



O'Hara '98

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Flowers for All Seasons: Floral Variety Along the Shores of Lake O'Hara

By Jon Stuart-Smith

The Lake O'Hara area is the perfect place for wildflowers and there is no better place to get a sampling of the floral abundance than the gentle walk around the lakeshore. Even though the walk around the lake is only 3.2 kilometers, a variety of conditions can be encountered such as the open avalanche slopes along Wiwaxy, the rocky cliffs next to the Seven-Sisters falls and the dense Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir forest at the south end of the lake. Various plant communities can be found at different locations around the lake. Plants all have different needs; some need shade while others need bright light and some need lots of water while others do not. This diversity comes about as a result of location, aspect and the time of year. The north side of the lake basks in the sun all day (when it's not raining or snowing of course). Because it faces south, it is the first to be free of snow and thus is also the first place to see flowers in the spring. The Western-bog Laurel, a small



Four-parted gentian

woody perennial with rosy pink saucer shaped flowers, is among the most beautiful flowers that poke their heads out of the lingering snow on the north shore of the lake. Other spring arrivals include the Western Globe flowers and the Western Anemones which can also be found at the north end of the lake. For those up for a more strenuous hike, the Wiwaxy gap trail is also an excellent place to see flowers in the spring. Even if you only venture part way up the steep climb, the reward is sure to include Columbines and Violets while nearer to the gap the sun drenched slopes harbour an abundance of alpine flowers such as Purple Saxifrage and Moss Campion.

As the year progresses and the snow slowly melts from the rest of the

lakeshore trail, many more flowers come into bloom. Bunchberries, Labrador Tea, Gentain, Penstomens, Willow Herb, Twin-flower, Grass-of-Parnassus, and Spotted Saxifrage are just a few. Among the most interesting is the Butterwort, one of the few carnivorous plants in the Rockies. A close look at the leaves will suggest the reason for the common name; the leaves of Butterworts feel sticky. Insects that land on the leaves are trapped and are slowly digested. This carnivorous lifestyle allows it to flourish on nutrient poor sites where other plants are not able to survive. Keep your eyes open for other spectacular finds such as the White-bog Orchid and Alpine Bistwort which can be seen along the northern part of the lake shore a little later into the summer.

Along the southern shore of the lake past the falls, as the forest becomes more closed in and light levels are lower, a whole new set of flowers can be found. Snow lingers later into the year along this shady shore and consequently the plants that are found here must deal with an even shorter growing season. However, these conditions do not mean that there is not an abundance of interesting flora to be found. Sweet-colts Foot is one of the early arrivals along with an abundance of saxifrage species including Leatherleaf and Red-stemmed Saxifrages.

The moist conditions found along the creeks that flow into the southern

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Butterwort

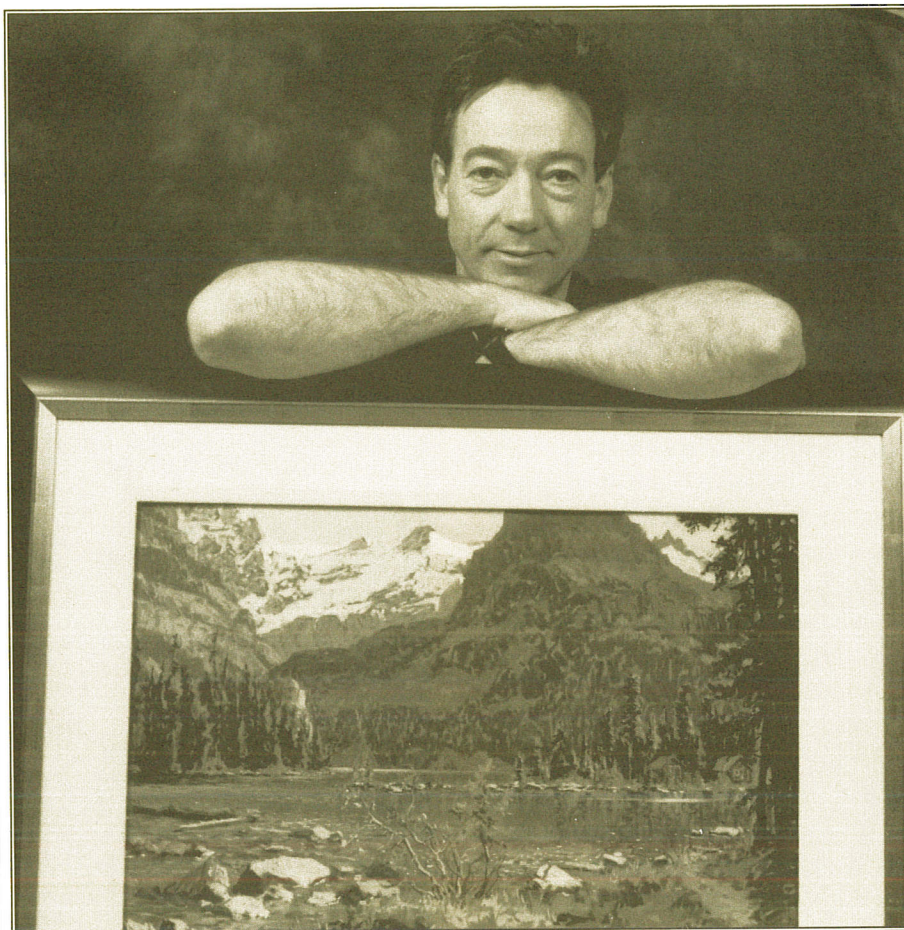
Yoho National Park Bear Habituation Education Project

