



# Outward Bound

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

*Journal*

2011 Edition

The Origins of  
Outward Bound

OB Hong Kong's  
Inspiring Community Courses

Lessons We Share  
With BP and Wall Street

The History of Solo  
Urban Wilderness

\$15.00 US



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A Love of  
**Adventure**  
pg. 14

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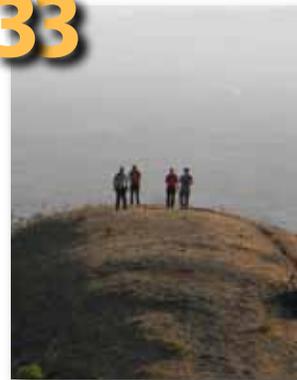
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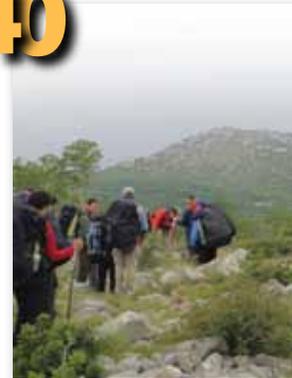
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# Contributors



## Costa Rica Outward Bound Partners with Peace Corps Volunteer in Buena Esperanza

Courtney Black is the External Relations Manager for Outward Bound Costa Rica. A recent addition to the OB family, she looks forward to experiencing all that Costa Rica has to offer, especially hardshell kayaking. Courtney has

spent most of her career in a variety of editing and communications fields, most recently as a Public Information Officer in Sacramento, California.

## The Love of Adventure

Dick Hubbard is the founder of Hubbards Foods, a New Zealand-based producer of breakfast cereal. He has been a strong supporter of Outward Bound New Zealand since taking an OB course in 1964, and is deeply involved in community and professional organizations. Hubbard served a term as Mayor of New Zealand's largest city, Auckland; founded the Sustainable Business Network; was Chairman of the New Zealand National Parks and Conservation Foundation; and through Hubbard Foods, has set up a cause-marketing program for Outward Bound. Join him as he shares his love of adventure and chronicles a recent 23,000 km motorcycle trip around Australia.



## Blossoming Hope

Julie Staub was born in South Africa but grew up in Rhodesia, where she participated in an Outward Bound course as a school camp. After various administrative positions in South Africa and Europe, she got a job as the secretary at her sons' primary

school, where she met Craig Wilkinson, who was involved in Outward Bound. Craig offered her an admin position at the newly-opened Outward Bound office in Johannesburg, which she excitedly accepted. She was involved in organizing the Outward Bound World Conference in 2006 and shortly after was asked to take over the fundraising position. Julie is a hardened disciple of Outward Bound and the work it does around the world.

## Human Error: Accidents in Adventure Activities

Marcus Bailie is the Head of Inspection for the Adventure Activities Licensing Service, a part of the UK government's Health and Safety Executive. Marcus has been involved professionally with adventure activities for over 30 years, including serving as an instructor at Plas y Brenin, the national mountaineering centre, and as director of Tiglin, the National Adventure Centre of Ireland.



## The Origins of Outward Bound

Born in England and a graduate of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, Rafe Parker's first position with Outward Bound was as an instructor at the Aberdovey Sea School in Wales. He was instrumental in starting the Outward Bound School on Lake Tanganyika, Zambia. He has also served at OB Schools in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and South Africa. In 1968, Rafe was appointed Program Director at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. From 1978 to 1982, he was Executive Director of the Southwest OB School in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



In 1982, Rafe was appointed president of Sea Education Association ([www.sea.edu](http://www.sea.edu)) in Woods Hole, MA, which he led until he retired in 2002 and helped expand from a one-ship program to a unique interdisciplinary educational institution at the university level. Since then, he has served as a consultant for Sea Education Association and Ocean Classroom. Most recently, in May 2010, Rafe was invited to assume the role of Executive Director for the Bermuda Sloop Foundation ([www.bermudasloop.org](http://www.bermudasloop.org)), a position he continues to hold.



## Risk Management Lessons

Reb Gregg is a leading attorney, lecturer and writer in legal liability issues for adventure-, education-, and recreation-based outdoor programs. He has served as president of the Houston Bar Association and on the Board of Directors of the State Bar of Texas. In

2002 he was identified by Outside Magazine as "the Dean of the Outdoor Bar." Reb presently serves on the Risk Management Committee for Outward Bound International. He has served on numerous governance and advisory boards and as general counsel, including 30 years with the US-based National Outdoor Leadership School.

## OB Hong Kong's Inspiring Community Courses

Zoe Byron is a copywriter for OB Hong Kong. A Hong Kong native, she has worked as a research assistant at Hong Kong University and as a freelance writer for various business and lifestyle magazines. A new addition to the Outward Bound team, Zoe is currently focusing on increasing OBHK's print media coverage. She lives next to OBHK's stunning headquarters in Sai Kung's country park and loves exploring the surrounding bays and mountains.



## Canoes and Peacebuilding

Prior to joining the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding as Executive Director, Ana Patel was a Deputy Director at the International Center for Transitional Justice. Ana has over 15 years of experience in the fields of peacebuilding, development, and human rights across the globe with such organizations as the United Nations Development Programme, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Andean Development Corporation in Venezuela. She is also an Adjunct Lecturer and Fellow at the Center for International Conflict Resolution at The School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

# From the Editor



Seventy years have passed since Outward Bound offered its first course in the Welsh town of Aberdovey. Twenty-four young men enrolled in that four-week course where the central skill taught was seamanship. Character development was the aim.

Since 1941, Outward Bound has grown immensely, both in its global reach but also in the impact of its educational ideas. Countless organizations have adopted into their own curricula the ideas that Outward Bound has pioneered over seven decades: challenge courses, solo, final expedition, and of course, community service as means to develop compassion for others. Oscar Wilde was right, imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.

The first Outward Bound school outside the United Kingdom opened in 1955, in Malaysia. By the mid-1960s over 55,000 young people had participated in Outward Bound courses. Present-day Outward Bound operates in over 30 countries, serves more than 250,000 students each year, and boasts an alumni base of over six million.

Over the years, Outward Bound's educational ideas have come to encompass much more than character development for young men. Young women and men from all walks of life now participate in courses designed to increase self-esteem, realize untapped potential, and teach students to work effectively in small-group settings through adventurous experiences conducted in wilderness and urban areas. Of course, Outward Bound is not just for young people. Adults comprise an increasing number of Outward Bound's participants worldwide.

This issue of *OBI Journal* profiles several of the impressive offerings of the schools that comprise our international network. Let us take you on a page-by-page journey through a year in the life of Outward Bound. Learn how OB Hong Kong reaches out to its community through specially designed programs for young people. Contemplate Outward Bound South Africa's program for helping turn abused women's lives around. Read how Outward Bound in the US came to have a three-day solo. Check out OB Canada's new "urban wilderness" programs in Toronto. And join in the story of long-time Outward Bound supporter and former student Dick Hubbard as he chronicles a 23,000-kilometer motorcycle adventure down under.

Enjoy the journey!

Rob Chatfield  
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# Outward Bound

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

## Journal

### Contributors Wanted

Outward Bound International Journal is an annual publication that aims to showcase the worldwide organization through a mixture of feature-length and sidebar articles that have a strong global emphasis, and reflect on the social impact and innovative nature of Outward Bound's programming.

Writers interested in submitting articles, especially those that illuminate Outward Bound's philosophy, central figures, and historical roots, may do so by contacting the editor [objournal@outwardbound.net](mailto:objournal@outwardbound.net) with a proposal for an article. Unsolicited material will not be returned.

Outward Bound Magazine is published annually in July, and the deadline for contributors is March 15.



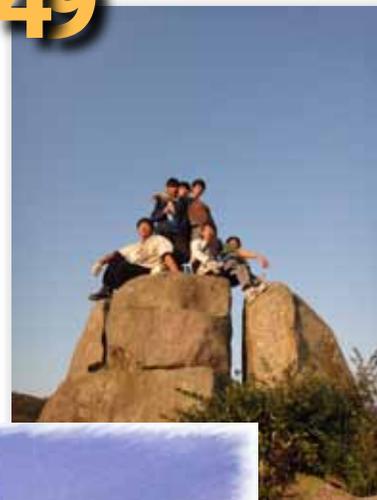
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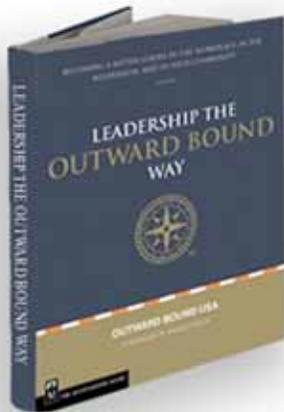


## Thompson Island Outward Bound's Summer Learning Program

One of the most significant developments of the past year for Thompson Island Outward Bound has been the development of its Summer Learning Program. Funded by the New York City-based Wallace Foundation, the project will study how high-quality summer learning programs can prevent summer learning loss and help close the achievement gap for low-income students. Boston is one of four urban school districts participating and TIOB is one of four local non-profits partnering with the Boston Public Schools to provide programming.

In 2010 the National Institute on Out-of-School Time reported findings showing that TIOB out-performed all other partnerships and far exceeded statewide averages for Massachusetts summer and after school programs. Student showed dramatic growth in behaviors demonstrating academic engagement, initiative, communications skills, relations with peers, and relations with adults.

## Learn to be a Leader Outdoors, in Business, and in Your Community



Foreword by Jimmy Carter

For more than 45 years Outward Bound has been training leaders. *Leadership the Outward Bound Way* is the published compilation of that wisdom.

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# Risk Management Lessons We Share With British Petroleum and Wall Street

By Reb Gregg



*Reb Gregg is a leading attorney, lecturer, and writer in legal liability issues for adventure-, education-, and recreation-based outdoor programs. He has served as president of the Houston Bar Association and on the Board*

*of Directors of the State Bar of Texas. Reb presently serves on the Risk Management Committee for Outward Bound International. He also serves as counsel to the Association for Challenge Course Technology and the Independent School Experiential Education Network. He is a member of the Wilderness Risk Managers Committee, which includes Risk Managers of outstanding programs around the United States.*

*He wrote this article several months after the explosions of British Petroleum's (BP) Macondo oil well in the Gulf of Mexico, at a time when the US was reeling from an economic collapse more severe than any since the Great Depression. He has updated the article based on new information and to clarify a few points for the benefit of our international readers who might be less informed than US readers about these events.*

I see our industry's risk management issues all over the reports of the Wall Street and Gulf of Mexico disasters. More than a year after the massive oil spill in the Gulf, on April 20, 2010, we continue to learn of lapses in judgment and planning which are all too familiar to risk managers in our industry. There is hardly anything I know less about than the financial markets, unless it is drilling for oil, but here are some thoughts raised by reports of those events. Perhaps you see some of the same similarities, and are searching, as I am, for how these disasters might inform our own risk management thinking.

As you know, my expertise is in managing the risks of legal liability—not operations. There are overlaps, however, so I hope I'll be excused for jumping into this learning opportunity.

The Wall Street implosion caused the loss of an incredible amount of money, and the loss of trust and confidence in the market system. The Gulf of Mexico explosion killed eleven workers, and released a reported five million barrels of oil into the Gulf, which caused immeasurable environmental damage. Both disasters involved miscalculations of the probability and severity of an event which, if it was anticipated at all, was considered too far off the probability axis to deserve serious attention. As someone observed early in the investigations, however, unprecedented does not mean impossible. It may not even mean unlikely. It means only that the bad event hasn't occurred...yet. Former Vice-President Dick Cheney, whom I don't often quote, supported what

he called "The One Percent Doctrine"—if there's a one percent chance of a bad thing happening, tend to it!

A British Petroleum executive reportedly told an investigating congressional committee that the explosion and leak were "an aberration" and "a rare event that the company is not likely to repeat". Where does such an event fall along a scale of probability? Would you lead a participant into a situation that you felt was "not likely" to kill him or her? Was the leak foreseeable (that is, reasonably anticipated)? Arguably not, based on what we know so far. Since 1950, 36,000 offshore wells have been drilled in the Gulf of Mexico. Only one, in 1979, came close to causing as much damage as the Macondo well explosion. How do the probabilities of that explosion and the Wall Street collapse compare to your program's Black Swans—severe losses which are not likely, but possible? A professor of economics and behavioral science at the University of Chicago, Richard Thaler, commenting on the spill, observed that: "...people in general are not good at estimating the true chances of rare events—especially when human error may be involved."

**"The financial and oil leak disasters both reflect confusion, or indifference, regarding accountability."**

The financial and oil leak disasters both reflect confusion, or indifference, regarding accountability. Goldman Sachs and BP, for example, arguably were serving the interests of their shareholders and creditors. That's what good corporations do, of course. Each of you have constituencies whose interests you must balance—a Board of Directors, current and former participants, creditors, donors, partners and other owners, and peers in the industry. Their interests are not always the same, and may conflict with the interests of third parties who can be hurt by the actions of the organization. We know well, in the adventure education industry, that trying to please others is a major cause of accidents. The collateral damage caused by "trying to please" shareholders and management of the Wall Street firms and drilling companies has been terrible.

We have learned also in our business that an unanticipated converging of seemingly small events may create a problem far out of proportion to any of those events standing alone. Malcolm Gladwell wrote of this "cascade of events" phenomenon almost twenty years ago in his *New Yorker* article about the 1985 Challenger disaster, "Blow Up". Small failings led to a big disaster. This certainly occurred in the Gulf and on Wall Street. David Brooks, editorial writer for the *New York Times*, in a May 27, 2010 article, said the real issue in the Gulf was risk assessment, "...the bloody crossroads where complex technical systems meet human psychology". Brooks observed that we become acquainted with

“little” failures and in doing so we unknowingly adjust our definition of risk. Those “little” failures then combine with others about which we’ve also become complacent, and suddenly we have a very big problem.

## “We are not as quick to recognize risk as we think we are.”

Both calamities reflect mistakes of judgment made strategically, arguably in the interest of profit and, in BP’s case, to make up for very expensive lost time. (When the explosion occurred, BP’s well was over 40 days behind schedule, at a cost of \$500,000 per day for the rig alone!). According to the congressional committee’s letter to BP in advance of its hearings, BP chose not to do certain tests and not to install certain protective devices because to do so would have caused further delays. You and I know that a significant contributor to accidents is the desire to keep a schedule.

David Brooks and others argue that one of BP’s major errors was too much faith in the back-up system, the blowout preventer. Such misplaced faith can reduce attention to the frontline defenses. I recall, still with some shock, Betty van der Smissen, a noted writer and lecturer in the field of outdoor adventure programming, insisting that programs relaxed their attention to safety issues because of their faith in their Liability Releases. I disagreed with her, something I did with fear and trembling. In any event, it appears the blowout preventer did not work as it should have. Investigations into the reasons for its failure continue.

In the financial meltdown and in the Gulf of Mexico spill, regulations and certain industry standards were ignored, and those charged with oversight, within the organizations and out, were lax in performing their duties. The Emergency Action Plan submitted by BP to the government agency in charge reportedly was a re-write of one used in another location for another well—citing dangers to walruses, for example. (No walruses have been reported in the Gulf of Mexico.) One of the emergency contacts identified in the Plan had been dead for some time.

In both cases command and control were so diffused as to be of little value. Consider the many players (and supervisors) in the marketing and distribution of the financial derivatives. And, of the 160 people reportedly on the rig before the explosion, only six were BP employees. The disbursement of responsibility created an illusion of low risk and it confused accountability. No one, it appears, had the big picture. No one could contemplate the totality of the risk. The same condition existed at the government level in both disasters—too many committees, too many agencies, and not enough coordination. “Teamwork”, if that’s what it was, complicated assessment and prompt action.

Can regulation—including, for our industry, more standards, accreditations, and certifications—solve the problem? To some extent, yes, but we’re still dealing with human nature. Complex systems—and I

submit that any system which ultimately relies on human judgment is complex—are too often matched with equally complex governing or management systems. Effective oversight, internal to an organization or external, requires sharp and independent thinking and a structure that focuses ultimate accountability at a single point.

Most recent news reports point to negligence, and more, in the acts and omissions leading up to the respective disasters. Negligence is simply carelessness, and does not require an evil state of mind. But there appears to have been more going on than simple carelessness. More of a “can we get away with it” than a “whoops”.

The unhappy truth (this thought is not original with me) is that we humans simply have not yet learned to cope well with the complexities and interconnectedness of modern systems. Immanuel Kant describes humans as “fallible”. The more moving parts there are in a system, the greater the risk. Humans as moving parts enlarge the risk. In rulings involving inherent risks, courts have held that “machines naturally fail”. That is not to say that machines always fail, but it is in their nature to do so. What about human beings? We are not as rational as we think we are. We are not as quick to recognize risk as we think we are.



We ignore the reality that risk confronts us with the bad thing that hasn’t yet happened. We have lost our innocence in the way we view medicine, mineral production, health care, finance, sports, institutional religion, even law. None are as predictable or understood, or as well managed, as we once thought. As Peter Bernstein said (roughly) in *Against The Gods*: the problem with this life is not that it is safe or not safe. It’s that it is not as safe as it appears to be. Whoever, or whatever, designed this program, life, left out certainty.

Finally, some on Wall Street in the oil and gas industry, critical of the moratorium on drilling offshore and the increased regulation and oversight, argue that an important lesson from Wall Street and the Gulf is that, while we often are late to react, we too often overreact. Time will be the best judge of this, but it is a caution worth considering.

