



# OCAsional News

The Newsletter of the Ontario Camping Association

January 2001

250 Merton St.  
Suite 403  
Toronto, ON M4S 1B1  
416-485-0425  
F: 416-485-0422  
oca@ontcamp.on.ca

## Challenge by choice

by Brian Lisson, Adventureworks Associates, Inc.

Since the term Challenge by Choice was coined by Karl Rohnke in the mid-eighties, (Schoel, Prouty & Radcliffe, 1988), this approach has become commonplace in most adventure-based programs, as well as a standard operating procedure for ropes course programs for most camps in Ontario. Challenge by Choice is described in staff manuals, identified in operating procedures, and explained to campers as a regular part of the preparation for a ropes course program. However, its very essence is often forgotten, or worse, misapplied.

At a recent conference presentation to camp staff, I asked the participants to define Challenge by Choice. A college student responded that "Challenge by Choice meant that students didn't have to do the activities if they didn't want to." This response shows the way that Challenge by Choice has been simplified and diminished in many camp programs. Challenge by Choice has simply become a way for participants to opt out of the adventure experience - an exit strategy for those who are scared, overwhelmed, confused, or disinterested in the adventure experience. As camping professionals, we recognize that challenge and risk-taking are the choice of the camper, and that success in camp activities requires a supportive, rather than a coercive, atmosphere. The ability for campers to truly choose their level of risk-taking implies that they are being presented with an actual choice regarding their level of participation.

In current practice, much of the emphasis has been placed on the camper's ability to choose the level of challenge, but often, little time is spent actually creating or providing varied levels of challenge within the adventure experience. In many cases, this means that participants are relegated to secondary roles, with no opportunity for true growth and learning. Holding the rope bag, spotting, or belaying may be important tasks in the context of a challenge course experience, but often don't match the action opportunity presented by the climbing and full participation in high ropes course elements. This is particularly true when these other roles are presented as second-place alternatives to the experience of climbing.

see *Challenge by Choice*, page 6

## Health Care Committee

### Q(s) & A

**Q.** What is PPA (phenylpropanolamine)? Why has Health Canada issued an advisory concerning PPA?

**A.** PPA is widely used as a nasal decongestant in both prescription and non-prescription cough, cold, sinus and some allergy medications. Health Canada has issued an advisory concerning PPA because of PPA's reported association with hemorrhagic stroke.

Although the risk of hemorrhagic stroke as the result of the use of products with PPA is considered low, Health Canada is nonetheless following the lead of the United States Food and Drug Administration in issuing their advisory recommending that consumers do not use any products containing PPA. The FDA determined that there was an association between PPA and Hemorrhagic stroke after reviewing a recently released study completed at Yale University.

For more information, consult the flyer enclosed with this newsletter, or visit the Health Canada website at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/archives/warnings/2000/2000\\_108e.htm](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/archives/warnings/2000/2000_108e.htm).

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The official newsletter of the Ontario Camping Association, the *OCA'sional News* is published monthly from October to June of each year. The newsletter helps to keep the OCA membership informed about developments both in and out of the Association pertaining to children's, youth, and special needs camping.

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Ontario Camping Association.

Queries regarding submissions and letters to the editor are welcome. Please direct correspondence to:

*OCA'sional News*  
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F: 416-485-0422  
oca@ontcamp.on.ca  
www.ontcamp.on.ca

OCA Office Staff:

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## Special Needs update

# How to help families access funding

by Barb Hnatiak  
Special Needs Resource Committee

The Government of Ontario, Ministry of Community and Social Services, has several funding programs to which families can apply to help them to cover part, or sometimes all, of the fees associated with camp. Helping families who have limited resources, or very high childcare expenses is a wonderful way to begin the new year. Doing this will open the doors of your programs to children, youth and families that haven't been able to benefit from the amazing camp experience.

*Special Services at Home (SSAH)*: Provides funding (not based on income) once a year for a child/teen with a physical disability up to age 18 and children/youth/adult with a developmental disability. Families decide where to spend this money.

*Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD)*: Provides funding on a monthly payment plan for families who have a child/youth with a severe disability and a family income of up to \$60,000. The sliding scale ranges up to \$375/month to cover the extra costs of raising a child with severe disability.

*Respite Enhancement*: This is funding for medically fragile/technologically dependent children up to \$3,500/year, and should be used to cover expenses that are above and beyond what would normally be offered by other community programs. It can be used for camps that serve children in the identified group.

*Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)*: Provides funding to adults age 18 and over.

When you are sharing this information to families please note:

- Children/youth that access these funds must have a medical diagnosis
- Application forms are available from government offices in most cities (numbers are available in the blue pages of telephone books)

- Application forms must be completed annually by the family and are found to be difficult and confusing by some, with long waiting lists. Encourage families to apply to get on the list.
- Regional staff/managers in the government offices have the authority to allocate funds differently than in offices in different regions.

### *Child care expenses and tax credit*

Credits are available for day nursery school, day care centre, day camp, sports school, boarding school, camp where lodging is involved and education institution providing child care services. Transportation and meals costs are included. If the child receives social assistance of similar benefits (i.e., as listed above), these are added to the net income which can impact/eliminate the credit.

Camps can assist families by providing official documentation outlining the amount and that the fee has been paid. Documentation that is accepted includes a payment receipt or a notation in the confirmation letter.

- \$ 150 per week per child is available for child under seven
- \$ 90 per week per child is available for child/youth seven and over
- \$ 150 per week per child is available for child/youth with severe disability, any age.

### *Payment receipt or tax receipt*

Payment receipts are official documentation from the company/organization outlining the amount paid for services received. Tax receipts cannot be provided for any money received when a specific child is named.

**whoops!**

In the November issue of the *OCA News*, we neglected to identify Henri Audet's piece as a Special Needs Resource update, which it was.

# Volunteers: Pain and Pleasure

by Jason Brown

Volunteers are an essential ingredient for many non-profit and agency camps and, for that matter, for OCA too. Whether on the board of direc-

tors, at the annual camp work day, stuffing envelopes in the office, or handling the booth at the camp fair, volunteers do a lot for us.

Too often, though, it is the same volunteers year after year giving tireless support - and sometimes they can get worn out, and they may just quit! Volunteer recruitment and retention are serious things for camp directors to keep in mind: as serious as hiring a great staff and recruiting and retaining campers. Here are some ideas:

1. Give new and experienced volunteers a clear idea of what you are asking them to do, make clear commitments and follow through on them.

2. Make sure they are doing something important and understand why they are doing it.

3. Get lots of volunteers and spread the work around.

4. Make their voluntary work fun and memorable - they'll want to do more!

5. Recognize them at special events and in your newsletter.

6. Never ask them to do something you wouldn't do.

7. Make sure they are supervised, but not too much - you asked them to help because they have a talent.

8. Show them how much you appreciate them.

Some excellent resources can be found at [www.charityvillage.com](http://www.charityvillage.com) or [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca).

*Jason Brown is the OCA Board Member representing Non-Profit and Agency Camps and is the Manager of Camping and Outdoor Education for the National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA.*

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Ellen Nash, Camp Northland - B'nai Brith  
3995 Bathurst St., #200  
Downsview ON M3H 5V3  
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97 Chatsworth Rd., Toronto ON M4V 1C8  
416-920-6666 F: 416-920-1440  
dundasj@guidesontario.org

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Toronto ON M4S 2Y9  
416-486-1526 F: 416-485-0422

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R.R.#4, Brighton ON K0K 1H0  
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Moffat ON L0P 1J0  
905-854-3820 F: 905-854-3821  
eoin.wood@sympatico.ca

### Director, Agency Camps Sub-class:

Jason Brown  
National Capital Region YMCA-YWCA  
R.R. #1, 1620 Sixth Line Rd.  
Dunrobin ON K0A 1T0  
613-832-1234 F: 613-832-4324  
ottawa\_y-camps@ymca.ca

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Elaine Cole, Walden Canada  
3768 Bathurst St., #311  
North York ON M3H 3M7  
416-635-0049 F: 416-630-9248

