important to continue the volume series and not start over because great work has been done in the past. I believe to plan for the future we must recognize what has happened in our past. This journal is a perfect way of documenting issues, values and changes that have occurred in the Canadian Outward Bound movement throughout its history.

Volume seven is a General Issues publication for it was difficult to pinpoint one major issue across the country. The varied contributions found herein reflect only a sample of what issues are current in OBC.

Tom Wolfe discusses some signs of change within OBC in *Outward Bound Canada: Future as an Industry Leader*. He examines the potential of the organization, offers suggestions for change, challenges methods used to determine industry standards and alludes new developments.

Skills and Ways: Perceptions of People / Nature Guiding, by Bob Henderson brings us some insights from an educators conference on Deep Environmental Education Practice (DEEP). This paper helps explore the concept of a wilderness dweller considering hard and soft skill sets, as well as how we initially greet a natural setting.

An opportunity to venture further into the mind and philosophies of an Outward Bound instructor is found in *An Interview with Lee White: Thoughts on the Outdoors*. Chris Joseph's interview discusses personal experiences, experiences others may have outdoors, another toolbox, the role of risk in activities, and individual empowerment.

Critiques in any field challenge the status quo and often promote change and positive development. Rory Gilfilan compares his experience at COBWS with Colorado OB. *Dulling the Sharp End* can be a metaphor concerning perception, senses and reality. The basis of the articles relies on OB fundamentals such as expanding individual limits, overcoming challenges and facilitating personal growth. This article challenges us to consider what we do in the field, perhaps we are turning potentially very real experiences into mere clichés.

To know where we are going, it's good to know where we've been. Especially in a time of change where our organization may seek new directions we must consider our roots. Sean Blenkinsop revisits our founder in *Remembering our Roots: Kurt Han*. Problems in the past, created the need for Outward Bound, many problems are still with us. By examining original beliefs we can focus on the power of motivation, which is constantly sought by our society. But challenges will always face OB, and just as we try to pass on challenge management skills to our students, we as professionals must also meet our own organizational challenges

Some of these submissions had some similar patterns. The issue of professionalism within the Outward Bound community appears to be underlying some of the articles. For this reason the *Call For Articles* (page 29) for *Volume Eight* will discuss the issues pertinent to professionalism in our field. This topic will inevitably address the changes occurring in outdoor experiential and adventure based education as it relates to OBC. I look forward to receiving many more contributions for the next issue and welcome Jennifer Besner to the editorial board as we will both be Guest Editors for the next issue.

Outward Bound Canada: Future as an Industry Leader

By Tom Wolfe

Well, soon another summer season will be upon us. This year we'll all be united as one organisation with associated schools as Outward Bound Canada (OBC). Although I am always concerned with the direction that an organisation that is so near and dear to me is going, I sense great potential and I can see already some signs of change for the better in Outward Bound in Canada.

However, as good as expansion and development can be for an organisation, there are obvious risks. I think that the present situation in Outward Bound Western Canada (I'll refer to this here as "OBWC", though technically, I

OB staff turnover

What makes an Outward Bound course? Is it the equipment? The base? The vehicles? These are essential, but relatively minor, components. Do the mountains speak for themselves? Sure, that's part of it, but there is much more.

The role that the administration and board play in OB is clear: without these people,

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believe, it is now OBC's "Western School"), where there has been much expansion and talk of future expansion, makes these risks especially severe. Developments like the sea programme and now "Outward Bound Alberta," the east-west merger, the fresh wounds from the leadership "shuffle" of two years ago, shortages of qualified and experienced instructors, and the pitiful state of staff compensation all make for a very delicate situation. In the words of one instructor, who I will leave anonymous, "I believe these operational concerns are so severe that OBC runs the risk of having a very serious accident. If you are planning to expand that's the last thing you need."

there would be no OBC, no courses, and no students. When it comes down to it, though, the experience that our students pay for is something that is mainly created by the *staff and instructors* who work to make our courses unique. What lies at the heart of an OB course is the curriculum that the student experiences; our students are

paying for the wisdom of the staff and instructors to facilitate a life-changing experience.

In the time that I have worked with OB, I have been impressed with what a hard-working, generous, visionary, and skilled staff we have. With this kind of resource, I believe that OBC could and should be *the leader* in Adventure Education in Canada. So why isn't this the case? There may be many reasons, but the most crucial, from my perspective, is that OB's greatest resource—our staff—is being squandered every year in unnecessary attrition. Every year new staff must be hired and retrained to replace the disillusioned instructors and other staff members who, after a couple of years with OB, leave looking for something better.

Staff turnover at OBC is, in my opinion, unacceptably high: in 1999 39% of the staff were

Mountain Air, Glacier Water, and \$95 a day

Are OBC's staff members paid fairly?

In terms of work *environment*, I don't think that too many OBWC instructors would say that OBWC is anything but a superb place to work. Sure, there are minor differences and squabbles, but on the whole operational staff and instructors feel respected and feel that they are

new to OBWC, and in 2000 that number was 34%. In 2001 this number is expected to be at least 25%. It logically follows then that in 2001 only a very small minority of OBWC's instructors will have more than two years of experience with the school! This should be a cause of grave concern for OBC's administration.

I realise that there are several major themes that affect the turnover rate; the four that spring to mind are working conditions, compensation, training, and voice within the organisation. In this opinion letter I will deal strictly with the issue of compensation. I want to emphasise, however, that the issues of training and voice also demand immediate attention at OBWC and are closely related to the issue of compensation; but I will leave that discussion to others to take up for now.

treated very well while they are in the field. Work *demands* on all staff are very high. Although being an OBWC instructor is a lot of fun it also requires an exceptional level of responsibility (arguably the highest of any OB school due to the terrain we usually use), and

requires a high level of expertise. While a great working environment is conducive to staff retention and high expectations of staff do not necessarily create an environment which

OBWC's average wage is approximately \$95 per day, topping out at around \$120 for Level 3 instructors (Course Directors), and starting at the miserable level of \$70 per day for so-called "Assistants" (who do as much work and are as equally indispensable as Instructors). Summer staff members do not receive any kind of benefits apart from wages. Compare this with the wages earned by a first-year schoolteacher in Alberta, who makes about \$35,000 per year if they have about five years worth of schooling; this works out to about \$175 per day plus an extensive benefits package—medical, retirement, and so on. Alberta teachers consider themselves to be overworked and underpaid, and yet the Alberta Teachers' Association's *lowest-paid* teachers still earn roughly *three times* as much per day as a first-year OB instructor and about twice as much as a Level 1 instructor.