Bear habituation to people is recognized as a major threat to bears in Yoho National Park. Once a bear has become habituated to humans, especially if the bear is food-conditioned through improper storage of food and garbage, the potential for human-bear conflict increases. Options for dealing with a highly habituated bear that has become a public safety problem are limited. Proper food and garbage storage, and safe hiking and roadside viewing practices can help prevent bear-human conflicts and protect both people and bears. It is generally felt that signs and publications alone are not effective in instilling bear safety behaviours in park visitors. Personal, face to face education is needed.

The Yoho National Park Bear Habituation Education Project is a project initiated by Yoho National Park and jointly funded by Friends of Yoho and The Lake O'Hara Trails Club. The Lake O'Hara Trails Club has contributed \$4250.00 to help fund the salary and operating expenses of one interpreter for the 1998 summer season. This interpreter will present short bear talks and set up a roving bear display in campgrounds, day-use areas, and roadside pull-offs from mid-June to mid-September. The interpreter will inform visitors about safe camping and hiking practices that will help prevent bear-human conflicts and protect bears. The interpreter will also provide information on general bear biology, status of bear populations in Yoho National Park and initiatives within the park to reduce habituation of bears.

The interpreter will present a bear interpretive program as part of the summer speaker series at Lake O'Hara this summer, however the majority of the interpreter's time will be spent outside the Lake O'Hara area. We do

Trails Club Raffle



Colin Ferguson displaying his prize, "September Morning Sunshine"

Last year the Trails Club was extremely fortunate to have Horace Champagne donate one of his pastel paintings of Lake O'Hara to the Club for the purpose of raising funds for trail work in the area. The framed painting titled, "September Morning Sunshine", was valued at \$3,775.00. Raffle tickets were sold

during the summer months and a total of \$3893.00 was raised. The lucky winner, and now proud owner of this beautiful painting, is Colin Ferguson of Canmore, Alberta. Many, many thanks to Horace Champagne for his very kind donation and many thanks to all of you who supported the raffle.

know that human activity outside the Lake O'Hara area can directly affect bears that frequent Lake O'Hara and consequently feel this education initiative is an important step towards preserving the bear population within the park.

Father Roman Szarama

Father Roman Szarama passed away in June of 1997. He joined the Lake

O'Hara Trails Club shortly after his first visit to Lake O'Hara in 1965 and had been an active member ever since. The Father shared his love of hiking and of Lake O'Hara with many members of his family over the years. He will be fondly remembered for his part in the dedication service of the Dr. Link memorial plaque on Odaray Prospect and for his weekly Sunday masses. We will miss meeting him striding along the trails and alpine routes in his familiar red plaid shirt and canvas pack.

Education Program

By Catherine Watson

Last summer was an exciting one for the Lake O'Hara Trails Club with the introduction of an environmental education program for kids. The program was designed to introduce children to the wilderness and help them gain a greater understanding of the components and sensitivity of the ecosystems at Lake O'Hara. The children's program consisted of a variety of day and night time activities.

"Trails and Traces" was the title of the day program held on Thursday afternoons. Children were introduced to different animal signs found in the Lake O'Hara area such as tracks, homes, scat and food. This was done through a series of interactive games. After this, a trip to the alpine meadow allowed children to apply the knowledge they learned from these games. It was quite a sight watching kids with magnifying glasses and clipboards as they ran around



*Playing environmental games at Le Relais
Photograph by ?*

investigating different animal signs! We even had occasional reports of animals never before sighted in the area; i.e. elephants and tigers!

The evening program, which took place every Friday night, brought children and their parents to Le Relais for challenging trivia and lots of laughs. Our bizarrely dressed game show hosts led the evenings of "Tacky Bingo" and "Jeopardy". Throughout the hour-long show the audience was quizzed with a variety of questions

ranging from information about animals, plants and mountains to the more challenging category "O'Hara history". It seemed that parents enjoyed the games as much as the children did.

At the end of the season, upon reflection, it was felt that the children's program was a success. It was not immune from growing pains, but we did find that the night programs were in high demand, averaging around 20-30 people each show. The day program, while enjoyed by those who participated, was not as well attended as the evening program. The feeling was that during the day, families were out hiking together and wanting an organized activity for the evening. It was felt that by designing the programs to maximize the children's learning through an interactive approach accomplished the goal of increasing environmental awareness with great success. Thank you to all who participated in the programs!

The Changing Face of Trails at Lake O'Hara

Over the past 6 years researchers have been monitoring both the human and grizzly bear use in the Lake O'Hara area. Two summers ago the field work component was wrapped up and since then many hours have been spent analysing data. The final report should be available for reading at Le Relais this summer.