## OCA Regional Representatives

### Eastern Ontario (Ottawa):

Jeff Brown, Camp Otterdale  
Box 127, Lakefield ON K0L 2H0  
705-652-6277 F: 705-652-0057  
jbrown@cycor.ca

### Northeastern Ontario (Sudbury):

Dave Ward, YMCA John Island Camp  
185 Lloyd St., Sudbury ON P3B 1N1  
1-800-465-9622 F: 705-674-3236  
david\_ward@ymca.ca

### Director, Special Needs Camps Sub-class:

Sari Grossinger, Camp Robin Hood  
158 Limestone Cres., Downsview ON M3J 2S4  
416-736-4443 F: 416-736-9971  
sarig@camprh.com

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Bill Stevens, Camp Big Canoe  
322 Bigelow St., Port Perry ON L9L 1N2  
905-985-9848 F: 905-985-2326  
SWESTevens@aol.com

### Director, Day Camps Sub-class:

Barb Weeden, Seneca College - King Day Camp  
13390 Dufferin St. N., King City ON L7B 1B3  
905-833-3333 ex. 5029 F: 905-833-0421  
barb.weeden@senecac.on.ca

### Membership Committee Chair:

Pauline Hodgetts, Camp Hurontario  
1 Ridge Drive Park, Toronto ON M4T 2E4  
416-488-2077 F: 416-486-0865  
hurontar@interlog.com

### Standards Committee Chair:

Catherine Ross  
8 Catherwood Ct., Toronto ON M1W 1S1  
416-497-5389 F: 416-497-4883  
ross@miakonda.com

### Human Resources Committee Chair:

Patti Thom, Camp Tanamakoon  
297 Lakeshore Rd. E., Suite 2  
Oakville ON L6J 1J3  
905-338-9464 F: 905-338-3039  
p\_thom@softhome.net

### Public Awareness Committee Chair:

Rob Savage  
247A Lippincott St., Toronto ON M5S 2P4  
416-536-4441

### Northwestern Ontario (Thunder Bay):

Charlie Wilson, Dorion Bible Camp  
408 South Marks St., Thunder Bay ON P7E 1M5  
807-857-2331 F: 807-857-1141  
dbccc@northroute.net

### Southwestern Ontario (London):

David Woollven  
YMCA-YWCA Camp Queen Elizabeth  
1795 Clarke Rd., London ON N5X 3Z6  
519-667-3300 F: 519-455-2519  
david\_woollven@ymca.ca

# Jorg's CCamping Journal

by John Jorgenson, CCA President

The real Millennium has arrived with more than its share of promise and bright future for the CCA/ACC. It follows on the heels of an historic meeting at Camp Centennial in Moncton, New Brunswick. We can congratulate ourselves on what happened last October, what has happened since and what will happen in the coming year(s).

**Camping in Japan is Incredible!** Even before Moncton, the Canadian Camping Association gathered around a wonderful event in Tokyo, Japan. Almost 40 Canadians participated in the 5th International Camping Congress and the experience was wonderful. Thanks to the camping connections and initiative of Jocelyn Palm (a past president of both the OCA and the CCA), we were invited to the Ambassador's Residence at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo for a reception with Ambassador Len Edwards and his wife, Margaret. We presented a crystal Inukshuk, CCA material, and other camping gifts to commemorate our visit there.

**Quebec Camping Association Returns to CCA!** For the past ten years, the Quebec Camping Association (ACQ) has not been a member of the CCA. In October, we invited an observer from ACQ to join us in Moncton. We were pleased to greet Francois Oligny, a camp director and member of the ACQ board. Francois participated in the meeting and subsequently made a report to the ACQ board. The ACQ, finalizing its own three year action plan and receiving a favourable recommendation from Francois, has made the decision to re-enter the CCA and work with us to build a truly national camping community.

The CCA Presidents' Council will review this application to renew its membership this month and we expect to welcome Francois as ACQ's representative to the Presidents' Council in March.