Compare the length of a workday of a typical OB instructor with that of a schoolteacher and the discrepancy becomes even more

discourages this retention, it is the issue of compensation that is hurting OB's ability to retain the skilled people that the schools need.

ludicrous; then, to top it off, consider the incredible level of responsibility taken on by an OB instructor for the safety of a patrol in dangerous mountain terrain. The wages of other guides in the outdoor adventure industry is way above that of OB instructors: ACMG *Assistant Rock Guides* at Yamnuska, Inc. make \$165/day; day hiking guides with White Mountain *start* at \$120/day; I have a friend who worked with Slipstream last year who had never guided before in his life and earned \$150/day; and so on. I think that it is obvious that the current level of compensation that OB instructors across Canada receive is very poor and cannot ensure reliable staff retention.

This is a global phenomenon with OB. My question is, why is this the case? Why is it that OB as an organisation can get away with taking its staff for granted? Why do we, as OB instructors, work even a single course for wages that are lower than some of our teenage students make at their summer jobs? Since OB is a non-profit organisation, is it ethically justifiable for

OB to offer sub-standard wages? Are we really a rough-and-tumble bunch of barbarians who need little more than mountain air and glacier water to sustain us? Or, is a job with OB the best we can do? Do we lack the education or the character to get ourselves a better-paying position?

No, the truth lies in the fact that most staff members see OB as a stepping stone or a means to an end. In speaking with many of my colleagues at OBWC, the general sentiment seems to be: "I love the job. It provides me with incredible opportunities to develop as an instructor and guide. But I can't survive on the money I earn here, and I'll be moving on soon to greener pastures."

Interestingly, there is at least one OB school that has figured out the importance of staff retention. OBNZ offers outstanding instructor employment conditions (good pay, good benefits, and a ten-month work year) and has low turnover and high competition for placements. One of last season's outstanding OBWC instructors, Neil Harvey, has just taken a 3-year position with OBNZ. Keep an eye out for others heading that way soon.

My wife Deb and I both enjoy working with OBWC immensely. It's a great job, and we would love to remain working at OBWC for years to come. However, in response to the plain fact that working as an OB instructor is not a viable career option, we are both in the midst of pursuing other career options—Deb is studying Nursing, and I will soon be a teacher. A quick survey of other OBWC instructors will reveal the exact same strategy: several of us have either just become teachers or are pursuing teacher training; at least four of us are in the middle of Nursing degrees; and others are pursuing professional degrees of some sort or another. Still others are moving on to other guiding or training and development careers run by organisations that offer their staff more than OB does. This has been the case for many years, as everyone is aware. In my opinion, this pattern is to the extreme detriment of OB.

I don't have any advice on the matter that would be enthusiastically received by the OBC's Administration—essentially I feel that wages should approximately double, benefits should be added, and standards for hiring should rise dramatically

Objections to these suggestions would include:

- it is financially impossible
- OBWC already pays better than any other OB school in North America (a popular theory that I'm not certain is true; certainly it is not true world-wide); and,
- OBWC has a sufficient supply of qualified instructors so why bother raising wages?

To which I would respond: OB should not be content with being sub-status quo. We can, and should, aspire to be cutting edge in all respects, and this begins with addressing some

fundamental concerns, among which staff employment conditions should be critically important.

Compensation: Conclusions

Can OBC compare its programming to what the outdoor industry has to offer?

Thirty years ago Outward Bound in Canada may have been leader in the outdoor industry but—like many others in Canada's outdated "camping industry"—our operations are becoming more and more bush-league. The activities we offer, the development of our curriculum, the safety of our programming, the screening of participants, and how staff are treated lack a professional edge and we are falling behind professionally run commercial operations like Yamnuska, Inc., Slipstream, or the dozens of other quality outdoor programmes in Canada. Training institutions like the ACMG, University College of the Cariboo, and about a half-dozen other college diploma programmes

across Canada have raised the bar substantially on what constitutes an outdoor professional.

Rather than raising the bar even higher, OBC is letting its talented instructors slip away, year after year, as they seek better employment conditions elsewhere; furthermore, many skilled potential instructors don't consider OB as a serious option because of the low pay.

Staff members who are paid well and provided with professional development and training opportunities are first of all going to stick around longer, and secondly going to be better for OBC. This is so obvious that I can't believe it needs saying. If OBC is to move towards becoming a *leader* in the Adventure

Education industry in Canada the following industry standards (and I would caution anyone to use other OB schools as "industry standards",

To Meet Industry Standard

□ *No instructor should be paid less than \$120/day*—and I mean Assistants here. Even at this rate s/he would be making just \$6.00/hour if one considers that a work week is more than 105 hours (7 days a week, 15 hrs a day minimum) and one accounts for overtime pay at a rate of 1.5. Offering wages below \$120/day is ethically, morally, and arguably legally inadequate. I believe this pay scale should apply to all staff, not just instructors. OBC, an organisation that promotes high ethical and moral standards in its students, should be ashamed of how little their instructors at all levels are currently earning.

□ *Highly skilled Instructors and CDs should be making as much as \$200 to \$250/day*. This amounts to between \$10 and \$12.50 per hour (considering a schedule of 7 days per week, 15 hours a day = 40 hours/week regular time plus 65 hours O/T @1.5) which is still incredibly low, but begins to resemble the industry standard. Employees with a company

because they're not) must, in my opinion, be met as soon as possible:

like Yamnuska Inc. with a comparable level of responsibility to a senior instructor or CD would ask for \$250-300/day.

