



Photographers: Cameron Macdonald and Greg Boyd

BAFFIN ISLAND EXPEDITION 2005

Turnbull Family Adventure Award Winners

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE ARCTIC ANIMALS, THE INUIT PEOPLE AND, MOST OF ALL, THE SCENERY. MY FAVOURITE PART OF THE TRIP WAS ALL THE MOUNTAINS AND GLACIERS WE SAW IN THE PARK. THE LEAST FAVOURITE PART WAS THE RIVER CROSSINGS. BUT, OTHERWISE, I HAD A FANTASTIC TRIP AND I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER IT. ANOTHER GOOD THING WAS THAT WE DIDN'T SEE A POLAR BEAR.

— *Matt Boyd, age 13*

On July 30, twenty-one Scouts, Venturers and leaders from the 17th Ottawa (Southminster) Scout Group returned home from what many of them have called the trip of a lifetime — a two-week expedition to Baffin Island in Canada's Arctic.

The 14 boys, ranging in age from 12 to 15, traveled as two teams and were, according to park staff, the youngest group ever to hike across the Arctic Circle through the remote and rugged Akshayuk Pass in Auyuittuq National Park. The expedition was a re-creation of a similar hike 13 years ago by the 17th Southminster Venturer Company, whose members were 16 and 17 years old. One of Canada's most northerly parks, Auyuittuq receives an average of only 250 to 350 visitors per year.

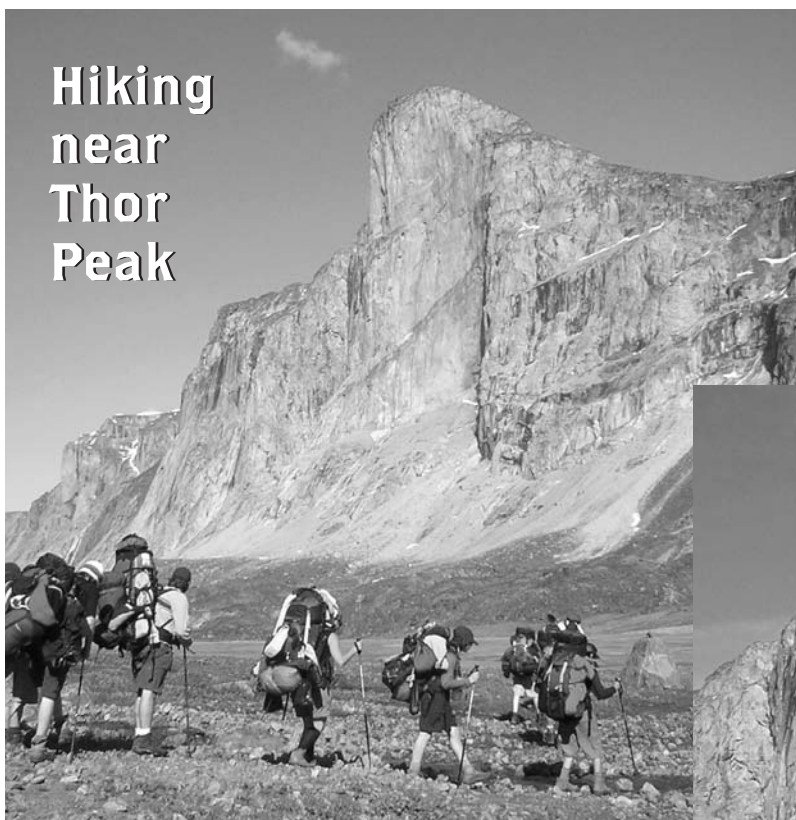
The group was well prepared for the risks inherent in such an adventure. Risks such as polar bear encounters and July snowstorms (nei-

ther of which occurred), and high winds, sandstorms, rockfalls, and swift water river crossings (all of which were encountered) were just some of the challenges.

WINDY LAKE, JULY 22:

— TODAY WAS SATISFYINGLY HARD. WE HAD PANCAKES FOR BREAKFAST AND THEN STARTED HIKING. WE HAD TO CROSS A HUGE EXPANSE OF STREAMS, WHICH WASN'T FUN, BUT FROM THERE ON IT WAS GOOD STRAIGHT HIKING. WE PASSED HUGE CRATER LAKES AND BOULDERS. WE ACTUALLY MADE IT TO THE ARCTIC CIRCLE. THAT WAS

Hiking near Thor Peak



THE TURNBULL FAMILY **ADVENTURE CHALLENGE**

Start planning your adventure now. See page 24 for details on requirements and how to apply.