### **Immigration Program is Ready to Grow!**

Ian Barnett (MCA) has begun the process of assembling all the necessary information to bring foreign workers

into the country as part of the Camp Counsellor Visa Program. One piece of good news is that there is no change in last year's paperwork from Immigration Health Services and so they are available immediately and may be photocopied. There is a brand new package of support material available for the asking at the CCA office.

We have contacted several people in the government who are willing to meet on the topic of simplifying the process in the future (the NEAR future!).

**Commercial Membership Creates Strategic Partnerships!** We are very encouraged by the interest in CCA shown by various marketing and commercial firms. The excellent work being done by the OCA Conference Committee around the Conference Showcase is indicative of a new (and necessary) way to think about how we communicate the camping message to the public.

**Project Development Fund Sponsors Two More Initiatives!** Monies from the CCA Project Development Fund have been directed to two new projects:

- One is the revision of the Health Care Video developed by the Health Care Committee of the OCA. A copy of the new video will be sent to every PCA.
- The second project is the invaluable exercise of surveying the camping community across Canada. In conjunction with the OCA, we have contracted Ipsos Reid, Inc. to assist in determining the scope of camping influence in Canadian society. With the results, we will know ourselves much better, but, more importantly, we will be able to speak with authority to both government and corporate communities.

**CCA Comes to Ontario!** The CCA Presidents' Council is returning to Ontario for a second year running. We are planning to participate in the important OCA Camping Showcase that takes place at the International Plaza on March 3 and then we will bring our meeting to Camp Tawingo in Huntsville from Sunday to Tuesday (March 4-6).

### **Changes on the PCA and National Scene!**

Leaving Presidents' Council: Ellen Nash (OCA), Ian Barnett (MCA)

Joining Presidents' Council: Brian Blackstock (OCA), Sean Pollock (MCA)

### **CCamping Matters!**

The re-birth of a CCA newsletter is only months away. Watch for it because ....CCamping Matters.

## Sexual Abuse Insurance

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## Elsie Palter 1910-2000

by Bert Danson,  
OCA Honorary  
Life Member

We regret to inform you of the passing of another of our old time camp directors. Elsie Palter died after a brief illness. She was in her 91st year.

Elsie was one of the first women at the University of

Toronto to receive a Ph.D. in Psychology. She had been involved in camping during and after her University days. Elsie was a member of the executive staff at Camp Arowhon in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Then she and her husband David established Camp Kawagama in 1945. Kawagama thrived until 1964, when the Palters opted for retirement from camping.

After Elsie retired from camping, she worked for several years as a psychologist with the Catholic Children's Aid Society.

The Palters were among the most active directors in the OCA during our formative years. Elsie was responsible for organizing sessions and workshops on camp programming, counsellor training, and especially the integration into our camps of children with special needs. Her background in psychology was invaluable to us in many areas of camp operation.

Dave worked tirelessly on our original camp standards, and was responsible for getting our standards to the point where we were able to start formal visitations to our member camps, to ensure they were adhering to the standards set by the OCA.

Elsie was quite involved in the formation and the organization of the Society of Camp Directors. She served two terms as president of the Society in 1971 and 1972.

The contributions the Palters made to the OCA were incalculable. May their memory be for blessing.

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*Challenge by Choice,*  
*continued from page 1*

A fuller application of  
Challenge by Choice as a  
design and planning approach  
offers an opportunity to pro-

vide meaningful challenge course experiences for all members of our groups regardless of their ability. The intentional application of Challenge by Choice principles in both the planning and delivery of the adventure experience can create greater inclusion, and more meaningful learning opportunities for participants.

An effective adventure program should ensure that each participant has the opportunity to truly match their skills and capabilities with the challenges that are made available to them. Too often, the activity is an all or none proposition, with those who choose not to meet our expectations being relegated to peripheral roles. Using Challenge by Choice as a design principle ensures that each challenge course experience provides a *range* of opportunities for participation that are intentionally designed within the activity. This means that there are equal rewards and value placed on different kinds of participation and levels of challenge. This also means taking the focus off "getting to the top," or a single role for participation in an activity, and instead structuring challenge course activities in a way that de-emphasizes in its very description limited outcomes or roles.

