



# RAQUETTE LAKE NEWS

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## A TRIP DOWN UNDER



*Trip from Cairns to Karanda via the Karanda Railroad to visit the Australian rain forest*

Once programs were completed last fall, I had the opportunity to travel to Australia and enjoy a working vacation. Three Australian campuses, the University of Sunshine Coast, Victoria University and the University of Ballarat, served as hosts during my visit. The visits allowed me to gain a better understanding of their outdoor and environmental education programs and to develop an international internship for an Australian student at Raquette Lake. Without the organization and support of SUNY Cortland's International Programs Office, especially Elizabeth McCartney, assistant director, and Marley Barduhn, interim director, this trip would not have been nearly as successful.

During my tenure at Raquette Lake, we have hosted a number of international students from Australia. Some students come with programs associated with their major, while others visit during the Cross-Cultural Weekend held every September. I felt it would be educational for an international student to experience SUNY Cortland's operation at Raquette Lake. During this trip I met with a University administrators and a number of faculty from a variety of disciplines. The experience better prepared me to discuss a semester in Australia with our SUNY Cortland students.

The University of the Sunshine Coast has an outdoor education facility by the name of Dilly Village. The center is located on Fraser Island and accessible only by water. As part of their Sunshine Coast experience, SUNY Cortland students would spend five days at the site. While on the island, the students and faculty travel the sand roads by four wheel drive motor coach. All roads are sand; anything less would be stuck almost immediately. In fact, these vehicles must travel the beach because there are no roads. They have to contend with the tides and the levels of the surf.



*Remarkable rocks on Kangaroo Island*



*Koala Bear*

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**Cortland**  
State University of New York College at Cortland

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to include campus staff in their meetings. Penny James, lecturer, is delivering a course for the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department using this computer video system from the office at the Antlers.

Members of Administrative Computing also took the time necessary to upgrade the wireless computer system. Campus band width has been expanded to provide better service to Raquette Lake. Relocation and adjustments to the wireless antennas were also made. The laptop computers were upgraded and virus software was enhanced. It is like having our computers get their annual physical, only the doctor comes to them.

Paula Warnken, associate provost for information resources, is a real "tasks master," but did provide time in their program schedule for members of the group to explore and do some cross-country skiing. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a special thanks to Dan Sidebottom, director, administrative computing services; Scott Thomas, assistant director, administrative computing services; George VerDow, director, classroom media services; Josh Peluso, senior programmer analyst; Brad Snyder, technical services coordinator; Chris Poole, manager, personal computer services, and Vicki Hess, computer lab coordinator, for their continued support of Raquette Lake's computer system. Without their

help, we would not be able to offer the cutting edge educational resources in our programs.



Josh Peluso and Scott Thomas

## THE NATURE NOOK

Throughout the winter season there have been a number of wildlife sightings. The mild winter has greatly benefited the Adirondack deer herd. The deer have been able to break through the snow cover and forage for plants and roots. In addition, the wind storms have toppled hemlock and cedar trees which have added to the deer's food supply.



The Raquette Lake area supports a fairly large coyote population. The coyote is the White-tailed Deer primary predator for the white-tailed deer. We have seen coyotes near the waste water plant and signs of a deer kill near the sauna.

An otter has been coming up from the open water by the main dock and going under the Chalet. It creates a major problem for Addie, the wonder dog, as she voices her disapproval every time she passes the Chalet. Our local mink has been seen a number of times traveling the frozen shoreline. For the first time in six winters I found a set of snowshoe hare tracks. The rabbit population has been held at bay by not only the coyotes, but the marten and fisher population. A pine marten was observed on two separate occasions late last fall.

The winter bird population is stable and consists of black-capped chickadees, blue jays, evening gross beaks, hairy and downey woodpeckers and an occasional visit from a few juncos, purple finches, and gold finches. In the past few days I have seen Canadian geese, morning doves, trees sparrows and a single red-winged blackbird. To me, the red-wing blackbird is a stronger indicator of spring than the traditional robin.

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One could become stranded if the surf was too high and you were in an area where there were high sand banks. It is a beautiful island which hosts a truly unique rain forest, a wild dog called a "dingo," and perhaps the most shark infested waters along Australia's Eastern Coast. The center grounds are encompassed by a "dingo fence" which keeps these dangerous pests out of the compound. I am sure the SUNY Cortland students who had the opportunity to attend Dilly Village and explore Fraser Island would never forget their adventure.



