



Notes from the Briar Patch

Delaware Valley
Orienteering Association

Fall/Winter 2008

Vol. 31 Issue 2



What DVOA Means to Me

There is something I have been wanting to say for some time about DVOA as an association, club, organization, brotherhood, sisterhood, institution or whatever it is that we have become. I almost attempted saying this while we were honoring the Ringos at an Annual Meeting. Let me try this out on you now.

It is this: DVOA represents, for me, the absolute BEST in collective human endeavors. I do not mean that we are saving the world or operating altruistically, but that our basic level of volunteerism, friendliness, lack of politics, cooperation and can-do-ism is extraordinary.

I also do not mean that we are perfect, but when I compare DVOA to other such associations—church, work, school, local/state/federal politics, clubs and all the other aggregations of human beings brought together for some collective purpose—I find DVOA to be far superior. This has been true, for me, for years; and I find the longevity of DVOA's vital spirit to be astonishing. Pondering why this has occurred has led me to consider a number of factors. At first, I thought orienteers are a uniquely intelligent and nice bunch, brought together for a common interest. Why would things not work out perfectly?

Then I realized that there are other orienteering clubs and that none of them has attained the same level of sustained success. It must be something else. I thought it might be the "Ringo Factor": DVOA's long-term nurturing by Kent and Caroline, two folks who welcomed, uncritically, anyone who wanted to orienteer or help in any way. I considered the "Frank Syndrome": acceptance of unstinting and endless responsibility for promoting DVOA and orienteering in general by Mark and Mary.

Worth adding to the mix is the "Weyman Determinant": Eric's relentless search for places to orienteer and the

coordination of all the complex aspects of making the maps on which DVOA relies and now takes for granted. Or how about the annual "Scott Manifestos": when Ed demands, pleads, organizes and eventually staffs our numerous meets? Or the "Fillebrown Acumen," when we needed a volunteer to learn about and incorporate e-punching into the mix and Sandy raised her hand? Or the "Shaw Magic," when Kent said abracadabra to his computer, over and over again, for years, and created the world's best website?

The only problem with this reasoning is that it would require dozens of names and thousands of additional words to complete; and it would still inevitably leave out others who have contributed much to DVOA's success: the officers who guided us, the newsletter editors, photographers, mappers, course setters and meet directors and the volunteers who register, start, finish and pick up controls at meets, and many others.

I am flummoxed by my inability to figure this out and to apply useful conclusions to other human associations, so I will fall back on this simplicity: that DVOA's remarkable success as an organization involving imperfect humans is the result of everything discussed above: the niceness and intelligence of orienteers in general, the amazing long-term commitments of a very special few DVOAers, and hard work and assistance by many, many others.

This is my opinion: DVOA-land is a unique place, filled with special people who come together occasionally to accomplish exceptional things. Let us count our blessings that we are part of this magic. Let us find ways to pass it on. Let us find the words to thank those who do their share. Let us never fail to thank the meet registrars and starters who sit shivering in the wind, the course setters for the days spent in our behalf and the meet directors for raising their hands. And let us find a special thanks for those who have done so much more than their share. Thanks for listening.

Hugh MacMullan III

A great big THANK YOU!

In the last issue I bemoaned the fact that the reason the *Briar Patch* has declined in frequency was due to a lack of original material.

With the posting of event results on our website, there was no need to include them in the newsletter; that reduced content by half. And with the advent of the e-board and the opportunity for event directors to post thank-yous and other notes immediately, there was a further drop-off in submissions as event write-ups started to go the way of the passenger pigeon.

But my plea for help brought noticeable results.

The first big **THANK YOU** goes to Dasha Babushok. Even though her career path has taken her out of DVOA's environs, she wanted a way to support the club. Luckily for me, she chose to take on the role of article wrangler; the number of original articles in this issue of the *Briar Patch* can attest to her efforts.

The second big **THANK YOU** goes to those of you who submitted articles for this issue. Please keep up the good work! Which means I (and Dasha!) will be looking for more good work from you!

The third big **THANK YOU** goes to Caroline Ringo and Jean O'Connor, who have continuously submitted material to the newsletter.

My last big **THANK YOU** goes to everyone out there who is getting material—articles, essays, training tips, photos, event write-ups—ready for the next issue of the *Briar Patch*, which will come out sometime this spring.

To submit material, please send an e-mail to me at njsharp@aol.com.

Nancy Sharp
Editor, Briar Patch

DVOAers' Adventures Abroad

Sweden, Here We Come!

By Janet Porter



Corinne & Janet Porter in front of the Royal Palace in Stockholm

Ever since Corinne went overseas with Tom Moran back in 1998, I have wanted to go to Sweden to orienteer. I always thought I would get there someday, but suddenly late last year I realized that a window of opportunity had opened, and I decided to jump on through. It was when I was doing the Junior Team budget for 2008 for the board meeting at the 2007 US Champs in VA that I realized that the 2008 Junior World Orienteering Championship was going to be in Gothenburg, Sweden.

I first thought that I would take a group of juniors to the Spectators races at JWOC, but I was told by Corinne and other juniors that the juniors would have a better experience at the O-Ringen. Then at the US Champs, I talked with Tom Hollowell about taking Juniors overseas and to the O-Ringen; he had just been hired by as the executive director of O-Ringen. So from then on our trip was to O-Ringen.

There were chances to orienteer overseas this summer for six weeks straight, but there was no way I could afford that much time off work. So after a number of emails to different juniors and their families who were interested in going on the trip, we decided on a couple of options for the juniors to choose from with hopes of getting as many of them as possible to go.

We decided that because of the choices, there would be a couple of dif-

ferent chaperones. The Childs family from Vermont was going to the Spectators Race at JWOC, the Fin 5 and then the O-Ringen with an open week between JWOC and the Fin 5. Susan Kuestner from Seattle was going to the Spectator Races at WOC, which was the same week as the Fin 5; a group of juniors from the JWOC team were going with

her. Both of these groups were leaving Sweden and coming back for the O-Ringen, which increased the cost of the trip.

Since I really wanted to spend time visiting with Birgitta (an au par who had been a part of our club back in 1999-2000) and her family while over there, Corinne and I decided that our group would stay in Sweden for the entire time. This would also offer a bit cheaper trip to the juniors who were working with a tighter budget. Tom Hollowell had offered to do a week-long training camp for the USA juniors in conjunction with his Swedish club's mini five-day event the week between JWOC and the Fin 5/ WOC event week.

My group decided to start our trip with the training camp, spending the second week visiting Birgitta and her family at the beginning of the week, sightseeing in Gothenburg and ending the week in Oslo, Norway, before going to the O-Ringen.

