

# ROVER VENTURER MAGAZINE

Apr ~ Jun 2020



SNOW MOOT 2020



It starts with Scouts.

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**Letters to the Editor:** send them in by e-mail or by pen, pencil or crayon

Last Issue the Letters to the Editor page including an appeal for the fire devastation in Australia with Bush Fire Appeal Badge. Little did we all know that it would all be replaced so soon in the news by world wide pandemic.

We spent hours developing our calendars and collecting flyers on future events, only to see many cancelled do the quickly all encompassing spread of the virus.

In coming to grips with the changes we are required to make to keep ourselves, family, neighbours and friends safe, by staying home and practicing social distancing we been provided an opportunity. I can remember reading; I believe in one of Kevin Callen's books that winter was the time to spread out his maps and plan the trips he would be taking as soon as the ice went out of the lakes in his home province of Ontario. We have been given that same opportunity to plan for the future.

Now is the time to plan for the summer or autumn, when we can travel to the places, we dream of going, when we are shut in by cold winter days. Start your Bucket Lists for the post-pandemic era.

**What is the first thing you want to do?**

**What are your next challenges?**

For me it's also an opportunity to go through some of my old columns from years back and introduce a new column or rather dusting off old columns as **Out & About – from the Vault**. Something I've been thinking about, which now has become a necessity due to the Stay at Home Policy

Editor's Note from the Previous Issue: "I was lucky enough to visit Australia 2014 and to be hosted by fellow Rovers. It's an amazing country let's support their Rebuild Efforts!" Its now time to support our "Essential Workers", those in the front lines who are keeping us safe!

With all Scouts Events/Activities cancelled, re-scheduled or on hold, we've held off on publishing our usual three calendars of upcoming events. We hope they'll be back in our next issue.

Now let's rebuild our Scouting Year. In the short term: at home activities, maybe even planning or providing service to our community, then back to the outdoors when the time is right.

J Kirby McCuaig

Editor-Ro Vent Mag

# Not everything is affected by Corona Virus!!

By: Tessa Shelvey

6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale



*(Battle lines drawn: Cattails on the left and Phragmites on the right)*

Schools, community centres, fitness clubs, restaurants, cinemas, museums, art galleries, shopping centres are all closed for the foreseeable future but spring is not around the corner, IT'S HERE and that means plants are going to start growing fast including INVASIVE SPECIES!!!!

Ontario is home to a large number of invasive plant species that have been dormant all winter but are shortly going to start getting into high gear. Invasive species are primarily spread by human activities, often unintentionally. People, and the goods we use, travel around the world very quickly, and they often carry uninvited species with them. Some invasive species are brought in to control other invasive species. Birds or the wind can carry seeds from garden plants into the wild.



Here is a reminder of a few that are wreaking havoc in Ontario.

Invasive Phragmites (photo above) (also called reed grass) is an invasive grass that has been causing problems in Ontario for decades. Phragmites grow along roads and ditches, as well as in marshes, ponds & beaches. Phragmite is a very aggressive species that chokes out native plants like bulrushes that were growing in the area before the phragmite established itself. Phragmite spreads by its roots and is a death trap for snakes, toad, frogs, turtles and birds which become trapped among the reeds and cannot get out. In the spring of 2018 Kirby and I visited Long Point Conservation area where we saw vast amounts of phragmite competing with native bulrushes who were clearly losing the battle.

Giant hogweed is an invasive non-native plant species that is invading streamside areas throughout North America and Europe. Giant hogweed plants can grow up to 5 m tall and produce up to 120,000 seeds upon flowering. Giant hogweed is a human health hazard. Contact with sap in the presence of sunlight can cause skin blisters.

You can get severe burns if you get the sap on your skin and the skin is then exposed to sunlight. Eye contact with the sap has been reported to cause temporary or permanent blindness. It needs a professional exterminator to remove the plant.

Purple loosestrife was introduced to North America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Soon afterwards, it managed to occupy the entire continent. Purple loosestrife is classified as a noxious weed in almost all countries including the USA and Canada. It grows in moist habitats such as marshes, areas near streams, lakes, ditches and canals. It also quickly eliminates native plants, such as cattail, which plays important role in the nesting of waterfowls.