Dingo on Fraser Island



Kangaroos on campus

Ballarat University is the campus which has historically hosted our physical education majors. The campus is located in Victoria, northwest of Melbourne. This school has an excellent reputation for preparing physical educators and exercise science professionals. SUNY Cortland students are mainstreamed with the Ballarat students in their traditional course work. The University also has a course that they substitute for PE's Outdoor Education experience. Unlike the two-week residential programs held at

Raquette Lake, these physical education students participate in a series of weekend experiential programs. The course may include such activities as canoeing, kayaking, bush-walking, surfing, rock climbing and camping in the outback!

The beauty of Australia's people and their country is truly something to behold. The people are so proud of their country and more than willing to share their enthusiasm at the drop of a hat. Australia is about the same size as the United States. Many sections of the eastern coastal shore are highly developed and commercialized. Yet, there are vast areas that have been set aside as national parks and preserves. In some towns on the Sunshine Coast there are proposals to limit growth and development.

After my five-day visit to the University of the Sunshine Coast, I traveled north to Cairns. It was there that I took the Karanda Railroad to the town of Karanda to explore the rain forest. The city of Cairns also served as a base to arrange a trip to the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef. I snorkeled over the coral reef. It was all I had hoped for and more! It was an experience that I will never forget.

From Cairns it was a three and a half hour flight to southern Victoria and the city of Adelaide. Adelaide is often called the city of churches and served as a base to travel to Kangaroo Island. Kangaroo Island was my favorite place out of all the places I visited. At the island airport I met the director of the Vivonne Bay Outdoor Education Center, Simon



Penguins

served as my personal guide while I was on the island. Kangaroo Island is approximately 40 miles long and quite diverse in its fauna and flora. It reminded me somewhat of Prince Edward Island in the Canadian Maritime Provinces with its agricultural grazing land.



Harbor Bridge in Sydney

The coast was just fantastic! In some areas, erosion caused by the relentless ocean waves has created huge cliffs. For other parts of the coast, there are a series of sand beaches. The beaches are favorite breeding areas for the New Zealand Fur Seal and the Sea Lions. In addition to the seals, I observed kangaroos, wallabies, emu and feral Vivonne Bay Outdoor Education Center, cats on the island. The Vivonne Bay Outdoor Education Center is a wonderful operation. Regional middle school students travel to the center by ferry. Normally this is for a week long residential experience. On the southeastern end of the island, there were a group of highly eroded boulders sitting on the top of a rock outcrop. The first question to come to mind is, "how did these huge rocks ever get up here?"



Two of the 12 Apostles on Great Ocean Road

From Kangaroo Island it was off to the outback via the "bus"! This was a 12-hour ride north to a place called Coober Pedy. The unique community was built with about three quarters of it underground. Summer temperatures often reach 120 degrees. While at Coober Pedy, I booked passage on the 400 mile mail run through the outback. In 400 miles we delivered mail to seven locations. Now, this is tough country, and the people who reside here are even tougher. This little adventure was out of the way but well worth the trip.



Noosa Heads National Park

The last stop was Victoria University in Melbourne. The Melton campus offers an outdoor education major. The campus is approximately 30 miles outside the city of Melbourne. In fact, one of the Melton students spent two weeks at Camp Huntington last summer as part of the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department's program. David was the type of student who took advantage of every opportunity presented him. We met in Melbourne and spent the morning chatting together.

The trip was fantastic! Hopefully, in the not too distant future when you come to Raquette Lake, one of our staff members will be from "down under." I am very excited about the possibility of this and look forward to returning someday to this beautiful country.



Outback north of Coober Pedy

## 2006 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A number of improvements to the Raquette Lake facilities are scheduled for 2006. Many of these initiatives are funded through campus Project Alteration Grants. Other projects have been funded by the Raquette Lake Foundation, Auxiliary Services Corporation and other private sources.

Huntington Memorial Camp currently has two projects underway. The two bathrooms in the Hemlock Dorm are being renovated. It will be a complete overhaul from the floor up. The existing floor is being replaced with tiles and new showers are being installed, which will include small changing areas. New wall



Repair of Chalet roof

materials, counter tops, sinks, toilets, lighting and ventilation system are all being replaced. The Hemlock Dorm was constructed in 1969 and many of the bathroom fixtures are original.