Ultimately, I offer with some discomfort, it comes down to us: managers, staff, and the consumers of the services we provide. I want my oysters and shrimp and I don’t want to pay \$10 for a gallon of gas to get to my favorite seafood restaurant to enjoy them. So, we have fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico drifting under oil rigs whose operators and owners and regulators are cutting corners to assure I can get to supper cheaply. It’s beginning to occur to me that I can’t have it all.

If some of my facts are a bit off (I don’t think they are), treat this as a good story which might reinforce some of the lessons we have learned in our businesses. BP has said it will do all possible to keep this from happening again. We haven’t heard the same assurances from Wall Street. The question is what did they—and what will we—do to keep it from happening the first time? 🌟

# Outward Bound **Pack**



Over the years more than a few outdoor equipment manufacturers have turned to Outward Bound as a proving ground for their new designs. A typical Outward Bound center can approximate years of wear and tear on items like sleeping bags and backpacks in just a few months of institutional use, and Outward Bound's instructors are also remarkably adept at figuring out what works and what doesn't when it comes to outdoor gear. Little things, like hipbelt buckles that "pop" under load or sleeping bag zippers that won't zip, can be little more than mild annoyances or may snowball into much bigger problems. Quite often the simplest and most robust designs are the best for Outward Bound. This is especially true when it comes to backpacks.

Such was the result when Outward Bound Hong Kong approached the popular New Zealand-based outdoor products company Macpac to design its new range of institutional backpacks. The company had a reputation for exceptional quality, and like many contemporary outdoor brands it had introduced a range of sophisticated backpacks into the marketplace.

Working with Macpac was a good fit for OB Hong Kong. The challenge-based school was looking for packs that were durable and rugged, and that's where the Kiwi company had built its reputation. The staff of OBHK worked closely with Macpac's designers to produce a single-chamber, no-nonsense design that would survive the rigors of Outward Bound programming. With several prototypes in hand, OBHK then asked Macpac's designers to remove all the "bells and whistles," in effect reducing the packs' weight and minimizing the number of breakable components. The result was a slightly less sophisticated, but much lighter, range of workhorse packs that are durable enough for the wilderness and stylish enough for everywhere else. 🌐



## OBI Expects an Enthusiastic Turnout for **SINGAPORE SYMPOSIUM**

Outward Bound International is putting the finishing touches on its 2011 Staff Symposium, to be held in Singapore, October 2–4. This year's gathering is the 19th such event since Outward Bound held its first staff symposium at Anakiwa, New Zealand in 1983. Since then, staff from around the world have packed their bags for Australia, Canada, Finland, Hong Kong, Malaysia, South Africa, and other far-flung locales where the symposium has been offered.



This year's event will be held at Outward Bound Singapore's Pulau Ubin (Granite Island) campus in northeast Singapore. Just 140 kilometers north of the equator, Singapore has a tropical rainforest climate that sustains reliably warm temperatures throughout the year for its five million inhabitants.

Keynote speakers from Canada, Ecuador, New Zealand, Oman, and Singapore will join a host of workshop presenters from among Outward Bound's worldwide network of schools to embrace the symposium theme, "Outward Bound Making a Difference in the Community."

For further information, including how to register and where to apply for travel assistance, please visit the symposium website: [www.outwardbound.net/conferences/2011\\_symposium](http://www.outwardbound.net/conferences/2011_symposium). 🌐

# Blossoming Hope:

## Turning Lives Around in South Africa

By Julie Staub – OB South Africa



**T**he abuse of women has increased enormously over the past few years in South Africa as well as globally. This is why the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-Moon has introduced the “UNiTE to end violence against women” programme, which is currently running around the world. While we commend him on this initiative, it does not help the women who are already the victims of abuse. At Outward Bound we feel that such women can benefit from a programme where they are taken back to nature and helped to realize that despite what they have been through, they all still have great potential and the ability to turn their lives around.

Outward Bound South Africa recently ran an eight-day programme for a group of six women from the Cape Flats, a very poor area outside of Cape Town known for its violence, drugs, and physical abuse. We partnered with a Centre for Abused Women and Children in order to work with ladies that had already started their rehabilitation programme and whom we could monitor after the Outward Bound course had been completed.

On arrival at the Outward Bound base, the participants, ranging in age from 21 to 52, were nervous and afraid of what was to come. They were wary of the unknown and felt very unprepared



for the course—the more the activities were discussed, the more threatened they began to feel. However, the women adapted very well to the outdoor environment and accepted whatever weather conditions came their way. They were determined to make the most of every situation with humor, perseverance, and a willingness to learn as much as possible without questioning the process or the way things unfolded. They were all very grateful to be on the course.

### “The course made me dig down and find myself.”

While climbing the highest mountain in the area, considerable conflict arose because the ladies felt they would never get to the top and were becoming afraid of the height. Nevertheless, they eventually managed to channel their negative energy into the mountain and were able to conquer it. At the top they each had two rocks. One was their burdens and the other their fears. They had to leave these rocks on the mountain and move on past them. Walking down the mountain symbolized their moving away from their burdens and their fears.

A social worker accompanied the ladies on the course and during their eight days of adventure. They also worked on an art project called the “Tree of Life”, the story of their lives in pictures. They described who were their roots, their branches, and their leaves, and how they, the tree, affected their lives and those around them.

“The course made me dig down and find myself. It made me conquer my fears, burdens, and also let go of my pain. For nine years I couldn’t see the beauty around me but you made me let go of my bitterness and even the simplest fern was an amazing sight. You actually taught me to trust again and know that my problems out there can’t be higher than the mountains we climbed or wider than the river we rowed on,” one lady said at the end of the course.

During the final debrief session, the ladies were able to relate their experiences on Outward Bound and the things that they had learned to their lives back home. Some of the comments were:

- I am moving from the Centre to start a new life. Taking the courage to get an interdict against my husband and then getting a divorce. I will no longer take the abuse.
- Making plans on how to leave my fears behind and how to move on.
- I am going to stand up and not sleep all day anymore. I am going to motivate others to do courses and to progress with our lives.
- I want to become a missionary and help others the way Outward Bound has helped me.
- I am going to take charge of my own life and reach out for



help. I am going to make a conscious effort to get and job and be a better mother for my kid.

- I learned to put my trust in others.
- I learned to stand up for myself.
- I realized what I was doing was wrong and I know I must work on it.
- It is not what I say, but how I say it.
- I have the courage and the confidence now to make big decisions in my life.
- I can do the trapeze, I can do this course, and I can go back and do things in my life.
- I am, I can, I will.

From the start of the course the group's expectations of themselves were very low. The women were nervous at the start of the different activities but as their confidence grew, their enthusiasm grew as well. Their new confidence helped them to accept their responsibilities and to mature as the course progressed. By the end of the course, the ladies had all realized that they were capable of performing almost all the challenges and that with perseverance and determination they could overcome their fears and turn their lives around.

At the start, of course, they needed a good deal of encouragement due to their lack of self-esteem, trust, and belief in themselves and others, as well as self-taught helplessness. The women showed all the signs of true victims, but as they became more confident, they coped better with the activities even though the course became tougher due to bad weather and longer days. They matured emotionally by realizing that they could be somebody with hope and that they are capable of doing things, reaching their goals, and making big decisions. They grew from being empty to have something inside of them. They were like closed flowers and as they developed within themselves they developed into beautiful blossoms for the entire world to see.

The ladies' greatest discovery during the course was being one with nature. None of them had spent any time in the outdoors and were amazed by the mountains and especially by the plant life. They were in awe of the flowers, insects, and incredible nature in which they found themselves. Mountains and water appear to have played a large part in the growth of one member, since she referred to them in most of her conversations. The Experience Letters at the end of the course were all very positive and spoke of what they had learned and what they plan to do when they get back home.

“I am, I can, I will.”

Since the course we have established that there are still four of the ladies living in the centre but each has made enormous progress. The others have all left their partners and moved to different towns. 🌸

# The Love of

# ADVENTURE

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.” -Helen Keller

By Dick Hubbard

**W**e all know only too well the key messages from the legacy of Kurt Hahn that are embodied in the ethos of the Outward Bound movement — the development of self-knowledge, resilience, perseverance, and mental toughness. However, to my mind there is one legacy message that is often not given the emphasis that it deserves. It is the instilling into young people the love of, and an appreciation for, the value of adventure.

When I look back at the various lessons I received as a young 18-year-old doing a New Zealand Outward Bound course in 1964, the most abiding one to me is the fact that Outward Bound instilled in me a deep and abiding love affair with adventure. Indeed, as I look back over the years and reminisce, as someone of my age and stage is allowed to do, I realize with increasing clarity that my life has been largely shaped by an appreciation of the value of adventure and by the rich rewards that come from deliberately seeking it out.

When one steps back and examines what is meant by “adventure”, there are many and varied definitions of its meaning. Such definitions range from the somewhat whimsical G.K. Chesterton quote, “An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered,” through to the deeper George Mallory quote, “What we get from adventure is sheer joy. And joy is, after all, the end of life. We do not live to eat and make money”. However, to me personally, “adventure” is something that is essential if one is to really know oneself, if one is to experience the sheer joy of living as opposed to merely existing. Also, we can only make a contribution to the world we live in by being adventurous. The meek may well inherit the earth but they will not save it or improve it! My definition of adventure, succinctly put, is that it is food for the soul and food for the society we live in.

It is easy to confuse an adventure with that of an “intense experience”. Adventure has to my mind two distinguishing features from an intense experience. Firstly, in adventure there will be always exposure to risk and

the learning of how to calculate, and minimize, that risk. As Canadian author Douglas Coupland pointedly put it, “Adventure without risk is just Disneyland”. Within Outward Bound we obviously go to great lengths to minimize risk, and we can teach our young people a lot by exposing them to perceived risk or simulated risk as opposed to actual risk. However, life is about managing risk.

“Outward Bound instilled in me a deep and abiding love affair with adventure.”

Secondly, to my mind an essential part of adventure is the sheer unpredictability of it and the joy and mastery of making decisions based around unpredictable circumstances. Real lessons about adventure in an Outward Bound context must,

in my opinion, come from students being exposed to unpredictable circumstances and learning how to cope with those surprises.

Do adventures have to be physical in nature or solely linked to the outdoors? I think not. Yes, particularly with those of non-outdoors experience, the outdoors is a wonderful classroom in which to learn about about adventure and the other key Outward Bound messages, but to me adventure is about the mind as much as the body.

I love reading about adventurers. Some of these can be the hardy physical types such as explorers or mountaineers. However,

many successful businessmen see a business venture as an adventurous, unpredictable ride with lots of calculated risk. Ditto with some politicians. I know! Many of the quotes on the value of adventure, interestingly enough, also see artists as adventurers in that they also often go where no one has gone before. Facing a blank canvas is the start of an adventure, with unpredictability and, at least, risk to reputation.

With all this in mind, and a thirst for adventure that seems to be increasing rather than decreasing with age, in February last year a friend and I hatched the plan of riding our motorbikes right around Australia. Why Australia? Well, from the practical point of New Zealanders, Australia is just an uncluttered extension of our own country. Now there is true risk for you! More seriously, Australia is





huge — think Texas squared! The perimeter of Australia is about the same as the perimeter of the United States. More importantly, much of Australia, particularly in the north, is the “Outback“ with sparse populations (and support facilities), and dirt roads subject to heat, flash flooding, and other such dangers. Driving around Australia in a car or four-wheel drive vehicle is an adventure in itself, but on a motorbike it is considerably more so.

“Adventure without risk is just Disneyland.”

The logical next step was to do this exercise in true Outward Bound mode. According to the lessons of Outward Bound, success or failure would be hugely influenced by the thoroughness of planning. First up was the compatibility with my riding companion. We had known each other for 30 years, but how would we cope with 50 days on the road together and, more importantly, with stressful circumstances? As Captain Scott of Antarctica fame said, “Pick your companions well.”

Lesson two from Outward Bound: sort and choose your equipment with care. Obviously the key equipment was the motorbikes themselves. We both decided to sell our big road bikes and get BMW R1200GS motorcycles instead. For those who know motorcycles,

these can handle the dirt and mud roads of the Outback but still ride the long stretches of relatively high-speed road with comfort. Forget Harleys!

Camping gear was also going to be essential as we would be in places where there was no accommodation. Also if one got caught out

by failing light, or became lost, or broke down, one could camp at the side of the road. This we did.

Finally, another lesson from Outward Bound: prepare for contingencies. In our case, this meant having a reasonable tool kit, first-aid experience (my companion was a trained Red Cross volunteer medic), and, last but not least, protocols for not losing each other.

All Outward Bound adventures should have a defined start date and a masterplan, and our trip was no exception. We left Sydney on a crisp but fine late autumn day of May 1 exactly as planned and headed north to the cool (well, slightly cooler) but drier season of northern Australia.

North of Cairns, close to the north of the continent, Highway 1

abruptly stops and the four-wheel drive roads start. It is still 1000 kilometers to the top of Australia. Road signs saying beware of kangaroos, wombats, and crocodile suddenly had meaning.

More importantly, so did signs saying “unforded river or stream — cross at your own risk!” Fine for a “grunty” four-wheel drive to cross streams on rounded and slippery river stones, but on a motorbike with just two wheels it was something else. My companion fell off his bike halfway across one such stream and we had our first lesson in picking a fallen bike up in midstream, getting it to the bank, drying the engine out and, last but not least, emptying the luggage panniers of copious quantities of water.

From the tropical Daintree rain forest of the northern Cairns area, we travelled onto the arid dirt roads leading up the Cape York peninsula to the northern tip of Australia. Mud turned into soft sand and dust and the bikes often reacted to the road conditions like bucking broncos. The danger of falling off was often very real. Lying winded on one’s back in the middle of a sandy road with a 400 kilogram bike half on top of one is an interesting experience! Fortunately, as with most adventurous journeys, be it mountains, the sea, or the Outback of Australia, courtesy and etiquette come into play and there is the ever-present unwritten rule that if you ever need help, the next traveler, whatever the circumstances, will stop and do his utmost.

I did, however, break this rule once. Later in the journey, on the long road to Alice Springs in the centre of Australia, I passed a Harley-Davidson stopped on the side of the road. I waved companionly as I passed. It was only that night in the bar of a lonely roadhouse that I found out he had run out of petrol and of course I had a spare 10-liter plastic container full of petrol strapped to my back seat. Well, it was only a Harley, I consoled myself! It did cost me a few beers.

From the Cape York peninsula we traced our trip through the lonely and isolated gulf country at the bottom on the Gulf of Car-

pentaria. It was tough country there and one got to really appreciate the tyranny of distance and the related tyranny of isolation. One could certainly understand the importance of the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service. For us it was a form of insurance.

After three weeks on the road we took a break in the fleshpots of Darwin, then got on the bikes again to cross the top of Australia via Kimberley and the infamous Gibb River road — 700 isolated kilometers of dirt road, tricky river crossings, and sheer, sheer isolation. From there, the journey tracked down the western side of Australia and through the Pilbara, where the isolation is broken by huge iron ore mines busily supplying the roaring furnaces of China. It was at yet another isolated roadhouse in the Pilbara where we learned via a blaring TV in the corner of a bar that Australia had just got (legitimately!), as a result of a leadership coup, its first female prime minister. The mining workers and the truck drivers had their jaws around their knees! It’s a macho male place is the Outback, where the men are men and the (few) women are even stronger.

## “It was between Ayers Rock and Alice Springs that we really put the ‘A’ into ‘Adventure.’”

At Perth, and with 12,000 kilometers on the clock, we were halfway through our adventure. After servicing the bikes with new oil and tyres (and a few running repairs), we took off around the southwest

corner of Australia and then east across the famous Nullabor plain, heading to Adelaide. East of Kalgoonie the road sign just said “2300 kilometers to Adelaide”. A mere doodle! But we added a twist to the adventure: North of Adelaide we turned right instead of left and headed up to the famous Ayers Rock and the equally famous township of Alice Springs.

It was between Ayers Rock and Alice Springs that we really put the “A” into “Adventure”. We took a short cut from Kings Canyon to Alice Springs. Just 180 kilometers through an aboriginal reservation, the road map said; just five hours on a dirt road, we said. How wrong we were. The dirt road was mud with water across it in many places, where the only passage was through untracked Mulga scrub on the side of the road. It was two long days instead of five easy hours and we were fighting with the bikes in the slippery mud all the way. Our average speed was 12 kilometers per hour and at night we camped exhausted on the side of the road just halfway to our destination. Both our bikes and ourselves were absolutely plastered with red mud as we rode into Alice Springs.

I thought of Thornton Wilder’s quote, “The test of an adventure is that when you’re in the middle of it, you say to yourself, ‘Oh now I’ve got myself into an awful mess; I wish I were sitting quietly home’. And the sign that something’s wrong with you is when you sit quietly at home wishing you were out having lots of adventure.” That did happen too!

From Alice Springs our adventure had us tracking south to Adelaide, a quick flick to Melbourne, round the southeast corner of Australia, through the Snowy Mountains to Canberra, and thence to Sydney for a triumphal ride across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. We turned down the invitation from the new female prime minister (who was by now well settled into office) to have a red carpet welcome. We figured she was better off running Australia than worrying about us!



