

# Outward Bound

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

## *Journal*

2009 Edition

New Learning at the  
Altar of the Rockies

**Outward Bound  
as Servant**

Underground  
in the People's  
Republic of China

**The Age  
of Irony**



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**Canada**  
Turns 40!  
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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 International Journal is published annually in August, and the deadline for contributors is April 15.



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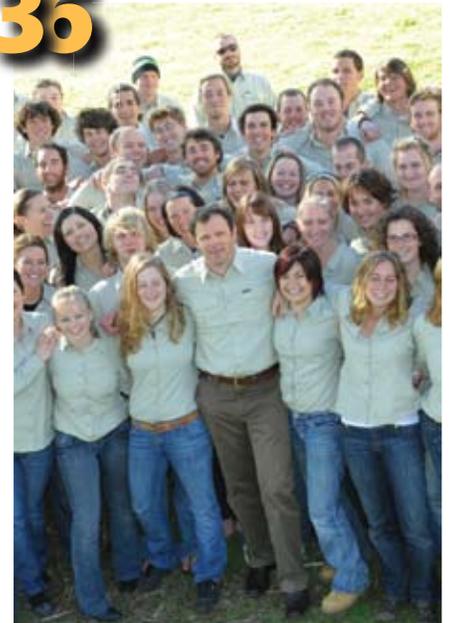
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# Contributors



**Darren Black**  
*Sustaining Outward Bound*

Darren is the CEO of Outward Bound Australia. After a 13-year career as an Army Officer (following in the footsteps of a Navy father), Darren retired with the rank of Major. He spent the next few years as a consultant in Leadership & Change Management within the corporate sector. Soon after, he found his true passion in the service of Outward Bound.

**Benny Callaghan**  
*Deepening the Outward Bound Leadership Experience*

Benny Callaghan is the former National Partnerships Manager at Outward Bound Australia. His professional focus has involved project and team management, education design and delivery, and strategic consulting. He has worked for and supported a number of social ventures in Australia, Rwanda, and the Philippines. He has also worked as a community facilitator and as a teacher. He joined Outward Bound in 1999 to work as an instructor and course coordinator. Benny is a passionate advocate in the social sector and is committed to having a broad impact on the wellbeing of communities through active citizenship and social entrepreneurship.

Benny is currently the CEO of the School for Social Entrepreneurs Australia.



**Bill Frederick**  
*Outward Bound in the Age of Irony*

A former Hurricane Island Outward Bound School instructor and program director, Bill has been the Director of Safety and Risk Management Services at the Salem, Massachusetts-based School for Field Studies for the past six years. His adventure education background spans more than twenty years, including

having taught emergency medicine as a senior instructor for the Scarborough, Maine-based Wilderness Medical Associates.



**Jim Garrett**  
*The Centrality of Service in Outward Bound*

National Director of Outward Bound USA's Service Initiative, Jim has been affiliated with Outward Bound since 1964 as a Hurricane Island Outward Bound instructor, Trustee, and Corporation Member. For thirty years he taught school-age students in the fields of English, world religions, and human values. He also established outdoor adventure programs for

International College, Beirut, Lebanon, and The Gilman School in Baltimore, Maryland.



**Richard Gerrish**  
*Underground in the People's Republic of China*

Richard Gerrish began his pursuit of adventure at the age of 15 when he started exploring caves. He later graduated with a degree in Outdoor and Science Education from Liverpool John Moores University in the United Kingdom. His career led him to work as a science teacher in the UK and then to volunteer as a science teacher in Zambia. After 3 years in the classroom, he decided to pursue a

career in the outdoors, and moved to Hong Kong to become an Outward Bound instructor. In his article, "Underground in the People's Republic of China", Gerrish takes us beneath the small tobacco farming village of Tian Xing in Wulong County, Chongqing Prefecture, where he explores China's first 1000-meter deep cave. Richard is currently the Training Manager at Outward Bound Hong Kong.

**Colin Mortlock**  
*The Spirit of Adventure*

Colin is an author and athlete who graduated with a degree in Modern History from Keble College in Oxford. He is the former Warden of The Woodlands Outdoor Centre in south Wales. In the 1960s, he was one of the UK's top rock climbers, and was perhaps the first person to devise and use a climbing wall. In his article, "The Spirit of Adventure", he talks about his latest book, adventure, nature, and Outward Bound's role in the modern world. Colin is also a keynote speaker at the forthcoming Outward Bound International Staff Symposium in Finland.



**John Read**  
*Outward Bound Closer to Home*

John enjoyed a remarkably diverse career prior to joining Outward Bound USA as president in 2002. After graduating from business school in 1971, he joined government service, holding positions in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Treasury Department's wage and price control program. In 1976, he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as Assistant Secretary of Labor for

Employment Standards, under President Ford. After a series of manufacturing plant management positions and a stint with his own manufacturing business, he found his true calling: Outward Bound. As an Outward Bound student, John's experience dates to 1992, when he took the first in his long series of wilderness courses.

**Anjuli Burrell**  
*Outward Bound Comes to New Zealand*

Anjuli is Outward Bound New Zealand's marketing executive. Prior to starting with Outward Bound, she worked briefly for the government, and then began working on sail training vessels in New Zealand and around the world-including Gordonstoun School's Sail Training vessel, *Ocean Spirit of Moray*. She completed her first Outward Bound course in 2004 and has helped with several courses since. She lives in Lower Hutt, near Wellington, and travels around the South Island promoting OBNZ.





## Indefatigable Outward Bound

The squall line of a fast-moving economic storm is a good place to observe the resilience of an organization like Outward Bound. With many schools and centers experiencing sharp downturns in enrollment and the prospect of continued hardship amid what has been described as the worst global recession since the Great Depression, it is easy to lose track of the dire circumstances that attended the birth of Outward Bound.

Outward Bound was dually conceived on the war-torn shipping lanes of the North Atlantic and in the educational atelier of antebellum Nazi Germany. And it was born into an economic freefall. In the years leading up to World War II, Britain staggered under high unemployment, the lingering economic effects of World War I, and the Crash of 1929 that triggered the Great Depression.

The situation was grim in the depressed areas of Wales, where pre-war unemployment reached 70 percent. With the Welsh economy on a war footing, the British government was working to restrict the availability of consumer goods and public spending through taxation. Price and wage controls were to follow and in January 1941, rationing of clothes was introduced. Nine months later, that October, Outward Bound began its operations in Aberdovey, Wales. Outward Bound survived the Second World War, spread throughout Britain, and then globally.

The reason Outward Bound was able to survive and then grow during such difficult times was that it was needed. It wasn't part of the leisure economy. It didn't rely on discretionary spending, and, importantly, it had a determined base of supporters in the private sector, as well as politicians who knew its value to society.

"An indefatigable spirit," the survival of which Outward Bound's visionary founder, Kurt Hahn, referred to as the foremost task of education, is perhaps the very definition of what Outward Bound can now draw upon to ensure its own survival, relevance, and continued growth.

We hope you enjoy this issue of OBI Journal!

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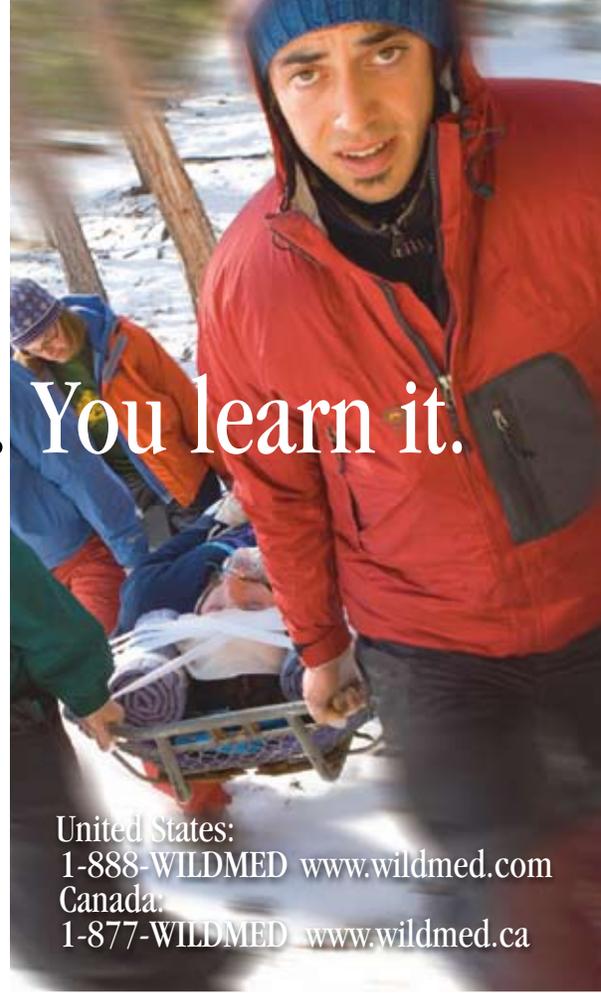
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# Deepening the Outward Bound Leadership Experience

by Benny Callaghan

For years, alumni, parents, schools, and communities have told us of the long-term impacts that Outward Bound has on young people. Individuals have called us referring to programs they participated in throughout the 1950s and '60s and how these programs remain one of the pivotal experiences of their lives. For us as practitioners, this is in some ways accidental. We merely provide a catalytic experience whereby people can discover more about who they are and what they are capable of. Of course, facilitating the experiences to explore how the OB educational experience transfers to participants' regular lives is an important part of our pedagogy. Outward Bound programs include reflection and goal-setting as standard components.

Outward Bound Australia (OBA) has been exploring ways to extend the program experience into communities.

## Evaluation of long-term program impacts

Outward Bound Australia engaged heavily in research throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Work conducted by James Neill and Garry Richards, especially the Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ), has become one of the leading evaluation tools for the outdoor industry both in Australia and the world. This tool has been effective in measuring the impact on student self-perception from the beginning to the end of OBA programs.

We have more recently turned our attention to understanding the long-term impact of the Outward Bound experience on individuals and communities over time. We began with a literature review exploring elements of citizen engagement in community. We became interested in five dimensions on which we believed our programs could have an impact: human capital, self-efficacy, motivation, community participation, and community support.

## A new look at program design

In wanting to deepen the Outward Bound experience beyond the end of a program, we knew that we also needed to reexamine the design of our programs and some of the elements we included in them. We knew of the impact of the wilderness component on young people, and wanted to maintain the elements of a place apart, adventurous activities, and solitude and reflection in a beautiful environment as key features.

Apart from this review, we have also been experimenting with program design concepts that have emerged from Outward Bound Czech Republic and New York since the 1990s. These programs have achieved powerful results for individuals by using creative mediums in residential settings. Over the past ten years, Outward Bound Australia has been bringing

the two program design methodologies together in its corporate and youth leadership development programs. This has been met with consistently positive anecdotal feedback, and strong LEQ results.

Wilderness Component	Residential Program	Skills for Community Action Project
Expedition Adventurous activities Solo experience Values Journey	Large-scale creative activities Leadership workshops Guest speakers	Creating a vision Project planning Project management skills Public speaking workshop Youth mentors (past graduates) Ongoing support

Aspects of community development	Definition
Human Capital	Cognitive skills, knowledge, training and other personal skills and resources of people in the community
Self-efficacy	Individual's belief that they can succeed at something they want to do
Motivation	Incentive for taking action
Perceived Level of Support	Individual's perceptions of the level of support provided by the community for projects
Participation	Citizen involvement in the community

### How we are impacting the community

At this stage of the pilot, it is difficult to draw any strong quantitative conclusions about the impact of the program on participant

In extending our programs into the participants' communities, we found the need to add a third dimension, which arose outside of the field of outdoor education and has come through the youth sector and social change movements. Delivered under a myriad of names, this third element takes the form of designing Community Action Projects to be conducted in the participant's community.

### The National Aspiring Leaders Summit

We began to deliver our Aspiring Leaders program in 2002 with positive responses from the communities we engaged with. In 2007, we scaled this program to a national level, bringing 28 young Australians from around the country at a summit our National Center in Tharwa, in the Australian Capital Territory. Over the past two years, we have implemented this program design with positive feedback from our participants, and we piloted a new evaluation methodology for it for the first time in 2008. The evaluation included surveys to draw quantitative data, and phone interviews to gather feedback from the participants and their supporters.