We left on July 5 and returned on July

27. The group that stayed with Corinne and me was small, but that gave us a chance to really get to know each other. Alison Campbell flew with me from JFK in NYC, and we met up with Huw Stradling from Seattle in Amsterdam before ending our flight in Stockholm. Corinne flew from BWI in Baltimore to Philly, where she just barely (ask her about it sometime) met up with John Williams from Georgia, and we met up with them in Stockholm.

We spent two days sightseeing in Stockholm before driving (oh, yeah, that's another story to ask Corinne about: driving in a foreign country with her mom, a very tired and poor navigator). Anyway, after Stockholm, we drove to Karlstad to join up with the rest of the juniors coming from JWOC to the training camp that Tom was holding for all of us. The drive to Karlstad was fine; finding the club house for OK TYR, Tom's Swedish club, which is where we were staying for the week was another story, and again it was mostly my fault as I hadn't gotten good directions from Tom before he went on vacation.

The week was spent with Tom holding a training exercise in the morning for

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Tom Hollowell (far right) provides instructions to Juniors during a training event in Sweden.

DVOAers' Adventures Abroad

My Adventurous Trip to Deaf-O in Denmark

By Tracy Acuff

When one writes of an orienteering experience overseas, one would likely describe the occurrences during an orienteering course; however, just the overseas trip itself can be quite daunting and an incredible tale to share.

Last year, I joined the U.S. Deaf Orienteering Team to attend the Nordic-Baltic Deaf Orienteering Championship in Horsens, Denmark.

I'd made my own flight reservations after my team had already made theirs two months earlier. Five planes, a bus, a train, 2 km by foot, a playground fort, short night-time and hours upon hours of delay were what it took for me to get there. It should have taken me just three planes and two buses, if everything had gone smoothly. As it turned out, a three-hour delay from Boston to Manchester, England during the second leg of my journey was the cause of a chain of events beyond my imagining.

When my plane departed from Baltimore a half hour late, I should have known I'd be facing an unusual adventure. The Boston Airport was so huge that I had to run from one end of Terminal C to get to the other end of Terminal A in time to catch my next plane. I got to the gate as passengers were boarding.

For the first time in my life, I got to use my passport and go through customs. Next thing I knew, we sat stewing on the runway for an hour and a half. Then the plane dragged its tail back to the gate because of an air conditioning malfunction. We got off the plane and had to wait another hour for a different plane. Because we got off the plan, we had to go through the passport process once again in order to reboard. Tick tock, another half hour later, we were finally airborne; thus a three-hour delay to Manchester, resulting in my missing the next plane to Billund, Denmark.

Thankfully, before landing, I had enough sense to ask a flight attendant about my next flight, which had already departed. An escort who was waiting for me when I got off the plane led me through the maze of the Manchester air-

port, one of the worst airports I've ever seen. Luckily, the airport personnel were nice and helped me to make new arrangements for the next leg. As it turned out, there were no more direct flights to Billund that day. They had to reroute me to Copenhagen, Denmark. Ugh!

In Copenhagen, I had to wile away several hours before the next flight. The CPH airport has got to be one of the cleanest, simplest and best structured airports I've ever seen. I felt like I was in an Ikea store with its simple furniture, wooden floors and the barest necessities.

It was approximately 8:30 p.m. when I finally in Billund, 8 ½ hours later than originally planned. The place was practically deserted on that late Sunday evening. I knew I needed to take a bus to Horsens, but I could not read Danish. I asked a bus driver who spoke some accented English, but couldn't write it. Believe me, you do not want to try lip reading someone speaking English with a foreign accent.

There were no more buses going directly to the Horsens station. After some further haggling, the bus driver suggested I take a bus to Vejle instead, then take a train to Horsens. I wanted to hug that driver, but I had to rush out to catch that very bus leaving for Vejle within five minutes. A passenger on the bus who had overheard my earlier conversation with the driver offered his assistance to find the next train to Horsens. As wary as I was of this total stranger, I couldn't say 'no'. That kind stranger was a godsend! As soon as the bus arrived in Vejle, the godsend guided me into the station and purchased me an e-ticket without allowing me to pay him back. Then he guided me to a train that departed just moments later with instructions to get off at the next stop.

By the time the train pulled into my final destination, it was 11:15 p.m. and the sun had just gone down. From there, I was to take a city bus to the hostel where I'd made a reservation. As my



US Deaf Orienteering Team

luck would have it, the station was practically deserted, and no more city buses were running. Luckily, before I'd left home, I printed a map of the city, and I tackled the last 2 km on foot. Twenty-five hours after I departed from Baltimore with barely a wink, I trudged up to the doors of the hostel. Yeahhh!

Poor me, those doors were locked. And did anyone answer my knocks? No. The hostel was located on the outskirts of town and next to a beautiful bird sanctuary. I didn't know of any other places to stay, and I was too weary to go any further, so I decided to sleep on the floorboards of a playground fort about 20 meters from the hostel. It seemed safe enough and not exactly something I haven't done before; however, I didn't know of the perils Mother Nature had to offer.

Such chills I fought for the next few hours in between winks. The temperature must have dropped into the 40s, and it didn't matter how many clothes I pulled out of my travel pack to cover myself, as well as place on those dratted floorboards; I could find no comfort. Minutes crept by at a snail's pace, until about 4:15 a.m., barely a half hour after

the sun had risen, I finally gave up trying to get some sleep. I repacked, hid my bags, then spent a breathtaking two hours as I hiked and explored the marvelous bird sanctuary behind the hostel.

Wildlife was abundant. The most bizarre things I saw were the zillions of black slugs and gigantic snails as big as my hand slurping across trails and crawling up tall grasses. I was startled by a gray fox that crossed my path while I stared at some cows grazing nearby with no fence to be seen. I was pleased to meet up with some rather small deer here and there. I was startled by a pheasant out of underbrush, which I understand is a rare opportunity. Even though I had quite an eventful journey to Denmark, the amazing morning hike couldn't have been more refreshing than a few hours in a strange bed. It was truly a blessing in disguise.

Upon my return to the hostel, the front door was still locked, but I was able to get inside through a side door of the guest kitchen. I busied myself with tourist materials in the lobby until the manager arrived and apologetically informed me that a key was left for me on the office counter; it was still there when we checked. The door to the office was supposed to have been left open when she left, but it somehow locked itself after she left the night before. I was waived the first night's fee and given a free breakfast to make up for the unfortunate welcome. I took a much-needed nap until the rest of my U.S. Deaf-O team arrived from Ireland that afternoon.