As any Outward Bound person will tell you, the debrief and the analysis of lessons learned is one of the most important and most pleasurable parts of an adventure. In true Outward Bound fashion, we pondered just what were our key lessons from this trip? Firstly, and not surprisingly, our planning paid off handsomely. Secondly, the two of us remained friends, and indeed one realised the checks and balances that come into risk assessment when there are two of you instead of one. Thirdly, forget about enjoying adventure less as you get older! The bones may be older but the senses are not. One of the most inspiring encounters on the trip was meeting up with a 71-year-old New Zealand woman who was riding her pushbike by herself right around the top end of Australia.



Finally, let me say that the idea of having one last adventure at our age is just a myth and a cruel one at that. I somewhat naively thought that the trip around Australia would get this sort of adventure out of my system. How completely wrong I was. As a result of this trip I have now got the taste for adventure even more entrenched in my system. My wife and I are soon off for three weeks riding motorcycles in the Himalayas, and we are just starting to plan an epic 2012 motorcycle trip called "Ice to Ice" which will go from Prudhoe Bay in Alaska to the bottom of Tierra de Fuego in Patagonia, from the top to the bottom of the Americas. Perhaps I can get an instructor's job at the Costa Rica or Ecuador Outward Bound Schools on the way!

So, to those of you that are the sharp end of delivering the Outward Bound message to the young people of today, do not overlook the need to instill the love of adventure into your charges. And don't forget you can only do this by continually refreshing yourself with adventures of your own! Regard adventure as an investment in yourself. Finally, just do it for the sheer unrationalised and untrammelled joy of it! 🗺️



# Costa Rica Outward Bound Partners with Peace Corps Volunteer in Buena Esperanza

By Courtney Black- OB Costa Rica

In June 2011, Outward Bound Costa Rica students from the Journeys School, an extension of the Teton Science School in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, embarked on a nine-day multi-element excursion that included snorkeling, rafting, zip lining, and, most notably, a community service project in Buena Esperanza, an isolated, low-income community on Dolphin Bay in the Bocas del Toro region of Panama.

Students arrived at the base camp in Tres Rios, Costa Rica, and drove to Panama, where they took a boat (which is the only trans-

portation available) to Buena Esperanza. Once there, students were welcomed by Michelle Aguilar, a Peace Corps volunteer, and her community, who hosted the students by providing home-cooked meals, shelter, and facilities.

Michelle has been living in Buena Esperanza for the past year and a half, working to provide safe drinking water and water sanitation education for the community. She was originally charged as a “community economic development volunteer,” but soon prioritized projects to ensure the availability and use of clean drinking water.

Within three months of her arrival, Michelle witnessed the deaths of two children that were “likely curable, the causes of death being water-borne diseases.”

For a week, the OB Costa Rica students helped Michelle and other volunteers install the community’s 28th rain catchment system. The project included tough manual labor, sweat, and perseverance—work that may not seem suitable for most high school students. However, the response from the students and their teacher was nothing but positive.

Many of the program participants came from the United States where few, if any, have ever experienced such basic living conditions. Even fewer have ever had to worry about the safety of their drinking water. Seventeen-year-old Owen Winship commented that, “living with the people of Buena Esperanza was an amazing, enlightening, and enriching experience.” This



sentiment was shared by many students, several noting that this phase of the course was their favorite.

Even Michelle is humbled by this experience as she continues to be reminded about how water, or the lack thereof, changes and affects life. After recently installing a tank for a mother of six, Michelle was told a story about times when the old water source (a dirty, shallow well) would dry up, forcing the mother to pack up her house, gather her children, and hike for two hours to stay with her mother in a neighboring community. The children were forced to miss school until the next rain allowed them to return home. While this woman's story is not unusual for the Bocas region, it reinforces Michelle's commitment to this project and its importance.

When asked what her biggest successes have been since the project's inception, Michelle replied, "I feel like the group work within my community has been a success. The fact that all 270 in my community now have access to clean drinking water is a success. I feel like the fact that I have not been to another funeral since the water project started is a success."

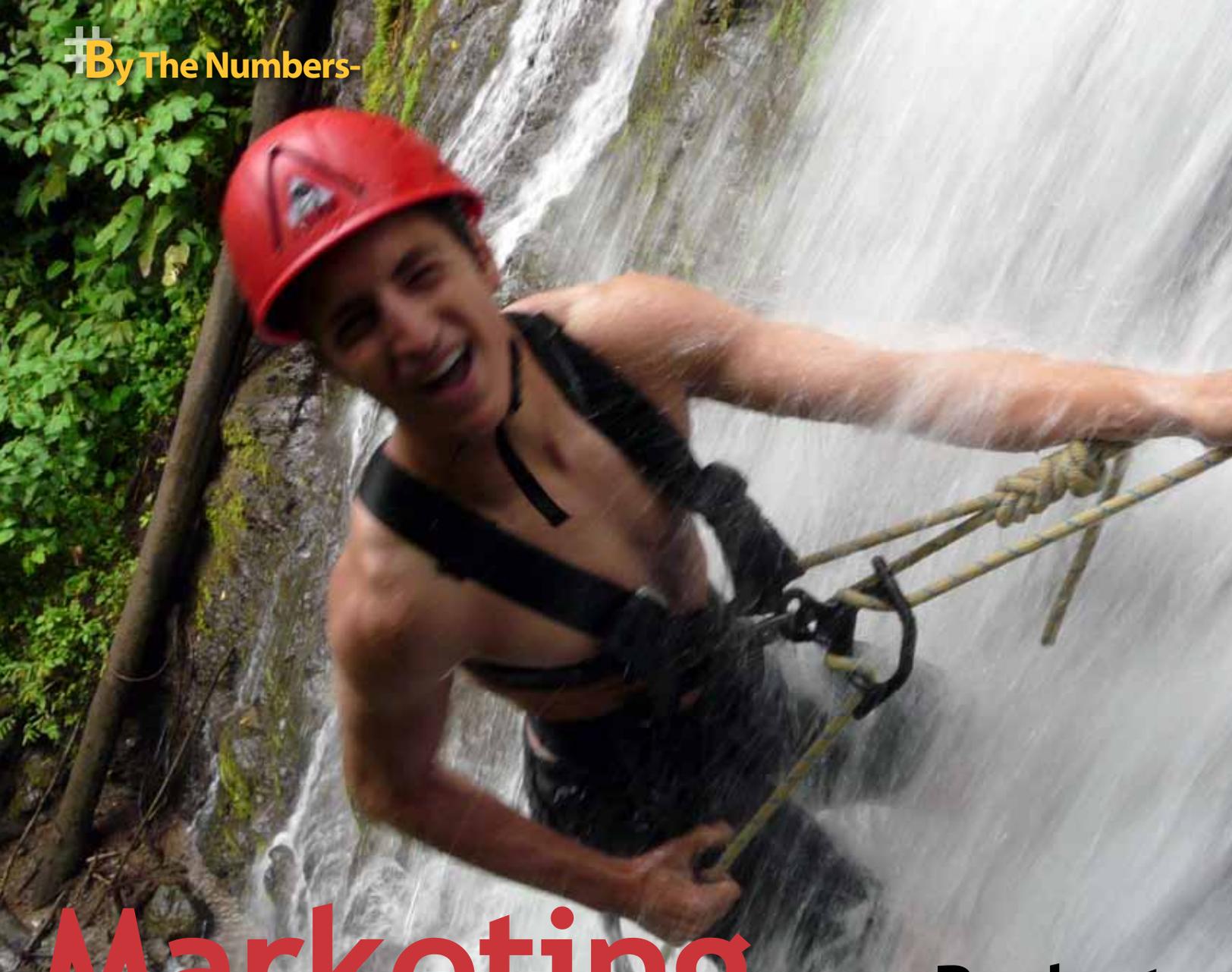
As for challenges, Michelle didn't have many complaints aside from



finding volunteers who shared her desire to share in the educational aspect of the project. That being said, she praised Journeys School for their "week of dedicated service, cultural sensitivity, and respect."

Costa Rica Outward Bound and our students feel honored to work with people like Michelle to make a difference in one of the communities in which we work. If you are interested in learning more about Michelle and her work in Panama, visit: [www.peaceinpanama.blogspot.com](http://www.peaceinpanama.blogspot.com). If you would like to participate in one of the many service projects Costa Rica Outward Bound offers, go to [www.costaricaoutwardbound.org](http://www.costaricaoutwardbound.org). 





# Marketing on a Budget

Outward Bound Costa Rica Utilizes Low-Cost Marketing Options in Creative Ways

By Courtney Black - OB Costa Rica

**L**ike many organizations in these challenging economic times, Outward Bound Costa Rica has had to rely on creativity and resilience in order to thrive in the marketplace. We have worked hard to increase our marketing efforts and to raise enrollment levels despite a conservative budget and an uncertain economic outlook. One of our most successful strategies has been to adopt a low- or no-cost approach to marketing. We've listed some of our favorite budget marketing tactics below.

**Network:** Social media is booming and sites like Facebook and Twitter continue to grow at a rapid pace. At OB Costa Rica we work to create unique, targeted posts relevant to the great range of our users. We form personal connections with our 'followers' and make sure to balance market research questions, such as what new kinds of courses interest people, with special-

ized targeting, such as mentions of upcoming courses.

Recently, *Surfer Magazine* ranked its top 100 surfers, one of whom is a Costa Rican who grew up surfing the same beaches our courses visit. We linked to this on our Facebook page to highlight a local success story. At the same time, this story increased our credibility and made us easier to find by surf-related Web searches.

Partnerships with other Outward Bound International centers are a natural extension of our marketing efforts. Viewing our unique organizations as complimentary rather than competitive is an excellent way to strengthen our brand while increasing enrollment. OBI schools can develop partnership courses, generate referral business, and take advantage of each school's strengths to help



give clients exactly what they are looking for, build brand awareness, and create more business for everyone.

**Tell a Story:** As an organization, we can tell the stories of our participants, but their stories are often told best by themselves. Reaching out to our participants and capturing these stories is an important marketing resource.

Press releases are a great way to do this because they reach a large number of people without significant cost. It may seem obvious, but aside from staff time it costs nothing to write a press release, and the results can be surprisingly beneficial. The key is to create a compelling and relatable story. However, the success of a press release relies on the writer and, most importantly, on matching a story with an appropriate media outlet and/or reporter.

Outward Bound Costa Rica has experienced measurable success in its “Hometown Heroes” features, which spotlight recent course graduates who have had a particularly interesting or successful Outward Bound experience. Marketing their stories to their hometown publications, regardless of media distribution, has increased enrollment from friends and neighbors seeking a similar experience.

**Keep in Touch:** At OB Costa Rica, our alumni are our greatest source of referrals. Reach out to them via Facebook, regular newsletters, or email updates. Keeping alumni informed and engaged keeps Outward Bound at the forefront of their mind if anyone asks them for a program recommendation. And don’t overlook the value that alumni bring to your staff! Hearing their

success stories help all staff stay motivated and feel like they are helping make a difference.

**Listen:** Course evaluations can provide valuable program and marketing data. Create thoughtful questions that encourage participants to reflect on their experience. And, when you make a change based upon participant feedback, report it. This will increase the credibility of your school and improve future programs.

Regardless of the size of your marketing department or the resources you have available, there are options for every Outward Bound International organization. Whether you decide to focus on increasing Facebook fans, the amount of press releases, or the number of organizations

you reach out to, create a goal and stick with it. The expenditures are minimal but have the potential to generate big returns!

Contact [pr@crobs.org](mailto:pr@crobs.org) or visit our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/crobs> to see what we’re doing now and how we can work together. 

### Top 5 Marketing Strategies

1. Network – Use social media and find common links.
2. Create Partnerships – Use the partnerships within Outward Bound and reach out to others in our industry.
3. Tell a Compelling Story – Send press releases to market programs by relaying a participant’s positive experience.
4. Keep in Touch – Cultivate alumni, as they are often the best sources for referrals.
5. Listen – Complete evaluations and pay attention to the feedback.



# Imagination

Back

Each year, tens of thousands of young people participate in Outward Bound courses in over 30 countries worldwide. Most complete their courses with a profound sense of enrichment and accomplishment in having met the varied and often overlapping personal and physical challenges that are part and parcel of a well-crafted Outward Bound experience.

Many of these young people participate through the generous support of donors who contribute to scholarship and bursary funds aimed at helping those who would otherwise be unable to take advantage of Outward Bound's courses. Few, however, are given the opportunity to share their gratitude before an audience of Outward Bound's supporters and benefactors. And fewer still have been invited to speak in front of 600 well-heeled New York City dinner guests.

Caroline Del Rosario is one of those young people. Caroline was the evening student speaker at Outward Bound USA's 2010 National Benefit Dinner held at the Riverside Church in New York City. Standing before an audience of enthusiastic supporters, she eloquently shared her personal story about growing up in Brooklyn and how tragedy led to opportunity in the form of a life-changing experience as a member of an Outward Bound group that climbed a 13,000-foot peak in the Colorado Rocky Mountains.



I will never forget July 30, 2009. It was the day I climbed a 13,158 ft peak. In case you don't know how tall that is, it's the same height as eleven Empire State Buildings. With each step, I could feel my hope growing and I knew something good was going to happen. I reached the top and it became clear to me: I can do anything. July 30, 2009 will forever be the day I got my imagination back.

My name is Caroline Del Rosario and to understand what this day meant for me, I would like to share with you some of my story. I was born and raised in Bushwick, Brooklyn. In eighth grade something happened that changed everything. I remember that night clearly: my house caught on fire. The flames were so bad that I ran down the stairs barefoot. My sister, mom, and dog followed behind me and out the door to safety. There we were, in the street with nothing and everyone staring at us.

This tragedy left us homeless and we had to start from scratch. We lived in a shelter for the next year while we waited for housing approval from Section 8. The shelter was far, I didn't know anybody, and the room my sister and I shared was like a hospital room. We didn't decorate it, because you decorate a room you want to stay in.

I continued to go to school, but I was so uncomfortable. I knew everyone felt bad for me. They would ask me how I was doing and offer me their clothes. I was thankful, but the pity made me feel weak. I didn't want help and I didn't want to talk to anybody about what happened. So, I just stayed quiet most of the time and stuck to my daily routine:

wake up, go to school, basketball practice, Grandma's house, sign in to the shelter, watch TV, do homework, go to bed, day after day. I lost hope and started not to care. I used to wonder, "Why care about things if they're gonna disappear so quickly?" Along with hope, I had lost my imagination. I stopped thinking about who I was and what I wanted to be. Before the fire I used to dream about my future, but after, I didn't at all.

To be honest, I couldn't really think past the end of the day, let alone the end of high school. So, when the first day of ninth grade came, I chose to hang out with the wrong crowd. We would ditch school again and again. By the end of first semester, my grades were horrible and my absences were high. It was then that my mom, Juana Fermin, started to notice. I knew that she made sacrifices in life so that I could accomplish more than she ever could. She helped me understand that my not caring, giving up on myself, was giving up on her too. So I began to try.

In the tenth grade, my guidance counselor at school told me about Summer Search and encouraged me to apply. Summer Search is a youth leadership development program that gives students mentoring and opportunities that many may never be able to afford. She told me about Outward Bound, which partners with Summer Search, and thanks to generous donors students receive full scholarships for Outward Bound courses. I thought, free trip, cool, why not? Then, she hit me with the "no showers, no bathrooms" thing. I started to laugh because I thought she was kidding, but she didn't laugh with me. She was serious. I wondered, could this city girl really survive in the wilderness? My counselor kept encouraging me and for that reason I decided to apply.

A week after my interview for Summer Search I got my acceptance letter in the mail. I was outside and started to jump up and down and scream. There I was again in the street with people looking at me, only this time I didn't care!

In no time, the day for my Colorado mountaineering expedition with Outward Bound arrived and boy, was leaving difficult! I would not be able to see anyone I knew for the next 30 days. My first week was the toughest. I felt weak, alone, and homesick. Arriving the first day I started to question myself and really think this just might be harder than I thought it was. Was I really going to carry a 60-pound backpack all by myself? The next day we woke up pretty early and I had to get ready to hike. I thought this would be no big deal, till we started hiking up and over peaks. That's when it became a big deal, when the altitude made it hard for me to breathe. It seemed to be easier for everyone else. I started to feel alone because I felt like I was the only one struggling.

It was almost a full week in when I realized I wasn't alone. One night we were all sitting around after dinner talking, and one of the boys confessed that he was really homesick. Some of the other boys agreed. I was shocked! These boys had been putting up such a strong front, and I thought they were unshakable. I couldn't believe they were showing us their weak side. That's when I started to realize that we were all in it as a team, and in order to finish our course strong we had to come together and support each other in our struggles. The boys weren't weak, they were just having different challenges than me. From that night on, my coursemates became my new support system cheering me on. I realized there were a lot of people that wanted me to succeed. It was time I started to believe in myself.

And it was then that I was met with my biggest challenge yet, that 13,158 ft. mountain, Twilight Peak. Some may think that climbing a mountain is no big deal but this was by far the hardest thing I've ever done! I felt like I could only go up halfway. My instructor asked me to think of my motivation as I stood on the side of the mountain catching my breath. I immediately thought of my mother. Slowly, one foot followed the other up the mountain, as I thought of how brave my mom is. Every step was a challenge, but I just kept climbing. When I was finally at the top of that peak, with the clouds surrounding me and my new friends celebrating all around me, I felt powerful, and like I could

do anything, like the world was in my hands. I did more than I ever thought possible and ever since that day I started to dream big.