The data collected over the years is intended to form the basis for any future planning in the Lake O'Hara area. As a result we may see a variety of changes to the way the trail system is currently managed. This summer the existing closures will remain in place. This means that the Odaray Prospect area (the direct and midline trails as well as the trail down to Morning Glory Lakes) will remain closed while the

Odaray Highline will remain open for access to Grandview. The Ottertail Valley trail will also remain closed for this summer.

Next summer we may see the Ottertail trail open to a few groups, by a reservation system. This will allow for parties to complete the spectacular Floe Lake - Lake O'Hara trail. Details of the reservation system have not been worked out at this time but should be in place by early next year. We may also see the relocation of the Lower McArthur trail to a position higher up which will branch directly off of the Upper McArthur trail. This relocation would still allow people to access Lake McArthur via a loop trail and would provide a more spectacular view down the McArthur valley.

There may also be some micro-management of trail use in the Odaray area as a result of the study. As pressure increases on natural areas such as Lake O'Hara, it will become even more critical to consider the impact of individual trails, the number of people that use these trails, and when they are used as well as how the animals are using the areas, when discussing area management.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 1998 Annual Meeting of
the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will be
held at Le Relais at
8:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 23.

Flowers for All Seasons...

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part of Lake O'Hara from the Opabin plateau make them good places to find other interesting flowers. Two such species include the Heart-leaved Twayblade and the Broad-leaved Twayblade. The delicately tiny flowers of these two prize orchid species make them hard to spot but their beauty is worth the time spent looking. A couple of lily species, Claspings Twisted-stalk and Rosy Twisted-stalk are two other water loving species that can be found under the shadows along the south end of Lake O'Hara.

With the variety of conditions found along the lakeshore, it is no surprise that a multitude of flowers can be found throughout the summer season. But the lakeshore trail is also only one of the many places where spectacular wildflowers can be found in the Lake O'Hara area. Watch where you are going but keep one eye on the ground so that you don't miss the show. If you would like to know more about the plants at Lake O'Hara or other aspects of the ecology of the subalpine community why not attend one of the lectures in our highly successful speakers series which runs from the 26 of June to the 6 of September. Check at Le Relais for dates and times.

Trail Work in 1997

Last summer \$5549.97 was spent on the purchase of new trail signs. The purchase of the signs is part of the Trails Club seemingly never-ending joint project with Parks Canada to replace all the trail signs in the Lake O'Hara area. The above cost represents about half of the signs needing to be made. These signs are now finished and ready to be put in the ground. The hope is to have the rest completed this summer, however based on our progress to date, we will not be making any guarantees!

There was also some gravel work

done in late September. New gravel was placed along the trail from the Elizabeth Parker Hut to Morning Glory Lake and along the trail from the Elizabeth Parker Hut to the Big Larch trail. The other trail receiving new gravel was the lower McArthur trail. The one area that did not receive badly needed gravel was the trail leading from the Elizabeth Parker Hut to Schaffer Lake. Time restrictions due to inclement weather unfortunately did not allow this section to be completed. We hope to complete this section in 1998. In total, \$1321.50 was spent on gravel and a further \$6043.90 was spent on helicopter time.

Remembering Tommy Rudland

By Stephanie Griffiths

It is no revelation to say that Lake O'Hara makes an especially strong impression upon people whose character resonates with the beauty of the landscape. Tommy Rudland was one of many who have spent a good deal of time at Lake O'Hara, enjoying the magic of the surroundings. Perhaps without knowing it, he made as much of an impression on his environment as it did upon him.

Tommy was born in Shanghai, China in 1910, and spent his childhood riding the waves of political and social events in that country. In 1949 he immigrated to Canada, and first made annual visits up until 1986 when he could no longer breathe comfortably at altitude. He missed hiking, the fishing, and his perpetual search for alpine gentians, while people at O'Hara missed his

presence, his jokes, and his gentleness.

He was an unusually kind and generous person, with eyes that seems designed to twinkle and laugh with you. He was very devoted to his family and his faith, being one of the few whose genuine love and respect for life extended beyond his immediate sphere of loved ones. As a young girl at O'Hara, I was naturally struck by an adult who not only would spend time with me, but also would do so for its own sake. He told wonderful stories of his childhood in China and his own family - in such a way that one would immediately feel included. I will never forget his quick wit and even quicker smile, or that he taught me how to fish and how to let some of them go.

Tommy passed away in Burnaby, BC in October of 1997. He has made an impression, which will never pass upon those who were touched by his kindness and love for other people. While death is obviously a cause for sadness, there can be a simultaneous celebration of a life well lived and selflessly shared with those around him.

We Need Your Help!

Your donation to the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will help further the preservation of Lake O'Hara and its trail system. The Trails Club is a registered non-profit organization and will issue a receipt for income tax purposes. You may donate directly at Le Relais, or mail your donation to:

The Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box 98, Lake Louise, AB T0L 1E0

Would You Like to Join Us?

Life membership in the Lake O'Hara Trails Club is available at Le Relais for a mere \$25. For this you will receive this newsletter annually and help support club activities in the Lake O'Hara area.



*Preservation
through
Appreciation*

Produced by the
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