

Technology invades the wilderness

Going over the edge at Cape Split

BY GREG MCFARLANE

Camping — the last refuge of society's non-conformists. Sick of cities and tired of industrialization, campers retreat to the great outdoors to escape the encroaching confines of civilization. Or so my biases led me to believe.

Stressed out from work and school, I was ready to become one of them. I called a friend who regularly takes to the woods and asked if he'd drag me along on his next trip.

"Well, we're going to Cape Split tomorrow," my friend Rob explained.

Great. Cape Split, jutting into the Bay of Fundy about 30 minutes north of Wolfville, ranks among the most picturesque spots in Nova Scotia. I could use the scenery, I thought.

"We're leaving at five tomorrow night," Rob said.

"Five?" I questioned in a complaining tone. "Five usually means 5:30, and then we won't get there until seven and it'll be dark. Shouldn't we go earlier?"

I was being honest. I wanted time to relax and watch a glowing sun fall into a western horizon. The thought of trekking through the woods in the dark didn't exactly appeal to my urban senses. Apparently Rob didn't share my touristy views.

"With the hike we won't get there until 8:30, but the rest of us have jobs on the weekend —

not everyone is lucky enough to have their weekends free, pretty boy," Rob chided. "So we can't leave until 5:30."

"5:30 means six," I murmured. The idea of this camping trip was starting to wear

thin, but I wanted to belong. So if it meant hiking through the dark woods and having a flashlight as the only thing connecting me to the person in front of me, then so be it. I was eager to test my virility against the challenges of nature.

At five the next day we met in the city to set out for Cape Split. It turns out that I didn't have the adequate equipment for this trip, so I spent the day stocking up. Amaxed out credit card later, I was angered. I thought we were going to test ourselves against nature, but it turned out that the only thing we were testing was the latest round of outdoor gear — waterproof boots, the almighty Gore-tex, expensive sleeping bags and futuristic packs. The human element was taken right out of it.

Kelty, Banff, Columbia, The North Face, Trekk, you name it. Every company that ever decided to sink money into creating high-performance outdoor gear was represented on this trip, and I began to get suspicious. These trips had nothing to do with getting back to

tools that look great hanging on the wall, but no one, myself included, really knows how to use.

I was wondering what exactly was going on. Was I being drawn into a conspiratorial web at the hands of these big-name outdoors manufacturers? Would I be the next to purchase a pricey Columbia jacket without thought? Were the campers I was with in on the act, or were they pawns in the system, already bought out by the companies? My paranoia reached a fit-like extreme the closer we got to the cape. I couldn't relax. The whole trip was backfiring.

We parked the car and began to hike. The physical exercise relieved my tension — there's something about walking at night that is wholly peaceful. No sun beating on your neck and no nagging insects, it seemed to good to be true. And it turns out it was.

About halfway through the hike, I stopped. I heard growling. Everyone else stopped, too.

"Where is it?" I asked nervously.

"What is it?" another camper asked as we heard rustling in the underbrush.

Now it has to be understood that I'm not a brave man — I'm a small, petty, weak boy on the verge of manhood. So, when someone says, "If it's a bear, it's every man for himself," even in a half-assed joking way,

my heart starts ticking a little faster. In all truthfulness, I was looking for the nearest tree to scale.

The rustling continued and whatever it was, it got faster. It seemed to be moving away from us.

Everyone else starting



The tides of the Bay of Fundy crash against the shores of Cape Split.

nature at all. Instead, it was all a sleek ploy engineered to entice nature lovers and even those ambivalent towards nature into buying the latest round of equipment. Sure it's expensive, but it all looks so good — like power

Dal womens' swim team start on good note

Men's team not so fortunate in loss to UNB

BY SCOTT SANCTON

The Dalhousie Women's swim team started their season with a win against the UNB Varsity Reds Friday night at Dalplex. The Tigers' team of 18 women dominated the Reds 13 member squad, defeating them by a score of 86-37.

Individual event winners for the Tigers included Angela MacApline (200 freestyle and 100 free), Amy Woodworth (400 individual medley & 400 free), Sarah Mathieson (800 free), Megan Hannam (100 butterfly) and rookies Caitlin Peterson (100 backstroke) and Amy Clattenburg (100 breaststroke). The rest of the squad helped in the defeat by providing valuable back up points in second and third place finishes.

The mens' team did not enjoy the same luck as the women, but kept the Reds on their toes, losing only by a margin of three points. This early defeat didn't set the Tigers back too far, however, as the

Tigers have a few tricks up their sleeve, with several athletes becoming eligible to swim in the new year.