□ Staff should be given the opportunity for *wage promotion based on a variety of factors* including:

➤ Experience with OB schools worldwide or similar institutions

➤ Expertise as an instructor at OBC

➤ Certification, including First Aid, CAA, ACMG, and other relevant certification boards

➤ Level of responsibility, including training of an assistant, operating as a course director, programme development, etc.

➤ Other relevant skills (i.e. Class 4 driver's license, conference attendance, etc.)

➤ Staff training attendance

□ Staff should be required to participate in *professional development throughout the year*, similar to the way teachers are required to participate in X number of days of professional development. This of course

-
- must be compensated either through wage promotion (above) or bursaries.
 - Professional quality staff training must be provided annually to staff members, who must be required to attend (or provide

evidence of an alternative). Staff should be paid 100% of their normal day rate for training and professional development, including the staff training.

If these suggestions seem unrealistic, consider the following:

- If OBC adopts these kinds of employment standards, we would have the absolute best staff in the entire industry pounding at our door;
- With better staff, quality of programming would skyrocket. Alumni would rave about their experiences and draw in more and more students;
- Safety would improve (sure, OBWC hasn't had any fatalities—yet—but I believe that some courses are run with too much risk, and the potential for a major tragedy is imminent);

- We would be recognised in the guiding industry as being competent professionals (instead of being regarded with contempt(24));
- And, *most importantly*, the great staff we have now would stick around and get better.

And Then.

If, even after considering all of these points I have made, OBC's Administration thinks that these standards seem too unrealistic, then I suggest that we need to humbly slow the expansion down a bit until the issue of staff working conditions has been addressed to the

point that we can expect stable and reliable staff retention.

We have rested on our laurels of being an industry leader for far too long; that was back in the forties, fifties, and sixties. Expansion may seem like the gift of flight we need to catch up, when in reality we need to relearn how to walk.

New Developments.

With regards to new OBC developments, I am most impressed with and even optimistic about the appointment of a committee dedicated to Staff recruitment,

retention, and training. The issue of Staff recruitment, retention, and training is, in my opinion, critical to the successful future of OBC as an outdoor industry leader.

Skills and Ways: Perceptions of People / Nature Guiding

By Bob Henderson

A year or so ago, I found myself in Norway with an international group of outdoor educators. We had gathered for a symposium entitled Deep Environmental Educational Practice (DEEP for short). Here is an excerpt from the conference abstract:

The papers at this [gathering] will explore ways in which "outdoor life" may maintain links with nature weakened by developments in the last century and maintain traditions of knowledge and respect which have been placed at risk by globalization and modernization. The papers will explore the imperatives for developing deeper analysis of the environmental and cultural dimensions of outdoor life, with particular emphasis on pedagogical implications.

We were concerned with how to preserve that quality of outdoor life that helps us behave and belong as true dwellers, comfortable with nature as a place to know and be at home. And we were concerned with how to actively take on the task of this preservation of certain

land-based traditions. In Scandinavia, particularly Norway, the word *friluftsliv* represents this tradition of thought attentive to the folkways of nature life in the country and outdoor life for the urban excursioner (weekender and/or expeditioner).

During introductions, I mentioned to an organizing group that I was involved with Outward Bound in Canada. I hadn't thought of any fall-out from such association. However, to quote from the timeless "Alice's Restaurant" by Arlo Guthrie; "they all moved away from me on the group W bench." To be succinct, the group of European outdoor educators had strong feelings towards Outward Bound, an international movement that, in the words of conference organizer Borge Dahle, sets up "nature as a sparring partner." I think there is some truth to this and I agree with Borge Dahle that the nature-as-sparring-partner model uses nature merely as a backdrop, a challenge arena, for one kind of group and self-based personal growth. But I didn't see this way of meeting nature as a defining quality of the OB school with which I

am familiar.

COBWS

Outward Bound may use nature merely as a challenge arena backdrop but the two ideas, OB and nature the gymnasium, need not be synonymous. The question of focus may be relevant to contemplating how Outward Bound Canada might develop a deeper analysis of environmental and cultural dimensions of outdoor life. It could be useful to consider epistemological (how and what we know) alongside ontological (ways of being) understanding for guiding and facilitating group and personal growth. What follows is a concrete way of thinking about such a dualistic approach.

A common question I get asked by students at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, where I teach Outdoor Education is: "how do you select the staff for our nine day canoe trips to start the school year?" The students that ask this question are often interested in some day guiding one of these trips themselves. They are interested in Outdoor Education generally and they have probably noted a certain "something" common to the group of trip leaders that sparks their curiosity. Likely, they are already well-acquainted with the

conventional ways of thinking about the outdoors/nature and with Outdoor Education leadership here in North America.

For years I have answered this question poorly with vague comments about moving beyond the assumed travel skills and group competence to notions of how people meet the place of travel. Looking back, I think I confused, more than articulated an important thought process for me, my students and, I believe, for outdoor education . Thanks to the attention I have paid to how a friluftsliv approach conceptualizes outdoor leadership and the comparison between this model and the adventure-programming approach that dominates North American thinking, I have found a conceptualizing tool that answers my students' question well . Exploring conceptual tools also denotes a distinction between ways of perceiving leadership for outdoor education and travel guiding. Central to this distinction is whether one thinks primarily epistemologically (how and what we know) or ontologically (ways of being).

Hard and Soft Skills

In North America, we are fond of speaking about Outdoor Education leadership in terms of hard and soft skill development. Hard skills are the technical travel skills, such as navigational skills, hiking, paddling, skiing, camping skills, first aid, etc . Soft skills are group processing skills coupled with the leaders own personality traits of self awareness, communication skills, motivating groups, to name a few. I could follow this good ole North American convention and discuss with students, as the question of hiring arises, this rather mechanical notion of a skills set. It is an epistemological approach--a focus on what is known . Hard and soft skills are without question important to, as best possible, "ensure" safety and a vibrant functioning group to maximize personal growth in the out-of-doors. The problem is, I just do not think this way, first and foremost and certainly, I am not alone. There is another way of thinking here. With lots of help from friluftsliv-based literature and dialogue, I can now comfortably note the place of disconnection I have with this "skills" (if we must use this word) convention.