Today, I feel blessed as I look back at this wacko journey and realize how things could have been much worse. I have little doubt that God sent an angel or two to watch over me and see me safely to the hostel through such bizarre circumstances. I don't know very many hearing people who would travel alone like I have, let alone another deaf person. I am amazed that I didn't fall apart before the remainder of the week was over, for there were yet more unforeseen glitches for me to deal with.

Now let's talk about orienteering itself, where I was placed in the wrong

class all week long, rather than in the F40+ class I was supposed to be. Every day, the event director kept telling me that the mistakes were being taken care of, and that I no longer had to worry about the next event, yet those efforts failed.

Nevertheless, I did enjoy mingling with many deaf orienteers who came from 15 other countries, learning about some of their signs, cultures, ways of life and so forth. It's amazing how so many different countries can overcome barriers by being able to communicate with each other through our creative gestures and similar signs. The terrain in that part of Denmark was quite different as well, with flat land, hordes of man-made irrigation ditches and tall windmills. What wasn't so different were the orienteering events themselves, where I felt at home, even though I had many first-time experiences with my first relay, my first sprint and so much more.

The trip back home was less eventful, even though it was not without a few obstacles. The airport personnel at Billund airport were unable to find my e-ticket within their computer system, thus forcing me to wait in the uncomfortable lobby all night long until the following morning when the British Airway office opened and found my ticket, which got misplaced due to the reroutes I had to endure previously on my way there. However, once that was straightened out, I had time to do some last-minute, tax-free shopping before making an uneventful flight back home. Jet lag was a bigger challenge to face after touching back on American soil, but I made it back home in one piece.

Thanks again for all your advice, financial support, uniform loans and so forth to make this wonderful opportunity possible. Perhaps, this was a test and preparation for getting me ready to attend the Deaflympic next year and may my next overseas orienteering story be less of an ordeal.

Tracy Acuff

Junior Trip to Sweden

(Continued from page 3)

spectives. I am no longer nervous about jumping from having nine people in my category to over 100, which at first was quite daunting, let alone seeing hundreds of people out in the woods that aren't even on your course. Plus Europeans do things slightly differently. Walks to start are longer, finish chutes are bigger, courses are harder, and terrain is more challenging. Being exposed to all of this will greatly help any junior and inspire you to train harder. It has fired me up with a personal goal to make the US JWOC team.

Orienteering in Sweden was a dream come true as I have wanted to go for years. This trip was such a blast and an experience I will never forget. We built so many new friendships and strengthened existing ones among the US juniors, and with juniors from other countries as well, which I thought was pretty cool. An exciting part is that these friendships continue through keeping contact through the Internet, including armchair training and attackpoint discussions. It really is a small world.

Another thing I noticed was the bond between DVOA members. There were only a few of us in Sweden, but still everyone made sure to say hi to each other each day. We met up with Sandy Fillebrown and Clem McGrath at O-Ringen, and every day each of them asked me how my course went and offered advice. Other Americans did that as well, but with DVOA members, it felt more like a family. I got very excited to see Clem compete in the World Cup at O-ringen! So I would like to thank Janet, Corrine, Sandy, and Clem for being a family for me this summer, and to DVOA as a whole for being a great and supportive club.

Alison Campbell started orienteering competitively in 2002 at QOC's US Championships, and has been a member of DVOA for about 16 years. Alison and her father John have volunteered at numerous local events, and has recently helped to organize the Junior NW A-meet. Alison is a member of the DVOA Junior Team. She lives in Philadelphia and is a student at the Science Academy. Alison's favorite non-orienteering activities include cross country, photography, and reading.



Tracy Acuff tries out local 'head gear'

Event Reports

Clash with the Creek by Ralph Tolbert

No, this is not a creek-crossing experience that went bad during an orienteering event, as the title might suggest. Clash with the Creek is the name of the Adventure Race held each of the past four years at Brandywine Creek State Park. As far as adventure races go, it's considered a beginners event. There are four categories of two-person teams: male-male, female-female, mixed double and parent-child.

The race begins and ends at the Hawk Watch parking lot. The two-person teams begin a 5-km bike ride around a marked trail heading towards Thompsons Bridge parking area. There teams switch from bikes to canoes for a two-kilometer paddle down and back on the Brandywine. This portion of the race tends to spread the field out significantly. Once the paddle portion is completed, teams scramble up to the parking lot and grab an orienteering map and punch card (DVOA's role in the race).

For the first two years of DVOA's involvement, participants followed one of two different courses back to the starting point. This year I tried another format for the orienteering portion: Score O. Twenty controls were placed on or near the trails between the Brandywine and the parking lot. Each team has to find ten of the 20 controls on their way back to the Hawk Watch parking area.

This last format proved to be the most popular version with the participants, so it will be repeated with some changes for the 2009 edition of Clash with the Creek. The race is limited to 40 teams because of the number of canoes available. If you've thought about doing an Adventure Race, this would be a great introduction to the sport. Also, this is the one time of the year that bikes are allowed on the trails in the park. Registration is managed through the state park office; the race is usually scheduled in June.



Ralph Tolbert joined DVOA in 1995. He has served as past president and as course setter for numerous local and A-events. Other interests include running, biking, trap shooting and various home-improvement projects.

Fair Hill/Little Egypt and Camp Horseshoe Events by Ralph Tolbert

Fair Hill/Little Egypt and Camp Horseshoe: two different maps, two different venues. But are they all that different? I got to thinking about this after setting courses and holding events recently on both of these maps – July for Fair Hill and October for Camp Horseshoe.

I'll start by comparing the maps themselves and looking at the common ingredients that show up on the paper. I should note that one of the significant connections between the venues has an historical theme: the Mason-Dixon Line runs through both. The 200+ pound limestone monuments that these two intrepid surveyors put in place every mile along the line show up on both maps. Just imagine getting these monuments in place back in the 1700s, when many of the roads we have in place didn't exist!

Okay, enough of the historical perspective, more about the maps and terrain.

The first obvious feature visible on each map is a stream. The headwaters of the Christina River flow north to south on the Little Egypt map, and on the Horseshoe map, your eye is quickly drawn to the Octoraro Creek, again flowing roughly north to south.

You can also count on seeing an abundance of wildlife while you wander around these venues, including: deer, fox, numerous song birds, and birds of prey, including an occasional glimpse of a bald eagle, which is always exciting to see.

Another aspect of holding events on these two venues I really enjoy is working with the staff that manages the park and camp. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources staff is great to work with and works hard to accommodate our event

needs. This also applies to the Camp Horseshoe Ranger staff. After just one phone call, I was given the key to the gate and permission to wander all over camp to complete my field work.