Camp Huntington visitors will also see a new roof on the Chalet. The roof panels and other materials were recently brought over the ice road and positioned near the Chalet. A number of spruce poles were cut last fall in the event we needed to replace some of the existing rafters. In addition to the new roof, interior work will be completed to straighten the roof line. Brick replacement and pointing will also be completed as a part of the roof work. In the past few years, new roofs have been installed on the Hemlock Dorm and Metcalf Hall. Other roofs scheduled for replacement in the next few years include the Guide's House, Kirby Camp, Spruce Dorm, and the Staff House.

The only new construction envisioned at Camp Huntington is construction of a new maintenance shop/garage. The size of the existing facility is very limited. During the winter months we are unable to get some of our vehicles inside because of their length. Consequently, overhead doors are then left open and tarps are put in place to keep out the cold, which is not a very good alternative. Unfortunately, at this time there is no campus funding for such a project, but I will continue to seek external funds. Who knows? There may be someone out there who may want to support the construction of such a building. To keep the cost at a minimum, we are considering a prefabricated building approximately 24' x 40'. As an additional cost containment effort, the Raquette Lake staff would construct the building.

A major undertaking will take place at Antlers this spring. The installation of a steel bulk head for the boat dock and fishing area will be completed. It is a very expensive project. The primary funding will come from the Auxiliary Services Corporation, with additional financial support coming from the Cortland College Foundation and the Raquette Lake Foundation.

Unfortunately, another project scheduled for the Antlers has been postponed. The project would include construction of a wheelchair ramp and an accessible bathroom in Cedars. Only one vendor submitted a bid and it was above the budgeted amount. It is an important project and additional bids will be requested over the coming summer months.

Recently, I received notification from the campus that an

Alterations Grant that was submitted to replace the windows in the Hemlock Dorm had been approved. The small crank out bedroom windows will be replaced with larger double-hung windows. The windows not only improve lighting and ventilation, but will also provide an improved exit in the case of an emergency. The estimated completion of this project is early 2007.

## LIKE FINE WINE: IT IMPROVES WITH AGE

For 27 years, faculty and students from the College of William and Mary of Williamsburg, Virginia, have come to Camp Huntington for their winter experiential course. The program was developed by three SUNY Cortland alumni: Sylvia Shirley '73, Randy Drake '77 and Tim Ramsey '73. Tim is a faculty member at the University of Northern Colorado and spends



College of William & Mary faculty

his spring break with this class. Each of the instructors have experienced Raquette Lake as students.

After a 14-hour Greyhound bus ride, the students are immediately engaged in winter activity. The walk across the ice road is a new experience. In the distance they can see Blue Mountain, which is on their schedule to hike later in the week. They experienced a wind chill of about 25 degrees below zero as they crossed the ice road for the first time.

Over the years, the staff has fine-tuned this course to ensure students experience as much as possible during their stay. For many of the individuals it will be their first time on cross-country skis or snowshoes. The group skied to Fox Mountain, cooked out and experienced some world-class sledding down the mountain. It was an all-day adventure and their first extended experience on cross-country skis. Later that evening they were all able to quell those aches and pains via the sauna and the cooling lake water.

The next day was spent climbing Blue Mountain. It was a beautiful Adirondack day, not a cloud in the sky, with temperatures in the mid 30's. On the summit they were able to orient their topographical maps and identify a number of the high peaks in the distance. Some students felt that the trip down the mountain was more difficult than the hike up.

Their final outing was an overnight stay at Tioga Point. They loaded their tote sleds and skied off into the sunset. After winterizing a couple of the lean-tos they made a savory beef stew, which was their evening meal. After breakfast they returned to Camp Huntington with another notch in their activity belt. The annual outing is certainly one of the best examples of SUNY Cortland alumni promoting and sharing Raquette Lake with their students. It is truly a credit to the staff, the facilities and the quality of their program!



College of William & Mary students



### THETA PHI BRAVES THE ELEMENTS

The weekend of February 17 was one for the record books. The scheduled groups for the weekend were Theta Phi Sorority and the Environmental Management Council from St. Lawrence County, who have shared this weekend for the past four years. Unfortunately, it was not to be in 2006!