Periwinkle (photo below) is a ground cover that was introduced to North America from Europe. It creates dense carpets of vegetation that limit the amount of sunlight available to other species. Periwinkle spreads through underground stems and roots and is toxic to most animals that feed on ground cover. Periwinkle is one of the first invasive species you will see in early spring.

Also known as black swallowwort or pale swallowwort, dog-strangling vine does not actually strangle dogs but it can “strangle” native plants and small trees if it is in dense patches. This plant was first observed in Ontario in the late 1800s, and is originally native to Eurasia.

Dog-strangling vine grows and spreads very quickly. It can invade forests and create dominate ground covers. The vine can attach to small trees and plants and climb up to 2 m high.



*(Periwinkle below expanding across the ground cover)*

Threatened monarch butterflies are thought to be impacted by dog-strangling vine. These butterflies will sometimes lay their eggs on the vine thinking it is milkweed and the larvae consequently do not survive.

Garlic mustard is an invasive herb native to Europe. It was brought to North America in the early 1800s for use as an edible herb. Garlic mustard flowers in the early spring and is high in vitamins A and C. It has a strong, distinctive smell similar

to garlic. Since its arrival in North America it has escaped into the wild and is now one of Ontario's most aggressive forest invaders.

### What Can Be Done to Deter Invasive Species from Specific Habitats?

Never buy or plant invasive plants in your garden.

When leaving an area containing invasives inspect, clean and remove mud, seeds and plant parts from clothing, pets (and horses), vehicles (including bicycles), and equipment such as lawnmowers and tools.

Do not compost invasive species.

Participate in local activities to remove invasives by digging, pulling and cutting them out or sometimes burning.

Carry a pair of clippers in your pocket or backpack and take a few minutes when you are on your next hike to trim back invasive species. Native plants and flowers will thank you for giving them room to grow.

# Out & About - from the Vault

## Reissue Number 1

*From the Vault, an idea that I have been toying with, and now became a necessity because of the days we are living in (literally). Last issue you may have noticed, included **Out & About Number 58**, I've always numbered my columns through the 3 Rover publications that I've written for: The Canadian Rover Eh!. Rovering to Excess and now Rover Venturer Magazine over the last 20 years plus. So, with little fan fair, the introduction of **Out & About - from the Vault**. Now some of these articles pre-dated digital photography, so I don't always have photos, so now the words will have to tell the whole story.*

## Here's **Out & About Number 3**

Welcome to my third column. I'm still going to need your help and ideas (especially for the cross-country issue for the Christmas issue).

Since my last column I've again been out & about, this time on the "Left Coast" or otherwise known the West Coast by some. Imagine being in Vancouver for 10 days and **it only rained** once (true it did pour rain when I was out riding, but only for an hour).

There are two outstanding trips within 2 hours drive of Vancouver: **Shannon Falls and the Stawamus Chief** (north of Vancouver along the coastal highway) which provide excellent hikes of a vertical nature.

I also recommend taking the drive east out of Vancouver on the Trans Canada to the **Kettle Valley Rail Trail**. The rail trail begins in Hope and ends at Castlegar. It winds its way from the Cascade Mountains to the Columbia Mountains, passing through Merritt, Princeton, Osoyoos, Penticton, Midway, and Grand Forks along the way. Since it's a rail trail it's a relatively flat route through the mountains with incredible tunnels and trestles. A great way to hike or cycle through the mountains of British Columbia with being a mountain goat.

### **Shannon Falls & the Stawamus Chief:**

Approximately 50 km north of Vancouver (on highway 99 north) is the Shannon Falls and the huge Granite Cliff called the Stawamus Chief or simply the Chief by the locals. There are three well marked and maintained hiking trails (read climbs if you are not a mountain goat) referred to as First, Second, and Third Peak Trails.

To visit the Shannon Falls themselves requires only a short walk from the parking lot to the base of the falls. The Chief can be seen as you approach along the highway from the south. Believe me you won't want to miss it. It's over 500 metres of vertical (I mean straight up and down vertical) wall of granite. The cliff is the highest granite cliff in North America and only second to Gibraltar in the world. It therefore attracts a great number of rock climbers from all over the world. There is a spectacular view of the Squamish and Whistler area from the top.