The results of the pilot study recommended a variety of things for us to consider, including how we can improve the program, the evaluation methodology, and the kinds of supports that we can provide the young people on their return to their community. The evaluation process will be run again throughout 2009 and 2010.

communities. The Community Action Projects varied in scale and came under one of four main banners:

- Environmental and conservation projects
- Health and well-being projects
- Youth empowerment and community participation projects
- Global or cultural projects





The most popular area was creating projects associated with mental health. Some individuals worked alone, while other participants formed teams to conduct larger projects. Some projects were very local (i.e., school or church-based) while others were more global in their outlook. Interviews were conducted with 23 of the 28 participants, six months into their project completion. At the time, 19 (82 percent) were still working on their original projects. Three participants identified alternative projects to work on when they returned home. Five identified a second project that they were working on in addition to their original one.

One of the most remarkable aspects is how the participants have maintained their motivation and commitment, despite not having regular contact with their fellow participants. I recently received a call from one participant

who, one year on, is still working on his project—to organize a concert raising awareness of violence against young people in his community. Tim is now 18 and lives in a regional city over 1000 kilometers from the nearest Aspiring Leader. Tim has so far managed to gain the support of his city council, a local youth organization, a local funder, and a major Australian band. When I asked when he expected to complete the overall project, he quoted April 2010, two years beyond the completion of the Summit. Tim has also gone on to study social work, which he was inspired to do through participating in the summit.

### **Concluding remarks**

A full report on the program and results of the first evaluation can be found at our website. As can be seen in the report, the impacts have been

mixed and the recommendations for improvement to the program and design methodology outweigh the strong results on community impact. The purpose of this paper is not to laud Outward Bound Australia's program success, but rather to ignite or contribute to a conversation about how we can extend the value of our programs to the communities we serve. We have also made the evaluation tools publicly available for schools who may like to participate in evaluating their programs in similar ways. We welcome any feedback on how other practitioners or researchers perceive the program design and evaluation methodology. 🌟

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*Benny Callaghan is the National Partnerships Manager at Outward Bound Australia.*



# A Global Marketing Pioneer Steps Down as Chairman of Outward Bound International

*A Farewell Tribute to Chairman Kelly O'Dea by Ian Wade*

**W**hen it was confirmed late last year that Kelly O'Dea was stepping down as Chairman of Outward Bound International after nearly six years, I started to think of an appropriate recognition gift.

First I thought that a large bag full of cash is always welcome! Then I thought that Kelly already has lots of cash and something more personal would be better. One of the few complaints Kelly has made is that his Outward Bound hat collection was lost some time ago, so I wrote to each Executive Director asking for a hat. In keeping Kurt Hahn's dictum that there is "more in us than we know", the response from the schools was beyond expectations and fills this bag. Before opening the bag I'd like to reflect on some of the contributions Kelly has made to OBI that reveal the character of the man:

### **He is Foremost a Man of Action**

Those of us who have been around since the 2000 OBI World Conference in Sabah will remember sitting in a large plenary session where the idea was raised that Outward Bound needed a mission statement that would apply to the whole network. Jumping into action, Kelly stood up and said, "let's work on that now." Thirty minutes later he'd led 200 people through a process of crafting the mission statement we still use.

*Described in a Harvard Business School case study as "a global marketing pioneer, business builder and change leader", Kelly O'Dea is a recognized strategic advisor, marketing expert and entrepreneur with a track record that crosses virtually all major market categories worldwide.*

*Prior to joining Outward Bound International as Chairman, Kelly advised top management clients in such companies as IBM, Microsoft, Shell, Samsung, Lenovo, Boeing, Compaq, Ford, Jaguar, Fujitsu, AT&T, PepsiCo, Kraft, and Unilever. He also managed some of the world's top marketing and communications firms, including serving as President, Ogilvy, and Mather Worldwide Client Services.*

*Kelly is now Chairman and Co-Founder of the Alliance for High Performance Leadership Worldwide. He also serves as senior advisor to former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, lectures at leading graduate schools, and is a regular speaker and media commentator on future trends, global marketing, digital economy, new media, leadership, and change management issues.*

### **Man of Global Vision**

If you had to free-associate a phrase to go with Kelly O'Dea, for me it would be "global visionary". When Kelly took over from Peter Kyle as Chairman in 2003, OBI had done a couple of rounds of Safety Reviews and asked a few members to leave. We were feeling pretty good about the consistency of quality programming around the network. So it was logical for Kelly, with a career in building global brands for major

corporations, to think about how to capitalize on this. There is a Harvard Business Review case study on his work.

The "Global Leaders Program for a Better Tomorrow" was born and focused us for two or three years on how Outward Bound could use its unique methodology to train a new breed of global thinking leaders. Laying aside the practical difficulties of an organization with limited marketing and program delivery capacity trying to do both things, the Global Leaders Program video that was produced documents a compelling concept. It was eventually delivered at break-even cost and with very positive reviews from those involved. This concept would never have been brought to life without Kelly's vision and global leadership.

### **Man of Diplomacy**

Another aspect of Kelly's character that the last two years have revealed is his diplomacy skills. He has teased out the interests of various parties in the possible restructuring of OBI and the Outward Bound Trust, a process that could have encountered much difficulty. However, Kelly has kept the focus on getting a positive outcome for the Outward Bound network.

Personally, it has been amazing to work with Kelly. How many Board Chairmen can you call at 11:30 at night and be sure that he will still be working and think such a call is "normal"?! Kelly knows Outward Bound from over 20 personal expeditions, so his advice is always rooted in an understanding of what the organization can deliver.

He has made a unique contribution in growing and strengthening the global Outward Bound network. In his term OBI has added 12 new licensees. We can celebrate that in 2008 Outward Bound had its biggest year of service ever with 245,000 participants from 36 countries and that the growth rate of new Centers is at an all-time high. Thanks so much for the work Kelly; for the wisdom and fun you have brought to us all these last six years. We are glad you will remain on the Board and join the ranks of Chairman Emeritus and offer advice in perpetuity!

Now to see what gifts you have... 



Jamie Anderson, Ian Wade, Kelly O'Dea

# LEADING THE WAY:

## High School Comes to Outward Bound New Zealand

by Anjuli Burrell

In January of this year, 28 school leaders selected from secondary schools around New Zealand came to Outward Bound New Zealand's Anakiwa Center for the 2009 School Leaders Program. This 21-day course is for students moving into Year 13, who will have a leadership role in their last year at high school.

Using the challenges and outdoor activities of Outward Bound along with workshops, discussions, and peer feedback, students were able to develop their leadership skills in preparation for their roles in the coming year. Students then had a chance to practice these skills by leading their fellow group members through team-based activities such as tramping and sailing. They also got the chance to encourage each other to achieve more than they thought possible, through individual challenges like rock climbing and the high ropes course.

*Eve Decker, Head Girl of Lynfield College:*

Intense mental and physical challenges, set in some of the most tranquil, alive, and picturesque scenery in New Zealand, is a poor description of the three weeks that I can only express to people as life changing. There are no words to explain and no pictures which can truly capture the experience that is Outward Bound.

Thrust into the outdoors with 13 complete strangers and a fast-paced, action-packed lifestyle that is out-





side many people's comfort zones, you really learn to use every minute to the full.

Through injury, pain, laughter, frustration, satisfaction, hunger, and contentment I learnt the full meaning of Kurt Hahn's philosophy "Plus est en vous — there is more in you than you think". Outward Bound has empowered me

"to serve, to strive and not to yield" in all my daily adventures, and that in order to reach my full potential the only person worth competing against is myself.

I was informed that my true Outward Bound journey would not start until I returned home and put everything I had learnt into practice. I look forward to this year and aim to make the most of every opportunity and thoroughly enjoy the journey along the way. At least once a week something will remind me of my time at Anikiwa and I long to be back there. I long for the people, the community, the scenery, and the purposeful and challenging lifestyle.

Time spent at Outward Bound will remain with me for the rest of my life and inspire me throughout my term as the Head Girl of Lynfield College for 2009. Thank you to the people who enabled me to attend Outward Bound: you cannot fully comprehend how much your support has meant to me." 🌟





# Shaping the Benchmark of Quality

*Program Review Leaders Training at Outward Bound Singapore*

by Lim Lui Shan

The Program Review Leaders Training was initiated in 1999 to equip senior management staff in the Outward Bound (OB) fraternity with the skills and knowledge to conduct program reviews at OB Centers. The training program also aims to increase the global standards in operational management, quality, and safety benchmarks in all OB Centers.

The fourth such training program was held at OB Singapore from January 8 to 15, 2009, and was attended by 22 senior management staff and practitioners. After their training, these senior staff proceeded to conduct program reviews at OB Hong Kong, OB Lumut, OB Malaysia, and OB Indonesia.

Ian Wade, Executive Director at Outward Bound International, described Outward Bound Singapore as “one of the top OB schools in the world for risk management ... that is why

*“Once again OB Singapore has provided a service to the world network of Outward Bound by sharing their staff, knowledge, and experience in collaboration with OBI.”*

*– Ian Wade, Outward Bound International*

we held this training program here, so we could show other schools an example of a school that has thought very carefully about their safety processes.” He further said, “Outward Bound Singapore is generous and willing to share their experience. By hosting this training, they learn from other people from around the world, so they are not complacent even though good and are still trying to be better.”

After going through the six-day review and training, Colin Bunge from OB New Zealand observed that OB Singapore operated at a very high standard and that the Center has “very formal safety systems” that are well-documented, and that “much can be learned from that.”

This was the second time OB Singapore had hosted such a training program, following one in 1997. 🌐





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# OUTWARD BOUND SINGAPORE'S

## Amazing Urban Quest



by Nicholas Ye & Charles Ang

**A** classic Outward Bound (OB) program with an urban twist was created by the Training Development Unit at OB Singapore to enable participants from overseas OB Centers and partners to understand more about themselves and what it takes to become an effective team.

Last year, the Urban Quest program

brought together instructors and representatives from various OB Centers in different countries. This combination offered new insights for Charles Ang, an instructor from multi-racial Singapore, in learning how to deal with language barriers and the challenges that arose from cultural differences when working together as part of a team.

The program was a truly enthralling and enjoyable voyage for Nicholas Ye, an instructor at OB Singapore. He described his experience with the Singapore Urban Quest: “In the last instalment of the 21-day Classic Course, my watch-mates and I embarked on a five-day, four-night ‘Singapore Urban Quest’. It was an ultra-long trek through both the concrete and real jungles of Singapore, from the glimmering malls and

skyscrapers of the city to the evergreen monuments of the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. (Singapore is one of the two cities of the world featuring a rainforest within its boundaries) With an international line-up of participants from regional Outward Bound Centers and OBS partner centers, and a delegate from OB Croatia, the expedition was a great opportunity to showcase ‘The Lion City’.

If there was a chequered flag for the commencement, it would be the night before when the plans for expedition were laid out. Gearing up for what was to come—heavy backpacks and trudging more than 100 kilometres—were not on our the participants’ minds.

When we began, anticipation and excitement filled everyone’s hearts to the brim, but it threatened to fizzle out as the miles pounded on. The message at





the start was simple: “Lead the adventure, and it will lead you.”

The quest took the team to almost every axis of Singapore. They passed an impressive list of landmarks and places of interest, from the HSBC Treetop Walk at Mac Ritchie, the wetlands of Sungei Buloh, and the famous Henderson Wave pedestrian bridge. They were also exposed to the historical novelties at Kranji War Memorial,

Kent Ridge Park, and the Central Business District. With these interesting sights, the overseas participants were provided a different perspective on the uniqueness of Singapore’s past throughout the entire journey. During the Urban Quest, neither the cold rain nor the glaring shine could weaken morale or diminish hopes because the team knew that they had each other to count on. The camaraderie spurred on every breaking spirit.

All worries were allayed collectively and all burdens were shared together. The memories of this action-packed “adventure” would be unforgettable. It was a truly rare opportunity for the authors because of what they accomplished within a multi-national group that was different by appearance but common in the cause of self-discovery.

The team members became increasingly familiar with one another’s unique personalities and approach as the journey progressed. And the positive flow of endorphins competed favourably with the inevitable pain of lactic acid as it slowly infused the tired muscles.