The day before their scheduled arrival, mother nature delivered one of the severest storms of the season. We did not have to contend with snow but rather the rain and wind. The rain, which registered 2.9 inches on the rain gauge, melted almost all the snow. The weather station, located in the dining room, recorded wind gusts reaching 63 mph. Winds were clocked at 83 mph about 60 miles east of here. Electrical service to Raquette Lake was out for more than 12 hours. We had a number of trees come down within the building complex and on trails. Fortunately, none of the trees hit any of the historical buildings.

As a result of these severe conditions, the group from St. Lawrence County were unable to reach Raquette Lake. The road from Tupper Lake to Raquette Lake was closed due to trees and wires down on the roadways. Reluctantly, the Management Council members decided to call it a day and returned home.

The sisters from Theta Phi were coming from the south and did not encounter the debris or closed roads. The problem was crossing the lake. The ice on the lake was covered with approximately six inches of water. We knocked down the snow banks, which were acting like dams, to let the water pass through. We used the ice auger to drill holes in the ice to let the water run back into the lake. Each hole was like a giant sink drain. It took a few hours, but it worked and the water level was reduced to about three inches.

Conditions being what they were, it was not possible for the group to walk across the lake. As a result, the "Mule" was used to bring the sisters to camp. It took two hours to get everyone safely across. By the time they were scheduled to leave on Sunday, the cold temperatures had returned and the sisters were able to walk to Antlers. Hopefully, 2007 will offer better weather conditions for both Theta Phi and St. Lawrence.

### MARY JO CAREY JOINS THE CENTER STAFF



Mary Jo Carey

In February, Mary Jo Carey joined the Center for Environmental and Outdoor Education staff as our new secretary. She came to SUNY Cortland in August 2003, as a Keyboard Specialist I in the Human Resources Department. Mary Jo has a secretarial/court reporting degree from SUNY Alfred. She has several years experience in the secretarial field. Before coming to

SUNY Cortland, Mary Jo was a full-time homemaker and worked part time as a church secretary.

Mary Jo resides in Newark Valley with her husband, Daniel, and her two daughters, LesLea and Christine. She grew up in Windsor, NY, and has lived in the Southern Tier most of her life. In her spare time, Mary Jo likes to cook, garden and enjoys being time with her family at their seasonal camp in Union Springs.

If you have any questions regarding the Center, please do not hesitate to call her. We are excited to have her as part of our staff.

### WINTER ALUMNI CAMP: BETTER THAN EVER

The 2006 session of Alumni Winter Camp was better than ever. The weather cooperated with a few inches of snow accumulation daily. The



Alumni Camp Participants

snow adequately covered the trail system for skiers of all abilities. Some participants decided to do a little bush-wacking on snowshoes. Other traditional activities such as ice fishing and the sauna also took place.

Enrollment for the Alumni Winter Session has increased each year and 2006 was no exception. Thirty-six people enjoyed the five-day winter escape session. Dan Kelly and Kelly Ehrensbeck, the food service team, provided excellent meals for the group during their stay. The alumni felt the friendly atmosphere, and quality of the food and diversity of the menu was outstanding. These features combined with a nice blazing fire in the dining room fireplace left memories that will last until next January. The dates for the 2007 Winter Alumni Camp are January 21-25.

The group included everyone who came last year along with four new participants. For many, this has become a reunion of their extended Camp Huntington family. I must admit that this is one of my very favorite groups of the year! In the following weeks, I received a number of notes and letters saying what a great time they had. Some commented that during their stay their cheeks actually hurt from smiling too much.

Erik J. Bitterbaum, SUNY Cortland's president, and John W. Mosser, vice president for institutional advancement, drove up from Cortland to spend the day with the group. Erik and John provided an overview of SUNY Cortland's future as well as the success of the Friends of Raquette Lake donations. Last year was the first time those who contributed to the Raquette Lake Foundation were formally recognized by category. Previously, they were identified as donors from a special class.

Once again, I would like to thank all these wonderful alumni for making this a week to remember. I am looking forward to seeing you all again in 2007. If you think, you might be looking for a great time next January give Alumni Winter Camp a try.