17th Ottawa Scouts and Venturers – Baffin Island Expedition 2005

Participants:

Team One:

Frank Taylor – Expedition Leader
Greg Boyd – Leader
Elizabeth Gottman – Leader
Giles Santyr – Leader

Venturers: Mason Beveridge
Alex Boyd
Tom Taylor

Scouts: Matt Boyd
Sebastian Davids
Nathan Denys
Nicko Duchesne
Brendan Santyr

Team Two:

Cameron Macdonald – Team Leader
Julian Murray – Leader
Philip Nidd – Leader

Venturers: Duncan Macdonald
James Murray
Graeme Nidd

Scouts: Jordon Howard
Jonathan Miller
Stuart Wilson



AWESOME! OUR CAMP TONIGHT IS GREAT BUT IT HAS HUGE AMOUNTS OF MOSQUITOES. I HOPE ALL THE HIKING IS LIKE THIS.

— *Stuart Wilson, age 13*

The journey was a physically arduous one. Depending on their size, the boys carried packs weighing from 15 to 25 kilograms, over 75 kilometres, on terrain that varied from compacted paths to gravel to rock and boulders, and through boot-sucking mud, bog and sand. Following inukshuks, the trail weaved through steep rocky inclines, across mudflats and along welcome sandy beaches. Mos-

quitoes, colossal in size and numbers, were a constant presence – except when high winds carried them away – and were virtually a part of every meal and hot drink.

BEING IN 24 HOURS OF DAYLIGHT WAS GOOD AND BAD. WE NEVER HAD TO SET UP CAMP IN THE DARK, BUT THEN WE COULD NEVER GET TO SLEEP. SOME OF THE STREAMS WE CROSSED WERE DEEP, SOME WERE FAST, BUT THEY WERE ALL COLD. EVEN THOUGH THE HIKES WERE

LONG, THE PACKS WERE HEAVY, AND THE WEATHER WAS USUALLY PRETTY COLD, IT ALL PAID OFF IN THE END, LOOKING AROUND TO SEE THE BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS, GLACIERS, WATERFALLS AND WILDLIFE. IT'S SOMETHING YOU JUST HAVE TO SEE IN PERSON.

— *Mason Beveridge, age 14*

Auyuittuq's stunning vistas, however, more than offset the hardships. Soaring mountain peaks on both

sides included Mount Odin, the highest on Baffin Island, and Thor Peak, the tallest uninterrupted cliff face in the world. Waterfalls, glaciers, huge deposits of moraine, and vast flood plains were regularly encountered. Added to the scenery was the constant aural backdrop of rushing water, howling winds, rockfalls, rain, and the thunderous sound of chunks of glacier calving off and tumbling hundreds of feet to the rocks below.

WE STARTED TODAY WITH A GRUESOME UPHILL CLIMB. IT WAS TIRING, BUT VERY REWARDING BECAUSE, AT THE TOP, WE HAD A WONDERFUL VIEW OF THOR PEAK. THOR PEAK IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW FAR YOU CAN SEE UP HERE. AT THE START OF THE DAY, IT LOOKED ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS AWAY. THIRTEEN KILOMETERS OF HIKING LATER, IT ACTUALLY WAS TWO KILOMETERS AWAY!

— *Nicko Duchesne, age 13*

Early on, the group had been advised to expect delays and to be prepared to adjust their schedules to fit the rhythm of nature, as the Inuit and their predecessors have been doing for millennia. Indeed, except for the final flights home, every leg of the

trip was delayed at some point by high winds. At the outset, one extra day was spent in Iqualuit when flights into Pangnirtung were cancelled due to high winds. When the group finally did arrive in Pangnirtung, they were advised to delay departure for the hiking portion of their trek for another two days, due to an anticipated windstorm. They took this advice, and the following day, a summer gale (the most severe in over 20 years, according to Inuit elders) tossed 4' x 8' sheets of plywood down the streets like tissues, an Inuit fisherman's boat was seriously damaged, and one Scout leader witnessed a wooden shed being lifted into the air and hurled down onto two snowmobiles.

These forced delays, however, resulted in chance meetings and coincidences that added immeasurably to the group's experiences on the trip. Indeed, while a tour of the magnificent Nunavut legislature, a baseball game with the Inuit youth of Pangnirtung, and a tour of the Angmarlik Visitor Centre museum (both of which were arranged by the very helpful and knowledgeable centre manager, Tommy Papatsie) were planned and among the highlights of the group's itinerary, the unplanned elements were at least equally memorable.

UPON REFLECTION, THE THING THAT STANDS OUT IN MY MIND ABOUT OUR TRIP WAS THE GENEROSITY AND THE INTEREST THAT WAS SHOWN BY THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITIES

THAT WE VISITED. I THINK ABOUT HOW THE RESIDENTS OF NUNAVUT WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ACCOMMODATE US AND MAKE OUR VISIT BOTH MEMORABLE AND MORE COMFORTABLE: THE RCMP OFFICER THAT MET US AT THE AIRPORT, CARRIED OUR STUFF BACK AND FORTH AND THEN DROVE THE LEADERS AROUND TOWN; THE STRANGER WHO CARRIED OUR STUFF BACK FROM THE AIRPORT (WHEN OUR FIRST FLIGHT TO PANG WAS CANCELLED) IN HIS PICKUP TRUCK; JIMMY AT THE MUSEUM IN IQUALUIT WHO GAVE US A SAMPLE OF THE CARIBOU HE WAS HAVING FOR LUNCH; AAJU, THE LADY THAT INVITED 21 PERFECT STRANGERS TO COME TO HER PLACE FOR AN ARCTIC CHAR BBQ ON THE BEACH; TONY ROSE WHO GAVE UP HIS SATURDAY AFTERNOON TO GIVE US A FASCINATING TOUR OF THE LEGISLATURE; REV.