A simple example of destructuring an activity in this way can be seen in the Spider's Web (Rhone, 1984). Traditionally, group members attempt to move from one side to the other, by passing one another through holes in the web. Usually, a hole can be used only once, and group members are not permitted to touch the web at any time. Those who are uncomfortable with this kind of physical contact, suffer from feelings of poor body image, or simply fear being lifted, are left with few choices in regards to their participation; they watch while others participate.

In a newer version, shown to me recently by Karl

Rhonke, the group's objective is to pass a rope through all of the holes, without the rope or anyone else touching the web. In this version, some group members need to be passed through holes in order to place people on the other side of the web. Other group members are involved in passing and holding the rope. This version provides a wider range of choice, as well as a challenge opportunity. The person who is uncomfortable with being passed through the web can choose another meaningful role, without pressure or undue attention. The activity changes the focus of the objective from physical performance to group problem solving, and creates varied roles for participation. This simple adjustment to a traditional activity invites participation from more participants.

When planning for broader participation and a broader implementation of Challenge by Choice as a design strategy, the following should be considered:

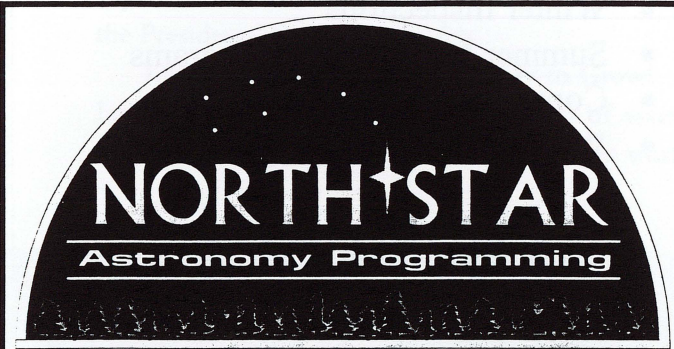
- Does the activity have an objective that offers varied roles for participation?
- Do all roles create meaningful opportunities for challenge?
- Do all roles contribute equally to the task?
- Are participants invited to make choices consistently throughout the program?
- Be aware of the way that language and phrasing create expectations.

At its beginning, Challenge by Choice responded to the traditional coercive methods often employed in outdoor adventure programs, and replaced them with an opportunity to create a supportive and nurturing environment for participants. This approach allowed participants to choose their level of participation. As participation in adventure programs continues to grow we need to do more than talk about Challenge by Choice. Successful programs that truly promote the goals of inclusion and participation will begin to actively utilize the Challenge by Choice approach as an active programming strategy. Challenge by Choice should not only offer a way out of the adventure experience, but ought to be the primary way of inviting people in!

References:

Rohnke, K. (1984). *Silver Bullets*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

Schoel, J., Prouty, D., & Radcliffe, P. (1988). *Islands of Healing*. Hamilton, MA: Project Adventure.