### INFORMATION RESOURCES ANNUAL RETREAT

Approximately 30 individuals from Information Resources and selected faculty came to Raquette Lake for their annual retreat. I feel very fortunate to host this group each year. The retreat provides an opportunity for the directors, selected faculty and key technology staff to share ideas and develop future objectives. While at Camp Huntington, they utilize the wireless computer system and the Poly Com, wireless computer video system,

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## THE WINTER THAT WASN'T!

When one thinks about the Adirondacks during the winter months, they usually visualize the mountains and trees cloaked in a mantle of white. Actually, the winter of 2005 -2006 began like this. We had about 30 inches of snow on the ground in late December. All of this snow created a major problem for our ice road. Snow is a tremendous insulator and prevented the cold from penetrating the ice, making more ice. Consequently, we had a very poor ice road and were unable to use any type of motorized vehicle on it other than a snowmobile for quite a while.



Ice Road

As January came to Raquette Lake, so did warming temperatures and rain. The warm temperatures actually helped settle the snow and allow the cold to penetrate the ice to make more ice. The colder temperatures created cracks in the ice and water. The water saturated the snow on the top and created more ice, resulting in poor quality ice. It had too many air bubbles in it to have much integrity. It would support people and light equipment, but not much else.

About mid January we were able to put a light duty utility vehicle called a "Mule" on the ice and plow the ice road. Again, we would go back and forth from snow to rain, from warm temperatures to sub zero. The weather was like riding a roller coaster. We would have snow and then we wouldn't. At times the ice road would be covered with six inches of water. On one weekend the rain came from the south; then the wind shifted to the northwest and temperatures began to fall. The strong northwest wind pushed all the rain on top of the ice into our back bay. We actually had white caps and 20 inches of water. The ice auger, used for ice fishing, was put into action to drill a number of holes in the ice so the water could return to the lake. The remaining water froze in small waves and created a ripple effect.

Then the winds blew in from the south accompanied by rain again! Wind gusts registered 63 mph on the weather station located in the Fuge Dining Hall. Branches and trees were falling all over. The power went out and remained out for more than 12 hours. Fortunately, none of the trees fell on the buildings here at Camp Huntington. After a major wind storm in 1997, the College converted all the overhead power lines at Camp Huntington to underground.



Tree Down at Camp Huntington

It was a tremendous undertaking, but one that has saved us many times.

One of the most discussed subjects in the north country is

"ice out." The big question is, "when we will be able to boat again"? I think we are all in agreement that ice out could be earlier this year, but Mother Nature is the one who will decide. We all look forward to the ice leaving because it is a long, and sometimes wet, hike through the Silver Beach Swamp. A five-mile hike will then become a 10-minute boat ride to the Antlers.

Most of us here feel that if we're scheduled for winter, bring it on! We are ready for it and actually look forward to the snow and cold temperatures. I certainly hope that winter returns in 2007, and I am sure all our winter guests or groups would feel the same.

## ONONDAGA - CORTLAND - MADISON BOCES



New Visions Students

Three New Visions Environmental Science Classes from Central New York visited Camp Huntington this past winter. New Visions is an immersion program for high school seniors funded by BOCES. The classes are held off campus and out of a high school setting. New Visions brings students directly to the world of work. Tim Sandstrom's Cortland class is based at the Tunison Laboratory of Aquatic Science. Melinda Shime's class is housed on the SUNY ESF campus and Ann Moore's program meets at the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District Office in Auburn. All three classes met at Camp Huntington to pursue environmental objectives identified by their instructors.

The students and staff participated in traditional Adirondack outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The group hiked Goodnow Mountain and Rondaxe Mountain. They also took part in a limnology exercise on Raquette Lake. Their activities were topped off by the sauna and a dip in the lake. All students agreed they had a "new vision" of winter in the Adirondacks! Future plans for Camp Huntington may include representatives from other New Vision programs in New York State.

The BOCES programs were also joined by Jim Barry's Homer School Science Club on that special weekend. The groups all coordinated transportation with Mr. Barry.

## PICTURES WORTH THOUSANDS OF WORDS...

If over the years you have taken some pictures of your visits to Antlers, Camp Huntington or the Kirby Camp, we are looking for you. In an effort to preserve SUNY Cortland's history of our facilities, we are gathering documents and pictures. If available, pictures should be dated and have listed the names of people in the photographs. Please do not send your entire collection, just a few that share sentiment of the time you spent there. We will have books at each facility with the pictures in them for you to peruse on your next visit.