The experience was a “great inspiration” for Orsat Kratoofil, from OB Croatia, when he found himself able to persevere in unusual situations and with people that he did not know.

The impact of the program was also keenly felt by Antonio Olampo, of Kool Adventure Camp in the Philippines, when he described his experience as “a life changing one. No amount of joint pains, blisters, and cookies can stop me from saying ‘Thank You’.”

For Neil Laksmana, from OB Indonesia, this course had reminded him of the potential individuals have within themselves. He felt that he had improved himself throughout his course and was able to see that there was no limit to what he could do if he just kept on going. ✨

# Underground

In the People's Republic of

# CHINA

by Richard Gerrish

“One... Two.... Three.... Four....”

I counted slowly under my breath as the whirring of the rock I'd dropped built from a barely perceptible drone to a clearly audible, chilling roar.

“Five.... Six.... Seven.... Eight....”

Boom!

The crash of the rock surrounded me. I instinctively double-checked that I was clipped onto the safety rope and stumbled back from the edge. Slumping against the wall, I lifted my helmet and rubbed my scalp to try and clear my head. It took me a while to focus clearly enough to do the maths required. After some adjustment for errors my final estimate hit me like a bucket of iced water in the face.

“250 meters!” A voice screamed inside my head. “Incredible!”

250 meters would be a very deep shaft, but I was already seated on a small ledge that was 250 meters below the last place that had an actual floor. This meant I was halfway down a 500-meter deep vertical shaft! 500 meters was not just insanely deep, it was a world record contender for the deepest underground shaft.

I suddenly felt very alone and with good reason. I was. The other three cavers in our survey team were safe on the surface, drinking tea and chilling out in the village. There had seemed little point in having company. They would either have to wait for me far above, out of effective communication and basically useless, or they would have to spend several unbearably painful hours in their harnesses while I rigged the ropes necessary to get down this cave we were exploring. Not only that, but this deep cave, Miao Keng, was in China, a country with no cave rescue service. A mistake here would be catastrophic. That said, the potential for finding something truly world-class was more significant. Risk of loss and risk of gain balanced—I had to go on.

I picked myself up from the damp ledge. Above me the slender white rope I had already rigged pointed to safety. Below me the brown-grey walls of the cave converged without ever actually touching. I could probably see at most 50 meters down the shaft with my light. Knowing now that that was only a fraction of what was actually there, I wished I hadn't thrown the rock.

I have never been one of those “no fear” types. Still, there is something genuinely intoxicating about original exploration, especially when it is as dramatic as this. To be fair, it had never before been this dramatic for me. Provided I kept my wits about me and was careful, I would be fine—more than fine. I would be one of a very small team to have explored one of the deepest shafts in the world. As a cave explorer you can't say no to that kind of opportunity, no matter how scared you are.

I continued down, gradually reducing the large collection of bolts and karabiners I carried as I installed them into the virgin slabs of limestone that served as my yardstick for progress, and slowly lightened the weight of rope in the bag that dangled



between my legs. Before either of these were expended, the juice in the drill battery ran out. Grateful for having a good excuse to go no further, I began my 400-meter vertical retreat up the ropes that connected me with the surface. My nerves were destroyed, my brain jittery from fear, but I couldn't wait to crack that first beer and tell my story.

After a couple more days of pushing by other members of the team, I was once again at the cutting edge. Abseiling down against the wall I was mindful of placing re-belays at regular intervals. This was mainly to let me feel more comfortable about swinging above the chasm, but I also wanted to move away from the water falling down the pitch (I didn't want to get caught on a rope under a flood pulse). The re-belays would also prevent bounce and keep everyone together on the way out.

With little to hold onto, I was entirely dependent on my skyhook to hold me in place while I drilled the next set of bolts. Several times as I was trying to position myself like this, I was catapulted across the shaft because pockets of stone defied all attempts to place a bolt in them. These unplanned swings were usually accompanied by a strumming on the rope that kept me aloft. Frantically looking up to see where the rope was rubbing was futile. Before long I made out a very welcome floor.

First a toe, then a foot and finally both my knees and hands dropped to the floor at the base of this humbling pitch. "Touchdown, the crowd goes wild!" I yelled. Euphoria washed over me. We had finally cracked it.

That day, the four of us mapped 300 meters of new passage at the bottom of the shaft. We were close to connecting it to a large cave system explored in previous years and the shaft itself was measured at 491 meters deep. That made it the second-deepest underground vertical drop in the world and only 22 meters short of the world record. However, we were a long way from the surface and over 600 meters of rope needed to be removed before we could go home.

The story of the de-rig is an epic in itself, and after a long and bitter fight with gravity we scored a resounding draw. A super-sized portion of muddy rope decorated the ledge at the top of the pitch. Despite the pain we had suffered and the exhaustion of a 21-hour trip, or perhaps because

***"My nerves were destroyed,  
my brain jittery from fear,  
but I couldn't wait to tell my story."***



of it, we hit the beers like the possessed. Our session couldn't last long, though, and shortly after midday we were comatose.

Other members of the expedition, who had already been in the field for a week, made the connection between Miao Keng and a large cave system called the Tian Xing Dongxuexitong. Matching that piece of the puzzle had been relatively straightforward. Now we were after a second connection, to a cave called Dongba Dong. That connection had already proven to be difficult to find, but making it would be significant.

My lack of caving in the past year had taken its inevitable toll, though not on my fitness. Good caving, like any other sport, is



he did, it was one of the best feelings in the world. Moving quickly through difficult cave passages is as much an exercise of the eyes and mind as it is the body.

Retracing our steps down the passage, we were soon at the junction with the main stream way. The water level had dropped since yesterday but we knew that it had been high enough to cause real concern. If water levels were to rise while we were at camp, this would be just very frustrating. If they rose while we were at the far end of the cave, they could make passage back to camp dangerous or impossible. We had already decided that our first job for the day was to rig some ropes along the walls of the stream way that would help us escape any potential flooding.

Sometimes caves will conspire against you and other times, by some outlandish chance, will assist you. In this stream way we were blessed with the latter. The sculpted walls were not only a feast for the eyes but also perfectly formed for rigging traverse lines. We didn't need to place a single bolt. At every point there was a perfect thread, nodule, or spike we could tie the rope to, enabling us to make very quick and satisfying progress.

As the cascades in the stream way eased, we started swimming. It was not long before we were out of the water again and this time climbing up the left-hand wall as the stream cut down violently and with increasing intensity. Powerful overhanging traverses took us to a muddy, enclosed ledge. This was the start of the Dragon's Mouth. One of our team rigged the rope off some natural belays before dropping over the ledge and disappearing. A single

bolt re-belay just below the edge took him into the swirling mist and spray. I could just make him out as he installed a second bolt 20 meters below. To his left, the stream leapt off the edge of the chamber we were entering and spewed into unseen depths. The noise drowned out everything except his vague cry of "Rope free!" I swung over the lip and slid down to the re-belay.

The spectacle was overpowering. In the vast chamber, with my light scattering off the spray, I could barely make out the waterfall, which only made it more impressive. The next drop from the re-belay was 130 feet of terror as the waterfall came within 16 feet of the rope I was on. I landed on a small rocky bank at the edge of an underground lake that surged back and forth under the pounding from the falls. Small waves fanned across the lake, driven by the winds that sucked and swirled around the chamber, creating whitecaps and jets of spray that chilled us quickly.

a combination of mind and body and the only way to get these two singing the same music is to do the sport on a regular basis. It is difficult to tell a good caver from a mediocre one, but a good caver takes longer to get tired because they move more efficiently through the cave passage.

This almost unnoticeable quality is the caver's best weapon and when it is in form it is pure joy. Like rock climbing, Par Cour, or Kung Fu, the effective synthesis of brain and brawn allows swift, fluid movement. In caving this constitutes the ability to read the passage ahead and to move in preparation for the approaching obstacles. The less your body comes into contact with the rock, the more you can preserve your momentum, and the more energy you can save. My time away from caving had allowed this ability to atrophy. My relearning curve was steep and hard but also enjoyable, I knew my old self was in there somewhere and I could feel him kicking in occasionally. When

From a small alcove we observed this in relative comfort before beginning the traverse around the edge of the lake. Each time I turned to look back at the waterfall I caught a slightly different, yet no less impressive, view of it. The final section of traverse was a subterranean deep-water soloing epic requiring fierce underclings and wide stretches with our legs to get past. One wrong move would have sent us tumbling safely but spectacularly into the lake below.

Downstream, the lake was channelled into a narrow stream, and progress required a gutsy downclimb next to a large cascade. All the handholds and footholds were there, but they weren't obvious from above and the whitewater and rocks below did nothing to reassure us. Beyond this, two more excellently exposed traverses took us onto an area of collapse. We followed the large blocks up and out of the stream and into a large cavern, "4 p.m. is the new dawn". It was there, over the next few days, that explorations by various teams of cavers tried to find the link between the two caves.

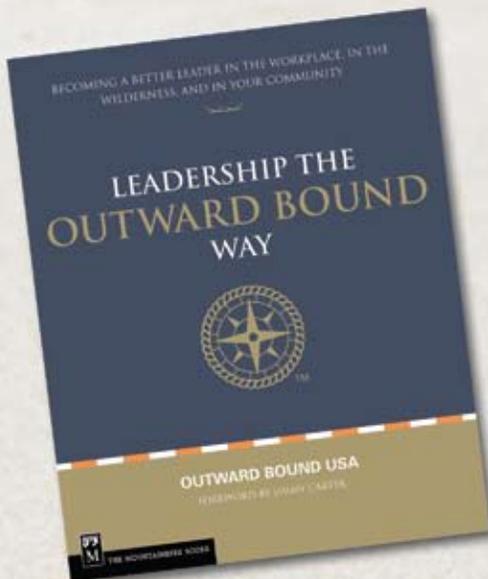
After many hours in unpleasant conditions, the news finally reached the surface just as a large contingent of Russian cavers arrived to join the expedition. The connection to Dongba Dong had been found!

The combined depth of the cave systems is now 1020 meters. As well as being the deepest cave in China, it was now the first Chinese cave to pass the one-kilometer deep mark. The collective efforts of numerous cavers over the past seven years had finally realized what we always suspected would exist here—but resting on your laurels is for Roman emperors. There are deeper caves out there to be found and explored, so the journey will never really end.

Richard Gerrish would like to acknowledge the generous support of Outward Bound Hong Kong through its Staff Adventure Grant awarded to encourage and assist staff to take part in expeditions, journeys and adventures that embody the philosophies of an Outward Bound experience. 

# Become a Leader in business, outdoors and your community

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*"The ways of leadership are as diverse as the circumstances that call for great leaders. In Leadership the Outward Bound Way, the authors have successfully captured this pre-eminent non-profit organization's core values, which have helped to guide my own business and personal life and the professional development of numerous Home Depot managers."*

— Arthur Blank, co-founder and former CEO of Home Depot

Forty-five years of leadership training as developed by Outward Bound USA is now available in this new book: *Leadership the Outward Bound Way: Becoming a Better Leader in the Workplace, in the Wilderness, and in Your Community.*

This detailed reference includes leadership skills that have been part of the life-changing program taught to business executives, politicians, change agents, and thousands of others who want to reach their potential and benefit those around them.

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Foreword by Jimmy Carter, 384 pages,

**THE MOUNTAINEERS BOOKS**

# OUTWARD BOUND SEEKS NEW LEARNING IN BANFF

BY SARAH FABBRI

“Now what?” It’s a question that’s being asked in boardrooms and classrooms around the world. And it’s one that Julian Norris of Outward Bound Canada says he will focus on during a new partnership with The Banff Centre.

Norris is director of Innovation and Development for Outward Bound Canada, which is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Since 1969, over 80,000 people have taken part in an Outward Bound Canada experience – participating in everything from youth canoeing expeditions to adult mountaineering programs, and learning more about themselves and their leadership skills in the process.

“But here we find ourselves in a new time,” says Norris, who is now a researcher-in-residence at the Centre’s Leadership Lab. “Our field has become more diverse, every piece has become specialized. What Outward Bound needs to answer is this: How do we make nature-based and experiential learning more relevant and serve the needs of our participants?”