I came home from that trip proud. I no longer felt pitied, but supported. At Summer Search events and at school I was a lot more confident and social. I became way more active, taking a leadership role on the basketball team and the Green Team at my school. I went to France for four weeks this summer on my second Summer Search trip, and found that it was now me giving the students who were struggling a helping hand. I realized without my Outward Bound experience I wouldn't be the person who I am today. Tonight, I stand before you as a young woman who is worthy of having dreams. I care about my future. I am no longer afraid of being challenged. I am confident in my ability to rise above hard times. I see a person walk by and I imagine what they do for a living and if I could do that too. The embarrassment I felt four years ago on my front stoop is gone and I am now walking tall.

Thank you, to all of the donors here tonight who have been so generous to give students like me the opportunity to experience the power of Outward Bound. Thank you for that moment on top of Twilight Peak, and for showing me I am so much stronger than I ever thought. Thank you for allowing me to see that I am worthy of having dreams, and that I am capable of making those dreams a reality. Thank you. 🌟



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## Kurt Hahn: Inspirational, Visionary, Outdoor and Experiential Educator

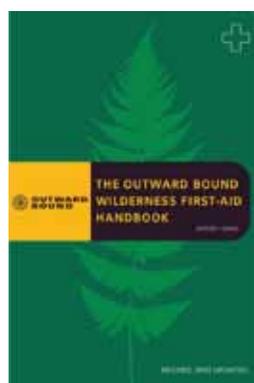
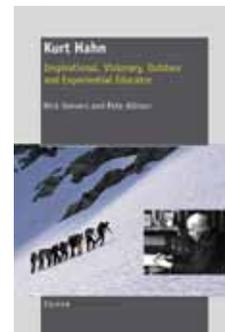
By Nick Veevers and Pete Allison

Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. 2011. \$99.00 US. Hardcover. 142 pages.

Kurt Hahn greatly influenced the fields of outdoor and experiential learning and adventure education. This book provides a detailed historical account, centred on Hahn and the movement surrounding him, of the development of adventure education up to 1944. This includes an examination of themes present throughout Hahn's educational endeavours.

It looks at Hahn's founding of the Salem and Gordonstoun Schools, his expansion of his educational ventures across Britain, and the founding of the Outward Bound Sea School. To help the reader better understand Hahn's actions, it also examines German and British educational practice; Hahn's experiences of the First World War, its aftermath, and the need to educate people to speak out and act upon their convictions; Hahn's inclusive agenda and expansionist aims; and the Second World War. Hahn's educational vision helped influence the Norwood Report and the 1944 Education Act, which provided the framework within which Outdoor Centres were set up in the UK.

Kurt Hahn was one of the field's greatest advocates and this book provides a detailed historical examination of his work and brings light to the complex tapestry of events which led to the rise and development of adventure education.



## The Outward Bound Wilderness First-Aid Handbook

By Jeffrey Isaac

Falcon, Guilford, Connecticut, USA. Revised & Updated, 2008. \$15.95 US. Paperback. 256 pages.

This comprehensive reference book clearly explains essential diagnostics and first-aid procedures necessary for wilderness injuries. Peter Goth, an emergency physician, developed the original concept for the book. Goth was among the first to recognize that medical emergencies in remote settings required a different approach. In the late 1970s he volunteered for the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School off the coast of Maine, and in the early 1980s he and Jeffrey Isaac joined to run the first medical courses for US Outward Bound instructors on Hurricane Island.

Included in the book are general principles in wilderness medicine; basic life support; outlines of major body systems, bones, joints, and soft tissue injuries, as well as toxins, allergens, common symptoms, and cures; medical supplies; wilderness travel; and the newest first-aid methods for outdoor situations. This handbook is based on the continuously revised and updated Wilderness Medical Associates curriculum, and is an essential reference for anyone headed into the great outdoors.

## Connecting Cultures: Intercultural dialogue in the deserts of Oman

By Mark Evans

Muscat Press & Publishing House (SAOC), Sultanate of Oman. 2010. Hardcover. 116 pages.

Connecting Cultures chronicles the development of the Connecting Cultures initiative, an educational movement that harnesses the power of Oman's beautiful outdoor landscape to challenge young people's attitudes, values, and viewpoints. It is an oversize book lavishly illustrated with colour photographs by John C. Smith and Mark Zelinski.

Established in 2004, Connecting Cultures is endorsed by UNESCO and identified by the UN Alliance of Civilisations as one of the world's leading civil society initiatives. Two journeys in 2008 had a media reach of 24 million people, and coverage on BBC News Online. Each year three desert journeys take place in Oman for 18 young opinion-formers from the Arab and Western world. Courses are based on the model of Dr. Ian Player's Wilderness Leadership School in South Africa, and are delivered by Outward Bound Oman. This book is available through a donation to the Connecting with Cultures organization, plus postage. Visit: [www.connectingcultures.co.uk](http://www.connectingcultures.co.uk) or contact: [admin@connectingcultures.co.uk](mailto:admin@connectingcultures.co.uk)





# Human ERROR

## Accidents in Adventure Activities

By Marcus Bailie

I have now been involved professionally with adventure activities for 30 years, as an instructor (including being in charge of the mountain leadership department at Plas y Brenin, the national mountaineering centre) as a manager (including Director of Tighlin, the National Adventure Centre of Ireland), and as a regulator. The views expressed here, therefore, are a summation of what I have learned over that time, and from others, and are not necessarily the views of TQS (my current employer) or HSE (to whom we are currently contracted).

“The biggest threat to the future of adventure activities” (Chris Loynes, circa 1999).

Whilst accidents, and especially serious accidents, in the adventure activity sector are thankfully very rare, they represent a disproportionate threat to it. Moreover, when we scrutinise those which do occur we find a number of common threads. Mechanical failure is seldom a significant cause of accidents. Nor does lack of knowledge feature highly, nor inappropriate operating procedures. Very occasionally, Risk-Benefit expectations go wrong, the Likelihood and Consequence considerations do not pan out as expected, or all the Lemons finally line up. Given the high rate of participation there are very few of any of these types of accidents. The majority of accidents, some of them serious, are those which simply should not happen, but do. The silly, easily preventable ones. The ones which were just plain dumb! And this leads us to the study of errors.

### Accident investigation and hindsight distortion

Surprisingly, accident investigations do not always focus on the cause of the accident. In some cases the investigation focuses on whether there was a breach in some regulation, or failure to follow an agreed procedure, even if this was not the principle or underlying cause of the accident.

The way our brains work does not help us to get at the truth of what actually happened. There is lots of research about hindsight distortion: the tendency to inaccurately remember unpleasant past events. Events at an accident don't usually unfold in a narrative form. Things happen simultaneously. Different witnesses are aware of different details. The shock of the event will distort our memory of the sequence of it, and even significant details are

recalled incorrectly. This all obscures the truth and so the reason that we don't learn the right lessons from past accidents is that we often failed to find the real cause. Worse, we think we have solved the problem, and stick to that belief right up until exactly the same accident happens again.

Most troubling is the tendency for an investigation to end with the conclusion that the cause was human error, and there they leave it. I argue that this should be the start of the investigation, not the end. Human errors have causes too, as I hope to explore.

### Aviation and Medicine

Not all professions experience similar accident rates, or even similar accident patterns. Because of the level of risk involved it is not surprising that farming, forestry, fisheries, and construction have higher rates than office work and many service industries.

What is more surprising is where there is a significant difference in rates and patterns with no obvious explanation. Comparing the medical sector (and in particular surgeons) and the aviation sector (and in particular pilots) in North America produced some very revealing results. Whilst human error

**“Things happen simultaneously.”**

is the major cause of accidents in both sectors, pilots had a much better record than surgeons. Indeed the safety culture within aviation paid more attention to detail than within medicine. Disentangling why this was helped to make surgery safer in North America. It also has very real lessons for our sector, adventure activities. The process revealed some of the characteristics of what they refer to as High Reliability Organisations, although it is acknowledged that we are only just beginning to understand the complexities of this crucial field.

Incidentally, for reasons which I will come to shortly, I believe the adventure activity sector is more towards the surgeon's end of the spectrum than the pilot's. You disagree? Well that would be a characteristics of surgeons as well. On the whole they tend to overestimate their own abilities, and also their own safety record!

### Problems in tandem with solutions

As well as trying to explore some of the basic concepts of this comparatively new study, sometimes referred to as 'error-nomics,'

it is possible to also look at solutions for the narrow sector of outdoor and adventurous activities. There are no universal solutions to the problem of Human Error Accidents, but one effective approach is to think small, and act in a sector specific context.

So let's leap from the observation that over-confidence kills, to an example of an adventure activity-specific solution.

The literature claims that when it comes to memory 'context is king'. This is why inspired managers and inspired regulators are critical of an approach which requires their staff "to read the latest risk assessments and sign them as an indication that they have done so and undertake to abide by them." I remember what I did when, as a keen but impatient young instructor, dossiers of this sort were pinned on the staff notice board. Like most of my fellow instructors I signed the front cover and went climbing!

Now let's assume (!) that today's instructors are much more professional and conscientious than I was. And let's assume they sit down there and then, or take it home, and read it cover to cover. How much will they learn? I argue, and the research supports me, that they probably won't learn much. Have you ever tried to work through the manual for a new computer programme without sitting in front of your computer and working through the various stages? You soon find out how much you have learned, or not, the first time you try to run the programme.



**“Mechanical failure is seldom a significant cause of accidents.”**

Worse, not only have these conscientious instructors not learned much, they think they have! Worse still, their bosses think they have as well.

The only way to go through written procedures is in context. Managers need to provide instructors with work time to go through the procedures, and to go through it with them, in context. That means if you are looking at high ropes procedures you do it out there at the ropes course, or those for the gorge, you go to the gorge.

Because many issues transfer from one activity to another not only will you have 'covered' high ropes or the gorge, but you will have improved safety awareness, all those important little details, across the board. Trying to review all of your procedures in one go is therefore less likely to be as productive as spreading them out, in some cases over several months, and in other cases perhaps over several years.

### **Walking the Floor**

It is now widely recognised that it is important for managers in adventure activities to get out of their offices and go and see what is actually being delivered in their name. This serves several functions. One of these is to ensure that staff are actually doing what they should be, but this is only a small part of it. Monitoring activities, or walking the floor as it is called in industry, is more about educating management than educating staff! It is not unusual for a manager, after a very infrequent session looking at what actually happens on the crag, to return to their office white and slightly shaking, muttering something about "I didn't know we did that."

Not knowing what is being delivered in your name, and how, leads to serious management errors, and consequential accidents.

### **What you do is important**

Monitoring also tells staff that their work is valued, and this is crucial for the safe delivery of activities. It is not a big leap from staff feeling that their boss doesn't care about the quality of their work to them not caring either. And when we don't care we make mistakes, and when we make mistakes we have accidents.

Staff need to be nurtured. Newly Qualified Instructors (NQIs) in particular need to know that what they are doing in practice is both satisfactory and important. Looked at in the other direction, more experienced instructors need the opportunity to feed back to their boss, in context, the success or otherwise of both new and well established approaches ("X would work better if we did Y and Z"). This keeps both parties focused.

Random monitoring also keeps all staff focused, and this is the single most important aspect in human error accident prevention.

### **What sign?**

Have you ever inadvertently driven past a motorway junction at which you had planned to exit? Yes?

How did you manage to miss those two enormous blue signs, the massive road markings, and the approach of a huge concrete fly-over?

Explanations commonly cover a wide range of irrelevant, implausible, self-protecting, and bizarre excuses. The truth, of course, is usually “My mind was somewhere else!”

Best practice in swimming pools is that the lifeguard does not sit on the big high chair watching the swimmers for more than 20 minutes or so. Otherwise their concentration tends to go, and their minds wander. Rotas are designed so as to prevent this.

If the same climbing instructor runs nothing but single-pitch climbing sessions, at the same crag, with similar clients, all day, every day, it is asking the impossible to expect them to stay 100% focused on each and every climber. The mind wanders and accidents happen!

Telling instructors that they must stay focused is unlikely to be enough to ensure that they do.

### **The myth of Instructor Infallibility**

Sooner or later we all make mistakes. The secret of survival is to ensure that no single error causes a catastrophe. (What HSE call a single point failure.) This is one of the reasons why in North America pilots made fewer mistakes than surgeons. At least two sets of eyes and minds are focused on any safety critical action. Check? Check!

Let's consider an example. Is it safer for a climber's harness to be attached to the rope by tying the rope directly to it or by attaching it via a karabiner? The clip on or tie on dilemma.

Tying on means fewer links in the chain and less chance of the climber being hit in the face with a big lump of metal. Conversely, tying on is much slower, even if the instructor does all the tying. Worse, evidence from climbing wall accident investigations in the UK tells us that sooner or later an instructor will do it wrong. Attaching to a non-structural part of the harness is the most common.

Clipping on with a karabiner not only has the advantage of speed but crucially, the climber can do it and the instructor can check it is done correctly. Two sets of eyes and two minds. Check? Check!

Overall, I believe that clipping on will result in fewer catastrophic errors, provided that the duality principle is applied.

Take this one stage further. An instructor attaches the belay rope to the back attachment on a full body harness before the student leaps from a high platform to a trapeze bar, some metres out from the platform, and some tens of meters in the air. Now you would think that a very experienced and highly-qualified instructor would never fail to make that all-important attachment, but you would be wrong. The impossible happened and the adult who fell

is likely to spend the rest of their life in a wheelchair.

In this case we may never know why the instructor failed to make the crucial connection, but we come across too many accidents where the instructor's mind was simply somewhere else.

For this reason I personally prefer the krab to be attached to the front of a conventional sit harness, which has been properly sized

and properly fitted. (I know of no single case of anyone, young or old, fat or thin, shapely or waistless, who has ever completely fallen out of a properly sized and

properly fitted sit harness. I would be grateful to hear from anyone with evidence to the contrary.) The jumper is shown where and how to attach the krab, does so (probably before climbing to the platform) and the instructor checks it (again) before the jumper jumps.

Interestingly this is exactly what scuba divers are not only trained to do as novices, but do throughout their diving careers. They call it the Buddy System. I check your gear before we dive and you check mine. If only climbers did that there would be a lot fewer accidents, without detracting one iota from the ethics of the sport.

### **The myth of multi-tasking**

Evidence now tells us that most of what we call multi-tasking is a myth. Even early computers, where the phrase originated, didn't multi-task. They switched from one task to another, and back again, in nanoseconds. The human brain simply is not designed to do this. Try having a conversation with someone who is working out the bill in a restaurant. Either the conversation or the mathematics (or indeed both) will suffer. One or both tasks always suffers.

We could apply this to our example of clipping on versus tying on. The instructor cannot tie on the climber and continue to supervise the rest of the group without one (or both) tasks suffering.

Loading more and more responsibility onto the instructor not only leads to task overload, but a misplaced faith in multi-tasking by both the instructor and managers means that the instructor is likely to try. And not surprisingly, accidents happen.

### **Variety is the spice ...**

If you have a number of comparatively inexperienced instructors, and each is given their own session to run all day, every day, the odds are stacked that at least one of them will have an accident or a near miss at some stage during the season.

You will recall that the swimming pool managers' solution to this problem of loss of concentration was to rotate the staff onto different tasks, even if each of the tasks is equally repetitive in nature.

We can transfer that solution into an introductory level multi-activity centre, for example, with good effect. Many of the instructional demands on an individual instructor in this setting are not high. (Often much narrower, for example, than the skills and experienced required for the relevant NGB award.) By 'up-skilling'

**“Evidence now tells us that multi-tasking is a myth.**



Outward Bound participants gather on Kalsubai (1,646 meters), the highest point in Western India.



the instructor through further training, it is perfectly possible to develop the climbing instructors to the point where they can lead the high ropes sessions, the zip wire, the big swing, and probably more. Similarly there are a lot of benefits to developing paddle-sport instructors who can manage the sit-on-top kayak sessions, the open canoe sessions, the dragon boating, and the improvised rafting.

### **Then rotate the staff.**

We can develop this idea further, and move away from single-activity instructors altogether.

### **Group Instructors vs. Single-Activity Instructors**

A single-activity instructor, as discussed above, stays with the same activity as different groups rotate around the different activities. The advantage of this is that the individual has to have experience and training, and been assessed as competent, in only one activity. Multi-disciplined instructors are harder to come by, and harder and more expensive to train. Ironically Licensing in the UK may have inadvertently made this situation worse because many employers assume that their instructors must all hold NGB qualifications in all the activities they instruct. They don't. The Licensing regulations merely state that they must be competent in the tasks they are asked to do.

**“Sooner or later we all  
make mistakes.”**

The disadvantage, as discussed above, is that single-activity instructors risk losing concentration and enthusiasm. There have been several accidents in recent years in the UK which occurred because the instructor was adding additional ‘thrills’ designed, at least in part, to keep themselves entertained as well as the participants.

By contrast a group instructor keeps the same group of participants and takes them through the range of activities. Group instructors, therefore, are always doing something different, and therefore more likely to remain focused.

### **Errors are made by people, not things**

Secondly they get to know their group in increasing detail as the course develops. Who is trustworthy, who is rash, who needs encouragement, who needs watching, etc. By taking an interest in the individual's progress the group instructor is more likely to remain focused on the session, and in particular on those components which are most likely to make errors. People!

This regime benefits from having in-house staff with sufficient experience and qualifications to carry out in-house training and assessment in most if not all of the activities offered. (External courses are very expensive and disruptive to programming.) It is crucial that these trainers are as aware of the techniques of error avoidance, as of the technical skills they are imparting.