ULTIMATELY, THE EXPEDITION HAS BEEN AN EXTRAORDINARY COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE FOR THE GROUP AS A WHOLE, AS WELL AS FOR THE TWO DISTINCT TEAMS.

— *Scooter Frank Taylor, Expedition leader*



BOWKETT AND ANNIE WHO AGAIN INVITED 21 STRANGERS INTO THEIR HOME FOR AN INDEFINITE STAY; TOMMY AT THE VISITOR CENTRE THAT LET US HANG OUT ALL DAY IN THE ELDER'S ROOM; OUR OUTFITTER THAT MADE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO RETRIEVE OUR GROUP FROM THE PARK; EMILY, THE LADY WHO GAVE US THE THROAT SINGING DEMONSTRATION; AME, THE ARTIST WHO GAVE US A FASCINATING PRESENTATION ON NOT ONLY HIS UNIQUE TWO-HANDED DRAWING STYLE BUT ALSO SOME INSIGHT INTO THE CULTURE AND TRADITIONAL WAYS OF LIFE OF THE INUIT, AND SARAH WHO SET US UP IN THE SCHOOL IN PANG.

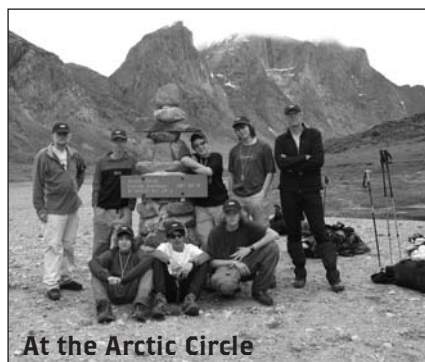
— *Greg Boyd, Scouter*

The expedition carried with it a donation of high-quality used children's clothing generously donated by Boomerang Kids to the community of Pangnirtung. At the end of the trip, the group also donated over \$1,000 in unused prescription and over-the-counter medications (which thankfully were never needed) to the Pangnirtung Community Health Centre.

The 17th Ottawa (Southminster) Scout Group and all of the 2005 Baffin Island Expedition participants expressed their heartfelt gratitude for this enormous show of support for their mission. Many, many sponsors, donors and Scouting members helped make this adventure happen. Of special mention, we'd like to thank The Turnbull Family Challenge – Scouts Canada Foundation, First Air – The Airline of the North, Canadian Geographic Enterprises, Bushtukah Great Outdoor Gear, and Mr. Ben Bolton, a former King's Scout who, on learning of the expedition called to offer a significant personal donation.

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— *Scouter Frank Taylor, Expedition leader*



At the Arctic Circle



Team one hiking through the Rock Garden



On the mud flats near Baffin Island's Weasel River.



END OF DAY 13:

– I STEPPED ON THE BOAT, FEELINGS RUSHING TO MY HEAD – FEELINGS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT, OF RELIEF, AND OF REFLECTION. ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR COMPLETING A PHYSICALLY DEMANDING TRIP, RELIEF FOR MAKING IT BACK WITH NO INJURIES, BUT MOST OF ALL REFLECTING ON THE PAST EVENTS I HAD BEEN THROUGH AND SEEN FLASHING IN FRONT OF ME. AS I WAS HANDED A FRESH CUP OF HOT TEA, THE ENGINES STARTED, AND WE STARTED ON OUR WAY BACK. I LOOKED BACK AT THE MOUNTAINS FOR A FINAL TIME, IN UTTER AMAZEMENT.

— *Jonathan Miller, age 13*

ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF THE TRIP WAS NO DOUBT THE RIDE OUT OF THE PARK. IT WAS 11 P.M. AND WE WERE AT THE VERY END OF OUR LONG ADVENTURE. OUR OUTFITTER PICKED US UP ABOUT TWO KILOMETRES SOUTH OF OVERLORD IN A HOWLING WIND. WE WERE ALL STUFFED INTO SURVIVAL SUITS AND SERVED SWEET TEA IN PREPARATION FOR A LONG TRIP BACK TO THE EDGE OF CIVILIZATION. IT GAVE US TIME TO REFLECT ON THE PATH THAT LED US HERE. AND AS THE GLORIOUS SCENERY FLEW BY, YOU COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL ENLIGHTENED IN SOME SMALL WAY. X

— *Duncan Macdonald, age 15*