

## Experiencing Voyageur life



*Ariane Michaud photo*

**Pierre the Voyageur introduces the fur trade to Suzannah Nicholson, Joey Carter and Austin Bell, Wednesday.**

**By Gabriel Waino-Theberge**  
Canterbury High School

The See Earth camp experienced the lives of the Voyageurs of early Canada when two Voyageur re-enactors appeared at the Wilderness Tours beach on Wednesday, along with their canoes (and a motorcycle).

After a brief history lesson, we set out in long birch bark canoes along the Ottawa river, one of the trade routes the Voyageurs had once travelled.

Fortunately, we didn't have to do as much work as the ancient fur traders, who would paddle day and night, distances over which we would now take the highway or even a plane. The two canoes raced – sort of – to Blueberry Island, taking breaks every now and then to learn new strokes or hear jokes.

By the time we got there it had started to rain, making it somewhat more of a challenge to find dry wood for a bonfire. But not too much.

The only real challenge: the rain pour was drenching us on the way back, which was punctuated near the beginning by a quite long and very entertaining stop at the towering



**From Voyageurs to scientists: The next day, campers collect some water samples to conduct chemistry tests.**

cliffs. We watched the teachers – or some of them (“the crazy ones”, as Ms. Minnilli described them) leap over the edge into the freezing water.

“Despite the rain,” said Joey, “it was a very enjoyable experience.” Which it was fortunately designed to be.

Rain was nothing to the hardships Voyageurs must have faced, though jumping off a cliff may have come close.

**By Jesse Morpaw**  
Brookfield high school

A guide dressed up like a Voyageur in a red hat told us the history of the Voyageurs.

I helped to carry the canoe to the shore and stepped in with 20 other students. We paddled hard as we raced the other canoe. We won the race to “Death Island.”

It started to rain and we got back

**Voyageur continued from pg. 1**

to shore on a small island. The guide asked us to collect dry wood to start a fire.

He used a tanning stick and a stone called a flint to start the flame.

I stayed on the island's shore as the teachers walked to the top of a high cliff called Blueberry Rock.

As the fire died out all the students got into the canoes to watch the guide and teachers jump off the really scary cliff.

All of them looked scared but they all jumped into the cold water as the rain fell.

We then paddled back to our cabins as fast as we could because we were very cold and wet.

I desperately wanted a long, hot shower and that is where I went to end this wonderful adventure.

**By Nathasha Mintenko**  
Woodroffe high school

On Wednesday July 15, 2009, See Earth took a canoe trip to Blueberry Island in two big canoes from the 1940s to about the 1980s called "Voyageurs". These boats were used for trading companies, and so was the river.

Our instructors, Pierre and Ron told us stories of the French and their journeys.

They said that workers would have to travel at 45 strokes per minute, while only stopping once an hour. They would do this for days, mainly

only eating lard and steak.

Pierre also said that in those days the men would drink and smoke a lot, plus they were paid by what they carried.

These men were obviously not very healthy.

Also, until the early '50s the lake the beach is on didn't exist. Therefore, the Ottawa River, which used to be very important to the Voyageurs, has changed in many ways.

After our enlightenment in history, Pierre and Ron took us out on the lake. We found that in order for the large canoes to move fast, we needed rhythm and teamwork. Some struggled with this at first.

While on the island, campers gathered wood for a fire on the rocks, however no one spent much time near the fire because many of us were excited for what was about to happen. With instructions and a lot of encouragement a few of the teachers jumped off a 50 foot cliff. With only a few injuries we rowed back to camp.

Whether it was because it had begun to rain or because we just found our rhythm, the way back was a lot faster.

A lot of kids thought the trip was amazing and tons of fun, even with the rain. It was really a great experience.

When the trip was over I got a chance to interview Pierre Mirault. He has been working with this company for 25 years and has never had much of a problem.

In his words, "It's always a new and exciting experience."

I'm glad that we got to have this experience.



*Delorean Clark photo*

**There was some leisure time for hijinks in the water.**

**Voyageurs with motorcycles** *By Gabriel Waino-Theberge*





Nancy Bell photo

Students from local Ottawa schools leap for the camera at the conclusion of their outdoor adventure camp. Students spent a week learning about everything from underground fossils to water chemistry.

# Outdoor camp ‘rewarding’

## Stories from the woods

**By Joey Carter**

Notre Dame High School

There are a wide variety of stereotypes that one assumes when four teenage males are forced to live with one another inside a small cabin in the midst of the wilderness.

One such stereotype, of course, would be the image of clothes spread across the floor so that one could not see its plain plywood surface. Although this may have some element of truth, that does not mean that four teenage boys cannot get along.

On the afternoon of July 15, we were met with with a “cozy and convenient” wood cabin, as described by Jacob Hopps.

As the door squeaked open we got the first glance of our accommodations for the next two nights. Despite the various insect life that had also made the cabin their home, it still had a sense of comfort.

There were, as well, a few negative aspects to cabin life. For example, the issue of privacy.

“Cabin life is frustrating,” explained Adrian Soble.

From another perspective, Gabriel Waino-Theberge gives a sense of optimism to cabin life: “Once you settle into a routine it’s pretty easy.”

Jacob Hopps agrees: “Everyone settled into their arrangements and cooperated very well.”

Of course there will always be clashing opinions but many of us will look back at cabin life as a positive part of the See Earth program. As Adrian says, “It was a rewarding experience.”

Perhaps some people could not be pleased completely but the cabins brought the four of us together with cooperation and respect.

“Although,” adds Jacob, “the teachers have nicer ones.”



Ariane Michaud photo

Suzannah Nicholson, Ashley Kennedy and Sarah Wilgress look on as teacher Linda Meulenbroek tests the chemistry of the surrounding water.

## Rope climbing builds teamwork

**By Terry Cowen**

Woodroffe High School

Camp has been great so far, but Thursday’s rope climbing course was a ton of fun. It really exercised our teamwork ability and communication skills. Everybody enjoyed themselves as we helped each other to complete the tasks at hand.

Some of the things we had to do are: swing a bucket of water from one platform to another. We also had to do some fun trust exercises to prove to each other that we were there to support them.

All in all today was great and I really learned to trust my new friends.



Photo by Chris Desjardins

Cole Boucher tries the hand pump at the Bonnechere Caves.

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# Memories to last all summer

For 28 Ottawa students and members of the See Earth camp, the seasonal warmth arrived in the nick of time



Photos by the 'See Earth' students of the Public and Catholic school boards of Ottawa.



It was easy to spot the See Earth gang during their week of travels and activities; the green backpacks gave them away. Above, Adrian Soble and Sarah Wilgress took in the sights at the Bonnechere River Wednesday. Jesse Morpaw was busy both indoors and out when he cuddled a "simulation" baby at Algonquin's Sim Lab (below) and participated in team-building fun at Wilderness Tours Thursday (far left). Left, Braden Bourne and Sarah Nicholson had a fashion clash but in the end, everyone came together during the team exercises (below left).