Now to the differences (if you consider them differences). For this comparison I'm looking at the areas used for courses. The open areas at Fair Hill are larger and come into play frequently during course design. Next, the lack of rock features in the Little Egypt area of Fair Hill compared to the abundance at Horseshoe also presents a noticeable difference. And for anyone who did a course at both events, there is more obvious climb at Horseshoe than the venue I used at Fair Hill. The Christina River is easily crossed in many places at Fair Hill but not so with the Octoraro, which has many deep pools of water and slippery rocks underfoot as well as unpredictable water levels due to the lake/dam further upstream. As for the orienteer's favorite area to see on a map (white woods), I have to give the edge to Camp Horseshoe, albeit a slight one.

One thing I can always count on being the same no matter where I design courses and direct events is the help of fellow DVOAers. Prior to the event, several people mentioned they could help and, as always on the day of the event, several more people stepped up and helped out. Here, in no particular order and not comparing which venue they helped at, are the helpers for the Fair Hill and Horseshoe events – thank you all!

Ali Bortz, Fred and Bailey Reed, Dayne Thatcher, Tom (rode his bike to Fair Hill!) Overbaugh, Tracy (always willing to help) Acuff, Mary Frank, Scott Thatcher, Karl (Doc) Alshwede, Robert Frank, Mark Frank, Dawn Singerly, Nancy Sharp, Harvey Lape, Bob Gross, Phyllis Wood, Ron Wood, Steve Mones. Apologies to anyone I overlooked.

Quail Hill Scout Camp Orienteering Day

by Bob Rycharski (Event Director)

Thanks to those who helped out at Manalapan, NJ on Oct. 26: Jim Puzo, Jerry Smith, Kathy and Dave Urban, Ron Mavus, Roger Hartley, Dan and Zak Barker, and many DVOA and Scout volunteers.

Weather: Sunny and lower 60s, perfect for fall hiking in NJ!

I had about 160 Scouts and 90 DVOA or other club walk-on hikers attend this annual Manalapan event. Results can be found on the club's website. We had quite a turn out. We came within two cars of filling the primary parking lot at Quail Hill BSA Camp, but had room for all (thanks to our Scout leader from T132/140 parking lot attendants).

Bob Burg presented some fantastic e-punch courses, and of course White and Yellow map hike/courses to boot. We had a small administrative error on the longer Yellow course: the circle on #8 flag was placed 1/4 km to the west and not discovered until about 10:45 a.m. (by finishers telling), when Bob B corrected all the remaining maps. Sorry about that.

Amazingly, Scouts (Troop 140) who won first on this course did so *with* the map/flag error; they just kept circling and searching until they found it. On White and Orange Courses, other Scouts had no such difficulty. On the Yellow Short course, local MAST High Schoolers Team A nipped a Troop 140 team 3 for first (only three seconds difference). On Orange, M35 Juergen Lunkwitz and M14, Zac Barker, finished 1-2 with only two seconds separating them; well done. First Scouts on orange were team of Scout Richard Y Ebright (T252) and Peter Azzisa (T70), and Ron Mavus breezed through the Brown course for the easy first. Tim Bellis aced the Green course. On Red, the usual suspects had a dual map, with 1st and 2nd courses pre-marked, but due to using e-punch the order was maintained. Hugh MacMullan IV outraced Karl Ahlswede by more than three minutes for Red course DVOA honors.

We had a fine event. This will be the last year we meet in Pima Picnic grove (it will be closed), and we will book another, even better picnic area in the center of camp next year (it has more parking lot space).

Every one had a great time, and I thank all the meet workers, especially Kathy Urban and Dan Barker e-punch unit and computer workers, Jerry Smith for drafting the event patches and all who walked on and pitched in as Start and Finish workers, as it was a bit under staffed for the mid-day registration and rush. But a few Scout leaders and DVOAers pitched in, and we got stuff done. Good thing I staggered the Scout unit arrivals (starts), so it was at least a bit manageable at the starting line. Our Scout patches (triangular with DVOA stitched on them) were delivered a bit late (five days), but I hope to mail them out before Thanksgiving to all the Scout unit leaders. FYI: When you place the Washington Crossing SP DVOA event patch next to the Quail Hill patch, the full design of a typical O Flag (OJ and White panel) can be seen.



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Sweden, Here We Come

the 12 juniors and the five adults attending the camp, us cooking our main meal of the day in the early afternoon; then relaxing at the clubhouse or spending a few hours sightseeing in Karlstad before competing in the evening in the mini five-day. At the end of the week, we split up, going in three different directions before getting together again one week later at the O-Ringen.

Our group had a great time visiting Birgitta and her family down in southern Sweden near the Baltic Sea. We did some great sightseeing and orienteering training and enjoyed four days of great homemade Swedish meals. One day we orienteered on the dunes by the Baltic, where the course ended on the beach. We then had a packed lunch on the beach while the juniors braved the very cold Baltic (about 60 degrees) for a quick dip to be able to say that they swam in the Baltic Sea.

The climax of our trip was the O-Ringen and what a climax it was! Just the organization of the entire event was incredible. Over 24,000 competitors to get from the housing area, which was very spread, out, to the staging areas and back again for five straight days. Then there was the bus line from the housing areas to the main event center for all kinds of nightly entertainment for all ages. Add to this food stores for 30,000 to shop at daily, laundry facilities and a number of other services too many to name. Except for a few busing problems the first day, everything seemed to go like clockwork for most of us. The orienteering was excellent and challenging and a great experience for all of us. It was really sad when the last day rolled around entirely too fast.

I hope that this article will make all of you want to learn more about this trip and possibly give serious consideration to planning a trip of your own in the near future. Corinne, Alison and I want to share our trip with all of you at the DVOA winter meeting in January, and we hope that Clem and Sandy will join us to include their experiences at WOC and the O-Ringen Academy. See you then.

Janet Porter started orienteering in 1993 at a Girl Scout training weekend taught by Linda Eck, and has been an active DVOA member for 14 years. She has volunteered and served as an Event Director at numerous DVOA events. She and her husband Denny have been teaching beginners to orienteer at the DVOA annual Hickory Run Training Camp for many years. Janet is a USOF Junior Team leader, and has been organizing junior training events and junior trips to Europe for orienteering. She and Denny often organize fundraising events for the Junior Team. Janet lives in Red Hill, PA. Her favorite non-orienteering activities include skiing, camping and swimming.

Contributor Bob Rycharski lives in Wanaque, NJ. Bob joined DVOA about ten years ago. He typically runs Green and Brown O courses and likes to occasionally set courses for DVOA events in New Jersey and. His favorite maps are Quail Hill BSA camp (DVOA, Manalapan, NJ), Forest Park, Queens and Holmdel Park (both HVO). His hobbies include promoting orienteering to NJ and NY based Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America; he also is a member of the Model HO Railroad Club. He also promotes orienteering at camporees and other GS or BSA camps/Scout activity open houses upon request; he can also re-"roof" lean-to's as a local Scout repair organizer and camp-master (his other hobby).