So now, happily imbued with friluftsliv

ways of thinking, I would say, safety and a functioning group is a given. It is a must. But a simple travel experience in our northern forests and lakes (not, say the extremes of high arctic or mountain summits) does not necessitate ever more demanding hard skill sets. In short, we do not have to look for the most hard skills when selecting leaders . Secondly, the group is important, but it is not everything. Nature relationality is too easily lessened as group processing dominates the thinking (read: all the thinking). There is a personal growth derived from the group experience and a personal growth derived from an in-nature, or better, a within-nature experience. These two can exist side by side as complimentary direction experience. In short, we do not always have to look for group-processing wizards. Group skills are important in conjunction with skills in the ways of "being" in nature . I mean here a nature that has become largely unfamiliar to people's daily lives. So, an ontological skill set is more in keeping with my own personal view towards hiring staff and this reflects on guiding principles as well. Remember, I do not wish to negate hard and soft skills; rather, I wish to add more to the mix.

Perhaps like another skill set (I can now thankfully drop this mechanical way of thinking about it) this "way of being" might be conceptualized as a warm and green "way", rather than a question of hard and soft skills . I

A Warm and Green Way

A warm way refers to how nature is met or greeted. Is it to be nature as sparring partner as Borge Dahle is fond of suggesting as a major problem, or is nature to be met as a way home to the open air? (Faarlund in Reed and Rothenburg, 1993, p:158) The friluftsliv traditions do not set up a duality of wilderness versus city. The attitude with this approach is that nature is wild because the planet is a wild place. All lands are nature and therefore can be met as benign, as friendly, as respectful, and as home. There is no wilderness where we do not belong and/or must fear or worship in friluftsliv. But there is a way of belonging that allows us to be engaged with the place as home, as a meaningful and alluring place which not only offers comfort but also demands responsibility. Theologian Martin Buber once described, what I think of as "spirit", as an instance of relationship, "an event at the source when a response was made to you, an essential act of the spirit" (1987, p103). How are

maintain that while John Miles is right, "adventure education is people work" (1990, p 471), it can also be nature work, and profoundly so.

moments of meeting to be developed or "framed"? A warm way is a way of being engaged with a nature that is home.

A green way of being in nature is a way of understanding. We use the term, "street-smart" or "streetwise" in urban contexts to denote a kind of "know how" that comes from experience. I might introduce the idea of a green-smart or green-wise way of the wilds. There is an awareness of things, of green/nature things, that comes with an understanding of nature and heritage lore of a place. When one can fill the landscapes with their nature and heritage stories, one brings places alive with echoing meanings, places which are all-too-often thought of as "empty" settings. There is an awareness that comes with a way of craft, of making and utilizing what you need from the woods. There are skills associated with dwelling within a place that involve travel and lifestyle activities. These three green ways of awareness provide a kind of

"landfulness" that American conservationist. Also Leopold thought was lacking from education in the 1940's. One can easily surmise what he might say now. One of his famous epigrams reads; "The problem, then, is how to bring about a striving for harmony with land among people many of whom who have forgotten there is any such thing as land, among whom education and culture have become almost synonymous with landlessness."

Without warm and green ways, the bush, as we are inclined to say in Canada, or free nature in Norwegian translations, is a cold arena over which we exert our technological power, a backdrop against which we complete a taxing set of logistics, or worst, a sparring partner and open air life is a pursuit in which equipment is valorized more than the place of travel. These attitudes are outgrowths of modernity. Our technological, fast-paced, commodity-driven society is what my ^{NORWEGIAN} Scandinavian colleagues fear most. I see no home in this. Learning to be at home, belonging and behaving well as an ever-learning dweller is the biggest "adventure" we face individually and collectively on the planet. ~~As educator David Orr put it, "All education is environmental education"~~. So when hiring new staff for our McMaster University travel program and with the education

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process itself, I look to warm and green ways of being along side the (dare I say it) obvious hard and soft skills. The former is ontological and a smooth fit within friluftsliv traditions of education. The latter is epistemologically based and comfortable within a North American adventure programming methodology.

~~Outward-Bound-Canada (but I can at this point only talk comfortably within a Canadian Shield Tradition of Travel)~~ should, I believe, engage in an exploration of practice that considers warm and green ontological ways of group-nature facilitation to ^{ADVANCE A NATURE-FOCUSSED} ~~support the ever-~~ ^{ALTERNATIVE IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION.} ~~advancing trends of adventure programming in THE ADVENTURE PROGRAMMING TRENDS, I FEAR,~~ North America. Such trends, I believe involve an intense cookbook like group and self focused personal growth that may miss the mark with nature.

Likely, such discussions of knowledge skill sets and ways of being in nature are ^{NOT COMMON IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION COMMUNITIES.} common in the OBC communities. If so, perhaps here I offer a clarifying 4-part typology to consider our notions of practice. We do seem to like models and lists in North America ~~too~~. I will resist the temptation, though, to render hard and soft skills and warm and green ways into a model. ^{SUFFICE IT TO SAY, WE NEED MORE THAN THE HUMAN-CENTRED HARD AND SOFT SKILLS IN OUR FIELD. WE NEED, ALSO, A CURIOSITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS FOR THE PLACES IN WHICH WE TRAVELED AND DWELL. A FOCUS ON OUTDOOR EDUCATION SHOULD ALWAYS} ~~include the~~ ^{TO WHICH WE ARE}

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An Interview with Lee White: Thoughts on the Outdoors

By Chris Joseph

Background

Lee White is a longtime Outward Bound Western Canada instructor. I interviewed him in early December for material to be used in an article that appeared in the Globe and Mail, January 13. The article was about a trip a group of friends and I did into the Slocan Chief Cabin in Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park during Christmas. The purpose of the article was to celebrate backcountry skiing and to perhaps justify the activity in light of the death of Michel Trudeau in 1998. I knew Lee could provide me with some choice quotes regarding why we go outside to experience it. I thought that Lee's comments were very interesting, and thought that this journal would provide the opportunity for many more of his words to be heard than what appeared in the Globe article.

