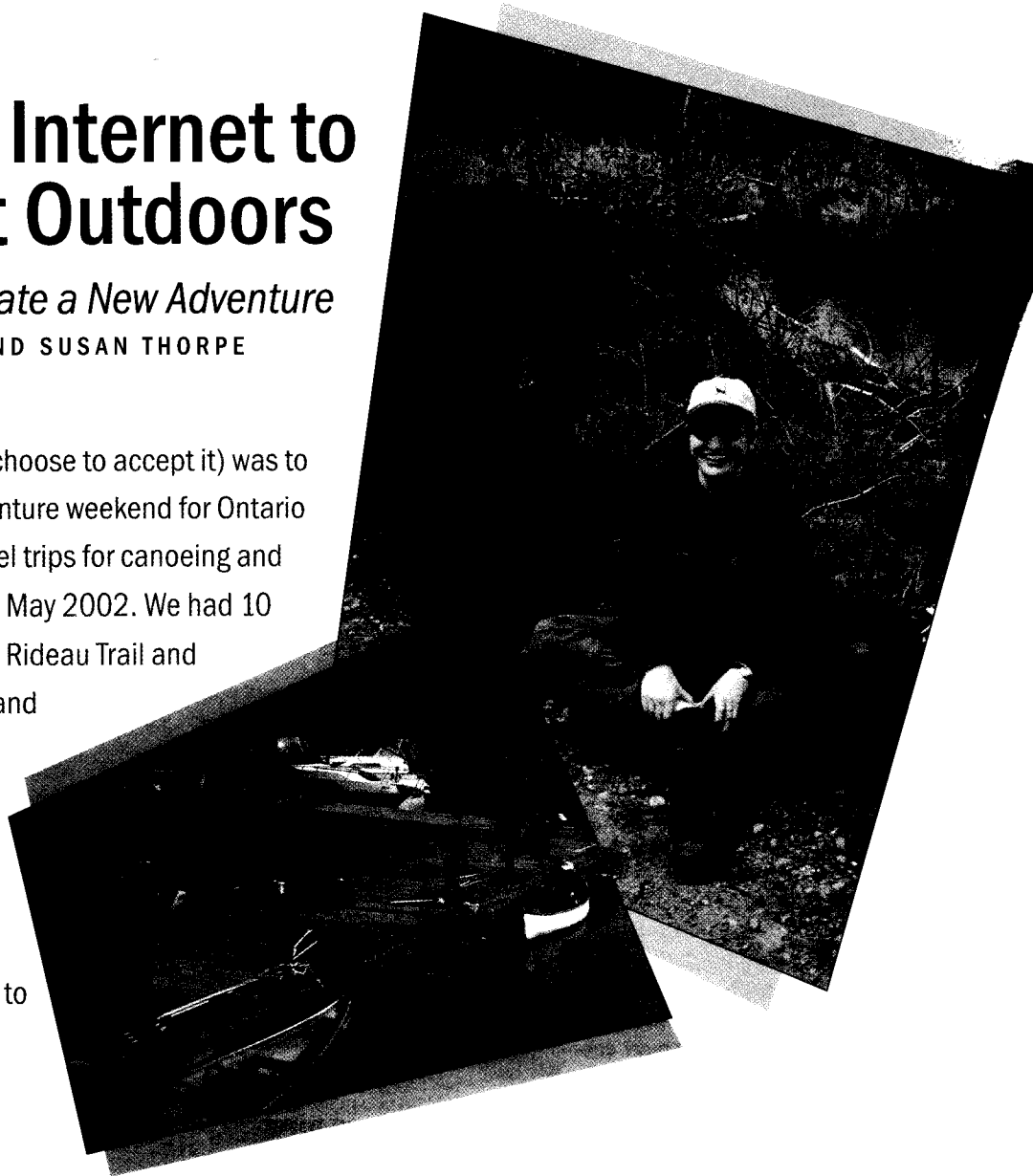


# From the Internet to the Great Outdoors

## *Link Members Create a New Adventure*

BY GLENNA HARRIS AND SUSAN THORPE

Our mission (and we did choose to accept it) was to organize an outdoor adventure weekend for Ontario Link members: two parallel trips for canoeing and hiking, three days long, in May 2002. We had 10 canoeists, five hikers, the Rideau Trail and Rideau Canal Waterway, and years of outdoor experience to draw on. The only hitch? The participants were scattered across Ontario, so all of our planning had to be done via the Internet.