“We realized it was time to shift our approach,” he says.

Last year, Norris found himself engaged in exploratory conversations with Colin Funk, who heads the Centre’s Leadership Learning Lab, and Nick Nissley, executive director of Leadership Development, which led to the formation of this new partnership.

“Leadership Development at The Banff Centre is a place where there is a confluence of many rivers, where the outdoor community and the arts community come together,” Norris says.

“The Banff Centre is also a place where you can workshop new ideas,” adds Norris whose PhD research explored how nature-based experiences can enhance learning and personal transformation.

A mutual agreement was struck. While at the Centre Norris will participate in Leadership Learning Lab research, program design, and events, and share his knowledge about outdoor and experiential learning to help inform Leadership Development programs.

“I’m hoping to bring wood to the fire here at The Banff Centre, to further the Centre’s mission of inspiring creativity and cultivating leadership,” says Norris.

“We’re excited about this opportunity to support Outward Bound Canada, to share our resources and to learn from

them at the same time,” says Funk. “Outward Bound is a world leader in outdoor experiential learning, and we’re a world leader in creative leadership development so it’s a fabulous fit for both of us.”

While at The Banff Centre, Norris says he will examine the needs of emerging leaders, itself a challenging task.

“How do you develop leaders and guide people when you have no idea what the future will look like? To quote Terry Tempest Williams: The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our time. And that haunts me in many ways,” Norris continues. “This is important work. It needs to be done, with great mindfulness, by building alliances.”

Dave Wolfenden, executive director of Outward Bound Canada, says they are eager to connect with like-minded institutions which support integrated learning.

“Education should be an adventure and an exploration. We are now thinking about how we can partner with other institutions that feel this way,” says Wolfenden.

It’s an organizational belief that hasn’t changed since Kurt Hahn offered the first Outward Bound program in Wales in 1941. His vision was “to use the challenges and inspiration of the natural environment – rivers, lakes, mountains and oceans – to bring out the best in everyone.”<sup>1</sup>

“Bringing people into the environment may seem trite, but it begins to build an appreciation, and an understanding of world issues from the economy to politics,” Wolfenden says.

Moving through natural environments requires creative thought and supports learning that can be transferred to real life, Wolfenden explains. “It’s about helping leaders build up a repertoire of responses that they can take to a wider range.”

Nature-based learning such as that offered by Outward Bound and Banff Centre leadership programs also helps build resilience. And resilience is an essential skill in today’s world says Wolfenden. “I think this type of knowledge will become increasingly more important in all organizations.” 

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Sarah Fabbri is marketing officer for Leadership Development.

*Reprinted with permission from the Leadership Compass magazine, Leadership Development at The Banff Centre.*

"Leadership Development at The Banff Centre is a place where there is a confluence of many rivers, where the outdoor community and the artisan community come together."





## 21st Century Sock

Socks rarely make news. They are not a product that usually merits much attention, even among outdoor enthusiasts. Many of us can marvel over the latest piece of high-tech outdoor equipment: the lighter-than-air, eco-green tent; the helium-filled carbon-fiber kayak paddle; the solar powered backcountry ice cream maker, but few of us stay awake at night thinking about what's new in the world of socks!

Well, set your alarm later in the morning, and meet Injinji, the first five-toe sock made just for the outdoor adventure set. If this product doesn't have you counting Nüwool™ sheep to lull yourself to sleep, nothing will.

Conceived for the ultra-sport enthusiast, the Injinji—pronounced In-gin-ji—sock takes its cues from the novelty, rainbow toe socks of the late 1970s. This time around it's definitely function over form. This sock has virtually put an end to between-the-toes blisters. While it takes a bit of practice to master the art of quickly matching each toe to its corresponding “sleeve” when donning the sock in the wee hours of the morning (and, yes, there is definitely a right and left), the extra comfort and virtual blister-free experience of Injinji makes it all worthwhile.

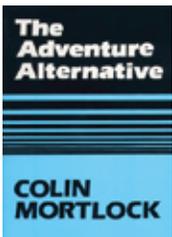
Injinji socks are a bit more expensive (Retail: \$12 - \$24 US), than a your garden variety liner sock, but they have the half-life of Plutonium-239—well, not quite 24,000 years, but they're unusually durable. In a wilderness setting, the Outdoor Series socks, used as liners by this reviewer, survived four seasons of multi-week Outward Bound courses, complete with stream crossing and infrequent washings, with nary a hole.

Technology: Five-toe design, combined with CoolMax wicking fiber, Lycra, or Nüwool™ seamlessly separates the toes and prevents blisters. A Dual Welt band keeps the socks up, and a Vector heel yields better sizing and reduced slip.

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

# The Spirit of Adventure

by Colin Mortlock



This summer my third book, *The Spirit of Adventure*, will be published. It will then be followed by the launch of a foundation of the same name. Its primary aim will be to promote the values listed in the book. The Spirit of Adventure Foundation will be international in scope and open to individual membership.

I was fortunate enough as a young and committed climber to meet, listen to, and be inspired by Kurt Hahn. In middle age, I was privileged to give the Hahn Lecture at the annual Round-Square Conference of International Schools, when it was held in the UK's Lake District in 1988. This lecture was based on the Hahn statement: "Education (or learning about life) should be concerned with the development of the whole man or woman in the pursuit of Truth."

As Director of Adventure Education at the local college, I used experiences in nature and a piece of chalk to fill a large blackboard with a framework of values. The audience of head teachers strongly agreed with the presentation. Unfortunately, hardly any of them used these values in an outdoor adventurous context. That was 21 years ago. Much humbler and hopefully wiser now, I feel sure that at long last I do have glimmerings of understanding of how I fit into the immense and complex jigsaw that is life. In particular I can see the potentially vast importance of experiences in nature in terms of their contribution to leaving the world a better place for future generations.

Recent extensive reading, reflection, and discussions have left me in no doubt that I am ashamed to be a member of the human race. In no time at all, man, despite his intelligence and technological progress, has all but destroyed the planet through his greed and "live now, pay later" approach to life.

Outward Bound is the world leader in terms of "Education Outdoors" and I know that much of its work is exemplary. I also know that radical problems, such as the state of the modern world, need radical solutions. My intuition tells me that Outward Bound International needs to embed the values implicit in *The Spirit of Adventure* into their philosophy and courses. This would be a tremendous yet exciting challenge, and certainly an adventure. I believe that the modern world is in such a state of increasing crisis that Outward Bound International should lead the way out of that crisis—or at least point the way forward by example. Kurt Hahn, I suspect, would agree.

## POST SCRIPT

Having run an outdoor center in Oxford, I am very aware that it tends to be normal for staff not to take kindly to suggestions from outside the center in terms of changes to ideas and programs. Please do not take that view. Life is both a search

for Truth (or should be) and, like everything else in nature, is dynamic. The latter wisdom means everything is either progressing or regressing—which of course includes ideas as well as civilizations! In my ideal world I see Outward Bound International taking the framework of these values aboard and then each center expressing them in its own unique and dynamic way. 

*Colin Mortlock is a keynote speaker at the forthcoming OBI Staff Symposium in Nurmes, Finland. But he is better known as author of the seminal works, Adventure Education and Outdoor Pursuits, and The Adventure Alternative. First published in 1973, Adventure Education and Outdoor Pursuits redefined how outdoor educators saw their world, changing the paradigm from "outdoor pursuits" to "adventure education." His second book, The Adventure Alternative, advanced the cause of environmental awareness within the adventure education movement. Together these books set the stage for his latest book, The Spirit of Adventure. This book explores the potentially huge importance of outdoor experiences, especially expeditions, solo journeys, and frontier adventure in an increasingly disturbed modern world.*

*In Adventure Education and Outdoor Pursuits, Mortlock describes four basic and progressive "adventure states":*

*Stage 1: Play: Characterized by little emotion through relatively easy participation in activities that are below the person's skill level;*

*Stage 2: Adventure: Characterized by enjoyment and excitement, where a person is using his/her capabilities more fully, but the person maintains control over the situation and his/herself;*

*Stage 3: Frontier Adventure: Characterized by peak experience, which emerges from a person experiencing adventurous challenges very close to his/her limits. If the person succeeds, then generally a peak experience is had, but there is real risk of pushing too far and falling/failing; and*

*Stage 4: Misadventure: Characterized by a person choosing or being forced to participate in challenges beyond his/her capabilities, resulting in negative emotions (fear, hurt, etc.), possibly injury, and even ultimately death.*

*Colin Mortlock was born in 1936 and educated at Bemrose Grammar School, Derby, and Keble College, Oxford, where he graduated in Modern History. A keen athlete, he went on to Loughborough College to take first class honors in Physical Education and Education. In 1965, he became Warden of The Woodlands Outdoor Centre in south Wales. In the 1960s he was one of Britain's top rock climbers, and was probably the first to devise and use a climbing wall. Since retirement in 1991, he has covered over 15,000 miles trekking in the wild, often alone. He has written extensively on outdoor education and has an international reputation as a keynote lecturer on adventure and values.*

# OUTWARD BOUND

# CANADA

## TURNS 40!

The first reference to potential Canadian interest in Outward Bound is found in the July 1966 minutes of the UK-based Outward Bound Trust. Three years later, surrounded by progress and hope, the newly formed Canadian Outward Bound Mountain School opened its doors along the banks of the Similkameen River, seven miles west of the southern British Columbia orchard town of Keremeos.

On July 26th, 1969, Canada's first Outward Bound school wrapped up its first course, K-1. The 26 boys who enrolled in the 27-day course came from across Canada and had diverse backgrounds, including two sent by the Children's

Aid Society, one by the Probation Service, and several who had worked to pay their own way. Many, inspired by an article in *Reader's Digest*, had submitted their own applications.

In his detailed post-course report, the school's first director, Major John Hasell, a former chief instructor with the British Army Outward Bound School, chronicled some of the challenges associated with starting a new OB School:

### PREPARATIONS

*The water tank arrived on the Sunday and we had the showers and all working the next day just as the first students started to arrive. It had been a close run thing and even then not all the equipment or maps had arrived. It seemed that everything that we begged, borrowed or scrounged had arrived in time but that everything that we had ordered and paid for in good time was subject to delay, worry and frustration.*

### THE SITE

*[T]he area is covered with sagebrush and prickly pear and it holds a fairly large population of rattlesnakes. Beyond this rough pasture, talus slopes and broken rocky crags rise steeply from 1,500 feet to 5,000 feet.*



## FIRST EXPEDITION

*During the three day expedition it snowed above 6,000 ft which was interesting for July when we had been working in 100 degree plus weather during much of June. Anyway it gave everyone the opportunity to run barefoot through the snow, to plunge into icy pools at six in morning.*

## SERVICE

*The normal Sunday routine then took over with the quiet hour, volleyball and then the briefing for the Cathedral Lakes Expedition. No sooner had the students been briefed and were starting to make out their route cards when we received a fire call. There was a large fire raging near Oliver and we were required to turn out at 4.30 next morning. This was to be the pattern for the next four days, working for between 14 and 16 hours a day for a total of approximately 1650 man hours. At last, with the aid of fire bombers, the fire was extinguished, and on the Friday everyone had a well earned rest day. This included some rather impromptu canoeing and swimming in Yellow Lake which lived up to its name.*

## RESULTS

*Three students failed to complete the course, one due to a minor injury, another because he was not prepared to comply with the requirements of the course, and the third left before the final expedition because he felt that it was more important to watch the moon landings on television. 🗺️*



*The first Outward Bound School in Canada was unique at the time in having been founded by two former OB instructors, both of whom had worked at the Outward Bound Mountain School in Eskdale—Art Rogers, an engineer and mountaineer, and Mike Perry, a prolific instructor with service at several Outward Bound schools around the world.*

*In 1974, a second school, the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School, was established at Black Sturgeon Lake, 100 miles north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. Bob Pieh was its first director.*

*Today, 80,000 students later, Outward Bound Canada continues to deliver on its mission: Ignite the Human Spirit, Invite Self-Discovery, Inspire Human Potential.*



# Outward Bound CLOSER TO HOME

by John C. Read

Outward Bound USA is on its way to place itself in more cities around the country as part of our True North Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to reach more students by augmenting our classic longer wilderness courses with more short courses closer to home. By establishing centers in more cities, we intend to deliver OB at times and in places that are more accessible to more young people.