I first met Lee in Victoria at the local climbing gym. He, like his brother Graeme (who is the Program Director in Pemberton), is tall, muscular and carries a pleasant smile. He looks like the archetypical mountain guide and his presence instills confidence.

I taught my first OB course with Lee. I enjoyed the experience very much. His casual guidance allowed me to explore my role as an instructor and his confidence in my abilities gave the impression that I had been doing this all along. Though a couple of students had suspicions, many in our group were surprised when Lee presented me with my OB pin at course end alongside the students.

In my mind, Lee represents the ideal instructor. He is a teacher of the ways of the mountains, the intricacies of risk vs. reward, and into the philosophy of sound education. Lee is 30 years old and lives in Pemberton, BC. He loves literature and is currently working on a book of his own.

The Interview

Q1: Describe your experiences outdoors, both individually and professionally.

I grew up recreating in the outdoors- originally in North Vancouver hiking on the North Shore. Then we moved to the Yukon where I learned to ski out of my backyard. I basically grew up with the outdoors as away of life. In '92 I started working with the young offenders program at Porteau Cove and then soon after at OBWC in Pemberton, and diversified from there. In Victoria I worked with another young offenders program called Coast Line Challenges and I also went to work for OB in South Africa. I have also done a little ski guiding. Away from work, I have gotten into kayaking lately after being focused on climbing for a long time. I am stepping away from the outdoor work, though. This is partly because of the accident [Lee had his leg squished between

two vehicles in a treeplanting accident a year and a half ago- he was very lucky to not have bled to death]. I was unable to work for a long time, and so more recently I've been doing things closer to home. Outdoor activity remains a central focus of my lifestyle however. I moved to Pemberton because of the access to backcountry skiing- there are few places that provide such variety and access to so many activities. Pemberton is a community that has a large number of people into the outdoors. For the last three months I've been working as a child and youth care worker for Pemberton Secondary School and I'm working on developing an outdoor program. Working in an indoor setting is a bit of a transition, mind you.

Q2: What do outdoor experiences do to people?

I've pondered this a lot. I think a lot of people go out into the wilderness and get removed from a lot of external distractions They are able to look at themselves and gain a greater appreciation for themselves and what I'd call probably the true self. This is different from a self that's really imposed by deadlines and the

way our parents treat us and our teachers deal with us, and all those things that create who we are. In the wilderness things are simplified and decisions are based on both survival and comfort. I think people recognize a lot more tangible qualities in themselves in a soulful way It can end up sounding very "new-agey," but

people develop a sense of spirit because they are in a landscape that is intact. Basically, students get to understand who they really are by being in

the wilderness and facing challenges in an honest environment.

Q3: How do you think outdoor activity can be used as a teaching tool?

It is tremendous because the lessons are tangible, they are real. What we often look for as instructors are situations where we can utilize the teachable moments as they come up as opposed to trying to force a curriculum on the students. I think it is much more of an innovative way to

teach as opposed to force feeding information that doesn't want to be absorbed at a particular time. Sometimes I feel that in a regular school system were just trying to force castrol oil down their throats and nobody wants it.

Q4: Where does risk fit into the picture?

I think that when we take ourselves from our comfort zones, taking a risk, we can always accomplish a reward. There's a tremendous fear in our culture and in our society to take risks because of ridicule and the sense of failure. I think that there's a high expectation to

grow up to have never have made a mistake and that makes us never take risks. Risk, that which takes us out of our comfort zones, enables us to learn and grow. It might be a painful process for some, but it doesn't necessarily need to be.

Q5: Does outdoor activity empower or foster realization?

I would believe so. I think that any time we have a greater sense of who we are and a greater comfort with that, which I see occur a

great deal in outdoor activities and wilderness experiences, it gives us a greater ability to go out and face the day in a positive way.

Dulling the Sharp End

By Rory Gilfillan

Peter's body shakes as he steps towards the edge, an edge that plummets 100 odd feet into space. Peter knows the logic, he has seen the anchors and can feel the web harness biting uncomfortably into his waist and thighs. One part of him knows he is safe within a proven system. He has watched me assemble the various pieces but at this moment that knowledge is far away.

It is hard to think of anything but a mind killing fear.

At an institutional climbing site or rappel station (A bit confusing, provide example) Peter would not be here because the necessity does not exist. He would have silently opted out and made himself invisible. Whatever layers of meaning we attempt to place at an institutional site inevitably succumb to the fact that none of it is completely necessary. The action and controlled chaos of such a day would protect him.

But not here, not today. There is only one way down and no way back. If Lao Tzu wrote, "the way to use life is to do everything through being", than Peter has never been more

profoundly present. This is Outward Bound; to push out limits, to explore one's potential and through it to grow and learn.

Yet at Canada's Eastern School this is rarely what we encounter. We have forfeited the real for the pretend, replaced actual experience for controlled initiatives and made a mockery of the statement marathon, in its place producing a mediocre non-event that fails to even slightly challenge our students much less provide a culmination for a twenty-one day course. We are no longer instructors but facilitators of pretend, purveyors of perceived risk, yes men (and women) playing down to insurance companies and their suffocating version of safety. We are the wellers of ropes courses, the Wall and other initiatives that lead to consistently similar conclusions: teamwork, leadership, cooperation, ad nauseum... The sharp end of experience that we, in years past, used to occupy, has become dulled by manipulating our expedition routes to coincide with the lowest common denominator.

Several years ago while instructing a five day school course, I found myself facilitating The Wall initiative. My students were

extremely efficient in their effort to overcome the abstacle, completing the task in what would have been record time. During the debrief they had all the answers... It slowly began to dawn on me that they knew The Answers prior to even arriving at Outward Bound, that one of the foundation initiatives, that almost every group encounters, had become a cliché.