The three trails range from 3 to 5 ½ km in distance, and take 2 to 5 hours to climb (one way). The trails are well maintained with steps and other aids provided in the difficult climb areas. Caution is advised during or immediately after rainfall as on a dry day I was slipping on the trail when jumping from rock to rock. The trails are a great work out, be **'prepared'** to sweat. There are no facilities along the trail or on the top, so be sure to bring adequate water and snacks with you, you'll need them.

### **Othello Tunnels - part of the Kettle Valley Rail Trail:**

Though I only got to cycle on the extreme western end of the trail, I did get to travel through the Othello Tunnels. There are four inter-locking tunnels through solid granite in the narrow Choquihalla River Valley with a trestle linking them to each other. The chief engineer Andrew McCulloch and his fellow engineers had to be lowered into the canyon by baskets in order to survey the route. To describe the area is simple; there is tunnel cliff, raging river and trestles. There are no flat areas; it's all gorge. It was an incredible feat of engineering for the time (construction began in 1910).

I read later, that salmon swim up the Coquihalla River to spawn above the tunnels. I couldn't believe it. Having looked down the rushing river from the trestle above and thinking if I fell into the river that would be the end of me. The salmon must have one hell of a sex drive to get up that river.

Sylvester Stallone has used the area in many of his movies. Cliffhanger, Rambo-First Blood and K2 have all had short scenes filmed there for a dramatic affect during action sequences. Including a scene in Rambo-First Blood as Rambo makes his way along a cliff next to a raging river to avoid capture. You may have also seen the tunnels is scenes of Pierre Berton's National Dream.

The entire route is approximately 600 kms and can be accessed from nearly all of the small towns it served during its days as the railway-when the only access other than by foot for many of the local inhabitants to the outside world.

### **Riding Tip:**

Cycling gloves are more than just a fashion statement. They have two very practical uses. The first maybe not very obvious but here goes: if you happen to fall off your bike, they will save you several layers of skin and the necessity of picking gravel out of your palms.

Second, the dampening affect they have on road vibration. Before discovering jell filled gloves my right hand would go numb on long rides and require me to shake it periodically.

### **Final Comments:**

My hat's off to the crews in B.C. You have a beautiful province to hike, bike, and or kayak through. My trip just scratched the surface, and I would appreciate it if someone from out west could keep us informed about the 'goings-on' on the "Left Coast"

Finally, I'm not a skier and therefore I would ask someone **who is**, to write a column or letter recommending cross-country ski areas or trails for the Christmas issue of the magazine. Last year we could ride right up until Christmas but we may get snow earlier this year, so I'd like our readers to "**Be Prepared' for skiing.**

For more information on the Stawamus Chie and other hikes in the Vancouver area consult: "Classic Hikes of the Lower Left-Hand Corner of British Columbia: Altitude Superguide" by Anita Cancian, published by Altitude Publishing Canada Ltd.

For more information on the Kettle Valley Trails consult: 'Cycling the Kettle Valley Railway' by Dan and Sandra Langford, published by Rocky Mountain Books.

Yours in Rovering  
Kirby McCuaig

***Note:** since writing the article more than 20 years ago, we have lost some of the trestles to fire and some areas of the Kettle Valley Rail Trail to landslides. Check local sources for the current status of the trail you would like to hike or bike prior to heading out.*

*Since writing this article I've only just crossed over the B.C. – Alberta border, and then only as far west as Golden, when I've ventured into our most western province, but I have convinced Tessa to cycle the Kettle Valley Rail Trail. So sometime after the all clear is sounded, just maybe.*

Previously published in **The Canadian Rover Eh!**, thanks **Stan** for your encouragement from the start.  
*I had no idea I still be doing this!*

**“Keep the Shiny Side of the Canoe Down”**

**John Kirby McCuaig**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale Venturer/Rover Scouts**



# Photo Journal – Snow Moot 2020





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Step by Step Polar Dip

by Phillip Boymans of 6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale Rovers