A Day or Two in the Medieval Forest of Elk Neck

by Tracy Acuff, Event Director & Course Setter

This being my second time directing a DVOA event, I found Elk Neck to be a stimulating challenge. First of all, every time I step into this park, I've always felt like I was being spun back into the days of Robin Hood, with its many hanging vines, magical green grass deep in the forest and reentrants galore. I can't help but expect a peasant to sneak up from one of the reentrants or a brave knight on a horse to gallop down one of the obscure trails. So, shall we draw out our bow and arrows, oops—reliable compasses—on this mighty beautiful, autumn day on top of Chesapeake Bay?

Responsibilities for this event were far greater than for my first directed event at Camp Rodney last year. Ralph Tolbert and Ron Wood made the Camp Rodney event seem like a piece of cake in comparison to this year, with their pre-planned and drawn course maps ready before I had a chance to ask for assistance. This year was a bit trickier; at the Winter Meeting; I agreed to allow John Campbell to design the courses for Elk Neck. Months later I followed up with John, only to learn that he would not be available during that weekend. Yikes! We did manage to work out a compromise, in which he would design the map courses, and we met one weekend to check out all the features and make the necessary changes for the final drafts.

Before this could be done, I had to find out who had the Elk Neck maps, retrieve them and somehow get a few of them to John. After vetting the courses and coming up with our final drafts, I also learned that I needed to find someone to overprint them as well. Oh geez, I never realized how much work was involved in preparing, designing, vetting and printing out these course maps.

Then there were the clue sheets to make, which included the need to go back to Elk Neck to check out some of the features to find out the height of a boulder, knoll or rootstock, depth of a pit, best place for controls in the various reentrants, and directions for placements of controls. Before this was over, I could feel a few corkscrews coming loose; yet Ralph, who willingly overprinted the maps and clue sheets, and I got this all down pat. Halleluiaah!

Crunch time came just days before the event, which involved picking up the event kit from the previous director and setting up delivery of overprinted maps. Once I got the maps, it was quite a chore to cut out clue sheets, glue them onto appropriate maps, fold them and insert them into plastic sleeves. Grudgingly, my kids helped me prepare a few sets of course maps in between their homework and free time.

I checked the file box from the kit and found that all the necessary papers for registration, start and finish seemed to be in order. All I had left to do was to get the multitudes of controls, pin punches, and e-punch boxes to their designated sites in the woods, which was the most physical task of all.

Friday came as a fairly gray overcasted and muggy day, when I made my first effort to set controls in the farthest, most remote locations. As I tried to find the site for the 11th control, it became obvious that my zest was flagging while I ran circles seeking the dratted knoll no longer waving its neon pink ribbon. Thankfully, Billy Allaband came to my rescue the very next morning and found it under a huge mesh of fallen branches. All day long through the muggy, drizzling rain, we trudged through the challenging terrain to set controls for 44 more sites, completed seven hours later. Needless to say, I could hear my bathtub calling me home to soak my bone-tired body in a hot mass of bubbles.

By Sunday morning, the Chesapeake Bay welcomed a bright crisp day with a few autumn leaves still lingering in the air before its last farewell. Old and new orienteers came in droves to take advantage of this marvelous day on the bay. Luckily for all, the tide was out during peak time, allowing advanced runners to cross the awesome strip of sandbar for a shorter route to their controls, which had to be quite a sight to behold.

All in all, the courses were challenging, and were greatly appreciated by those who dared to come all the way down to this neck of woods, even though sightings of elk are part of days long gone by. Regardless, there were excited reports of a red fox, chipmunks, squirrels and deer leaping about. Many fallen

trunks and new rootstocks not noted on a ten-year old map did make the event a bit more interesting; hopefully, the Elk Neck map will be updated within a year or so.

Even though I wore many hats during this event, it would not have been successful without all the assistance tirelessly provided by DVOA volunteers who sacrificed an hour or more:

- Course design & vetting: John & Allison Campbell
- Map overprinting: Ralph Tolbert
- Course setter: Billy Allaband
- Water stops: Dave Urban & Billy Allaband
- Registration: Mary Frank & John Ort
- E-Registration: Kathy Urban & Tom Overbaugh
- Start: Caleb Acuff-Passi
- Finish: Billy Allaband
- Control pickups: Vadim; Dan & Zac Barker; Robert, Mark & Mary Frank, Petr Hartman, Allison Campbell, Michael Forbes & Billy Allaband
- Final Results: Sandy Fillebrown.

I heard many interesting feedback comments, and I thank you all for coming. I look forward to doing this once again sometimes next year. Ho ho ho!

Tracy Acuff had her first taste of orienteering in 2004 at Brandywine. She has been a member of DVOA for two years. Tracy has volunteered at numerous local events, most recently serving as an Event Director for the Elk Neck event. She also oversees the DVOA uniforms.

Since last year, Tracy is a member of the US Deaf Orienteering Team. She represented the USA at the Nordic-Baltic Deaf Orienteering Championship in Horsens, Denmark in 2007, and she has qualified for the summer Deaflympic 2009 in Taipei, Taiwan next year.

Tracy lives in North East, MD, works for North Bay Adventure Program, and teaches ASL evening classes at Cecil College. Her favorite non-orienteering activities include kayaking, reading, disc golf & numerous other outdoor activities.



North American Orienteering Championships

By Daria Babushok and Clem McGrath

Fifty two members of DVOA traveled over 250 miles to compete at the North American Championships (NAOCs), held on the weekend of September 26-28 in upstate New York; this was the best representation of any club.

Runners were greeted with pouring rain, which filled the abundant water features to the brim, mild temperatures and colorful fall foliage. Not deterred by poor visibility, rain and highly technical terrain, many DVOAers showed terrific performances.

The first day of competition featured two sprints and two simultaneous "championships": the NAOCs and the North American Sprint Series Finals. They were held on an existing map re-field checked and drafted to ISSOM standards. Green Lakes State Park in Fayetteville, NY is a fairly conventional developed park on the northeast side of Syracuse.

With a developed road and trail network and fairly discrete blocks of vegetation, the geography was fairly simple. However, the terrain was used well, and it proved to be a very appropriate level of technical and physical challenge for the runners.

The two-sprint format was novel for both the NAOCs and the Sprint Series (an informal but highly competitive series of sprint races held throughout the US and Canada.). The NAOCs would be determined by the total time winner of the two sprints and the Sprint Series champion by the winner of the second. With special start lists and groupings, the whole affair seemed rather complicated, but CNYO got it off without a hitch.