This last spring I left the Canadian School to begin work at the Colorado Outward Bound School. My first course was a twenty-three day assault ending with a 17 mile marathon through the mountains at an altitude of nine thousand feet. Perhaps we were too aggressive in our agenda, perhaps we did not stop to breathe, smell the roses, or endlessly examine the nature of the wilderness analogy. Yet within the struggle as a patrol we lived a virtual lifetime, performed every day heroics of taking the weight of others who were struggling. In the long days we earned to adapt to diversity, learned that maybe there was more strength and endurance to ourselves than we had previously thought possible, and crucially, we learned the indomitable spirit of one another. We knew that we would never really be able to explain the experience to others. We knew, too, that we were

different now, that not only were the old parameters different, but ultimately, gone.

It has been often said that necessity is the mother of invention. Through necessity, and the grueling imperative of getting from point A to B we re-invented and in the process, rediscovered ourselves. The obstacles we faced, whether it be a high mountain pass, or rappelling into a smoldering canyons, were undeniably genuine. Our marathon was a true testament to what we had accomplished.

Nothing great or of any enduring value is achieved in a state of comfort. The route of least resistance is rarely the breeding ground for inspiration. Yet in many ways this is what we do in actuality in Canada despite our reputation to the opposite. I strongly believe that we suffer from an overabundance of sensibility, chastising students and instructional staff who push the limits, pressuring them to accept lower standards and a stagnant mediocrity. Often I was told to tone down my energy as to not intimidate other staff or make others feel lesser.

During my last expedition with the Canadian School we found ourselves in an area that had not been traveled in several years. There were no portages and the river was unnavigable.

REMEMBERING OUR ROOTS: KURT HAHN

Taking Concerns to Action; A Challenge for Today

By Sean Blenkinsop

History is always a delicate place to wander. There are times when programs, like children, outgrow their roots and need to move on and face the changing world of their existence. However, often children return to those roots in order to regroup, gain sustenance from the depth, or just to remember where it is they have come from. That return can act as a reminder and a re-orientation. With respect to programs, which are constantly changing members, growing, and morphing; this return can serve as a foundational anchor as the members try to understand where they fit in the larger scheme of the world.

Remembering the Problems: The Declines

In speeches given in North America in 1960 Kurt Hahn suggested that the youth of the day had "to be protected against certain poisonous effects inherent" in the society. He went on to say that "five social diseases surround them" (Hahn, 1960). These 'diseases' were the five¹ declines:

There is the decline in fitness, due to the modern methods of locomotion: the decline in

That said, with this short piece I propose to remember. First, to remember what Kurt Hahn saw as the problems facing the society of his day. Then, to remember the beliefs Kurt Hahn drew from in order to respond, with inspired action, to those problems. The rooted beliefs that have made Outward Bound and those many other movements that Kurt Hahn created and inspired, (e.g. the United World Colleges, the Round Square Alliance, and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards) the unique and powerful educational organizations they are.

initiative, due to the widespread disease of spectatoritis: the decline in care and skill, due to the weakened tradition of craftsmanship: the decline in self-discipline, due to the ever-present availability of tranquilizers and stimulants: the decline of compassion, which William Temple called "spiritual death". (Hahn, 1960)

¹There are in some places 6 declines: The missing decline is "the decline of memory and imagination due to the confused restlessness of modern life.

We were forced into a position where we needed to bushcrash with canoes and packs. One student rose to the challenge. He not only took one canoe through but an additional one and several packs.

It was likely his finest hour. Yet this value in the culture of the Eastern Canadian School is one that is frowned upon. It is said to fulfil a male stereotype. It is not worthy of praise, in fact it is held in disdain.

In our attempts to level the field, in our mission to make every effort acceptable we have not only lost sight of our standards but lost the essence of who we are. In the end who runs marathons? climbs dizzying peaks? or stands up for what they believe when no one else will. This is what Outward Bound is about, the core, the mission and who we are. This is what we are losing.

The declines seem even more poignant in the world of today. A world where the WWF launches new “sporting” endeavours, where 27 of every 100 pregnant women in Soweto are HIV+ as an extension of a disease ravaged, drug isolated Sub-Saharan Africa, and where the United States no longer even feigns interest in the environment by

Remembering the Beliefs: The Power that Motivates

Are we remembering Compassion?:

For Hahn, learning compassion was the most important part of education for any student or citizen. The story of the Good Samaritan was his favourite allegory. From it Hahn drew the notion that it is often the lowly, rather than the well positioned or obvious candidates, who are the ones to step forward and give. However, they need the strength and the knowledge with which to act. Hahn used to say, do not preach, for to preach at somebody was to give a hook without a worm, do not force, for to say “you must volunteer” was of the devil, but ask, for to say “you are needed” will draw forth the soul and nary a one will turn away from the call.² Thus, all his students received that summons and stepped forward

² This is a paraphrase curried from many places including some of Hahn’s speeches mentioned in the bibliography.

ceasing even its verbal platitudes towards the Kyoto agreement. This is our world of declines today and so the question arises, what were the beliefs that sustained Hahn in his creative action and what are we at OBC doing to continue the powerful legacy of our visionary founder

into compassion.

At both Salem and Gordonstoun (the schools started by Hahn in Germany and Scotland respectively), Hahn had the students involved in search and rescue. They were trained in first aid and were in the lighthouse 24 hours a day on the cliffs of Scotland overlooking the sea. Compassion also involved the economically less fortunate. For Hahn there was no better way to learn compassion then to be involved with people from all walks of life. In the village near Gordonstoun Hahn had the students doing outreach programs with those youth who were less fortunate. He also required that 25% of all students at the schools and on all OB courses were scholarship students. Many of the schools of the United World Colleges have that number explicitly written into their constitution.

Are we remembering Peace?:

Hahn's first school, Salem, was named after the Hebrew word for peace, Shalom. One of the greatest intellectual influences for Hahn, apart from Plato, was an essay by William James called "The Moral Equivalent of War". In it James argues fiercely for a peace built out of adventure, challenge and growth. James saw that war seemed to provide something for the young and that it would be impossible to stop war without being able to replace it with something that could provide similar opportunities for experience, challenge, and deeply shared relationships. Hahn translated this into group adventure in the wilderness. For Hahn, James' notion was a clarion call for the group wilderness expedition

Are we remembering Service and Ideals?:

Hahn talked little and did much; deeds reflected the man. We must remember that it was Kurt Hahn the Jew, albeit lapsed, in the increasingly anti-Semitic Germany, who wrote to the alumni of Salem, after a young activist was jack booted to death by the SS youth in front of his mother, to say that they must choose between Salem, peace, and Hitler. It was Kurt Hahn who was among the first to be jailed by Hitler. This was an ideal in action. But,

Are we remembering our commitment to personal growth: for ourselves as much as our students.