It began as an idea, but quickly became a reality. By communicating primarily online through the Ontario Link e-group on yahoo.com, we found a volunteer Responsible Guider, Alternate Guider and first aiders for both trips, and a lifeguard for the canoe trip. Following the Guides Canada *Safe Guide* in all our planning greatly eased this process, by outlining the steps we had to take to make the trip a success. In just two months of planning time, we had routes mapped out, kit lists and menus organized, and car rides arranged to get everyone to the starting points.

The hikers and canoeists "tripped" for three days and two nights, meeting together on the second night at Chaffey's Lock on the Rideau Canal Waterway. The Rideau Trail offered a beautiful hiking route, close

to the canoeists, who followed the lakes in the Rideau system. Many of us were new to outdoor adventures of this size, and some hadn't camped in a few years, but others were experienced. And our level of enthusiasm was constant, which ultimately made the trip a outstanding success.

The hikers began their trip first thing on the Saturday of the long weekend, with tents, cooking supplies, and food shared between everyone's packs. The three-day route took us along the Rideau Trail between Kingston and Ottawa, through woodlands, next to beaver dams and along rail fences. We saw songbirds and a porcupine, but were convinced the beavers always knew we were coming, because the only evidence there were beavers on the trail were a few freshly chewed trees!

The hikers slept overnight at a primitive lakeside campsite on the first night, and met the canoeists at Chaffey's Lock for the second night. The food was simple and light to carry, and all of us shared opinions on the best camping supplies and clothing. Everyone in the group had a new shopping list by the end! Over the weekend, the group hiked 50 kilometres, and bore the bruises and sore muscles to prove it. Would we do it again? Definitely!

At the beginning of the weekend, the canoeists met at Narrows Lock, deciding to camp there for the night and paddle off in the morning. After a long cold night, we set off towards Newboro Lock, the apex of the Rideau Canal Waterway. From here the water flows downstream in both directions: southwards through the Cataraqui system

to Kingston and Lake Ontario and northwards through the Rideau system to Ottawa and the Ottawa River. We dined beneath the boughs, where there were no wasps or cows to be afraid of! At least the cold weather kept the mosquitoes away.

The trip continued across Newboro Lake, which was not an easy paddle, as the lake is big and windy, and has very few islands near the marked channel. The group rested at every chance in the lee of an island, and sang Guiding songs along the way as we paddled through Indian Lake. And what happened next? The heavens opened and it began to snow! On Victoria weekend! But we were so tired by this point, the only thing to do was laugh.

By the time the backpackers and canoeists arrived at the lock, we were ready for a well deserved rest. The hikers' Responsible Guider had sprained her ankle; so she continued the final trip day with the canoeists. We certainly understood why we list an Alternate Guider on the Camp Application Form! The canoeists paddled back through Indian Lake and Clear Lake to a triumphant arrival at Newboro Lock. After a relaxed lunch and some group photos, canoes were car-topped and a tired bunch of Link members began the long drive home. The backpackers, a tired but happy crew, too, walked the last few paces to the end point, where we were grateful to be picked up by two drivers from the canoeing team.

All of us had such a fabulous time, there is already discussion on the e-group of another trip in the spring of 2003. Ontario and National Link members exchange messages regularly on e-groups at Yahoo!, and creating a separate e-group for the hike planning was both simple and effective.

Although not all of us were experienced hikers or canoeists, we finished the trip with new friends, wonderful memories, and a tremendous sense of accomplishment. Not bad for a few young women who planned a trip without meeting face to face! Who knows what adventures we will be up to next? ♣

*Glenna Harris, of Kingston, is a Link member and an Elected Member of Ontario Council. Susan Thorpe is a Link member and a Brownie Guider in eastern Ontario.*