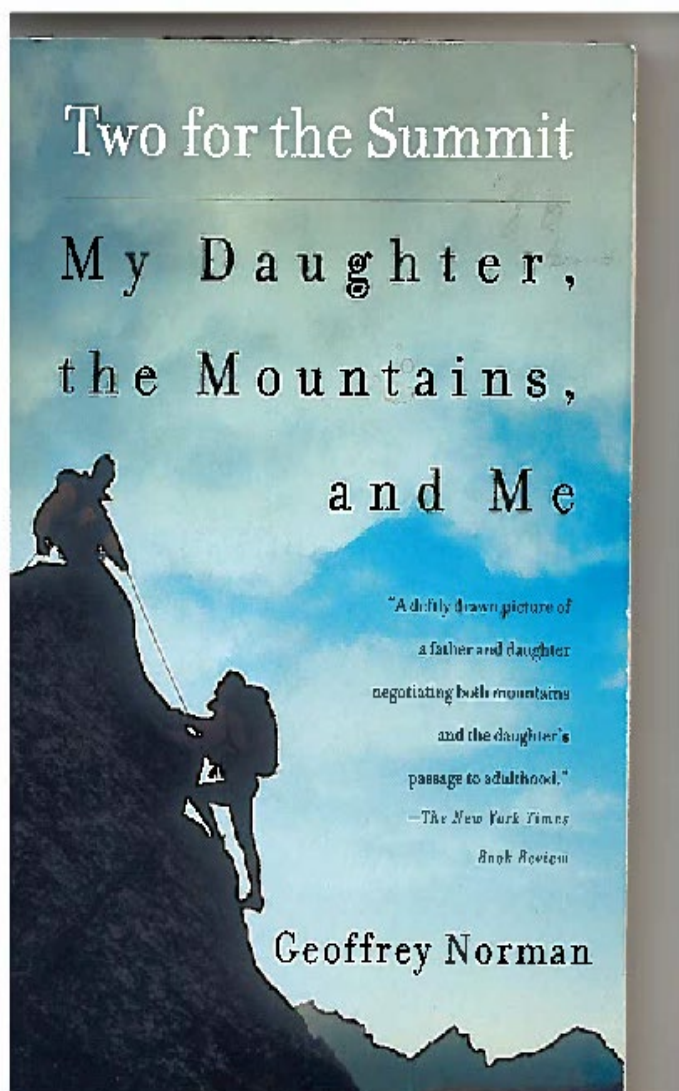
Photos by J Kirby McCuaig  
6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale Rovers

# Out & About - from the Vault

Reissue Number 2

Here's **Out & About Number 37**

## Book Review: Two for the Summit – My Daughter, the Mountains, and Me by Geoffrey Norman



Many Leaders and Advisors can trace their origins in Scouting back to a member of their family joining as a youth and then they themselves volunteering for an adult role. Whether it was with their son or daughter, grandchild or niece or nephew they began Scouting in the role as the experienced and capable one of the family.

Certainly, part of the experience of Scouting is to watch the youth grow in experience, but also watch them grow in stature as they become adults. Our roles and our relationships begin to change as they start Venturer Scouts and later become Rover Scouts.

After visiting the western United States on a work assignment, Geoffrey Norman takes home with him a lifetime goal of climbing the Grand Teton in Wyoming, though he isn't a climber at the time. Ten years later, and after raising two daughters, he announces at a family dinner he will climb the Grand



Teton to celebrate the arrival of his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

For Norman this is a special personal achievement as his father died at 49. Unexpectedly, his older daughter immediately announces *"I want to come too"*. p. 31 He abruptly tells his 15-year-old daughter that it's too dangerous for her, and that was he is planning to do it alone, which he immediately regrets saying. He tries to make amends by asking her to come along. She refuses and his anguish continues until he can convince his daughter that he really wants her to come. Later he realizes that sharing the experience with his daughter will be better than his original vision. *"The more I thought about it, the more I liked it."* p.36

The Grand Teton begins a series of summits they will climb together culminating in their attempt to climb Aconcagua in South America, the tallest mountain outside of the Asian continent. Norman outlines each step in the growth of his older daughter, Brooke, throughout the book as she develops into an excellent climber from her first experience when climbing the Grand Teton at 15 to their later climb of Aconcagua during her college years.