The vast majority of Outward Bound experiences around the world already occur through shorter programs one to five days in length. While some in our global organization have reservations about the benefits of a shorter experience, we have ample experience and data that demonstrate the transformative quality of a well-delivered short program.

For more than 20 years, challenging one- to five-day experiences have been delivered through centers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Atlanta with positive results. It has also been amply demonstrated here and around the world that “challenge and adventure” can be found in many more places than wilderness.

There are important factors that apply when designing and implementing short experiences:

- Young people today are far less likely to have experienced the outdoors, let alone the natural areas that surround their city, and are more susceptible to being out of their comfort zone by simply being outside.
- Time away from cell phones, text messaging, and the Web can be as challenging as the solo element of a 23-day course.
- Short courses are not “short” long courses. The teachable moments come more frequently and are found “within”, instead of after the personal discomfort and group dynamics which can be “waited out” on a longer course. Instructors must frequently adapt pre-course plans to allow group dynamics to shape the course as they play out. Short course instructors require special skills training to mine those moments in ways Hahn would expect.
- Service as an ethic (“above all, compassion”) becomes chiefly reliant on teaching around and through the small Good Samaritan acts that occur on these courses. Service projects

are possible and plentiful in and around urban areas but the time may be better spent on other initiatives.

- Sequencing and scaffolding these experiences is critical, so that they are not merely a string of unrelated activities but build toward a group challenge and debrief. For intact groups, pre-course planning is also essential to deliver on the school or youth group’s goals for their Outward Bound program. This requires a deep understanding of Hahn’s philosophy and an appreciation for the more diverse backgrounds these courses are likely to attract.

To be sure, there are real advantages to having young people in our care and under our instruction for longer periods of time and no question that remote wilderness areas are superb classrooms. To that end, in order to serve more students more often, we are creating, as part of the True North Strategy, a progression of Outward Bound experiences: short courses that both stand on their own as effective and that inspire students toward longer courses.



Where short courses are delivered as part of a student’s academic schooling, we are building a data base to establish the positive link between the course experience and (at least) such surrogate measures of academic progress as school attendance, school

behavior, and workforce readiness characteristics, including working in teams, effective communication, and leadership development. We are also providing follow-up on select courses, especially when we are serving “intact groups” so that the learning that took place on course can be reinforced in the classroom.

Perhaps most important, it is no longer enough for OBUSA to “put the student on a bus”, never to hear from us again. Our increasingly active engagement with our students as alumni has the purpose in part of facilitating their service to their communities in all possible ways.

The world has changed and Outward Bound in the United States is adapting in order to deliver the power of Outward Bound as effectively and responsively as we can. Our communities, gathering places for our alumni, are asking us to bring the life-changing experience of Outward Bound closer to home. Short courses are a powerful means of doing so. 

# Outward Bound and the Apprentice

The managers of Alfred Holt and Company believed strongly in the value of well-trained employees, for good reason. As one of the largest and oldest steamship companies in the United Kingdom, Alfred Holt and Company, better known as the Blue Funnel Line, pioneered many of the trans-oceanic routes from Europe to China and North Africa. Later, the company was instrumental in opening up the Western Australian trade route from Singapore, and it regularly sailed the trade routes of the treacherous North Atlantic between the UK and North America. A poorly trained crew meant more than an inefficient and unreliable operation; it posed a real possibility of catastrophe, including loss of life.

In 1916, confronted with a serious shortage of sail-trained deck officers, the Blue Funnel Line established its first in-house training operation—the Midshipmen’s Department. This was the beginning of a successful apprentice program that would last until 1989, when the vestiges of the Blue Funnel Line finally disappeared into an anonymous conglomerate after 124 years of operation.

In the late 1930s, Lawrence Holt, the nephew of Alfred and a principal in the Blue Funnel Line, received a letter from an educator named Kurt Hahn. Hahn, the headmaster of Gordonstoun School, wrote of his desire to help develop character among boys of nearby fishing towns, and asked if Holt would consider training them as petty officers after their time at his boarding school. Holt agreed and a reciprocal agreement emerged that would see the Blue Funnel Line provide scholarships to local boys to attend Gordonstoun. Out of this conversation emerged the possibility that Hahn could provide the Blue Funnel Line’s seagoing youth an opportunity to acquire the important skill of small boat handling. The idea of an Aberdovey

*“Sending our apprentices on an Outward Bound course is the most impactful way of getting apprentices to deliver excellent customer service and understand how our customers think and respond.” – Richard Welch, Network Learning & Development Manager, Volkswagen Group UK Ltd.*

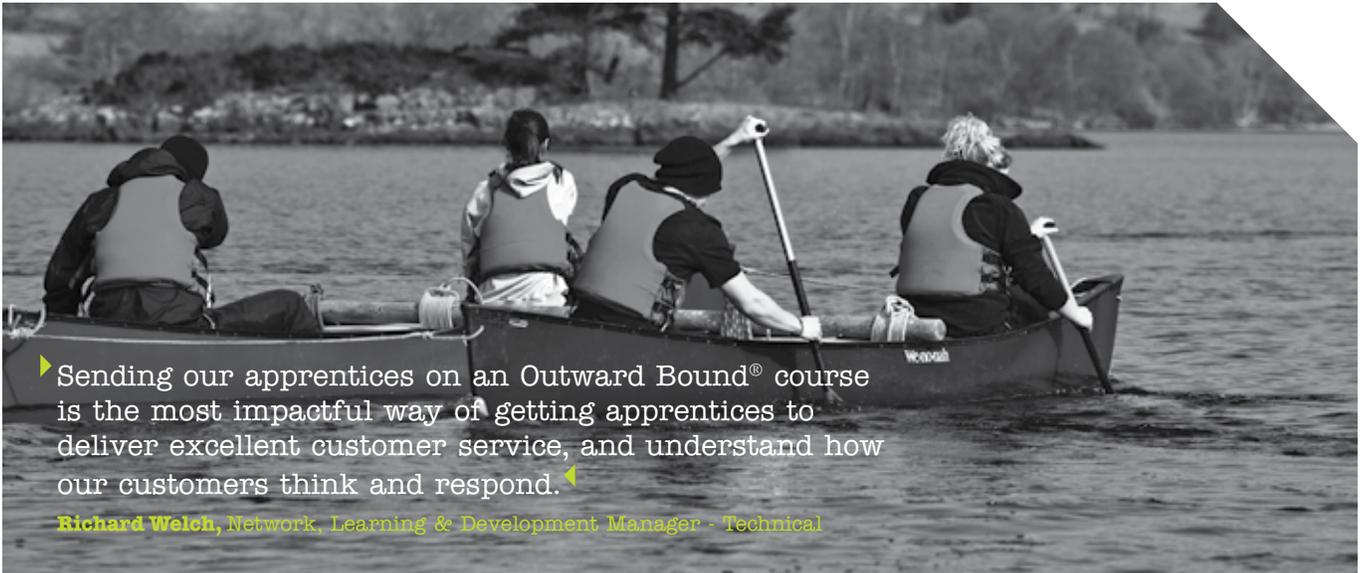
Sea School was born, and shortly thereafter Outward Bound came into existence. Gordonstoun and Conway boys and Blue Funnel Line apprentices filled Outward Bound’s first courses.

Over the years, Outward Bound has continued its involvement in working with the apprentices of various companies. Today in the United Kingdom, the Outward Bound

Trust offers courses targeting apprentices between 16 to 24 years, from a wide range of industries—from automotive, pharmaceutical, and engineering, to aerospace manufacturing and industrial training. The process, while unique, draws on Outward Bound’s long history of building stronger teams and a highly motivated workforce. OB courses allow rapid improvement in personal effectiveness to take place and give employers a chance to see the true potential of their apprentices in a relatively short space of time. Developing skills that transfer back into the workplace is a key part of an Outward Bound apprentice course.



# Volkswagen Group UK Ltd an apprentice development case study



▶ Sending our apprentices on an Outward Bound® course is the most impactful way of getting apprentices to deliver excellent customer service, and understand how our customers think and respond. ◀

**Richard Welch**, Network, Learning & Development Manager - Technical

## Fact box

Business Type:	Automotive
Number of Apprentices on Outward Bound programme:	280 per annum
Outward Bound Course(s):	Bespoke
Apprenticeship Type:	Modern Apprenticeship Programme for Technicians, Paint & Body and Parts

## ▶ Business requirements

The VOLKSWAGEN Group has a large and well established apprentice programme. They work on technical skills through internal training, but wanted Outward Bound to develop other Key Skills such as teamwork, planning, preparation and communication. This would be for apprentices aged 16 and upwards coming through in the 2nd or 3rd year of a three year process.

Excellent customer service is the key feature of the VOLKSWAGEN Group's business approach and young apprentices need an insight into what this means to them. The objective was to allow apprentices to see how they fit into the overall business, the brand and the values of the organisation.

## ▶ Programme created

The Outward Bound courses for the VOLKSWAGEN Group focus on the following areas:

- Building confidence to deliver excellent customer service
- Non-technical Key Skills that will help within the workplace
- Individual development for each apprentice



As part of their Key Skills development apprentices take responsibility for planning and preparation wherever possible, and are encouraged to take significant personal responsibility. The aim is to immediately increase their effectiveness back in the workplace, building their ability to think for themselves and lead when needed.

### Key benefits identified by the VOLKSWAGEN Group

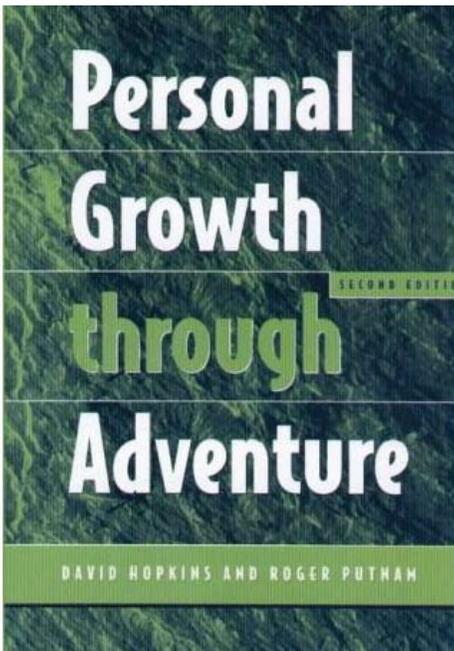
**Confidence & customer service:** Management see an increased level of self confidence in apprentices as a result of their course. Apprentices can clearly demonstrate why their role and actions are important in delivering excellent customer service. Although they cannot follow through with detailed metrics, the belief is that this leads to more confident, client focussed service to the end customers.

**Uncovering potential:** Giving full responsibility for tasks and planning allows apprentices, and the VOLKSWAGEN Group, to uncover potential that they were not necessarily aware of.

**Workplace skills:** At the end of the course it's clear that apprentices have developed their ability to plan and prepare, making them better equipped to deal with situations, colleagues and customers once back in the workplace.

**Lasting impact:** The Outward Bound experience makes learners more receptive, and gets points across in ways that learners are unlikely to forget. 

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## Personal Growth Through Adventure

by David Hopkins and Roger Putnam

David Fulton Publishers Ltd., London, England. 2nd edition, 2003, \$41.95 (US) Paperback. 176 pp.

This seminal text examines adventure education's history, purpose, psychological and sociological bases, and the principles of effective program design in order to help practitioners work more effectively. In the first section, the authors discuss adventure education and follow its historical progression, and the beginnings of Outward Bound, through a period of remarkable expansion from 1950 to 1980. The book contains a selection of interesting case studies that illustrate the increasing relevance of experiential learning in the twenty-first century.

David Hopkins was an Outward Bound instructor in Canada, England, and North Carolina. A former tutor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education, he is Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University of London. A UIAGM mountain guide, he has climbed in most of the world's great mountain ranges.

Roger Putnam was Principal of Outward Bound Eskdale from 1968 to 1988, and served for a time as Chairman of the Mountain Leader Training Board. He compiled the report *In Search of Adventure*, and is the former Chairman of the National Association for Outdoor Education.

These two authors bring their experience and research in adventure education to a nice focus in this very readable and comprehensive account. Their completely revised second edition remains a guide to those who seek a career in adventure education and related fields.