It also requires careful management. At least some introductory-level multi-activity centres in the UK with high annual turn-over of staff find enormous benefit in having a dedicated member of

the management team coordinating staff development. They have an activity manager who ensures that each session is staffed by suitably experienced and competent instructors, and a training manager who ensures each member of staff is teased, coaxed, supported, and given opportunities to develop basic instructional skills in a range of new and varied activities.

This may sound excessive but junior staff are a lot less expensive than an accident!

In some cases, and in particular in traditional outdoor education centres, this model not only encourages staff to have basic instructional skills in a wide range of activities, but thorough Continuous Professional Development, to gain NGB qualifications as well. In centres where staff may remain for many years it is every bit as important to keep them focused and enthusiastic.

### **Completing the circle**

From senior management through to the newest Newly Qualified Instructor, and from introductory level recreation to in-depth Outdoor Education, systems should focus on people not just mechanical procedures.

“Whether a procedure is likely to be followed or not is as important as considering the technical merits of the procedure.”

### **A short reading list:**

Hallinan, J.H. 2009. *Errornomics*. This book, or at least the first half of it, will completely change the way you look at accident avoidance.

Pratt, J.M. 2003. *Human Factor Flight Safety*. This is written for pilots, but in language which is very accessible and informative to anyone involved in riskmanagement. Very funny and with great photographs this makes the message even more easy to remember. He also has a host of great one-liners such as “Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is!”

Bailie, M.H. 2008. *Horizons* 42, “Bet your life”

Bailie, M.H. 2008. *Horizons* 43, “Language of Change”

Taleb, N.N. 2007. *The Black Swan*. Not so much about errors as about why we do things the way we do.

Association of Mountaineering Instructors Newsletter. Various.

Fiona Brindley, HSE. *Human Factors in accident investigation*. A Powerpoint presentation.

The Energy Institute. May 2008. Guidance on investigating and analysing human and organisational factor aspects of incidents and accidents. 

*This article was first published in the Winter 2010 issue of Horizons, a publication of the UK-based Institute for Outdoor Learning.*

# Smart Battery

Back in the day, headlamps were dim, figuratively and literally. They ran on batteries that hadn't changed much since Alessandro Volta created the first chemical battery in 1798. ("Volt," the electrical unit, was named after the luminous Italian physicist.) A long wilderness journey might require two or three sets of backup batteries to keep the standard incandescent headlamp burning brightly. Judicious use might allow a set of batteries to last three or four hours, depending on the outside temperature.

In addition to extra batteries, carrying an extra light bulb was also a good idea. The relatively short lifespan of the filament-based incandescent light bulb meant only 10–20 hours of illumination before "lights out" forced a cease and desist on the evening's plans. Some brands of headlamp were even fitted with a spare bulb as a contingency.

In the 1990s things began to change. The advent of AA lithium batteries allowed a much longer supply of power in a more compact form, and filamentless LED light bulbs began to appear in consumer outdoor products. In the 2000s, the electroluminescent LED headlamp began to displace its power-hungry incandescent predecessor; the AA

battery began to give way to its smaller AAA lithium cousin; and the rechargeable lithium-ion polymer battery began to be embraced as a practical alternative to the disposable battery. The size and weight of the typical headlamp was also greatly reduced (about 90 grams for a standard headlamp with batteries). In the present day, an LED bulb can last around 50,000 hours, and will operate 3–5 times longer than the filament variety.



Enter the latest innovation: the "smart battery." In 2010, Petzl®, the French producer of climbing and caving equipment, introduced a lithium-ion polymer battery pack that can be recharged using a traditional wall outlet, or a USB cable, and can be programmed using a PC or Mac. The CORE rechargeable battery can be "regulated" using Petzl's free software to output a certain amount of light over a specified period of time when inserted into any of its Tikka- and Zipka-series headlamps. Users can create several unique profiles for the same battery, in effect pre-determining how long the battery will last and how brightly the LEDs will burn before you are plunged into a predictable darkness. You can also program for "non-regulated" lighting where the light intensity decreases as the battery is discharged—just like the good old days. Price: \$84.95 US [www.petzl.com](http://www.petzl.com)

# Clean Water—Anywhere



OBI Journal spent a week with Katadyn's new MyBottle water purifier while traveling in India and the Middle East. The bottle, er, MyBottle, is aimed at outdoors people who prefer complete water purification without full-on sessions of filter pumping, as is often required with traditional backpacker-oriented water purification systems.

MyBottle incorporates a three-stage water filter into the form of a slightly larger than normal water bottle. 1) A carbon filter eliminates odors and improves taste; 2) A cyst filter removes Giardia and Cryptosporidium; 3) A ViruStat cartridge removes viruses and bacteria. According to Katadyn, MyBottle is the only water purifier bottle registered by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

It's a kind of fill-and-go approach to water purification (though not intended to replace the throughput of a fully-fledged base camp system) that has its appeal in simplicity. Just fill to its capacity of 700 mL and drink. However, it's not quite ready to use out of the box. The microfiltration cartridge needs to be assembled first and then flushed once with water to remove carbon dust from the carbon filter. This requires squeezing the soft plastic bottle with both hands to force water through the filters. Drinking from the bottle is a bit more difficult, too. You must squeeze and sip to make it work. Easier to drink out of than a normal

water bottle? No. Easier than getting sick? Yes. A good product worth considering.

A word of advice for air travelers: place MyBottle in your checked baggage. It's quite difficult to get all the water out of the filters immediately before security screening. And to the screening machine operators at Abu Dhabi International Airport, the innards of MyBottle were worth a 15-minute boarding delay. \$49.95 US. [www.katadyn.com](http://www.katadyn.com)

# In Case of Rain: E-Case **SEAL LINE**

In the old days, Outward Bound instructors worried about how best to keep their paper reading materials dry while sailing the seas or hiking a rainforest. The tried and true approach was to wrap the important documents in multiple layers of plastic bag. Not pretty, but better than trying to leaf through that soggy mat of paper that used to be an instructor handbook.

These days, when all the instructor handbooks ever produced in the 70-year history of Outward Bound can be uploaded and stored on an e-reader that weighs under 300 g, instructors (the techy ones at least) still worry about keeping their reading material dry. Now, however, it takes a lot less plastic bag to protect these important documents inside an expensive electronic device. Not pretty, but there's an alternative. . . .

The E-Case by Sealline offers submersible protection to your e-reader. This flexible waterproof case is completely transparent and allows operation of touchscreen-enabled devices through a urethane window. According to Sealline, the E-Case can withstand one meter of submersion for 30 minutes. \$19.95 US.

[www.cascadedesigns.com](http://www.cascadedesigns.com)



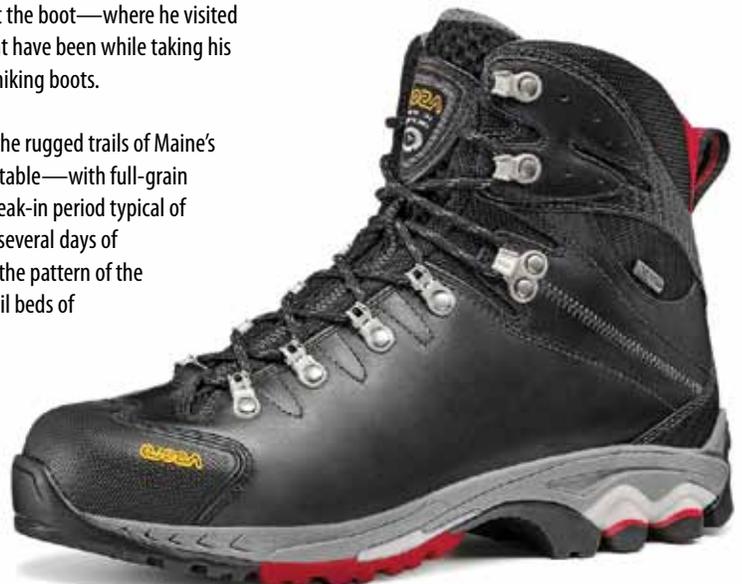
# Light of Foot



The village of Asolo, nestled among the hills of northern Italy's Veneto region, dates back to the Middle Ages. It is also the trade name of an Italian boot manufacturer from the same region. The English poet Robert Browning penned his last volume of poetry, *Asolando*, in homage to Asolo—the village, not the boot—where he visited and later lived. But one can imagine how much more comfortable Browning might have been while taking his early morning hikes in the hills of Asolo if shod in one of Asolo's new lightweight hiking boots.

Enter the Ergo GTX, an attractive 1.36-kilo hiking boot that OBI Journal tested on the rugged trails of Maine's Mahoosuc Mountains. Ergo is a surprisingly light, nice-fitting boot—ergo comfortable—with full-grain leather uppers that offer good ankle support without the compromisingly long break-in period typical of old-school leather boots. A Gore-Tex inner membrane allowed for dry feet during several days of unremitting Maine rain. The boot was quite decent for steep rock scrambling, but the pattern of the Power Lite outsole offered less than impressive traction on the steep loose-soil trail beds of western Maine. \$265 US.

[www.asolo.com](http://www.asolo.com)



Explorations in

# Maharashtra:

## Outward Bound Bharat and the Western Ghats

By Sudhir Moharir - OB Bharat

In India, mid-April till June is vacation time for most of the school and college students. It's also time for Outward Bound to gear up and offer some of these students an expeditionary kind of beyond-the-classroom learning experience.

Last year OB Bharat planned a mobile camp in a new location, the western part of Maharashtra state, almost 800 kilometers from our headquarters at Nagpur. The Sahyadri Ranges or the Western Ghats, as they are referred to, are a truly magnificent combination of undulating hills, deep ravines, vertical cliffs, and mountains that are challenging but do not come in the high altitude category. Since the mountains are easily accessible, expeditions to them remain of short duration but offer thrills that will please any mountaineer.

The terrain and the topography make these ranges an all-season affair. Winter, of course, is the best season. The greenery is very soothing to the eyes and the chill just enough to make you shiver without being biting. During monsoon season, the slopes and the climbs are challenging and the hundreds of waterfalls are magnificent to watch. The summer months are a little harsher, but nevertheless the day temperature is tolerable enough to plan for early morning rendezvous.

The summer of 2011 saw a group of 25 'Outward Bounders', 23 from OB Bharat and two from OB Singapore, venture into these ranges. The five-day expedition involved a gradual climb to Kal-subai, the highest point in western India at 5,400 ft. Starting early at 4:30 a.m., and taking the route through the barren slopes and rocky ridges, the participants made it to the top beating the May heat at 39° Celsius. Most of the participants being first-timers, the achievement was of much significance to them. Reaching the top tested their endurance. A little inward journey at this stage in the form of a mini-solo added a lot of personal value to their thinking process, and the highs and lows of the journey made them believe in themselves and their efforts in overcoming the hardships.

The innumerable forts situated on some of the toughest parts of these ranges offer a glimpse of the 600 years of history of the Maratha kingdom and the Mughal invaders, years which were full of valor and sacrifice. If one leafs through the history, the tales of the Maratha soldiers climbing the vertical rocky walls without any aids numbs the mind and leaves one wondering at their climbing techniques during those days.





On another day, a two-hour gradual climb through the thick forest brought us to the base of one such fort, Ratangarh. A short patch of vertical, a chimney climb, and then a rocky traverse brought us to the top. The view around was beautiful and the cool refreshing winds gave us respite.

Leadership training through expeditions is a great opportunity for youngsters. Every experience adds a little more to their skills of leading through self-exploration. Sitting at the top, the group discussed the pros and cons of safely making the downward journey on narrow paths at the edges. At one point when the participants moved to the other side of the ridge through a narrow rocky opening, the strong winds unsettled them for a moment. The trek over the narrow ridge with deep slopes on both sides required patience and alertness to be safe. The group made it back to the base in eight hours after negotiating through the loose soil and gravel on the slopes.

After climbing mountains twice in two days, the participants explored a deep ravine cutting through rocks and boulders with high rising walls on both sides. This part of the valley remains inaccessible during monsoon season and for almost four months afterwards due to gushing rainwater. The terrain at times reminds one of the famous Colorado Rocky Mountains in the U.S. The vertical cliffs are challenging and inviting. These ranges are a favorite destination for the rock climbers in the region. Exploring them is a true Outward Bound experience that takes one into the raw wilderness.

The five-day experience took the teenagers and the young adults on a journey of self-discovery. In addition to the wilderness experience the participants also got the opportunity to explore some of the Outward Bound activities such as 'solo', and other tasks that challenged their leadership potential and helped them positively shape their attitude. 🧭



# 36 Years of Innovation in Working With Youth

By Lewis Glenn & Jon Howard      Outward Bound USA

**O**utward Bound USA's STEP program in Florida, begun in 1975 by the then Hurricane Island Outward Bound School as a contract with the State of Florida to work with adjudicated youth, closed its doors in June of this year. Over 9000 youth were served during this time by hundreds of Outward Bound instructors.

Though STEP was one of the State's most successful programs, with low recidivism rates and one of the lowest costs per participant of the State's programs for adjudicated youth, Florida is now placing emphasis on prevention programs rather than on programs for youth that have already broken the law, and consequently chose to close the program. They are diverting youth historically served at STEP to be served in local communities.

The STEP program evolved to being an "evidenced-based" program incorporating education, case management, restorative justice, and limited counseling for an integrated program that effectively served youth. STEP was one of the first programs to serve adjudicated females. STEP was recognized as an exemplary Department of Juvenile Justice education program for the past five years.

The typical STEP course consisted of a 30-day, 350-mile canoe expedition across the State of Florida, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, on rivers and swamps populated by a variety of wildlife including alligators and snakes. The program worked with both males and females between the ages of 13 and 18, youth that had minor law infractions. STEP ran year round, in temperatures ranging from -6° to 35° Celsius, from its base on the St. Marys River.

Though STEP's purpose was to serve the youth of Florida, in alignment with Hahn's teachings, the program's influence on Outward Bound in the USA has been significant as well. The training that instructors received while working with this challenging population, most of whom didn't want to be in the program, developed interpersonal and group management skills that served these staff members and Outward Bound at large. These students were some of the best teachers that the Outward Bound staff ever had, requiring that the instructors deal with a range of behaviors while teaching camping, canoeing, navigation, and other outdoor living skills. The successful instructor was one who found his or her zen self, leaving their ego "at the door," while guiding these high-energy, acting-out youth with patience, equanimity, and compassion, leading by example. Like all Outward Bound programs, the success of STEP was the success of individual STEP instructors, whose commitment to helping students find the best in themselves continued year after year, decade after decade.

STEP instructors were sought by other Outward Bound programs in the USA because of their uncanny skill in working with people, youth and adults. The trainings developed by STEP and the other programs for troubled youth that spun off from it have consistently been some of the most effective and cutting edge in OB USA. Working effectively with people is what sets Outward Bound apart from many other outdoor adventure programs. STEP set a standard for that during its long service to the youth of Florida. In addition, many staff from STEP went on to leadership roles within Outward Bound USA. 🌟

# Bound For Glory



By Michael Burgess

Commonwealth Games cycling gold medalist Alison Shanks was almost at breaking point. She wasn't in the last stages of a gruelling 3,000 m pursuit as you would expect—but confronting her fears on an Outward Bound course.

The cycling champion is accustomed to high-pressure situations but the recent course presented a series of intense physical and mental challenges. Along with 13 other members of Bike NZ's high performance programme, Shanks completed the eight-day course in the Marlborough Sounds.

“At times it was brutal,” recalls Shanks. “Sometimes I thought, ‘what I am doing here? I just want to go home.’”

Shanks admits the group were pushed to the limit by the tough Outward Bound instructors.

“At times you think, ‘Oh, my gosh, I just want to punch you’,” she says of her instructors. “But you come away from it realising that, while they put you in some testing situations, they try to find your breaking point. It was good to be tested in a new environment and in completely different ways to what we are used to. They tailored it so that every single person is pushed out of their comfort zone by the end of the course.”

Over the last month Bike NZ, Swimming NZ, and Rowing NZ have sent high performance teams to Outward Bound as a critical training step towards the London Olympics. While each course consisted of typical activities like rock climbing, sailing, trampolining, and the overnight solo experience, the focus was less on physical endurance and more on team building, resilience training, mental toughness, and personal challenge.



One of the biggest adjustments for Shanks was the constant uncertainty, never knowing what would happen next. Like many athletes, cyclists live extremely regimented lives. On their training camps they are given daily schedules—when to eat, when to sleep, when to ride—often weeks in advance.

“I like to know what I am doing and where I am heading,” Shanks says, “but all that went out the window. They would say to us, ‘right, you are going out in the bush for two nights and have 15 minutes to get ready.’”

There was also the challenge of spending every waking hour—literally—with her teammates.

“At one point we were given a groundsheet, a fly, and sleeping bags, and told to set up camp in the bush. All 14 of us were packed in like sardines trying to keep warm. You can’t help but

get to know your teammates.”

At another stage the group spent a night at sea, all squeezed together on an old boat. Even back in camp, the mixed group shared a communal bunkroom.

“As a team-building exercise, it is pretty unique and you could say pretty extreme,” Shanks says.

The athletes had the added test of “terrible conditions”, one of the worst Aprils the Outward Bound staff could remember, with almost constant rain and gale-force winds.

For Shanks, one of the greatest challenges was the high ropes, where she had to walk on a thin wire 5 m above ground.

“I definitely had some moments up there,” she admits. “Obviously you are harnessed on but the mind seems to play some funny tricks when you are way up high and told to jump across a 2 m gap.”