By the end of the book, the journey has taken us from a father who wonders to himself whether his own ego has taken him and his daughter, to a place where she may be the one who pays the price for the danger he has put them both into, to acknowledging to himself that his daughter has grown into the more capable climber than him and how this will change their relationship forever.

Like Geoffrey Norman, I have been able to share outdoor experiences with past and present companies and crews and watch these capable individuals develop. As the older Advisor in my present Company, I too have had to learn to allow the youth and younger leaders to take the lead in certain situations, where their skills and abilities now outstrip mine. The trick of course is to know when to let them take the lead and to do it as seamlessly as possible.

A good read for those with an interest in climbing, those with young adults in their family or those witnessing Scouting Youth maturing into adults.

To Josh and Jamie, my nephews simply Thank You.

To the past and present members of 30<sup>th</sup> Toronto, 3<sup>rd</sup> Newtonbrook and 6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale, thanks for taking me along for the ride. While I haven't climbed too many mountains, there was the time we climbed one back in 1978 at the **Canadian National Rover Moot**, but I will have to save that story for another article.

Two for the Summit is published by Plume, a member of the Penguin Group.

**"Keep the Shiny Side of the Canoe Down"**

**J Kirby McCuaig  
6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale Venturer/Rover Scouts**

# Out & About

Number 59

## The Caledon Trailway



Palgrave, Ontario

When I first began to think I wanted to be a “serious cyclist” back more than 20 years ago. I knew at the time I needed to increase my ride lengths from just riding to the plaza and back. Working as I did then, and do now (when not working from home, as I am during this Pandemic) in Brampton, I needed somewhere to ride and explore after work.

I don't remember now how I first heard of the trail, it may have been from someone at work or on the internet, but one night after work I drove up highway 10 and searched for the trail. Back then I was riding just a few kilometres at a time, but getting in 5 kms at a time out and back from my car seemed like an accomplishment. It did lead to eventually joining two cycling clubs (Toronto Bicycling Network and later the Toronto Bicycling Club), two fully loaded cycling trips on Manitoulin Island in Ontario, the Othello Tunnels on the Kettle Valley Rial Trail in British Columbia, cycling from Canmore to Banff, and cycling in France, Switzerland, and Germany and a dream of some day riding from Montreal to Toronto on the Lakeshore Trail (on my Bucket List).

The trailway follows the old rail bed of the Credit Valley Railway line, east to west across the town of Caledon in the Region of Peel for 35 kms (47 kms overall) . It was the rail line that linked villages and towns of Terra Cotta,



Cheltenham, Inglewood, Caledon East, Palgrave and Tottenham (in Simcoe County), Ontario. Inglewood has one of the finest bicycle stores anywhere, with a large porch in which to have a cold drink and rest awhile. The trailway is recognized as the first section of the Trans Canada Trail, now renamed The Great Trail of Canada and has a pavilion at East Caledon dedicated to the opening.

While I have mostly cycled the trailway, it is also available for hiking as many other trails either intersect or share the trail along the way. The Oak Ridges Trail (ORTA) shares the trail in the village of Palgrave on map 0, you can follow the Oak Ridges Trail west to the Bruce Trail in nearby Glen Haffy on Map 17 of the Bruce Trail Reference Guide. The Humber Valley Heritage Trail also joins the trailway east of Palgrave and leads south to Bolton.

The trailway is also open to horseback riding and cross-country skiing. Please be respectful to both, don't scare the horses or walk on the ski trails. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the trail, with the exception of mobility-assist devices. The trail is flat and hard packed screened stone and is easily accessible to those with mobility challenges.

Signage is excellent with distances marked to each road crossing and village along the way with barriers to automobiles at each access to the trail. The trail is best suited for mountain bikes and hybrid bikes, but can be ridden by road bikes when the trail is firm and dry. **Beware** of the soft sand at each end of the bridge crossing **highway 10** or you may do a **header**, slow right down on the steep descent!



**“Keep the Shiny Side of the Canoe Down”**

**John Kirby McCuaig**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Willowdale Rover Scouts**





**Wear your Scarf wherever you are on August 1<sup>st</sup>**