To highlight some of the DVOA performances: in Sprint 1, the fast-paced qualifier Wyatt Riley finished 3rd in M21 category, Dylan Singley and Nathan Ohrwaschel were 2nd and 3rd, respectively in M16, Zach Barker placed 2nd in M14, Chase Thatcher was 2nd in M12, Peter Zakrevski was 2nd in M10, John Campbell was 2nd in M50, Alison Campbell was 2nd in F20, Nikki Singley placed 3rd in F14 and Albina Zakrevski was 3rd in F40. In the second sprint of the day, the official Sprint Series Final: Nathan Ohrwaschel and Dylan Singley were 2nd and 3rd respectively in M16, AJ Riley

was 3rd in M10, Greg Balter was 2nd in M45, John Campbell was 2nd in M50, Alison Campbell was 1st in F20, Nikki Singley was 3rd in F14, and Sandy Fillebrown was 3rd in F50.

The weekend competition moved north, to a region known as the Tug Hill Plateau, or what the residents of Syracuse refer to as the "north country." This area is known for its prodigious lake-effect snows and is one of the snowiest areas in the east. Luckily, early fall weather prevailed, and runners only had to contend with a reasonably warm rain.

The middle event was on a small map of the Salmon River Fish Hatchery in Altmar, NY. This area was notable for the kame and kettle topography and general glacial landforms. Mapped with 2.5 meter contours, it featured many areas with multi-contour depressions, complicated reentrant systems, and a mixed conifer and hardwood forest of very good runability.

In Saturday's tricky middle-distance event, Hunter Cornish placed 3rd in M20 category, Corey Thatcher finished 3rd in M14, Chase Thatcher was 1st in M12, Peter Zakrevski was 3rd in M10, Vadim Masalkov was 1st in M35, Gregory Balter was 1st in M45, Bruce Case was 2nd in M70, Corrine Porter finished 4th F21 overall but was the first American F21, Alison Campbell was 2nd in F20, Katherine Ebright was 2nd in F16, Nikki Singley was 2nd in F14, Albina Zakrevski and Tracy Acuff finished 2nd and 3rd, respectively, in F40 category, and Sandy Fillebrown was 1st in F50.

In a true show of sportsmanship, Dylan Singley, who was having a great race up to that point, came across a kid who was stuck in the mud up to his knees and could not get himself out. Dylan stopped and with the help of another orienteer, pulled the kid out of the mud and worked hard to try to recover the kid's shoe that was hopelessly lost in the bottom of the muddy swamp. The shoe was missing, but the kid still managed to finish his race in a shoe and a sock. Way to go, Dylan!

Sunday's long event was held at Klondike State Forest in West Amboy, NY. This area featured more conventional north-country terrain (less kettles



and kames) with harder running due to marshes, logging and downed trees, and fern cover. It was also technically challenging, with complex contours, mixed visibility and less local relief.

In Sunday's races, Hunter Cornish placed 3rd in the M20 category, Corey Thatcher finished first in M14, Vadim Masalkov was 2nd in M35, Gregory Balter was 2nd in M45, Bruce Case finished 3rd in M70, Alison Campbell was 2nd in F20, Nikki Singley placed 3rd in F14, Sandy Fillebrown was 2nd in F50.

Another notable performance was by the DVOA's own Matt Scott, who now lives and orienteers in New Zealand. Matt won the M21 category in the long-distance race.

To conclude the weekend, many of us gathered at the West Amboy volunteer fire station for lunch, discussion of the weekend, and the award ceremony. It was an exciting event, with a great showing by DVOAers!

Of note, LIDAR (light detecting and arranging) technology was used in preparing the base maps used for both of the weekend. We will be hearing more about this technology in coming years. It can be a very effective tool to create the base map that the field checker uses as a foundation for his work. In areas with conifer cover, LIDAR can be more effective than conventional photogrammetry. Participants spoke very highly of the maps, which reflected great attention to detail by the mapper, good offset printing, and high legibility.

Par For The Course

For many of us, orienteering makes up a large part of our and our families' lives. We love to think about orienteering and to talk orienteering with friends. It is rewarding to put on an orienteering meet and see many happy competitors gathered at the finish sharing their tales from the woods. It is exhilarating to navigate a long leg perfectly and to spike a control. And it is a great feeling to see newcomers to the sport become a part of the DVOA family. Challenging courses, frustrating orienteering mistakes, impassioned discussions of optimal route-choices and their less-than-optimal execution, hours of thought and energy devoted by dedicated DVOAers to course-setting, the ambition of DVOA to perform at its best at the regional and national orienteering meets...these are just some of the things that make orienteering an exciting, challenging and technical sport of a lifetime.

In this issue, we are debuting a new column with a focus on the technical aspects of orienteering and orienteering course-setting, and we welcome contributions and questions along the way.

Leg of the Issue

By Clem McGrath

The Leg of the Issue is a new feature where we will pick notable legs from recent DVOA events and delve into what makes them important or interesting. The first installment is from the recent Hickory Run training weekend. Rob Wilkinson set some fine courses. The one we look at here is control #7 on the red course (it was also leg #8 on blue.) I have made some efforts to annotate the leg here, but due to printing limitations it might be easier to follow along on the DVOA Route Gadget where you can take a look at the other courses and how people did the leg. Sergei Zhyk, who won handily, and Dan and Tom have drawn their routes.

Why notable?

Hickory Run typically is not a place that features long, grand route-choice legs. At the limit, many long legs involve running straight, unless vegetation gets in the way. This leg is one where it is possible to run straight but where there are viable right and leg routes choices. It is also a great leg in the way it forces a change in tempo, direction, and style in the course. This leg is the bridge between spate of precision orienteering and another area requiring constant contact. This leg, however, requires a mix of skills—from route planning, to rough compass, to precise vegetation and contour reading. It maximizes the use of a hard-to-use area of the map by traversing it, and it is used on two different courses. When a course setter devises a great leg like this, it deserves to be used on as many courses as possible.

Execution

As mentioned, there are three main route corridors on this leg. They are denoted as "L" for left, "M," and "R." They each serve as conduits to get runners to the "AP" oval which is where the assault on the attack point will happen. For this leg, I think the actual attack point is the banana-shaped knoll to the NW of the control. To me, the strongest feature in the AP region is the stream junction in the NW part of the oval, or the large spur between the two streams. Luckily, each of the main corridors, L, M, and R, provide a way to get there. The one drawback to R, however, is the need to negotiate the dark green vegetation along the stream. The other routes allow that to be largely ignored.