Participants from Outward Bound Germany descend from the summit of the Grünhorn in the Austrian alps



Outward Bound students hiking in the Coast Mountains near Whistler, British Columbia

# Outward Bound in the Age of Irony

by Bill Frederick

*“The most human thing you can do is comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”*

Clarence Darrow

When I took my Outward Bound course in 1973, we, the comfortable, were afflicted. The Cold War wasn't so cold. The memories of Nikita Khrushchev banging his shoe on the lectern at the UN, the Cuban missile crisis, and my grammar school's atomic bomb drills, were still recent. The Vietnam War spilled into our living rooms each evening. When the U.S. went to war back then, it was less of an abstract armchair exercise for most of us compared with today. If you were a young man or knew a young man or had a young man in your family, you knew that when he was 18, he'd have a draft card and would be sitting in front of a TV on lottery night when birthdates would be selected and the order in which his came up would determine if he were to be drafted or not into the U.S. military. A low number meant that you had the choice of either accepting the likelihood of going to Vietnam, going to jail, leaving the country or, if you had a compelling reason or some political clout, you might get a deferment or go into the Air National Guard with a guarantee of never seeing Vietnam. The civil rights movement was in full swing. My high school closed every year for a week or so when race riots broke out and, in 1968, seven miles from my house, Newark was burning. The National Guard shot protesting college kids dead at Kent State. Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated.

When the 1960s are spoken of these days, it is usually to remark upon the sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll excesses of the day. But what was really most remarkable about that time was the subtext which lay underneath all the social experimentation and which also helped Outward Bound really start to get traction. After the fat and happy '50s, Americans started to experience real pain as events persistently compelled us into examining our every assumption about who we were and what we believed in. The desire to trust our institutions and to believe in our elected officials ran smack into the realities playing out live on television. Can we still be the good guys if our police departments loose attack dogs on peaceful civil rights marchers and our soldiers author the My Lai massacre?

The striving for answers to fundamental questions briefly became a cultural norm. The concept of doing hard, challenging endeavors simply to gain insight, knowledge, and perspective found resonance.

In this atmosphere, Outward Bound in the US took off. When I took my OB course in Minnesota in 1973, slightly over 5,000 students attended an OB course each year. The average course



length was 20 days. OB was on the radar in suburban New Jersey, hardly a hotbed of wilderness adventure pursuits.

## The Age of Irony

By the end of the '70s, the Civil Rights movement was well past its heyday, the Vietnam War was over, and Watergate played out. Jimmy Carter's earnestness seemed like impotent incompetence in the face of the Iran hostage debacle and Ronald Reagan made greed acceptable in polite society once again. We returned to being fat and happy

as we slouched into “the age of irony” as described by the West Virginia philosopher Jeddiah Purdy. In his book *Four Common Things* Purdy says:

“Irony makes us wary and abashed in our beliefs. We do not want the things in which we trust to be debunked, belittled, torn down, and we are not sure that they will be safe in the harsh light of a reflexively skeptical time. We practice a form of irony insistently doubtful of the qualities that would make us take another person seriously; the integrity of personality, sincere motivation, the idea that opinions are more than symptoms of fear or desire. We are wary of hope, because we see little that can support it. Believing in nothing much, especially not in people, is a point of vague pride, and conviction can seem embarrassingly naïve.”

Outward Bound doesn't get great press in Purdy's age of irony. In a world where Jerry Seinfeld is a cultural icon, it has been much easier to ridicule Outward Bound than to grapple with its complexity and I have never heard anyone express well what is important about Outward Bound in a sound bite.

There are two kinds of stories about Outward Bound that have predominated since the 1980s. The first is fairly earnest and is primarily concerned with special needs populations, urban adapted programs, and corporate offerings. This genre was so prevalent that by the early '90s I had young adult students who reported that their friends questioned whether all was well with them when hearing that they were headed to Outward Bound. The second genre is one where the writer/protagonist presents themselves as functionally hapless but brilliant and funny nevertheless. They venture out onto an OB course knowing that they are supposed to have some revelation. After portraying the instructors as self-important prima donnas and the activities as truly worthy of ridicule by any sensible person, their revelation arrives in the form of the realization that they don't need to finish the course and off they walk.

In 2003, 30 years after my course, enrollment in Outward Bound in the US was up 60 percent in terms of student programming days. However, in terms of participants it was up 500 percent and the average course length was six days. There are many ways to interpret those numerical changes, but I think that it is safe to say that Outward Bound is viewed very differently by the general public than it was in 1973.

In my current capacity as Director of Risk Management Services at the School for Field Studies (study abroad), part of my job is to monitor the hazard landscape and to oversee safety for our students abroad. The landscape, and our perception of it, has changed remarkably since turning the corner into this century. The war in Iraq, the end of cheap oil, the coming flu pandemic, climate change as highlighted by 2005's tropical cyclone season (and the resulting debacle in New Orleans), and the true globalization of terrorism as ushered in by the bombings in London, and so on. have people more than a little worried.

## The End of the Age of Irony?

We the comfortable are afflicted once again in a manner not so dissimilar to the '60s. Can we still be the good guys when we have spurned so many international efforts to make the world a better place (the Kyoto protocol, the world court, landmine treaties, etc.)? When it turns out that Abu Grahb was hardly an anomaly? While watching poor people drown in New Orleans and then continue to slash spending for the poor to finance tax cuts for the rich? The last election proved how polarized the country is. People are angry and scared and looking for answers. Irony? Not seeing much of it these days.

I would not predict any reprise of the 1960s any time soon, but I wouldn't be surprised if we are on the verge once again of a widespread seeking of perspective. Outward Bound in the US may discover that, in the best sense of "your disability is your opportunity", that its best work is in its future. 🌐



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# SUSTAINING OUTWARD BOUND



## A PATHWAY TO SELF-RELIANCE

by Darren Black

### INTRODUCTION

This synopsis is written from my perspective as the CEO and Executive Director of Outward Bound Australia (OBA), based on OBA's experiences in leadership and management over the past five years. It is not a comprehensive guide on how to run an Outward Bound School, nor is it an attempt to claim expertise in this field. My aim in producing this article is simply to share what we have learned with other OB schools within the Outward Bound International network, based on my reflections on our endeavours to make OBA sustainable for the long-term.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Let me acknowledge at the outset that our approach at OBA over the past five years has consistently referred to the tenants of *Good to Great* and *Built to Last*, the seminal management works of Jim Collins. We believe the principles contained within these references to be sound guidance in the running of any organization.

We would also like to acknowledge the journey of OB New

Zealand (OBNZ) as a model that we have studied closely and hopefully learned from. We believe OBNZ presents an excellent case study of an OB school that has turned things around over the past eight to ten years to become great. Our thanks to Trevor Taylor (Executive Director) and Steve Hall (School Director) for their honest answers to our many questions, and their friendship and support over the past few years.

Rarely does the work of management involve reinventing the wheel, and we have not needed to do so at OBA; however, we have needed to mine the lessons of those perhaps wiser and further along the journey than we. Through observation and study of other successful organizations (OBNZ as well as other successful not-for-profit organizations in Australia including some of our competitors), we have learned a great deal. We have also learned much from our own 50-year history about what works and doesn't work, why things went well at particular times and why they fell down at others. We also therefore need to acknowledge the contribution and lessons provided by our forebears at OBA who have served and strived to ensure this organization has survived now for over 50 years.

# OBA IN SUMMARY

Outward Bound Australia ran its first course in 1956. Over the past 53 years, around 300,000 people have participated in OBA programs. We are a mid-size school with around 5,000 participants annually. We are predominately a wilderness school with mobile operations able to deliver programs in multiple areas around a large country. We serve mainly the secondary school outdoor education market, but also deliver open enrolment programs of between 7 to 26 days duration to youth, adults, and families, as well as professional programs for the corporate sector and sporting teams. We have a staff of around 80 people and annual turnover of \$4.5 million and growing.

## Historical Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats – A SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- OBA has a history of high quality programs and excellent people.
- Organizational culture has remained very strong around our ethos of “to serve, to strive, and not to yield”, which has been the catchcry of generations of staff.
- There is a solid base of return business through our long-term schools clients.
- Our safety record and risk management is very solid: no serious incidents for over 15 years across over 500,000 participants’ days in the field.
- We have award-winning traineeship for intern instructors.
- We have the ability to deliver a wide range of programs across several locations nationally (including deployable capability).
- We are a highly-regarded body of research into the benefits of outdoor education.
- OB is a respected brand, but one that is not widely recognized in Australia (unlike New Zealand or the UK where OB has strong brand recognition).

### Weaknesses

- There is a cultural aversion to thinking commercially about Outward Bound as a business.
- OBA is financially fragile; there is little buffer in the balance sheet, and a lack of endowment.
- OBA has a history of programs losing money through a combination of high costs and low pricing.
- Base facilities are in poor condition and overdue for upgrades, needing significant capital investment.

- The brand is not well enough known or supported in Australia (no government support and little corporate support).

### Opportunities

- We can leverage our alumni, the best supporters of OB who so far we have paid little attention to.
- We can increase price of programs comparative to market expectations.
- We can innovate new programs in leadership space for youth and adults.
- We can leverage our strengths to forge greater market share in corporate space (OB Professional).
- We can leverage the unique strengths of OBA—the things that differentiate us from all other providers in Australia.
- We can leverage the OBI network for shared intellectual capital and shared resources.

### Threats

- We have competition. In the early days, OBA were pioneers and leaders in the field in Australia. Now there are many competitors in all markets. OBA must differentiate itself to lead again.
- A weak financial position meant the focus for OBA for many years was on survival. This impacted resourcing in critical areas—R & D, program development, and fundraising. This is now changing.
- OBA has a decentralized business model spread across four states. This means that resources are spread thin, particularly compared to competitors who focus on gaining dominant market position in just one state or local area.

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

In confronting the brutal facts of our situation we knew that we had many strengths to build on; however, a simple truth held true—“No Margin, no Mission” (Covey, Stephen R., *The 8th Habit*). OBA was at risk of going under if we didn’t start to run it as a business. Under the guidance of the Board and with a new CEO and management team, we commenced the process of ensuring that OBA could be self-reliant.

Table 1 below shows OBA’s operating results from over the past six years (less donations and grants). Prior to 2004 there was a history of re-occurring operating deficit, only balanced by some well-timed and significant donations. However, some of our long-term supporters were tiring of funding deficits and we received clear indication that this would not continue. OBA was skating on thin ice.

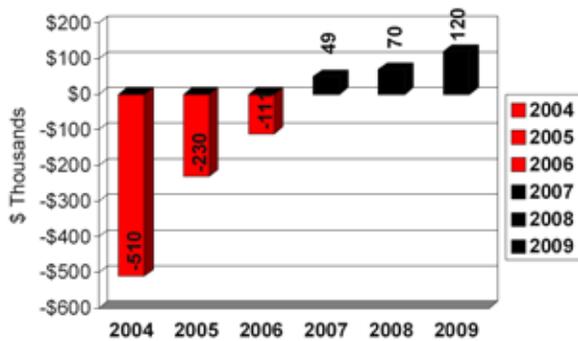


Table 1 – OBA Operating Results 2004 – 2009 (less donations)

## KEY FACTORS IN THE TURNAROUND

### 1. Preserve the core and stimulate progress

Central to our plan to ensure OBA had a sustainable future was to preserve the core of Outward Bound while stimulating progress (see Diagram 2 from *Built to Last*). The core of OB revolves around the educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn, the Mission of OB, and our Core Values and Culture. We believed these elements were non-negotiable and needed to be reinforced, while at the same time we needed to think critically about which things we needed to change or let go of. A key step in the process of reinforcing the core was a review of our fundamentals. In undertaking this, we mapped the process of OBNZ in consulting with the Board, staff, alumni, and other key stakeholders to re-evaluate Core Values, Course Objectives, and Design Principles. This process took 18 months but we believe both the process and the outcome will help shape OBA for many years to come.