The dreaded early morning swims in the chilly Marlborough Sounds was another memorable experience. Jumping into freezing water is difficult enough but is compounded when the air temperature is five degrees and you have a cold shower afterwards to ‘warm up’.

“If there are 13 others jumping off the wharf into the water, you can’t really say no because they are all going to be screaming at you to get in the bloody water,” laughs Shanks.

There were also plenty of lighthearted moments during the course. Shanks describes the scene on the boat: “There was no wind so we had to row, using these old-style oars. They don’t really work and we were all completely

sleep-deprived.”

A naked backflip by Eddie Dawkins off the top of a launch was “one of the funnier moments”.

“He decided to get naked, which was a big shock for us all.” As well as team building, Outward Bound is also about finding yourself and identifying your values. The cyclists spent two nights in the bush in complete individual isolation.

“I really enjoyed it,” says Shanks. “We are always on the go and in constantly changing environments. But there we had no reading material, no cell phones or i-pods and no option but to sit in the bush and just think. It was a good time for me to take stock of where I had been and where I wanted to go.”

After a month’s break, which included the Outward Bound

course, Shanks was back on the bike last week ready for the long haul through to the London Olympics. The female track team have a camp in Invercargill starting next week, before Shanks heads to the US in June for three months of riding and racing. Emily Thomas is a shining example of the Outward Bound effect. Thomas, who last year became the first Kiwi in 23 years to medal at the Pan Pacific Championships, is one of the shyest members of the swimming fraternity. But now she reports more confidence, more at ease with the team situation and dealing with outside pressures.

“My self-belief has increased,” says Thomas. “It took a lot to push myself sometimes but I learned that your body can do more than your mind tells it to.”

The toughest experience was a 13-hour, mostly uphill tramp, carrying 15 kg packs. The group of 14 swimmers set off at 10 p.m., stopping to set up camp at 1 a.m.

After a largely sleepless night, they started again at 7 a.m. “We enjoyed most of it but in the last three hours everyone was knackered and getting pretty angry.” The next day was the solo overnight experience. Thomas was given two apples and two carrots to last the 24 hours alone, but after struggling for hours to set up camp—“I wouldn’t have a clue how to set up a shelter”—slept for most of the time, still exhausted from the tramp. Thomas says she would go back “tomorrow” if given the chance again, and jokes that one day she would like to become an instructor for the famous institution.

Rower David Mabbot is an Outward Bound veteran. Having been on a course in the winter of 2009, the under-23 coxed four rower was sent back for more last month.

While the first experience was focused on developing individual strengths and values, this course was aimed at building trust and cohesiveness within the team before they embark on their European campaign, which culminates at October’s world championships in Slovenia. “It was my second time,” says Mabbot, “and I have to say I was not overly enthused. But it worked out well. We wouldn’t have developed the camaraderie and integration that we have now. It promoted some pretty straight talking.”

Indeed, now some of the Outward Bound techniques have become part of the Rowing NZ modus operandi. After each activity at Outward Bound, participants are encouraged to give two lots of positive feedback and one piece of constructive criticism to their peers, something that is now used during the weekly team meetings at Karapiro.

Outward Bound chief executive Trevor Taylor admits that working with high-performance athletes presents different challenges. “We are not a boot camp,” says Taylor, “and with athletes we are not so much worried about the physical side. It is about making them more self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, their aspirations and their values.

“We take away their home comforts and find out what really drives them.” For Taylor, it is about helping them find that “extra two per cent”, often the difference between success or otherwise

on the world stage. By putting them outside their comfort zone—and then finding out how far they can extend that zone—it gives them tools to use when things go wrong.

SPARC agree and currently fund one-third of each camp, with the remaining costs split between the sporting bodies and the Outward Bound foundation.

Outward Bound have run five camps for rowing since 2005, while Swimming NZ and Bike NZ have recently come into the fold. Triathlon and sailing are said to be the next sports on the list, while eventually Taylor would like to offer programmes to more traditional team sports like rugby, league, cricket, netball, and football.

Testimonials have been overwhelmingly positive. 2010 world champion Nathan Cohen said: “I never realised what kind of bubble I was in [within rowing] until that course,” while fellow oarsman Joseph O’Sullivan said the 10 days in Anakiwa gave him a “new way of thinking, enabling me to be true to myself and others”.

Beyond these soft skills, the sports have noticed tangible benefits to their team environments. Bike NZ high-performance staff talked of a real “levelling out” from the course, away from the typical cycling environment. He said there was no room for stars, and the usual divide between young and old evaporated over time.

Taylor says some of his instructors were a little apprehensive at first at dealing with athletes compared with the usual clientele. “They soon realised they are just normal people,” says Taylor, “especially with the demands of the course. They may be fitter than most, but they also have fears, weaknesses and vulnerable points like anyone else.”

“Everybody recognises that sport at the highest level can be decided by the smallest things and we wanted to explore all avenues,” says SPARC general manager high-performance Martin Toomey. “It is about athletes discovering what shapes them as people and giving them every opportunity to perform at their best.”

Toomey feels it is particularly important for individual sportspeople, who are often thrown together into teams at big events without having the time together to build compatibility that those in team sports enjoy.

The current arrangement has SPARC funding for three years and will be reviewed at the end of 2012.

At that stage, SPARC will meet with the relevant national sporting organisations and Outward Bound to assess the perceived effectiveness of the programmes. Outward Bound will celebrate their 50th birthday next year, having been established in 1962. They still operate from their original location. Over 50,000 New Zealanders have been through their programmes. 🌟

*Reprinted from an article by Michael Burgess, New Zealand Herald, 8 May 2011*

# CANOES AND PEACEBUILDING:

## the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding

By Ana Patel - OB Center for Peacebuilding





“**W**hat are the sleeping arrangements going to be? Because there is no way I’m sharing a tent with an Israeli.” With this statement one of the participants, a Palestinian from the West Bank, presented himself in 2009 to the first group of Palestinian and Israeli Emerging Leaders, a program of the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding (OB Peacebuilding) and its partner, Search for Common Ground. This participant had a deep commitment to preserving Palestinian culture and heritage. It was important to him that his participation in the Emerging Leaders Program was not seen as a step towards normalization of relations between Palestinians and Israelis, and sleeping in the same tent was his way to draw a line in the sand.

The Palestinian participant and an Israeli participant learned an important lesson a few days later: two people cannot get down a river in a canoe without speaking to each other. The Israeli participant was a devout Jew who had led Shabat prayer for the Jewish participants on the first Friday night of the program. Around the campfire that evening the Palestinian reflected, “To-

day, I spent the whole day in the canoe with an Israeli. Before today I had a certain understanding in my mind of what a religious Jew is. After spending the day with [this person], I feel like I have a new understanding or image in my mind of what a religious Jew is or can be, including being my friend.”

OB Peacebuilding challenges and inspires leaders in divided societies to build peace. Working in partnership with Outward Bound Schools around the world, OB Peacebuilding programs use experiential outdoor learning as a tool for peacebuilding, in order to: 1) Cultivate compassionate leaders who are committed to sustainable change across divides; 2) Advance leaders’ skills in conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding; 3) Foster connection to and respect for the environment; and 4) Create and strengthen active networks of peacebuilders. In the past three years, OB Peacebuilding has worked successfully with Outward Bound USA, Outward Bound Croatia, Outward Bound Finland, Outward Bound Sri Lanka, and Outward Bound Spain to design, fund, and implement programs.

The Palestinian and Israeli Emerging Leaders Program is now in its third year. In June 2011, a cadre of Israeli and Palestinian business leaders completed a ten-day backpacking and climbing course in the Velebit Nature Park in Croatia — an expedition implemented with Outward Bound Croatia. OB Peacebuilding program participants begin their experience with a catalytic expedition which, like all good Outward Bound programs, encourages participants to push their limits and move beyond their comfort zones. The expedition is followed up with retreats, skills-based workshops, and alum expeditions that build on the outcomes achieved in the expedition.

Peace and peacebuilding must be locally owned. OB Peacebuilding seeks to invest in national leaders by advancing their skills

in conflict resolution and transformation, providing them with an experience of what is possible to achieve between and among divided groups, and to work with them to build a community of peacebuilding leaders. During one of the follow-up retreats, the Palestinian participant of the story above offered his own assessment of the impact of the program stating, “I’m a very different person from the one who started this program.”

And when the group met for their second retreat six months later in Turkey, he shared a room with an Israeli.

For more information on OB Peacebuilding check out the website at [www.outwardboundpeace.org](http://www.outwardboundpeace.org). Join us on Facebook, follow us @OBPeacebuilding, or email us at [info@outwardboundpeace.org](mailto:info@outwardboundpeace.org)! 



# THE HISTORY OF SOLO

## in Outward Bound USA



# OBI

*Journal caught up with Jon Frankel, Outward Bound USA's Director of Research, to discuss the genesis of the three-day solo. Jon shared an abridged historical account that was re-confirmed in late 2010 when an OB USA staff member visited with Tap Tapley (the chief instructor mentioned in the below account) at his home in New Mexico. The full account can be found in the revised version of the book Outward Bound USA: Crew Not Passengers on page 109.*

Ralph Clough, an instructor who came to Marble from Outward Bound in Great Britain, brought with him the OB curriculum which included a 'night alone'—one overnight when each student camped on his own, isolated from his fellows. The night alone was a successful part of C-1 [the first course out of the Colorado Base in 1962]. For many of the youngsters it was—in retrospect, at least—a new, satisfying experience. Ernest 'Tap' Tapley [the first chief instructor at the base] thought it a highly valuable course element: "So many people have never been alone, completely on their own, in their whole life. Never been in a place where there was just no chance of reaching out for a telephone to say something has happened or 'I'm sick'."

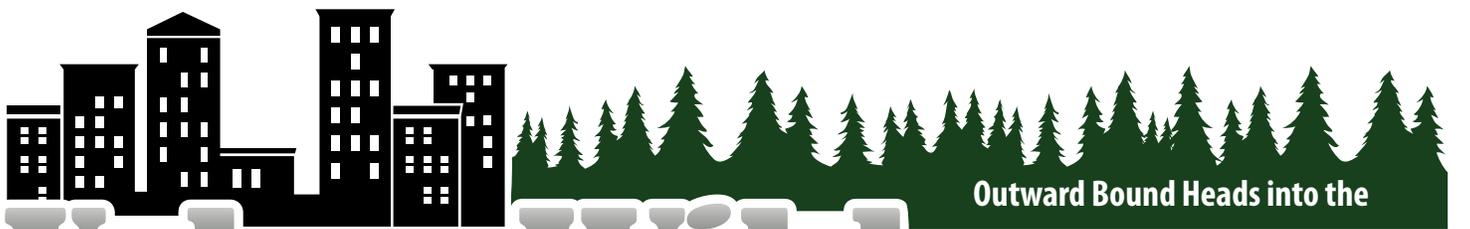
On C-2, on the day preceding the scheduled night alone, chef Frank Menendez came to Tapley in a panic. The school was running out of food, and the supplier had just called to say he could not make a delivery up the mountain for several days. Tapley perceived the crisis as opportunity. "If you have three days without having to feed anybody," he asked Frank, "will you be all right?" Frank said he would. "What we can do," Tapley said, "is something I've been wanting to try anyway. Tonight we'll get the group together, and I'll give them a

talk on edible plants and berries, and what kinds of game and fish they can find to eat, and we'll tell them they're going on a three-day solo survival..." We gave them a knife, a fishhook and a short piece of line, salt, matches, and a sleeping bag. We took them out and placed them at least half a mile apart. We put them by a source of water and told them not to go more than 100 yards in any direction. The instructors checked by day that they were all right, trying not to be seen. At night I made the rounds of the ones I was more concerned about, to be sure they had a fire and were by it.

**"We gave them a knife, a fishhook and a short piece of line, salt, matches, and a sleeping bag."**

"It was a great experience for the kids, and the greatest part of it was after they came in for the debriefing. We found they had got much more out of their solos than we had expected." That was how the solo, which more than any other feature of the program has brought Outward Bound its fame in the United States, came into being. The following year, Colorado extended the solo's length from two nights to three, and when other American schools opened they made the three-night solo standard on their course as well.

The 'survival' aspects of solo have become incidental to the solo's primary purposes, which are to experience solitude and to have an opportunity for contemplation/reflection. For most young people, those experiences may well be more stressful than being hungry or cold. 🌟



# Urban Wilderness

Outward Bound Heads into the

By Andrea Gordon



Pavement meets riverbank in the Don Valley's hybrid habitat, where railway overpasses criss-cross leafy ravines, graffiti blooms along with wildflowers, and blackbirds cry out over the distant rumble of traffic.

Instead of watching out for bears, urban explorers have to make peace with stray dogs or coyotes. Instead of shooting rapids, they can cycle along a path beside the river. And now, in lieu of rocky cliffs, there's an 18-metre climbing tower that soars above the historic Evergreen Brick Works.

This "urban wild" in the heart of Toronto may not be a hot spot for hardcore wilderness buffs, but Outward Bound Canada believes it's where the future lies.

That's why the not-for-profit educational group, whose name is synonymous with roughing it in the bush, has moved its headquarters to Toronto from Huntsville. Over the past few months, it has set up an "urban base camp" at the Brick Works on the lower Don River. Here, Outward Bound instructors will train groups of teens to make their way up the climbing tower in teams, or scale a 9 m climbing wall. It's all part of outdoor programs for students in grades 7 through 12, many of whom may never have experienced summer camp or cottage country.

## This is 'urban wild' in the heart of Toronto

The goal is to pass along a love of the outdoors and sense of self-reliance to youth by showing them the wilderness in their own backyard. In an era when 80 percent of Canadians live in cities, "the challenge is how to make what we do more relevant to urban society," says executive director Sarah Wiley. "It makes sense to go where the need is greatest. We could make a difference among people who have never heard of us."

Outward Bound will still offer the wilderness expeditions, corporate team-building trips and youth programs it has been running in Canada since 1969. But following the lead of Outward Bound in other countries like the U.S., urban programs will become a priority.

The guiding principles, aimed at instilling resilience, teamwork and respect for the environment, still prevail. "But the hazards and challenges are different," says Wiley. "What we do is put people in an unfamiliar environment. They learn things about themselves they didn't know."



Wiley envisions five-day urban camping excursions through the ravine system and is already working on permits from the City. She pictures teenagers paddling down the Don and across to the Toronto Islands to pitch tents. A pilot group of students tested that trek a couple of years ago.

In wilderness programs, participants go on solo expeditions for personal reflection and to test themselves. Urban solos might take place in a skateboard park, subway station, hospital emergency room or homeless shelter, Wiley says. Kids could do community service at food banks, environmental work by cleaning up the ravines, gardening at the Brick Works, or planting trees. “In many ways, it’s a more dynamic environment than the wilderness.”

The urban philosophy is already being embraced in the U.S., where Outward Bound runs programs in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, and Denver.

While the Brick Works site celebrates its official launch with an open house for schools and community groups on April 29 and for the public on April 30, groups of students from diverse backgrounds have already been breaking it in.

One of the first groups to visit the base camp last fall learned that the urban wild does have its surprises. Ten Grade 8 students from Toronto French School were on a half-day hike on trails along Mud Creek in the Moore Park Ravine. They learned to tie bowline knots and taut-line

hitches, set up nylon tarp shelters and make hot chocolate on a camping stove. Suddenly, nine off-leash dogs sprinted through the pastoral scene, followed by the dog-walker. One child was terrified.

## The goal is to pass along a love of the outdoors and sense of self-reliance

“That’s the city,” says urban programs coordinator Richella Hyde, who accompanied the group. “There’s always stuff happening you can’t control and you just have to go with it and deal with it and learn to manage.”

A former dogsledder, she showed the kids how to interact with unfamiliar animals and laid the groundwork for them to comfort and encourage, rather than belittle, their distressed classmate.

Next month, a dozen Grade 9 girls from Bendale Business and Technical Institute in Scarborough will spend their third day on the site. Of the 81 students in their grade, only 17 are female. The teamwork and self-confidence exercises help them to trust each other and focus in a school social environment that can be intimidating.

When the group first arrived in November, amid construction, “they wanted me to turn the bus around,” says Soula Koutlemanis, their guidance teacher. At the end of the day, they didn’t want to leave. “It brought us closer together,” says 14-year-old Sandra David. Some-



times rumours and disrespect from the boys at school cause disputes, but through outdoor group activities and discussions the girls learned to trust each other and use different tools to avoid getting drawn into arguments and backstabbing behaviour, she says.

“They were teaching us to think a little differently,” adds classmate Shirley Shaw, 14.

On their January visit, one girl was dead set against trying the climbing wall her classmates were scaling in teams. Eventually, with their encouragement and help, she made it to the top.

“There was a feeling of empowerment and connectedness between the girls that was so nice to see,” says Koutlemanis, adding that they bring this back to school in their relationships and ability to solve conflicts.

Outward Bound has also joined forces to run programs with Right to Play Canada, which brings play and sport to disadvantaged kids.

Over a series of days during the fall and winter, they provided leadership training to 16 teenaged students from Crescent School, a Toronto private school. In November, the boys brought their skills to the Brick Works, where they ran outdoor activities and games with 30 Grade 4 and 5 students from Queen Victoria Junior Public School in Parkdale.

Other schools are ready to launch similar matchups this spring through training at the Outward Bound site, says Julia Myer, manager of school and university partnerships with Right to Play.