On the other hand, route R appears to offer a lot of trail running, which is often useful. But, the reality is a little different. Oval A and E are important to look at. Getting to the trail out of control 6 involves going through some amorphous medium vegetation. Even if that is negotiated, the long trail to the

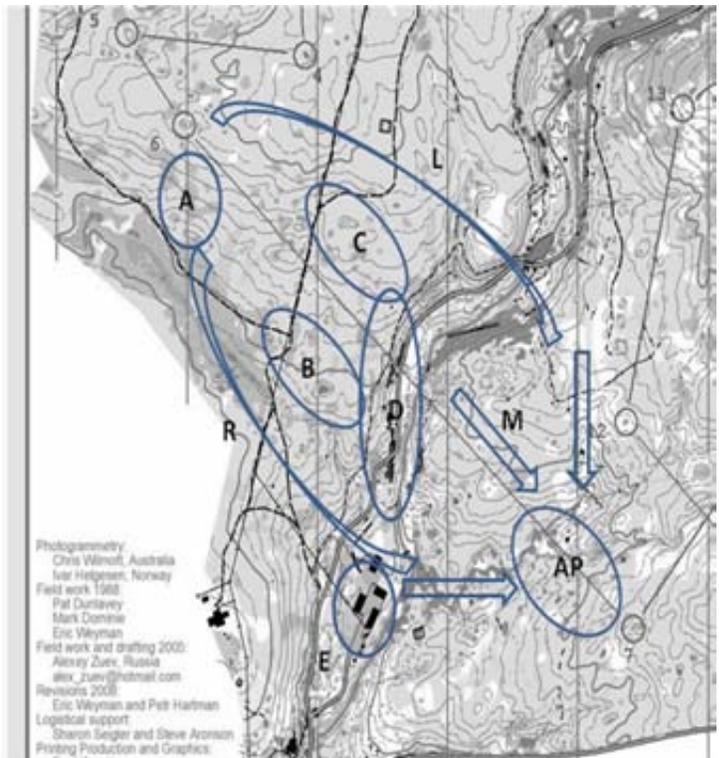
SSE into oval E probably isn't useful either. The area of buildings may be off limits and tricky to negotiate even if allowed. Therefore, the actual right route involves passing between ovals D and E, but without providing a lot of benefits from being on trails. The L route doesn't offer as much trail running (maybe a little on the north edge of oval C), but it does offer easier, intermediate-level orienteering. It would allow the runner to string together orange-level terrain and features the entire way to the AP oval.

For my style of orienteering, the best route is M. It has a little trickier navigation, but it is possible to do this leg close to perfectly straight (as Sergei did.)

One of the keys is to enter oval D in control and use the strong features along the road to prepare to negotiate the area going into the AP oval. To get to D, the more reliable ways would be to go through ovals B or C. They both offer an obvious trail junction starting point and features along the way to D.

Continued on page 11

Find Route Gadget at
DVOA's web site:
Events/Results/
Route Gadget



O-Puzzle by Jean O'Connor

Solution to Mapagrams in last issue: Valley Forge Fatlands, Brandywine Creek, Rocky Ridge, Daniel Boone Homestead, Mount Penn Pagoda, Fort Washington, Nolde Forest, French Creek, Hibernia, Elk Neck State Park. (Questions and comments to opuzzle@ksclick.com)

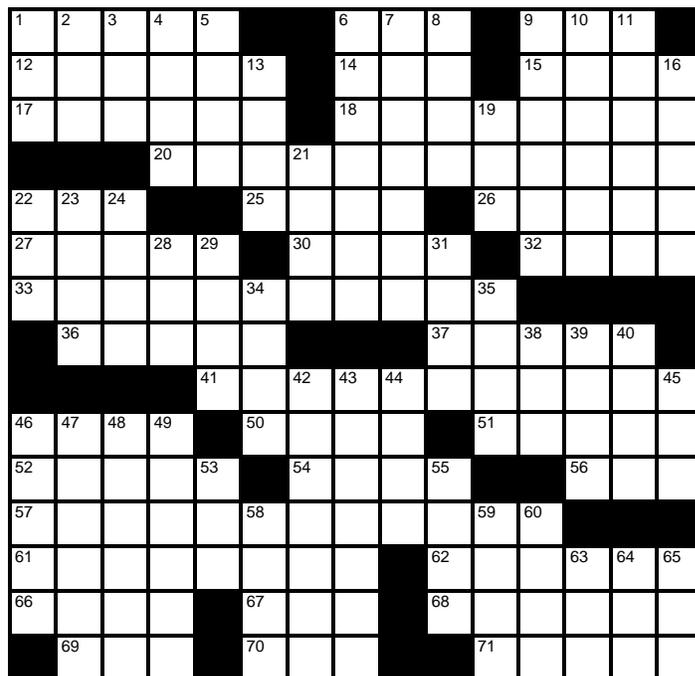
O-Movies**Across**

1. With 33 across, movie about a compass bearing of 337.5 degrees?
6. It would be orange on the map
9. "Who am ___ say?"
12. Make available
14. Picnic pest
15. 60's talk show host Griffin
17. Grand Prix site
18. Cattle gone wild
20. Movie about missing the first control?
22. Photo ___
25. Bakery buy
26. Tire pattern
27. Entity
30. Shoe bottom
32. Start of vision or graph
33. See 1 across
36. Part of SST
37. Cycle
41. Movie about a rewarding control?
46. Collecting Soc. Sec., maybe
50. Surprise attack
51. Reagan attorney general
52. ___ in the arm
54. General ___ chicken
56. Jeanne d'Arc, e.g.: Abbr.
57. Movie about a 1.61 km. advanced course?
61. Alamo victor
62. Flat straw hat
66. Ocean predator
67. Backboard attachment
68. Actor Poitier
69. One of Long John Silver's legs
70. 45 degrees from 1 across 33 across
71. Odds phrase

Down

1. Patriots' org.
2. Mine find
3. Kind of sleep
4. Some are herbal

5. Go after game
6. Not the best seats in the house
7. Authorize
8. What you might get at the beach
9. Significance
10. Medium for 15 across
11. Getting lost in the briars, maybe
13. H.S. junior's test
16. Cape ___ Islands
19. Board of Directors, for example (abbr.)
21. Possible result of bush-whacking through poison ivy
22. Gambler's locale, in brief
23. Sci. class
24. ___-Japanese War
28. Nantes negative
29. Irritant that gets in your shoe while orienteering
31. *Sports Center* channel
34. A prof. is one
35. Abound
38. Color eggs, maybe
39. Gorillas. e.g.
40. Santa checks it twice
42. Consumed at the kitchen table, perhaps
43. Commit a slip of the tongue, perhaps
44. Lakers' Lamar
45. Golf bag item
46. "Midnight Cowboy" role
47. F equivalent
48. From that place
49. GI ID
53. La lead-in
55. Doesn't guzzle
58. Bring home
59. Café au ___
60. Prefix with morph, meaning inner
63. "I'll take that as ___"
64. Game piece
65. Nautical agreement



(Continued from page 10)

Leg of the Issue**Summary**

Leg #7 on red at Hickory Run was a long leg, but it illustrates how it is possible and important to divide long legs into areas, starting with the attack point region. From there, runners can work backwards, identifying routes that favor their strengths and set them up for success. It is important to realize that the longest legs can be divided into manageable chunks and those connected with much easier orienteering.