Students have within them unique passions

and every expedition is ultimately for peace.

Built into peace for Hahn was the idea that bringing people together from different cultures, different languages, and different socio-economic positions was the way to foster understanding. In fact, the world colleges were to be "living examples of what it means to be at peace"(James, 1995). They were to be a utopian ideal in the tradition of Plato come to life in experiential education. Hahn told of the times when the "head" students, they were called "guardians"(after Plato's philosopher kings), were a Hindu, a Hungarian, a boy from the local village, and Prince Philip of Greece (later the Duke of Edinburgh).

Hahn believed that this kind of service and action was part and parcel of learning. The goal of learning was "to purify the destructive inclinations of the human personality, to redress the imbalances in modern ways of living, to develop each person's disabilities to their maximum potential, and to place new found strength in service of those in need". (James, 1995)

and talents and Hahn said we must always respect

and nurture these qualities. Josh Miner, a teacher at Gordonstoun and the founder of OB in the US, tells a story of how one of the students was caught stealing and Hahn immediately called in his teachers. Hahn wanted to know when the boy had started having trouble and why the teachers had not done anything about it sooner. For Hahn the boy must have had some trouble going on somewhere and it was the teachers' fault for not becoming aware of it and coming to the student's aid before it led to theft. The teachers had failed the student by not being caring

The Challenge:

As Outward Bound looks forward in Canada, are we remembering compassion? Are we on an expedition for peace that is taking the risk to acknowledge the "declines" and "imbalances" of our society today and performing the requisite responsive actions? Are we remembering to be reflective and mindful of our deeds and to challenge ourselves to

and respectful enough. The teachers had not been aware. For Hahn the point was to have everyone grow into themselves. It is as if for each and every one of us, there is a perfect self out there, able to function in peace, and we must grow into that form. This played out in simple ways for Hahn. For example, he would hire people who disagreed with him because there was fruitful growth and learning that arose out of the sometimes painful struggle and conflict.

reach out to that self that could be? Are we devoting our new found strengths to the service of others as that good Samaritan did? In short are we remembering the life and beliefs of Kurt Hahn and are we hearing his call, "YOU ARE NEEDED!!"?

References:

This is both a bibliography and an additional source for those interested in further reading:

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Thomas James. (1990). "Kurt Hahn and the Aims of Education". The Theory of Experiential Education: Volume III. Eds. Warren et al. Kendall/Hunt Pub., Dubuque, Iowa. 1995.

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Miner, J. "My Most Unforgettable Character". Published by Reader's Digest. Pleasantville, New York. 1975.

His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. "Kurt Hahn Award Address". October 24th, 1987.

Notes

Sean is a "retired" COBWS staff and an Outward Bounder at heart. He is also finishing a doctorate

at Harvard and can be reached for responses, questions, and queries at Sean_Blenkinsop@gse.harvard.edu

Call for Articles

Professionalism

Throughout our careers as outdoor professionals we may have experienced many organizations and various frameworks for employment. We may have worked for profit and non-profit organizations. Perhaps you may have been a raft guide, mountain guide, camp counselor, swimming instructor, school teacher, bank manager or engineer. Of these, and many other types of employment opportunities, some adhere to standards defined within the profession.

When any staff member of an organization acts as a steward or ambassador for that organization there are certain standards and expectations other interested parties will have of that individual. Their particular profession usually categorizes these standards. Those standards define the individual as a professional in that field. The Oxford Dictionary defines a professional as:

"Doing a certain kind of work as a full-time occupation or to make a living or for payment", "A person working for payment or performing for payment", "Someone highly skilled", "Having or showing the skill of a professional", "Of or belonging to a profession, or its members"

All submissions are welcome:

essays, poems, poetry, letters and reflections – anything that reflects our profession. Please send contributions via e-mail (COBWSJournal@yahoo.com) or by mail (see cover page) with both a hard copy and a copy on disk. E-Mail is by far the easiest and most convenient way for the Editorial Staff to be contacted. If you don't have access to a computer than scribbles, napkins, scrolls and hieroglyphs etch in stone are fine.

Digital Format:

Please ensure that all contributions in digital form are in MS Word or Word Perfect format.

Process:

Contributions will be reviewed by a peer review board. Edits will be suggested and sent back to the contributor. The contributor then must perform the edits and changes suggested for re-submission. Upon receipt of a final draft and editorial approval contributions will be published.

According to the above frame work, every time we sign a contract for a position of employment we assume the role of a professional. But what does this mean? What kind of professionals are we? Do we, our co-workers, employers, clients and the general populous view us as professionals?

The purpose of *Volume 8*, of the *Journal of OBC Education*, is to explore what it means to be a professional in the out-of-doors as an Outward Bound Instructor. Obviously there are many avenues to explore on behalf of both the administration and the field staff at Outward Bound Canada. Some of the latest standards (of which will surely change again) can be found in "The Candian Outward Bound Wilderness School Instructors Manual, Fifth Edition, May 2005"

Seldom discussed though, are the contrasts of perception. In this battle of perception and understanding lies many interested parties: administration, field / support staff, OBC students and views from our surrounding society. These contrasts should not become a point of contention, as it often does, but help us to understand the multiple views present in this issue.

Back Issues

If you have enjoyed this volume of *The OBC Journal of Education* perhaps you'd be interested in some past issues. The journal was previously published under the name *The Journal of*

COBWS Education. Please contact the editor via e-mail if you're interested in a back issue. Each issue can be purchased for \$10 to cover printing, shipping / handling fees.