Outward Bound’s Wiley hopes the new urban presence will also pay off by reconnecting with the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have gone through the organization’s programs. Many are potential donors who may want to pass on the experience to the next generation. (Outward Bound relies on donations from corporations, individuals, and foundations to fund programs for schools and community groups from high-priority neighbourhoods.)

To Hyde, coming to the city is all about giving kids a way to see their place in the world around them. “We want to build a sense of responsibility for the city and the natural environment and connect (youth) to the larger world.”

It’s an attitude that will stay with them, she adds, whether in the wild, the corporate world, or exploring the ravines with their own children. For more information, visit [www.outwardbound.ca](http://www.outwardbound.ca) 

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# Master Designer

*An Interview  
with Jan Davidsson*

**A** Swede by birth, Icelander by choice, Jan Davidsson is chief designer at Sjøklaedagerdin Ltd., one of Iceland's oldest manufacturing companies. Better known by its popular brand name 66° North, the outdoor apparel company traces its roots to the Ségandafjörður region of Iceland, a post-glacial landscape infiltrated by the cold waters of the North Atlantic and inhabited by an enduringly hardy breed of fisherman whose need for hard-wearing protective outerwear was the company's genesis.

Davidsson emigrated to Iceland in the late 1960s after being hired by a Norwegian industrial consultant to examine the clothing industry in Iceland. Once there, he started two of his own clothing brands, married an Icelandic woman, and was eventually hired to work for 66° North in 1989. In 1995 he was recognized with the annual Icelandic DV Cultural Award for his design work and was again honored in February 2011 when he accepted the International Sports Business Network's ISPO Outdoor Award in Munich, Germany. Davidsson spoke with OBI Journal from Reykjavik.

*“If you are here in Iceland, even opening the door and going out can put you in the severest conditions.”*

**Q: Where did you learn your trade?**

A: I'm a tailor. I worked Savile Row, in London at one of the famous tailors. That's where I learned the trade. In those days it was important what cutter you worked under; it was my good fortune to work with one of the best. Many well-known tailors learned their trade on Savile Row. The late British fashion designer, Alexander McQueen, he came from Savile Row.

**Q: What were the central influences on your career as a designer?**

A: Beauty. The search for beauty. It's difficult to pinpoint where the influence comes from. It can happen at any moment. God knows where it comes from, only God knows where it comes from.

**Q: How have outdoor activities influenced your life? And your design work?**

A: I've always been an outdoors person, anything from flying light aircraft to climbing, to some extent. And I've always been impressed by the early explorers, like Amundsen and even the Icelandic explorer Vilhjálmur Stefánsson. He explored the northern territories of Canada.

**Q: Can you describe a typical day in the life of a chief designer?**

A: Well, there is no typical day, not for me anyway. You know, I think that's what makes it, really, because the days are not really typical. That's what probably attracts me most. I'm not so attracted by typical days. It can be anything, you know, touching new fabrics, and seeing a new product evolving out of one's hand.

**Q: Outward Bound has thousands of instructors working in wilderness settings worldwide. Most want well-designed outdoor clothing that will last. What are the important features of a quality design?**

A: I think shape. It's almost like an extension of your body, in a way. It's everything put together, you know. Things like that are difficult to define. It's strength. A product that does not last is not a success.

**Q: It's been 30 years since Gore-Tex® fabric arrived in the marketplace. It was revolutionary. Are there promising new fabrics on the horizon that outdoors people should be excited about?**

A: Well, everybody's trying to top Gore-Tex, of course.

When Gore-Tex first came out it was ePTF membrane and it was famous for leaking, and they had to apply a polyurethane membrane on top of the Gore-Tex. Gore-Tex, without a doubt, owns the top bracket of breathable products. And yes there are other products that surpassed them in properties—but we don't use Gore-Tex. We are now working with Polartec® on the NeoShell® development. And of course we were just given that award there at ISPO, the international exhibition in Germany, and we were not sitting on the jury, so I guess they must have considered it certainly a top product.

**Q: How do you ensure that your designs actually work as intended in the real world? The leap from design to practical application?**

A: I use most of the things myself, of course. But we also have several guides that we get some feedback from. And of course, we have more guides that we have feedback from than we want to have feedback from. Because, you know, everybody is a designer in the outdoor field. And I don't like too many gimmicks.

I don't like to think for 200 hours about where to put widgets. I don't do things like that. I strive for simplicity. Most of these outdoor guides, they have their own ideas about things. We have petty tyrants haunting us all the time. I have guides that I like to

work with that think a similar way as I do. I think that sales is a very good indicator of if you succeed or not, and particularly if people come back to you and buy a second, third, fourth, a fifth, a sixth time, that they become loyal fans that come back and buy your stuff; that I think is a good indicator. We are very solid in Iceland. We supply the fishermen here, and that's what I like about this company—we supply, you know, the guys that bring home the money to the families.

**Q: What role does modern technology play in your design process? Do you use a computer?**

A: No, I work only by my hands. I work, more or less, like sculpturing; molding the design with my hands, pattern-making and overseeing mockup sampling and shaping the garments. I don't work with a computer in design.

**Q: Has the use of software changed the craft of outdoor clothing design?**

A: In a way it has just made it flatter, because it's not multi-dimensional, and you get complexities in it where you try to introduce all kinds of color panels, and cut up the surfaces of the garment in unnecessary ways. It can't replace the real thing.

**Q: Human beings come in different shapes and sizes. How do you make sure that your designs fit most of the people, most of the time?**

A: You can't fit most of the people, most of the time. You have to select where you want to be with things. We have a very small market here in Iceland. The Icelandic market in a way ensures that we cover a pretty broad spectrum. We use real people when designing our garments.

**Q: How has Iceland influenced your design and manufacturing process?**

A: If you are here in Iceland, even opening the door and going out can put you in the severest conditions. People live in those conditions here. We are not far away from the elements. We are right in it, really. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been the supplier of the Icelandic rescue team. We are right with those guys, all the time, you know; many people that work here are actually members of the rescue team. In that sense, we are a real sort of living company. We live with the people here in Iceland. I don't think you would have any other brand in the world with such a loyalty with the people here, and these people, you know, they don't allow us to f— up, you know.

**Q: The Súgandafjörður fishermen of the 1920s relied on protective clothing made by the company that inspired 66° North. Do they still?**

A: Yeah, definitely, even today. Their trade magazine *Fiskifréttir* [Fishing News] just came out, and we are almost on every page, because all the fishermen are dressed in 66° North.

**Q: Many of our instructors have considered careers in outdoor clothing and equipment design. What advice can you offer the aspiring young designer?**

A: Passion. A willingness to 'die' for it, being willing to go to any length to fulfill that ambition. You have to be willing to give it your all. Everyone has to find their own way. I think they must come to a point where they are ready to touch the fabric; they must have an obsession. In my case, strive for that beauty, for that perfection. It's a calling, you know. It's a calling. I recall, Jack Nicholson, the actor, saying, "Find something you like to do and keep doing it." 🧭



# OUTWARD BOUND HONG KONG'S INSPIRING COMMUNITY COURSES

## Beyond disadvantage and disability: Opportunity

By Zoe Byron - OB Hong Kong



Outward Bound Hong Kong has maintained its mission to provide well-rounded training and development for local people of all ages and backgrounds since it was established in 1970. Although Hong Kong is best known as a cosmopolitan city, teeming with the wealthy and successful, it is also home to the disadvantaged, handicapped, and under-privileged, and OBHK has accepted the responsibility of ensuring that these groups, as well as those who already have the necessary funds, are given the chance to experience the benefits of personal development courses.

By providing largely subsidised community courses supported by sponsorship, fundraising, and donations from the city's more affluent residents, OBHK offers people with limited financial means the opportunity to increase their confidence, self-esteem, and social skills, giving them not only an unforgettable experience but also ultimately equipping them with the skills necessary to confront and manage life's challenges.

Focusing on a variety of different but equally deserving groups, these community courses are tailor-made to the specific needs and requirements of their participants. OBHK ensures that all instructors in charge of these courses are highly experienced in dealing with a variety of people from all walks of life, with different dis-

abilities and social issues. Group leaders are fully qualified in all necessary safety requirements and, above all, are compassionate, sympathetic, and encouraging.

Currently OBHK works with five main groups: the Children's Cancer Foundation, which supports children and adults who have experienced childhood cancer as well as families who are coping with bereavement; Second Chance, which helps ex-prisoners in their rehabilitation into society; Women of Courage, which targets women with a history of abuse; Youth Suicide Prevention, which works towards reducing Hong Kong's significantly high youth suicide rates; and Breakthrough, which partners with the Hong Kong police to provide intervention courses that demonstrate that there are alternatives available to a triad (gang) lifestyle.

### Donovan's Story

One instructor at OBHK can empathise only too well with what many of the participants on these courses are going through. At 26 years old, Donovan Chow is a survivor of childhood leukaemia, battling and beating the disease at only three years of age, when he was given a less than ten percent chance of surviving.

Donovan's mother consequently set up the Hong Kong Children's Cancer Foundation, which today benefits from Outward Bound's



community courses. Despite a childhood shadowed by often traumatic and lengthy medical treatments, frequent hospital admissions, and the regular attention of doctors, once Donovan recovered he was encouraged by his mother to embrace physical and outdoor activities to build up his strength and fitness. This in turn led to a life-long love of the outdoors, team sports, and ultimately his job as OBHK's Ketch Skipper.

Today, Donovan is involved in many of the community courses, and is a strong believer in the benefits they bring. "Often people who come on the community courses have had a pretty tough time. They haven't had the same educational opportunities, because of illness, a lack of financial means, or from involvement in drugs and gangs. They may have suffered from abuse, depression, or self-harm. They tend to feel defeated by the challenges thrown their way. We aim to show them that life is not an easy road, but by pushing yourself you can surprise yourself with what you are actually capable of. Once they complete our courses you can see the change even in how they carry themselves—walking with confidence, showing so much more optimism and determination."

**"Donovan was given a less than ten percent chance of surviving."**

As a colleague and part of a particularly confident and gregarious OB group, Donovan is a regular all-rounder, with a long list of professional accreditations to his name, including Wilderness First Response, grade II pleasure vessel operator, and Royal Yachting

Association day skipper licenses, as well as safety-at-sea survival, life-saving, first aid, and many more. Passionate about sailing in particular, Donovan spends much of his free time as well as his working hours on board boats, often one of OBHK's ketches. Laid back and easy going as he is, it would be easy to miss Don's hidden depths. However, when it comes to understanding the myriad emotions, fears and doubts experienced by those who have undergone various types of trauma in their lives, Donovan not only empathises with such individuals but is also adept at drawing them out of their shells, urging them to push themselves further, and ultimately helping them to gain as much as they can from the course.

How can OBHK have such an impact on those who might otherwise have fallen through society's often open-meshed net? Community courses such as those Donovan works on can range from 8 to 18 days, depending on several factors, including the group being targeted, their capabilities, and the outcomes that are to be specifically aimed at. The participants' mental and physical health is fully taken into account, so that they are gently pushed out of their comfort zones. Activities are designed to help them learn skills they can transfer into their everyday lives, such as how to handle challenging situations, how to resolve conflict, how to establish and achieve goals, and how to communicate and work with others.

### **Operation Breakthrough**

In Hong Kong, the underground world of the Chinese secret societies known as the triads lures many who are vulnerable, poor, and seeking to change their circumstances. Children and young adults who have grown up in the rough backstreets of Hong Kong

are a group particularly susceptible to the temptations of a gang lifestyle. Destined to live a life of extortion, intimidation, and criminal activity, these people often see joining a triad, ironically, as the only source of protection and belonging available to them.

Breakthrough is a programme in which Outward Bound works with the Hong Kong police to show disadvantaged teenagers and first-time offenders that there are alternative lifestyle choices and role models available to them. By experiencing positive interaction with peers and instructors, physical and mental challenges, and outdoor adventures that often reveal an alternative side to the city they have grown up in, these ex-gang members develop a sense of independence and self-worth and ultimately the confidence to set goals and make lifestyle changes that will enable them to become useful members of mainstream society.

OBHK's journey courses offer participants such as those from Breakthrough the opportunity to experience an entirely new side of Hong Kong, particularly targeting those who have limited experience outside the densely populated city, or have been incarcerated or spent much of their previous existence in hospitals and institutions. Taking place around Outward Bound's stunning Sai Kung base, using the natural resources of the sea, coastline, countryside, and islands, the courses bring individuals to understand that there is an alternative way of living, quite different from the lifestyle they have been accustomed to. The school uses sailing ketches, sea kayaks, or its 67-foot sailing yacht, *Spirit of Outward Bound*, to take participants to Hong Kong's furthest bays and islands, opening their minds and broadening their horizons through an entirely new, unforgettable physical, mental and social experience.

### Angela's story

Angela, a participant in the Second Chance programme, experienced an 18-day journey course that included hiking and camping

in Hong Kong's countryside and ten days on board *Spirit of Outward Bound* last year. Having previously become lost in a world of drug addiction, Angela's journey opened her eyes to the natural beauty of Hong Kong. "Every moment on the course was not only an adventure, but one of the most enjoyable, meaningful, and memorable experiences of my life," Angela recalls. "In particular, I remember sailing to Lantau Island and being amazed by the peace once we had passed through Victoria Harbour."

The sailing section of the journey proved to be a breakthrough for Angela in a number of ways. In addition to opening her eyes to the world outside the city, Angela also learned the importance of confronting challenge and using the support of others in difficult situations.

"In the past, I had always succumbed to any difficulties I came across by getting lost in drugs rather than falling back on the support of my friends and family, which eventually led to me becoming very isolated. There was one moment during the course that totally changed my mentality. I remember we were sailing into Victoria Harbour and hit some pretty rough weather, and the seasickness I had been suffering from all day finally overwhelmed me. I was steering the boat, and as I began to feel dizzy and faint I started to panic that I would lose control of the helm, putting us all in danger.

"Just as I thought I could not carry on, I felt a hand on my shoulder and a reassuring voice asking if I was okay and telling me to sit down and have a rest. One of my teammates gently took over the helm, even though she too had been suffering from sickness for most of the day, and let me take my time to recover. At that moment I realised the importance of working together, helping and supporting each other, particularly in moments of adversity. While on that boat, I made the promise to myself never to touch drugs again. I truly feel as if I have been given a second chance in life."





Participants on journey courses are actively encouraged to work in teams and to take the lead by accepting responsibility, skills that are particularly important for participants who have a known history of social or psychological issues and needs. By exposing them to unique learning experiences in the natural environment, Outward Bound courses aim to show Hong Kong's disadvantaged that there is a wider world beyond the grime and turmoil of the city, and that through outdoor activities, physical challenge, and personal development they can start a new chapter in their lives, overcoming immobility, illness, depression, or substance abuse.

**“In order for our community courses to take place, a hard-working fundraising team is at work.”**

In order for OBHK's community courses to take place, a hard-working fundraising team is dedicated to organising large-scale events such as the Adventure Race and Annual Dinner, which invite Hong Kong's major corporate organisations, successful professionals, and affluent elite to provide donations and sponsorship.

In return for a chance to network, enjoy themselves, and contribute to the community at such events, members of these sectors provide the generous financial assistance that is OBHK's main source of funds. As Richard Winter, member of the Outward Bound Hong Kong board and a corporate professional himself, sums up, “The Annual Dinner is a fantastic evening filled with great music, food, games and dancing. This year's Woodstock theme revived happy

memories of those simple days of innocence, and we indulged in style reliving the fashion and music of the sixties. The evening blended fun with generous fundraising for the core charities we support.”

Thanks to such generous contributions, the OB community courses mentioned here are specifically designed to meet a particular set of needs and provide an exciting and challenging journey of discovery.

Through these unique experiences, participants who have been subject to mental trauma or underprivileged circumstances and those, such as cancer survivors and the impaired, who may have experienced extremely sheltered backgrounds because of illness or disability, come to realise how much they are actually capable of achieving. By exercising their minds and bodies and adopting a positive outlook, individual participants are empowered to change their own lives for the better. By learning to rely on the support of others they develop crucial skills for use in various social settings and, with newfound confidence, self-esteem, and independence, often go on to take the first steps towards embarking on a relationship or otherwise expanding their social circle.

Many go further yet, using the skills in a professional capacity to seek gainful employment and positions of responsibility, enabling them to make an active contribution to society at large rather than turning against it. In this way, instead of succumbing to a future of disadvantage and disability, they can learn how to become fully functioning, happy and healthy members of the community. 🌟

# The ORIGINS of Outward Bound

By Rafe Parker

**O**utward Bound grew out of the need to instill a spiritual tenacity and the will to survive in young British seamen torpedoed during World War II. What began as a wartime school for survival evolved into an action-oriented program for personal growth, service to others, and physical preparedness.

So goes the literature on the origins of Outward Bound. Through word-of-mouth, advertisements, and articles, we have come to understand that Outward Bound grew out of a wartime boot camp training for merchant seamen.

This does very little justice to Kurt Hahn as one of the most outstanding educators of the century, or to his basic philosophies which are central to the Outward Bound movement. It ignores the fact that the first Outward Bound course held in Wales at the start of World War II was the culmination of six years of careful development of a nationwide program designed to involve school children from all walks of life.

In 1976, John Binsted, former associate director of North Carolina Outward Bound School, stopped in England on his way to Greece. While there, John met a Captain Wakeford who gave him a series of newspaper clippings from *The Times of London* covering events in Britain leading up to what I have always considered to be Outward Bound's first course late in 1941.