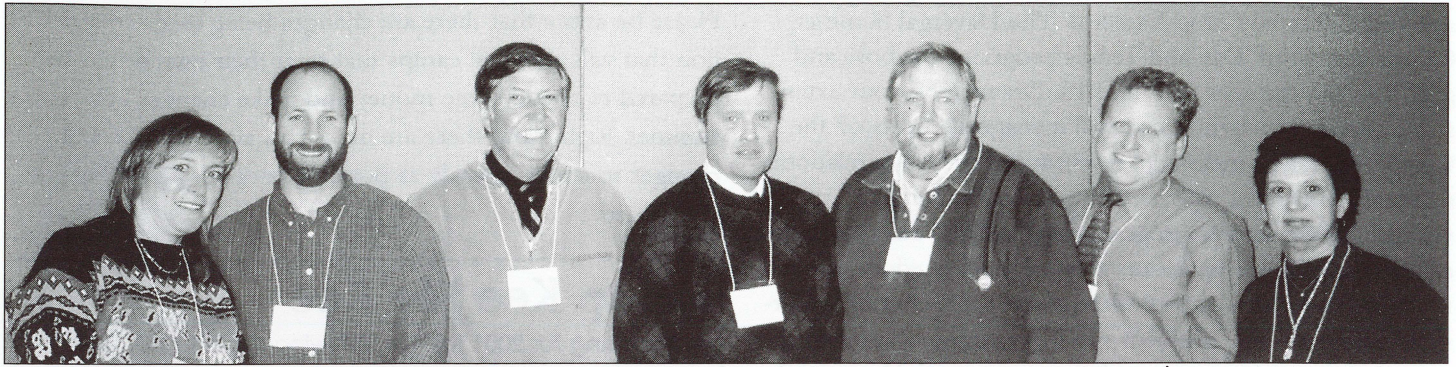


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# 2000 OCA Annual General Meeting

Toronto Cricket, Skating & Curling Club, December 12, 2000



The new OCA Board as of February 2001 (above, l-r):  
Sari Grossinger Director, Special Needs Camps Sub-class  
Eoin Wood, Secretary/Treasurer  
Brian Blackstock, President \*  
Alf Grigg, Director, Agency Camps Sub-class \*  
Bill Stevens, Director, Religiously Affiliated Camps Sub-class \*  
Dave Graham, Vice President \*  
Ellen Nash, Past President

*not pictured:*

Craig Hartley, Director, Private Camps Sub-class \*  
Jeff Brown, Regional Representative  
Patti Thom, Chair, Human Resources Committee  
Catherine Ross, Chair, Standards Committee

\* denotes newly elected or acclaimed position

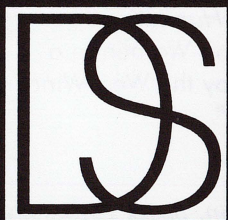
Kate Horton (above, r) of Glen Bernard Camp accepts the Chapman Cup from Len Manuel of the Lifesaving Society.

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**Job Positions - Head Cook & Kitchen Manager** required for summer children's camp. Both positions start from the end of June to end of August, and include room & board. Please fax résumé to 705-725-8693 or call 705-725-9190 for more information.

**Camp Director required** for small, innovative Leadership Camp near Parry Sound for 9- to 16-year-olds. Experience required, training provided. Full time summer hours, part time hours commence early spring. Please indicate interest by faxing a résumé to 905-841-8889, Attention: Pat Henry.

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### Did you miss the OCA Annual General Meeting?

You can still get a copy of the OCA Annual Report.

Just call the OCA office at 416-485-0425,  
and we'll send one out to you

## Waterworks Update

by Lisa Wilson, Camp Oconto

Please be aware that there are changes being made to legislation that will affect all camps that treat their own water. Be prepared to spend some money and make changes before the summer. Right now, there are no details available. We will get changes to you as quickly as possible once they have been confirmed.

### Camp Kee Mo Kee

is now hiring for 2001 for the following summer positions:

#### Director Assistant Director

*(Camping experience is recommended)*

Please send résumés by January 20, 2001 to:

**David Whiting**  
**RR #2, Lucan, ON N0M 2J0**

Please no phone enquiries!

## Congratulations

to the winners of the 2000 Society of Camp Directors

### Writing Awards

jointly sponsored by The Society of Camp Directors, the Ontario Camping Association, and Trent University Archives.

#### **Claire Campbell**

*University of Western Ontario, Ph.D History Candidate and Tutor, with family links to Camp Hurontario.*

*"Our Minds Weren't on Fish': Men and Women in a Canadian Landscape" and "Shaped by the West Winds: Memories of a Canadian Landscape."*

#### **Anna H. Lathrop**

*Associate Professor, Physical Education, Brock University, with family links to Camp Tanamakoon and Mary G. Hamilton*

*"Strap a Compass and Knife and Axe to your Belt': The Role of Camp Counsellor Training in the Socialization of Women at the Margaret Eaton School (1925-1941)."*

#### **Liz Newbery**

*Outward Bound Canada and Physical Education Tutor, McMaster University.*

*"Stories of an Unlikely Amazon: Competence, Role Modelling and Femininity in a Gendered Outdoors."*