Table 2 – Preserve the Core and Stimulate Progress

Up for scrutiny was just about everything else—our programs, processes, systems, structures, strategy, and operating practices. To enable OBA to move forward, it was critical to let go of any “sacred cows”, things that had been held to be true for so long that people had forgotten why. One such “sacred cow” was the Challenge Course. For OBA, our 21-day Challenge Course had been the original course and the mainstay of our programs for many years. It was seen by many as the OB course and was coveted by both staff and alumni alike. Yet years of declining enrolments and less than great results led us to an unavoidable conclusion—we needed to let it go. This was just one of a number of difficult decisions made to stimulate progress and move the organization forward.

### 2. Look after your staff

Another decision was to insist on improvements to staff pay and conditions. Management felt strongly that for too long staff had been willing servants of the organization but had been undervalued. Staff turnover was high, with many staff leaving exhausted after two to three years of selfless service. This high burnout and resultant turnover was costing the individuals and OBA. We focused on improving pay and leave entitlements, professional development, and career pathways, and on streamlining some inefficient business processes. Staff retention has improved significantly in recent years, marked by several ex-staff returning with newfound knowledge and energy. This focus on pay and conditions and to changing the culture of service and sacrifice that previously prevailed has been instrumental in enabling OBA to make a range of improvements to program quality and business systems. The simple truth is that if you can retain good people for longer, there is less time spent in recruitment and re-training and more ability to focus on quality program delivery and business improvements.

### 3. Focus on what you are best at, what you are passionate about, and what makes economic sense

An audit of all programs in 2005 discovered we were running 22 different types of courses. We recognized that a number of these were not fitting with OBA’s Hedgehog Concept. Many were losing money and some we could definitely never be the best at. We accepted that all products have a life cycle and that what worked for the past 20 years may no longer meet market and community needs. We went back to basics to consider our core and what OBA was passionate about—“developing human potential”. We then considered which markets we could serve best and began the process of evaluating and re-designing programs to ensure that they will be “life-changing” experiences (one of our goals stated in the strategic plan) and profitable (another strategic priority). This is an ongoing process.

### 4. Leadership, management, and governance

Leadership needed to serve the organization with respect but without attachment to the past. We needed a vision for the future that showed what might be possible for OBA and then to build a strong and balanced management team—one that had both a pragmatic sense of commercial reality as well as passion for the educational philosophy. We needed businesspeople and educators, people with creativity as well as discipline. Finally we needed a supportive Board, and the Board and management needed to be aligned and moving in the same direction. The results of the last few years would not have been possible without all this coming together.

## SUSTAINING OUTWARD BOUND INTO THE FUTURE

### At the Local Level

Outward Bound must continue to lead in areas of community need. From OBA’s perspective we are now one of many providers of outdoor education in the secondary schools market. It is

difficult for an uneducated market to differentiate us from others. We are attempting to do this by focusing on what is unique and special about OBA.

OBA must look to its purpose again and align our mission and programs to combat areas of need in our community—burgeoning rates of obesity, mental health issues, and drug and alcohol abuse, along with a community of people that is becoming increasingly urbanized and distant from the natural world. We have a responsibility to do what we can to bring the simple wisdom of Outward Bound forward to help counteract these trends.

Looking ahead, program innovation is underway around the notion of Outward Bound providing a catalyst for positive change at key transition points through life—adolescence to adulthood, mid-life, and retirement.

## At the Global Level

Outward Bound must continue to lead in areas of community need. A couple of significant OBI initiatives of recent years that warrant praise and further investment (we believe) are the Global Leaders program and the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding. These are wonderful leadership initiatives that respond to global issues by utilizing the powerful change mechanism of Outward Bound to focus on breaking down barriers between people and building bridges. We also see the Expeditionary Learning Schools movement of Outward Bound principles back into mainstream classrooms as a major step forward in ensuring broader acceptance of the Outward Bound educational philosophy. We see this move as particularly important against the backdrop of declining wilderness areas and increasing resistance to wilderness expeditions.



Darren Black

4. Investing in our staff—ensuring we care for them and demonstrate this with the provision of competitive pay and conditions.
5. Client relationships and understanding our markets. OBA has a history of long-term client relationships built on delivering a quality product. We must maintain this and listen to the needs of our clients.
6. Program evaluation, design and innovation. OBA was built on innovation. We must continue to look ahead and pioneer new programs in response to community and market needs.
7. Maintaining a strong and supportive Board. This has been invaluable in enabling OBA to move forward in recent years. Maintaining a Board that is well-connected and provides wise counsel to management remains critical to long-term sustainability.
8. Looking for relevant models of success. It is rarely necessary to reinvent the wheel.

## Investments needed to help accelerate OBA's progress are:

- Build the alumni – our greatest supporter base is relatively untapped. This will be a new focus in the next few years.
- Building donor base and long-term endowment – there are many more financially disadvantaged people in need of an OBA program than we currently have scholarship funds for. We must deepen the relationship with the alumni and broaden our donor pool to grow the endowment for the future.
- Greater focus on developing programs for adults in mid and later life. This will take considerable effort as OBA has geared itself to serve the youth market however, aging population is a growing issue in our society and assisting our “baby boomers” with a healthy transition is a major opportunity where market has time, wealth and influence.

# OUTWARD BOUND AUSTRALIA

## KEY LESSONS LEARNED

To ensure OBA is sustainable for the future we must continue to focus on:

1. Balance business and mission. Running Outward Bound, like any not-for-profit enterprise, is a balancing act. Maintaining the core—philosophy, mission, values—while also running a commercially viable organization is key.
2. Program quality and safety. There can be no compromise on quality and safety in the interests of efficiency and cost savings.
3. The maintenance of a strong and stable management team, able to lead the organization forward with the tenants of stewardship and servant leadership as their model.

## CLOSING

OBA's journey over the past 5 years has been difficult, challenging, and rewarding. Moving forward has required vision, passion, creativity and discipline. We are entering a new chapter, which will need all of what we've learned over the past few years to ensure sustainability, and more to enable growth—the journey is just begun.

Each Outward Bound School globally will be at a different stage of its evolution and will need to evaluate its situation within the context of its history and with awareness of its local environmental drivers—markets, competition, societal need, and natural environment. We hope the lessons learned from OBA's journey provide a helpful guide to determining your pathway forward to a sustainable future. 🌍

# The Centrality of Service in Outward Bound

by James R. Garrett

Ever since the founding of the first Outward Bound School at Aberdovey, Wales, in 1941, the ethic of service to one's fellow humans and to the world in which we live has been central to the mission of Outward Bound.

Josh Miner often recalled that "... the very heart of [Kurt Hahn's] personal philosophy ... was his profound commitment to the Samaritan ethic. He had one hero above all: the compassionate traveler on the road to Jericho. Again and again he called for the Parable of the Good Samaritan to be read to the school. In the years to come I was to witness the growing power of his ultimate conviction—that through help to those 'in danger and in need' youth can strike the deepest chords in the human spirit. It would become a creed: 'He who drills and labors, accepts hardship, boredom, and dangers, all for the sake of helping his brother in peril and distress, discovers God's purpose in his inner life.'

**In 2000, Thomas James wrote about Outward Bound and Hahn's philosophy of education:** *Outward Bound has come to mean many things in different places and for the great variety of people who are drawn to it. But at its heart, in every time and place, is Hahn's own center, his conviction that it is possible, even in a relatively short time, to introduce greater balance and compassion into human lives by impelling people into experiences which show them they can rise above adversity and overcome their own defeatism. They can make more of their lives than they thought they could, and learn to serve others with their strength.*

**Prince Philip, long the patron of the Outward Bound Trust, stated:** *Self-confidence and self-discovery are not enough by themselves as a preparation for a responsible position in adult society. They need to be tempered with a spirit of compassion and tolerance, a sense of humanity and concern for others. That is why all Outward Bound courses lay great emphasis on the principle of service to others.*

**Chuck Froelicher, who joined Josh Miner and Gil Burnett in the early 1960s in the effort to establish the first Outward Bound School in the United States—COBS—developed the idea that self-discovery is not an end in itself:** *Without self-discovery, a person may still have self-confidence, but it is a self-confidence built on ignorance and it melts in the face of heavy burdens. Self-discovery is the end product of a great challenge mastered, when the mind commands the body to do the seemingly impossible, when strength and courage are summoned to extraordinary limits for the sake of something outside the self—a principle, an onerous task, another human life. This kind of self-discovery is the effective antidote for the indifference and insensitivity we have bred into modern youth.*

Dan Meyer and his colleagues at NCOBS described the philosophy of the Outward Bound "process" as following a series of steps:

On a philosophical level, the program assumes:

- one reveres life for having experienced it in real and dramatic terms
- that from such experience one learns to respect self
- that from respect of self flows compassion for others
- that compassion for others is best expressed in service to mankind

**Martin Flavin was a student at Hahn's first school, Schule Schloss Salem in Germany, during the 1930s. In his biography of Hahn, published in 1966, Flavin said about Hahn's focus of service:** *Sixty years ago Hahn could characterize the goal of the school [Salem] as*

*"character training." Apparently even then some senior students felt oppressed by the sense that they were expected to become "trained for leadership." In keeping with the evolving zeitgeist Hahn later changed the words, if not the concept, to "training for service." I remember service work as farm chores for tenants on the Markgraf's estates, or domestic chores for the girls. Later "service" evolved into things more congenial to the ear today, ministering to the poor, elderly, and sick. The story of the Good Samaritan was his favorite homily; later as he became involved in projects that led to the Outward Bound movement, he became deeply impressed by rescue work. Its transforming effect on the rescuer captured his imagination, and he came to think it could yield more dramatic changes in the young than community service.*

**Peter Willauer, founding president of HIOBS, was deeply committed to the idea of incorporating rescue work into the curriculum right from the first sea courses in 1965:** *"In an Outward Bound program," Willauer declared, "the place of honor must be held by the Rescue Services." He cited the heart of Kurt Hahn's programmatic thinking: "The experience of helping a fellow man in danger, or even of training in a realistic way to give this help, tends to change the balance of power in a youth's inner life with the result that compassion can become the master motive."*

Today, however, there are often constraints facing Outward Bound program managers and instructors that steer them away from including service projects and rescue training on courses. Certainly, there are time constraints: "If we have to wedge a day of service into the curriculum, what gets sacrificed?" And, for mobile, backcountry courses, the chance of encountering other humans "in danger and in need" is remote. Does this mean that our only dependable type of service project, beyond the daily taking care of the needs of one another in the patrol, will be tasks such as trail maintenance?

**In fact, this situation is not new. Bob MacArthur noted the same quandary in the 1980s:** *The life-saving drama of rescue lies at the heart of Kurt Hahn's philosophy of service, and preparation for that moment of need has been central to Outward Bound training since the program began. ... Today, however, the opportunities for rescue are remote. The proliferation of para-professional rescue units and the length, location, and structure of the Outward Bound course itself have meant that Outward Bound groups may not be called upon or may not be available when emergencies do arrive. As a result, the centrality of service in Outward Bound has retreated with the lack of compelling applications.*

We might well remember Willauer's concept that "even ... training in a realistic way" to rescue or to give emergency aid can be a dramatic empowerer for students. So, even in remote areas, where there are no other humans to whom service can be rendered, we can train for service, thereby preparing students for active Samaritan Service in their lives back home. OB is not an end in itself. OB courses are not just "weeks in the woods," after which students fold their tents and go home, back to life as usual, unchanged. So: what sorts of change do we want to facilitate in our students?

If we define service through precepts and practices which are in a minor key (though still important)—for example, service such as trail maintenance, helping to improve the welfare of the OB course group, picking up trash, and so on—then students may leave with an understanding

of service as a lighter-weight matter, as domestic chores or dirty work. However, if we add the drama of rescue, the excitement of “helping others in danger and need,” we can elevate the ideal, the ethic, the concept, and the value of service to a higher level, possibly to the level of a calling, a life-long commitment.