Captain Wakeford, now in his seventy-third year, has devoted all his working life to improving the safety and quality of life at sea. For 35 years he was the director of the University of Southampton School of Navigation. He is a founder member of the Sail Training Association, was its first treasurer, and produced the basic design of the Winston Churchill which is now Britain's only sail training vessel. However, his most important claim to fame, as far as we're concerned, is the fact that he ran the first Outward Bound course in the world at the request of Kurt Hahn.

To bring us to the first Outward Bound course, let us go back to 1935. Kurt Hahn, having fled the tyranny of Nazi Germany, had just established Gordonstoun, a private school in Scotland implementing many of Hahn's educational ideas nurtured during his



Kurt Hahn

years as headmaster at Salem. Hahn instituted the "Elgin Badge" which incorporated his educational concepts within the curriculum of nearby Elgin Academy as well as his own school. This was the first step to making his ideas available to the general public. By 1938, Hahn had made the scheme available to the whole of Scotland under the title of the "Moray Badge," Moray being the name of the county in which both Elgin and Gordonstoun were located.

*Gordonstoun and an older dayschool neighbor, Elgin Academy, have jointly*

*instituted a system of athletic standards for every boy to reach. Adapted to various ages, it included running and jumping, putting the weight or throwing the javelin or discus, swimming, diving, and life-saving. The ordinary standards are such that any boy who practices for them can attain them, and thereby gain what is called the Moray Badge: a county name, because it should be equally open to all boys in the county.*

*The Times* – 8 August 1938

While the Moray Badge scheme was being launched by Kurt Hahn, Captain Wakeford was establishing his school of navigation and beginning his long association with sail training vessels. Both men were working at a time when there was enormous unrest and controversy as a result of Britain's inability to deal with the ever increasing threat of Nazi Germany. A very anxious and concerned public inevitably raised the question: Were their youth prepared for these tumultuous times and the enormous hardships of what could be a conflict of unbelievable proportions?

*... almost every country in Europe save Britain has realized that a community cannot afford to leave its adolescents unattached, groping, abandoned to the freedom of the adult before they are ripe for it. What efforts have been made and are being made in this country have been of a timid, over-pedagogic nature, unworthy of a virile and determined people. This is no time for including ping-pong in the plans of fitness campaigns or for offering men and women of the future easy-going recreational clubs of doubtful value. Youth*

*in our industrial towns has social needs which must be met by a long-term policy.*

Such articles appeared regularly in *The Times* prior to the outbreak of war.

Although Kurt Hahn was considered by many as a controversial figure during this period, his ideas and philosophies were frequently being aired in *The Times* thanks to the patronage of Hahn's old friend Barrington Ward, associate editor of that very influential newspaper. There is no doubt that *The Times* made a considerable contribution to furthering Hahn's development of the Moray Badge Program in making the British public aware of a vehicle that could help prepare its youth for the hardships to come.

By late 1939, the importance and relevance of the Moray Badge scheme had been recognized by the National Board of Education and duly accepted as a national program entitled, "The County Badge" scheme, being administered by each county within the British Isles.

*The time has come for the traditional British remedy: creation by voluntary effort. The formation of a county badge association, presided over by a man distinguished both as thinker and a man of action, is imminent. It will give the lead for which more than one county educational authority, more than one public school and youth organization, are waiting.*

*The county badge training was designed for peace, for producing the good citizen, who will incidentally make the good soldier. It was planned by Scotsmen on Scandinavian and German models, adapted to meet the needs of British boys, broadened to give every boy his chance of self-expression, discipline, and achievement. It fills a gap for which our educators should be repenting. It attempts to provide for the little man of our towns who begins earning his living at 14 an opportunity of experiences in which he can win self-respect, exhilaration, and the feeling of achievement in the difficult years of adolescence when his part in the world and society often seems so insignificant and meaningless. Much of the success of the dictators has come from the primitive emotional appeal to the average man. They have won his enthusiasm by offering him bodily opportunities in exchange for the slavery of his mind. Our better reply should be to offer to British youth the chance of freedom in the activities they like and admire, in athletics and sports, in traditional games and craft, in enterprises and expeditions which will take them back to the countryside and inspire that local patriotism which is the basis of culture and social harmony.*

Now that this program had gained national recognition, Hahn was determined to run an experimental program as soon as possible to further demonstrate its effectiveness in a residential setting.

While Hahn moved his school from Moray to a more secluded and protected location at Plas Dinam in Wales, Poland succumbed to Nazi domination and Prime Minister Chamberlain faced the inevitable decision that Britain must declare war on Germany,

Plas Dinam, Gordonstoun's new home, was a natural place for Hahn to run his experimental program being surrounded by the rugged Welsh mountains and close to the Irish Sea. Accordingly, he

set about finding someone who had the experience and the caliber to direct it; Captain Wakeford was an obvious choice.

For the past five years, Captain Wakeford had been developing his school of navigation and in 1937, had instituted a pre-sea training program for cadets of the Merchant Navy. Captain Wakeford's concepts of education paralleled Hahn's. It was natural, therefore, that he welcomed the opportunity to run the experimental program in Wales when Hahn approached him in early 1940.

In July 1940, *The Times* displayed the following advertisement:

#### "SUMMER P.T SCHOOL"

*A summer school in connexion with the movement for pre-service physical training will be held at Gordonstoun School, Plas Dinam, Llandinam, Montgomeryshire, from August 14 to September 6. This will be under the direction of Captain Wakeford, Director of the Department of Navigation, Southampton University. The syllabus is based on the County Badge scheme, and there will be preliminary technical training of use to future soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Any boy in the United Kingdom between the ages of 15 and 18 is eligible, the only qualifications being good health and characters.*

Wakeford then set to work to design a program that would conform with Hahn's concepts. The course was run on schedule to the satisfaction of Kurt Hahn and those members of the Board of Education who were there to observe it.

Just over a week after the conclusion of this course, *The Times Educational Supplement* led as its leading article the full description of the program:

#### COUNTY BADGE TRAINING

#### EXPERIMENTAL COURSE IN WALES

*A course in pre-service training along the lines of the County Badge scheme was concluded last week in Wales, a valuable experiment from which much may be learned. The course was under the direction of Captain Wakeford, director of the navigation department of Southampton University College. The boys who attended were largely from public and secondary schools, but included also members of boys' clubs and cadets from Captain Wakeford's department and from H.M.S. Conway. They put in rather more than three weeks of steady and progressive physical and mental work, as a result of which 14 qualified to receive the silver badge awarded to those achieving an advanced standard of performance, and 21 the ordinary badge. Many of those who failed to qualify came only just short of standard, and all were told they could continue training at home or in their club and qualify before any two responsible judges. Considering the shortness of the training, this result is remarkable; it was anticipated that the winning of a dozen or so badges would be as much as could be expected. The claim of the advocates of the County Badge training that it stimulates and fosters the instinct to achieve, and that it draws out and develops latent powers, was certainly justified on this occasion.*

*The course comprised physical training, badge training (running,*

high and long jump, discus and javelin throwing, putting the shot), compass and map reading, and outdoor games involving the use of these, direction-finding by day and night with or without compass, distance and height judging, observation and description of features of the landscape, elementary meteorology, star identification, field sketching and surveying, stalking, instruction knots, splicing, hitches, elementary seamanship, and first aid. Swimming, which is included among the tests for the badge, was enjoyed in a river pool admirably suited for the purpose, while the wooded and hilly country provided excellent ground for the extensive expedition or field project which forms the culminating feature of the badge training...

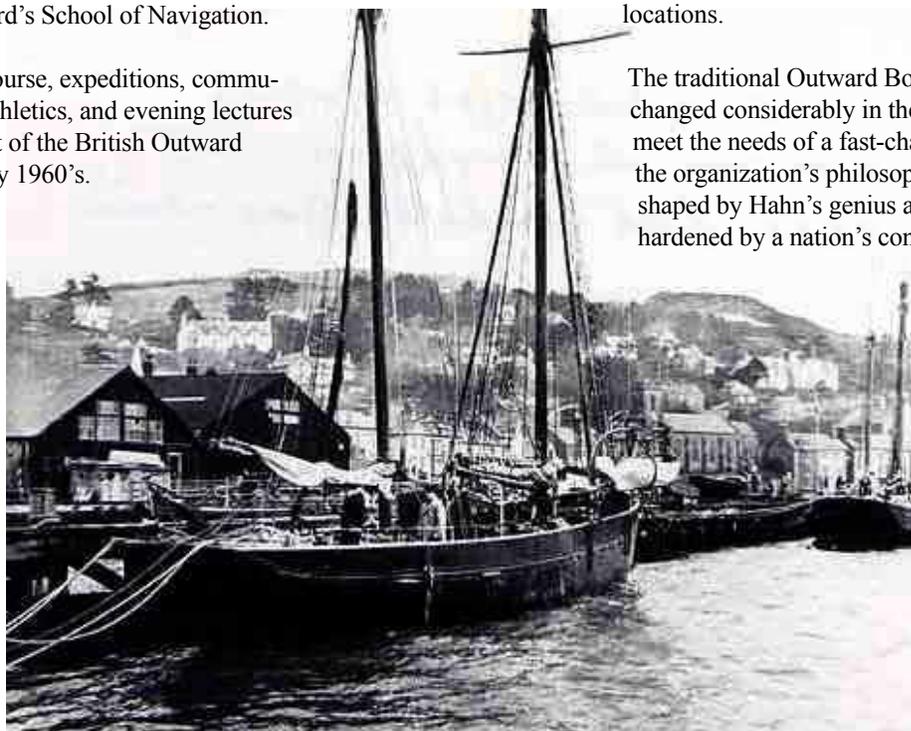
The boys slept in tents, but took lessons and meals in the school building, where they used the common room and had facilities for private study and the writing up of records of their practical work. The day began with reveille at 6:45 a.m., followed by a swim. After breakfast, kit inspection, and prayers came two lecture or instruction periods of half an hour each, then half an hour's physical training, and a period of an hour and a half devoted to badge training and instructional classes. Lunch was followed by half an hour's rest and half an hour's free time; the remainder of the afternoon was given to expeditions and similar activities. After tea these expeditions were written up. A number of lectures were arranged for the evenings...

A conference of instructors and observers (of whom many attended the course) analysed every item in the training. It was agreed that the mixing of boys from different types of schools made for success. Physical training was much enjoyed and there were few accidents or mishaps. It was generally agreed that such a course should demand much of boys, should be varied and should be run by men with their whole heart in the work.

This is a fascinating description of Outward Bound in its infancy. It is interesting to note that the majority of students were boys from schools and youth clubs while only a few were cadets from Captain Wakeford's School of Navigation.

The general content of the course, expeditions, community service, field projects, athletics, and evening lectures remained that way with most of the British Outward Bound Schools until the early 1960's.

The length of the 24-day course was established by the amount of time that allowed all those activities to take place without compromising too much of the school's summer vacation period — not related to the pay period of the merchant seamen as many are led to believe. The course was later expanded to 26 days. It was while attending this first experimental course as one of the



observers that Kurt Hahn first met Jim Hogan. Jim Hogan was a member of the County Badge Experimental Committee organized to develop the scheme on a national level. Through his enthusiasm for the whole concept, Hogan was asked by Hahn to establish a permanent ongoing program since Captain Wakeford had to return to his commitments as Director of the School of Navigation.

The success of Wakeford's course greatly encouraged the Board of Education to continue supporting Hahn's County Badge Program and generated further support from the British public:

*In a heroic age that appeal would be to the heroic. Men and women are called upon to serve the community whenever they are most needed. If necessary they are compelled. Youth wants to be treated seriously, to play its part with older men and women as equals in a total war. To treat young people differently is to treat them with contempt and to perpetuate and increase the feeling of inferiority which is common among the young when they compare their significance with that of their elders.*

Now that Hahn had shown the effectiveness of his program and found someone to direct it, he needed a suitable site, and someone to provide the financial support. By the spring of 1941 Hahn had located a house in Aberdovey, Wales, and shortly after, much to the amazement of Jim Hogan, he found someone to purchase it, pay the bills, and provide a large part of the staff. The great benefactor of the program was, of course, Lawrence Holt of the Blue Funnel Line, who had been a great admirer of Hahn's from the early days of Gordonstoun and who had, in fact, sent his own children to the school and provided financial assistance for students from Moray County.

With Holt's support and Hahn's blessing and inspiration, Jim Hogan ran the first Aberdovey course in the winter of 1941 thus permanently establishing a program that would continue for the next 37 years and expand into five continents and 33 separate locations.

The traditional Outward Bound Course has changed considerably in the last 15 years to meet the needs of a fast-changing society, but the organization's philosophies and concepts shaped by Hahn's genius as an educator and hardened by a nation's concern for its youth in a time of crisis remain the same today as they were in the bleak days of World War II. 🌟

Originally published in OB News, Spring 1978.



26,493  
young people

## The Outward Bound Trust Social Impact Report 2011

The Outward Bound Trust exists to unlock the potential in young people through discovery and adventure in the wild.

Over a million young people have taken part in an Outward Bound® course since 1941 when The Outward Bound Trust was founded.

Research has found Outward Bound courses to provide young people with significant opportunities for personal growth.

In this, our second Impact Report, we present the results of a continued effort to measure the difference our courses really make to young people. The purpose is not to paint a glossy picture of one life-changing experience after another, but to give an open and honest account of how young people benefit from our courses and of the challenges we continue to face in measuring that consistently.

### Our work - at a glance

**26,493** young people took part in an Outward Bound course in 2009-10.

**69%** of them received financial support from The Trust in order to attend.<sup>i</sup>

Our courses range from **three days** to **three weeks** but the vast majority of young people we work with experience a course that lasts five days.

We delivered our courses across six centres, located in the **Lake District, Scotland** and **Wales**.

**11,650** young people (44% of all those we work with) took part in our Adventure & Challenge course.

We helped develop **1,942** apprentices and graduates.

**469** participants took part in our three-week Classic course and Classic Expedition programme, the longest and most intensive course we deliver.

We worked with **383** schools and **69** corporate employers.

We awarded **1,980** young people with a John Muir Award, in partnership with the John Muir Trust. <sup>ii</sup>

383  
schools

# Executive summary

The Outward Bound Trust provides young people with the opportunity to make new friends, to learn new skills and to achieve in new ways. These experiences are directly focused on improving the aspects of young people's lives that underpin their well-being.

The results of our evaluation show that an Outward Bound course provides significant immediate benefits to young people's personal, social and emotional well-being. What this means is that they connect better with others and develop the ability to function better at an emotional and psychological level. These initial benefits continue to provide an enduring sense of confidence that boosts their ability to achieve and to live a more fulfilling life.

Our courses also benefit teachers, schools and employers in a number of

ways. For example, teachers find that they can offer more targeted support to their students as a result of sharing the residential experience with them. We aim to do more in the coming years to measure the real value of our course to these other stakeholders so that we understand more about the wider impact of The Outward Bound Trust.

However, our evaluation has also shown us that our courses don't always achieve the kind of consistent learning outcomes that we would ideally want them to. Some courses seem to make a considerable difference to specific aspects of young people's well-being, while others have a significantly smaller effect. Our challenge as we take our evaluation forward is to understand what influences our results so that we can minimise the factors that prevent us from achieving positive outcomes

for young people, and maximise those factors that enable us to achieve outstanding results.

Over the coming years, we will develop a strategy that enables us to build more credibility into our research practices. In particular, we will:

- ▶ Continue to focus on measuring short-term learning outcomes, whilst building in more longer-term measures.
- ▶ Consider the emotional and physical benefits of spending time in the natural environment, and how this helps to achieve positive outcomes for young people.
- ▶ Expand our research to include the full range of young people who participate in our courses.

## Key results

### Improved personal and emotional well-being

Young people become more resilient and optimistic, and their emotional health and self-esteem improve. 93% of teachers agree that Outward Bound influences their pupils' personal development, in particular their confidence and self-esteem.

### Improved social well-being

The quality of young people's relationships improves, in particular with their friends, family and teachers. 93% of teachers observe better relationships between pupils on return to school.

### Improved connection with the natural environment

Young people's knowledge, awareness and appreciation of the natural environment improve. 72% of teachers observe improved awareness of the natural environment in their pupils on return to school.

### Improved enthusiasm and confidence in learning

Their attitude towards learning improves, and they become more confident, capable learners in the classroom. 60% of teachers observe an improvement in their pupils' performance in the classroom on return to school.



To read and download the full report, go to <http://www.outwardboundtrust.org.uk/impact-report/index.html>

# Outward Bound Oman Course Reaches Kenyan Summit

An eight-person team returned to Muscat, Oman in June, after a successful but challenging ascent of Point Lenana, the third highest summit of Mt Kenya, the highest mountain in Kenya. Heavy rains, hail, sub-zero temperatures, and 17-hour days failed to dampen the spirits of the team, all of whom enjoyed a peaceful summit. Special congratulations to Sameh Al Siyabi, who reached the summit at the grand old age of 8 years old, clearly destined to follow in his father's footsteps. His father, Khalid Al Siyabi, is the only Omani to successfully reach the summit of Mt. Everest.



## Outward Bound USA Study Reports Impressive Results

A one-year study on student outcomes has revealed unprecedented results. One year after completing their Outward Bound course, 93% said they were more likely to accomplish their goals, 80% said they were more likely to be a leader in school or community, 79% said they were more successful at school or work, and 93% believed more in their ability to succeed.



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