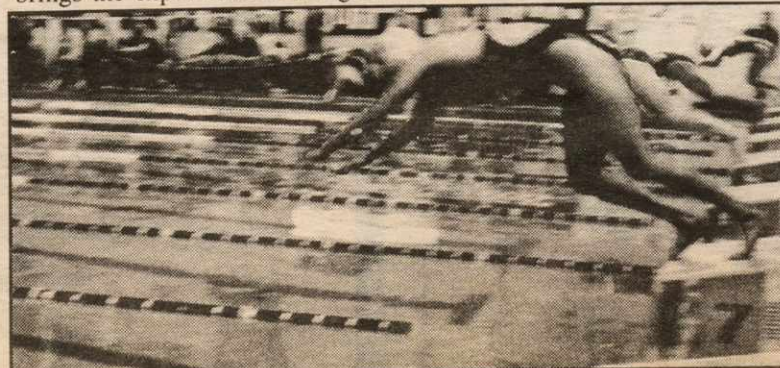
Top placing male athletes included Stuart Kemp (200 free & 400 free), James Wildsmith (400 individual medley) and Chris Stewart (100 breaststroke).

This year brings some change to both Dal swim teams as David Fry takes over the reigns of head coach from Nigel Kemp, who retired after 27 years of service. Fry brings the experience of being an

assistant coach with the Tigers for many years, as well as forming a top swimming consulting team composed of coaches from around Nova Scotia.

In the future, the Tigers will compete in many non-varsity events, including the Ontario Senior Championships in November and the Senior National Championships in Victoria BC in March.

The Tigers will compete at UNB the weekend of Nov. 17, and will compete at home on Nov. 23 against Mount Allison.



The Dal women's swim team dives into a winning performance.



After an arduous hike, two campers realize there's nothing to do here.

breathing sighs of relief, but not me. I wanted the bright lights of the city. I craved the safety of cheesy dance music in a Halifax bar. I was saddened by this revelation, too. My whole self-image began to dwindle.

When we got to an adequate campsite, we set up tents. It was heartening to see one tent that looked like the one my parents would drag around on camping trips when I was younger. But all the technical masterpieces going up around that one again summoned my Luddite paranoia.

We weren't camping for the night, we were setting up a hamlet, replete with systems of barter and exchange. I ignored the growing civilization around me and made my way down to the beach to set a fire.

But there, if I wasn't bothered enough, everyone took out tins of meat and some hard boiled eggs they pre-cooked at home. Roughing it, my ass.

I was steamed.

"You mean to tell me you carry tins of ham and tuna with you," I asked. "All I have is a bag of trail mix, granola bars and a bottle of water. Whatever happened to man against the elements? I wasn't thinking about wrestling squirrels to their deaths for food, but I felt guilty when I packed a bag of Rold Gold. And you have tuna... ham?"

"Daniel Boone would spin in his grave," I yelled, disgusted.

"Hey, calm down," the group implored.

"Calm down? I made a special point not to bring my walkman — and the portable TV stayed at home, too," I exclaimed. "But do I taste the sweetness of fire-roasted pork?"

"I'll give you some," Rob shouted.

"No," I retorted flatly and finally. I'm a coward, I'm weak and I probably belong in a bar on Saturday nights — but I'm no sellout.

I sat and sulked at the end of a log with a Nutri-grain bar. Eventually, out of pragmatism, I calmed down. My serene weekend was turning into a *Lord of the Flies* nightmare, and I realized that if I didn't relax I'd soon become Piggy.

Eventually, everyone went to sleep and the next morning we hiked up to the bluff at the end of the cape. The view here made the weekend worthwhile. Back to nature we were. Standing directly over two hundred-foot drops into the ocean makes one feel relatively small — a mere slip would send you careening to your grave. For once I felt earth's strength, for there were no man-made inventions that could save you here, only common sense. Oddly enough I relaxed.

I spoke little on the way back and felt less than relieved when I made it home. I thought of Cape Split and the trip, and I didn't look forward to a week of work and school ahead. Somehow, despite the knowledge I acquired, I enjoyed myself.

L'ARCHE

The University of the Heart

L'Arche Cape Breton is a community for men and women who are mentally challenged and those who choose to share life with them. We are a community committed to equality, solidarity, and simplicity, and since we began in 1983, hundreds of people have come to share this way of life with us.

We have welcomed many volunteers from Cape Breton, and from the UK, France, Austria, Germany, Granada, India, the United States and all over Canada. The experience in L'Arche has not only changed the way we see people with disabilities. It has changed the way we see the world.

We are always accepting applications from energetic, open-minded, and committed people. We provide room and board plus a monthly stipend, and will consider covering your student loan payments. There are even programs available for people interested in volunteering overseas, as there are over 100 L'Arche communities throughout the world.

Not sure what you are doing? Why not consider volunteering with L'Arche? Contact us for an information package.

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