**In his 1980 history of COBS, Thomas James relates that:** *Miner ... suggested [to the Board of Trustees] that rescue training was the main thing that kept the school from degenerating into either a summer camp or a survival type of school. “Miner, Kemper, Froelicher, Holden and others were worried that without service as a major part of the program, Outward Bound would degenerate into toughness for the sake of toughness.”*

Miner even went so far as to suggest, in the tradition of Hahn, that search and rescue was the primary mission of Outward Bound, and he deplored its omission from school courses after the first few seasons. He argued that climbing simply for the sake of climbing missed the point in an Outward Bound program. He saw service as the unifying force of this unique form of education. Once the school has firmly established the idea of service through rescue, the mastery of specific skills begins to make sense. And then, too, other qualities of Outward Bound seem to fall into place more readily. Adventure and challenge become implicit even on a dry-run rescue exercise. The sense of accomplishment through participation in such an operation can result in greater self-discipline, self-confidence, self-discovery, and self-respect. Having been required to extend oneself on such a drill, an individual becomes more aware of his own potential and his latent concern for others. The student learns responsibility and perseverance on such an exercise, and he develops in himself a sense of humility. The reasons for being flexible and adaptable, the ability to make decisions, the need for physical conditioning—all now begin to make sense. The student now begins to realize not only how but also why he should learn to cope with himself and with adversity.



**And Mike Fischesser has pointed out that rescue training is an excellent way to fulfill many of the objectives we have for our courses:** *By using rescue training as a service theme, adventure educators can create the opportunity to have a greater impact on students by using dramatic, realistic, high adventure components which also help to accomplish most of the other course goals and objectives.*

*The individual and group pride, morale, and esprit de corps provides [sic] the students with a sense of power from knowing that they can make a difference if someone needs them. This empowerment is one of the main magical ingredients of an Outward Bound or similar experience. If students know that they can take care of themselves and others, it gives them an intense kind of personal confidence.*

**The role of service is as important to the courses of our Centers in metropolitan areas as it is to those conducted by the Wilderness programs. Describing the initiatives in the 1980s to establish urban bases, Josh Miner remembered:** *We felt that the idea of service so central to our philosophy might be especially meaningful in the cities. Service begins in Outward Bound with the care of the other members of*

*the small, interdependent community in which the course is experienced. On wilderness courses, it may end there, for want of apparent opportunities to come to the aid of others outside the group. But it's a different story in the cities, where service to those in need can be the central and most compelling lesson, and where there are plenty of opportunities to help others.*

As for our Outward Bound Professional courses, many service-related activities have been programmed over the years, and OBP managers are now being asked by clients to provide, as the central part of their course, meaningful projects of service to their local communities (as JPMorgan/Chase has requested in recent years).

So, whether the nature of the service provided through Outward Bound courses is “dramatic service” (which is rendered “to those in danger”), or “epic service” (which is given “to those in need”), service has been,

and in fact continues to be, central to the philosophy and the mission of Outward Bound. At the heart of each of Kurt Hahn's educational initiatives—Salem, Gordonstoun, the County Badge Scheme, Outward Bound, the College of the Atlantic, the Round Square Conference—lies the service ethic. In all his endeavors, he tirelessly sought “to change the balance of power in a youth's inner life with the result that compassion can become the master motive.”

**In his closing address to the 1965 Outward Bound Conference at Harrogate, England, Hahn asked the audience to consider the ideals they espoused:** *I believe that the challenge of Samaritan Service, if properly presented, rarely fails to capture young people, body and soul, not only in the Western world. I hear encouraging news about the young behind the Iron Curtain—many of them look westward, with distrust but also with hope.*

*They ask a question which makes us blush: “Are you in earnest about the ideals you profess?” Who shall give an answer? Young men and women who render hard and willing service to their fellow men in danger and in need.*

We no longer have an Iron Curtain to consider, but, both nationally and internationally, the various cultures and beliefs that are in conflict pose for us a similar question: What ideals do we profess? When we say or write the Outward Bound motto, when we talk with our students about the motto's meaning and about Outward Bound's Core Values, are we in earnest? Do we demonstrate those values in deed as well as word? Are we walking the talk?

## TO WIN THE YOUNG

There are three ways of trying to win the young. There is persuasion, there is compulsion, and there is attraction. You can preach at them, that is a hook without a worm; you can say, “you must volunteer,” and that is of the devil; and you can tell them, “you are needed.” That appeal hardly ever fails. I am quite certain that the young of today respond better to the service which is demanded from them in the interest of others than to the service which is offered them for their overt benefit and improvement.

-- Kurt Hahn, from his address to the OB UK Trust, July 1960. ✨

# Outward Bound as Servant

Tony Richards gave a workshop on “Servant Leadership” at the 11th World Conference in Lumut, Malaysia. What follows are some of his reflections on the topic.

The notion I was looking at during the workshop was going beyond community service, where it’s generally a one-way street—we see a community need somewhere and then just go and fill that need and serve the people who are in need. How do we do more than that? How do we empower those people who we are serving to either help themselves or in turn be able to be of service to somebody else? And what are the opportunities that Outward Bound has to become a “servant leader”?

There are some obvious limitations: for example, our mobile courses, where we’re in the wilderness and only together 15 to 20 days. Does this allow us to satisfy Kurt Hahn’s intentions regarding declining compassion among young people? Do we really get at the essence of that decline, and how well do we do it on a wilderness course or a mobile course, where we have very little contact with people other than the patrol or group that we’re out with? It was one of Kurt Hahn’s issues that at best Outward Bound ignites, but it’s up to the individual to keep the flame alive. How do we go beyond that and do follow-up?

One of the ways of doing so is to become an “agency” for service, not just locally, but (if we’re really good at it) one that actually places Outward Bound graduates overseas in places of need. In the process we’d become a whole different kind of agency, perhaps one that Kurt Hahn would have dreamt of.

Does service equate with compassion? Of course, they’re not quite the same: you can develop compassion through service, but just because you do service doesn’t guarantee that you will develop compassion. The notion that compassion and caring and service are all part of character development was one of Kurt Hahn’s key premises.

One of the things I have a concern about is that we often leave the development of compassion to chance. We provide the service experiences and our processing of what we do. How intentional we are in creating and designing these service experiences is very often hit and miss. We’re supposed to have service in our programs, so we find a one-day community service project that we can do. I remember working at Colorado Outward Bound School and one of the projects was to clean up the garbage on top of Pikes Peak and carry it down—not that it’s a bad thing to do, but there was no human-to-human contact. Those graduates could perhaps go up Pikes Peak two weeks later and there would still be garbage! What had they done? It was an interesting project, but we really didn’t think about it in terms of whether it changed anybody’s level of compassion.

What I suggested in the presentation is that we should look at service in a sequential and incremental way, the same as we would look at any other subject that we would teach in school.

If we’re teaching children how to read at five or six years of age, we would not give them the complete works of Shakespeare on day one. We’d start off with simple stories, which would gradually get more complex. We should do the same thing with our service experiences by providing simple service experiences that are easy to handle and within the reach and capacity of each child or student. In an Outward Bound course, for example, it may be that caring and sharing for each other on the course is the beginning stage, and that we gradually move into more complex service experiences that go all the way through a continuum until, perhaps, a larger project spent serving three or six months in a developing country. But we would build towards those and gradually build on the previous experience. In other words, they’re incremental and sequential, one of the criteria for problem solving in Outward Bound.

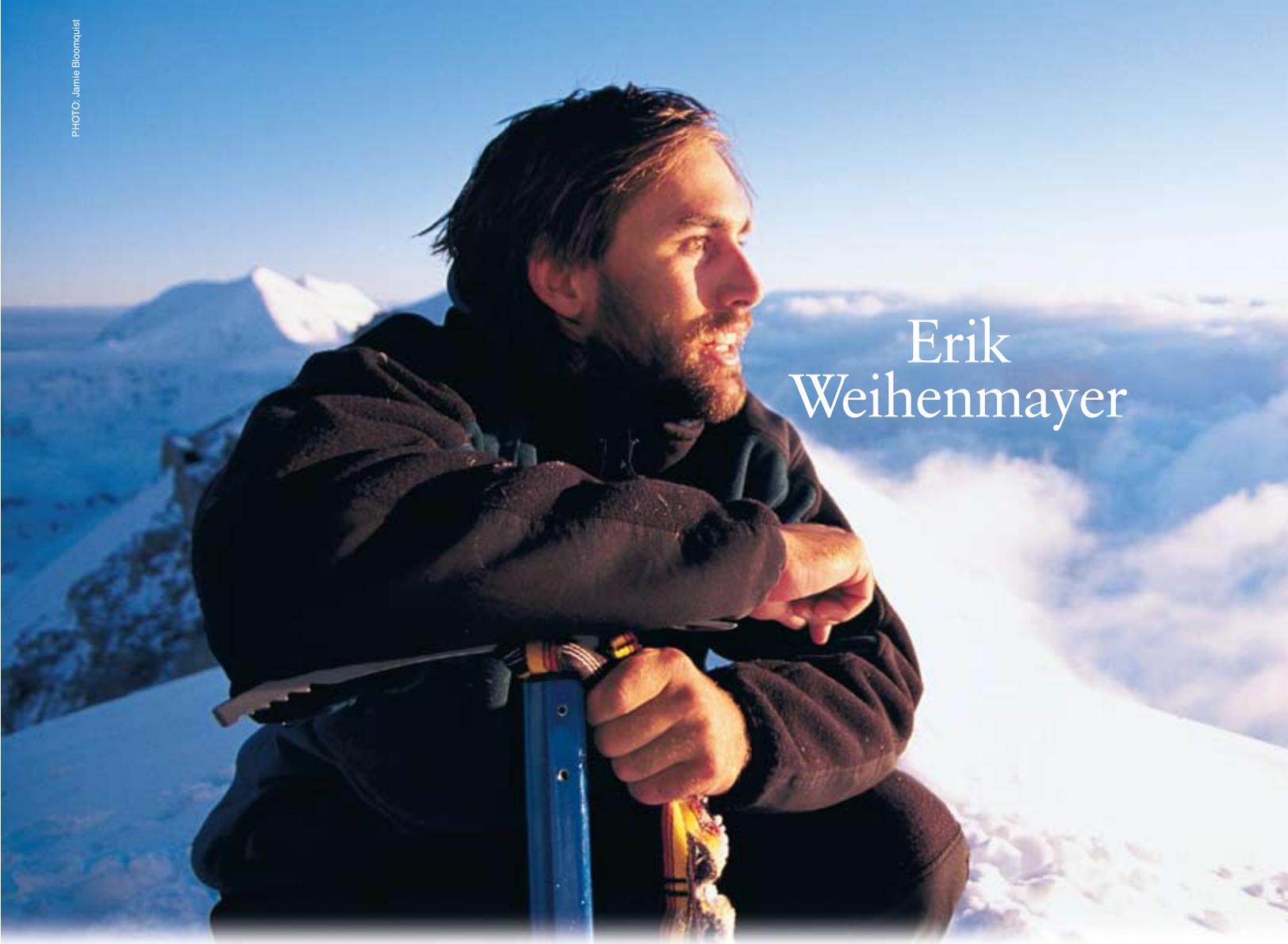
At Outward Bound, we don’t start with difficult problems. We start with simple ones and gradually get more and more complex as the two or three weeks progress. I think we do it well in our adventure activities, in our risk activities, and in the challenges that we give to the participants from day one, but we don’t do that with our service. Service is just jammed in there, and I think we should probably pay more attention to that.

In the minutes of one of the Outward Bound Trust meetings in the 1950s, Hahn was quoted as saying, “To put it bluntly: the Outward Bound experience by itself does not go deep enough. It is the beginning of a great promise—but this promise will not be fulfilled unless the follow-up problem is solved. It is not solved today.” And then he goes on, “. . . our influence is not wide enough. Let me use an analogy—supposing we had developed a remedy of a particularly grave disease. We ought to feel uneasy in our conscience if we only administered it in our own institution; we ought to do all we can to make it available to the great mass of patients suffering from that particular disease.” He was suggesting that Outward Bound should actually reach beyond just the participants it’s serving.

But what is the much greater effect and how do we go further with it? Hahn goes on to say, “I now come to the task of deepening our influence; I’m hopeful that before long a challenge will go out to all young people of this country [referring to the UK] to render voluntary active service in peacetime.”

So this notion that the service part of Outward Bound should go beyond the course, and should reach out even further, is not new. I’m just trying to pick up in a sense where Hahn left off, and suggest that we can actually go much deeper with our service experiences and probably do a better job. 

*Dr. Anthony Richards is a retired professor from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He currently works as a consultant in the field of Adventure-Based Experiential Learning. While completing his doctorate at the University of Colorado, he researched into the life and educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn.*



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