Volume 4 (1988): Gender Issues

Mens Journeys and Womens Journeys
Canoeing and Gender Issues
Rocks and Rivers, Men and Women
Gender Issues: A question of balance

Guest Editor: Nancy Suchman

By:

Valerie Beale
Bill James
Moon Joyce
Daniel Vokey

Volume 5 (1991): Community

COBWS Founder Looks Back
Community: Pas and Future
The Circle of Community:
A personal reflection on COBWS history
The Role Community Plays in Attracting
Returning Staff
Community-Commonity-Common Unity
More Than a Play on Words
On COBWS and Community
The Toronto Office and the COBWS Community

Guest Editor: Ken Victor

By:

Bob Pieh
Wendy Pieh
Charles Luckman

Paul Landry and Matty McNair

Moon Joyce

Daniel Vokey
Stephen Fontaine

Volume 6 (1993): Outward Bound In the 1990's: Making the Links

Guest Editor: Daniel Vokey

By:

Stephen Couchman

Philip Blackford

Bert Horwood

Martha Bell

Bob Henderson

NOTE: I am trying to track down copies of Volume 1 through to three. I feel it's important to share the wealth of information contributed to the journal in it's various forms over the years.

"To under stand where we are going, we must understand where we've been"

CROSSWORD

BY PHYLLIS CLARK

ACROSS

- 1. Dove, perhaps
- 5. Catharine _____ Traill
- 9. Constellation
- 12. Compass protector

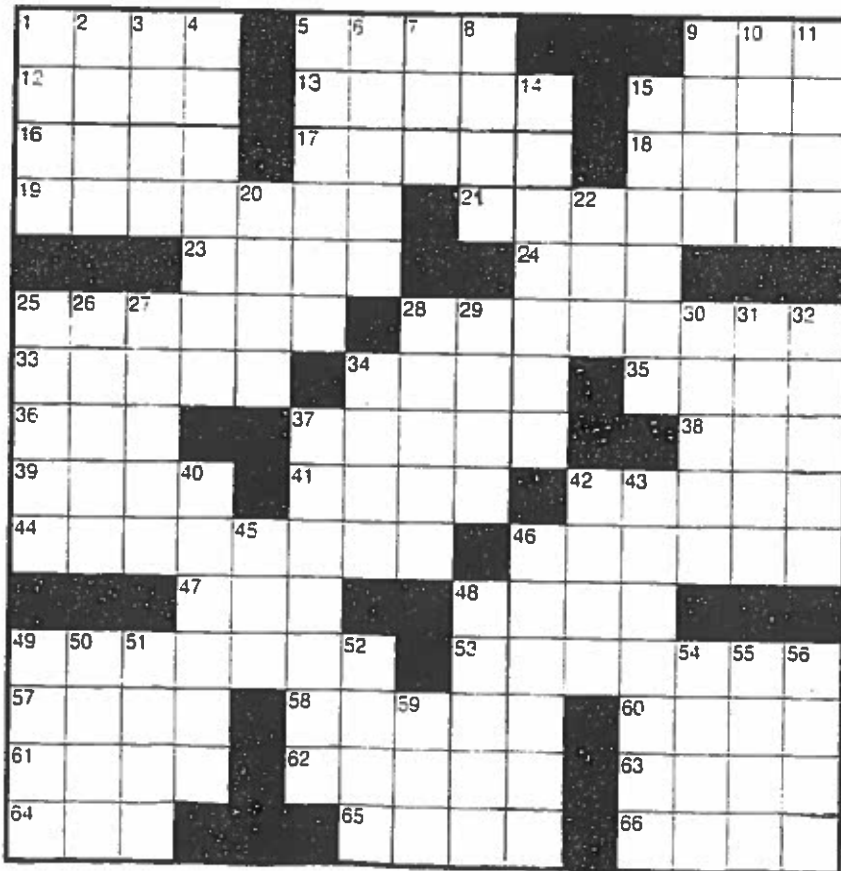
- 13. Turn away
- 15. Not there
- 16. Oakland player (abbrev.)
- 17. Saucy dance?
- 18. Keen
- 19. Certain believers
- 21. Outhouses
- 23. Web talk
- 24. Witness
- 25. Chocolate trees?
- 28. Outward Bounders, always
- 33. Tropical vine
- 34. It's set by an Outward Bounder
- 35. Editor's instruction
- 36. Min. of Citiz. and _____
- 37. Drops of liquid
- 38. Haw's partner
- 39. Do this at Chetwynd
- 41. Mr. Lecter, to friends?
- 42. Santiago's site
- 44. Birds or thinkers
- 46. Mad Hatter's item

- 47. Act
- 48. Jackie O.'s 2nd, et al.
- 49. Tents
- 53. Use them for coffee or water
- 57. Copied
- 58. Useful for keeping track of
34 Down
- 60. Env. science
- 61. Mediocre
- 62. Iranian girl's name
- 63. Don't, to Caesar
- 64. Explosive initials
- 65. Pianist, Dame _____ Hess
- 66. Komatik

DOWN

- 1. Trail marker
- 2. Vow
- 3. 70s tennis star
- 4. Large waterfowl
- 5. Penne and ziti
- 6. Captain's shout
- 7. Nephew, e.g.
- 8. Investment for the fut.
- 9. _____ Strauss
- 10. Great Lake
- 11. Ref. books
- 14. Ankle bones

- 15. Safe places
- 20. Teva, maybe
- 22. Comparative ending
- 25. Use a carabiner to do
this
- 26. Pointer
- 27. Brief performance
- 28. Advances
- 29. Merit
- 30. Moral code
- 31. Returned to office, to
Pierre
- 32. Arduous
- 34. Don't leave home
without it!
- 37. Outward Bounders
may hit it (2 wds.)
- 40. It may be holy!
- 42. Cover
- 43. Hurries
- 45. Bismarck, N. _____
- 46. Patricia's nickname
- 48. Post
- 49. Direction
- 50. Once _____ a time
- 51. Part of R & R
- 52. Thailand, once
- 54. Clone of 60 Across
- 55. Something to play
- 56. Slipped
- 59. Crafty



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| T | H | E | I | S | T | S | P | R | I | V | I | S | |
| C | A | C | A | O | S | L | E | A | R | N | E | R | S |
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