Clem McGrath is a ~23-year member of DVOA, who had served DVOA as vice-president and trustee over the years. Clem is a long-standing member of the US Orienteering team and represented USA as a member of the Men's USA Orienteering Team in 2006, 2007, and 2008 World Orienteering Championships.

"Notes from the Briar Patch" is DVOA's official newsletter. It is published four times a year and is sent to currently enrolled members. Its purpose is to communicate information and serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions. Articles and letters are welcome and should be sent to the **Briar Patch** editor, who retains the right to print, edit or reject submitted material on the basis of its appropriateness to this publication and space limitations. Send articles to the **Briar Patch** editor, Nancy Sharp, at njsharp@aol.com.

Epunch Update

By Fred Reed

Greetings! For those of you who may not know already, I took over responsibility for managing the club's epunch kit from Sandy Fillebrown earlier this year. As I'm sure just about everyone in the club is aware, Sandy's efforts were critical in taking us from "the early years" of epunch to the mature level of capability in both knowledge and equipment that we enjoy today in DVOA. Thanks, Sandy!

Beyond maintaining that fine legacy, we have expanded the use of epunch this year to the point that it has become the standard rather than the exception for local meets. Doing so has required many people to step up and learn how to operate the equipment and volunteer to help getting the equipment to the right place, ready and operational week after week. Thanks to all of you as well!

So, in a number of ways, this past year is one of transition—between the limited use of epunch enabled by a few experts, to the routine use of epunch enabled by the combined effort of everyone in the club. By next year, I expect we'll fondly (or perhaps not so fondly) be reminiscing about the "good ol' days" of clipboards and punch cards. I hope and expect that there will be plenty more discussion of all these things in the weeks and months to come before the 2009 season begins in earnest, but here are some random items to think about:

Event Directors

The ED has the choice of using epunch or not, and on which courses. The decision to use epunch or not should be getting easier as the barriers continue to fall—in particular, as the availability of experienced helpers continues to grow. It has been the custom to use epunch for only advanced courses at local events, but that too is probably changing. The benefits of epunch for runners (e.g., immediate results and splits) and EDs (e.g., less work in compiling results, no need for the manned start/finish stations) are many. The most significant remaining argument against

using epunch for all runners is that the controls on the easier courses may be more subject to theft and vandalism in certain venues. I am not aware of any empirical evidence to back that up, but we should, as a club, discuss whether or not that is an acceptable risk of doing business.

Because the workload on directors is already high, this past year I've tried to insulate them from finding and scheduling epunch volunteers. Vadim established and I moderate a Yahoo! Group—The Epunch Geek Squad—for organizing interested volunteers and that has



worked well for the most part. My hope and expectation is that the ranks of willing and able epunch volunteers will swell to the point that finding volunteers will be no different than finding someone to collect money at registration or write down map numbers at the finish. I wonder if that will eliminate the need for any special process for organizing epunch helpers, or that maybe we should keep something in place that makes the ED's workload more tolerable.

Epunch workers are wimps—we don't like wind (blows the papers around), sun (makes it hard to see the laptop screen), rain (not good for paper or electrical equipment) and cold (our fingers don't type so fast when we can't feel them). Whenever possible, we ap-

preciate ED's giving some attention to our silly needs...

If moving and/or storing the portable battery is in your hands, please take good care of it. The most important factor in maintaining capacity is minimizing the time the battery remains in a partially discharged state. So, if you are taking the battery home after an event, please remember to put it on the charger as soon as you get home. It is a "smart" charger and can be left on until the battery gets used again.

Course Designers

Most of the experienced designers already know that epunch gives them more flexibility in course design and better use of available area. If you are working on courses, keep that in mind, and see what new and improved ideas you can come up with.

The control boxes are programmed, using the laptop and a master box, to act as whatever control number we want (or as a Start, Finish, etc.). Normally, between events, we do not reprogram them—they stay programmed as they are. Customarily, and to match the set of flags that travel with the epunch kit, we keep a sequence that runs from 31 into the 90s (depending on how many usable controls we have). At present, we start the smaller, easier-to-lug-through-the-woods, red control boxes at #51. However all this is subject to change, and will definitely be different when we add new controls in anticipation of even greater use next year. The bottom line is that there's a relatively constant set of control numbers to work with. If you should happen to use a control number that is currently not programmed, it is very easy to make accommodations in the software and with some tape and marker.

Others have suggested that the final numbered control (aka Go control) be placed near the finish control with no navigation required. It may only be a temporary problem until people get used to epunch, but there has been some con-

fusion where runners believe they are finished when they punch the last control on the control list.

Volunteers

As I said above, my hope is that all club members will see running epunch as part of their communal volunteer obligations and step up to learn something about it. Ninety-nine percent of the time, operating the epunch software is trivially easy. For the other one percent of the time, there is help usually not far away.

If you think you might want to help, let me know, and I'll add you to the Yahoo! Group so you can receive occasional emails that help coordinate the events.

One thing we might do better is cleaning up the results before shipping off to Kent to be posted on the web site. When people's names are misspelled and/or other information is wrong, it takes more time to get the results posted and the rankings recalculated. Some of this problem, however, can be traced to poor information to start with (see first comment below under Runners)

The dreaded re-used rental epunch problem should become a lot less frequent now that we have received a new order of epunches (thanks again, Sandy).

Since the batteries were replaced in the portable power supply, we haven't had any problems making it through a whole event. Prius owners can now safely leave their cars unguarded ;>).

Runners

The single weakest link in the whole epunch process is getting correct personal data into the event software, particularly for rental epunches. If you are filling out the "blue card," please write legibly and fill in all the fields properly—if you don't know, ask.

Or, better yet, splurge and buy your own epunch. Once we get your personal information in the archive, a simple quick punch of the registration box retrieves everything we need (though you may want to confirm things if you are running a different course than usual). With the number of epunch events and the price to rent an epunch both going up, buying rather than renting will become the obvious choice for all but the most occasional runner. It is not only economical for you, but you are helping

the club by reducing the amount of volunteer effort that is required to put on each meet.

OK—so let's review the basic steps:

- Register your epunch (rental or owned) at the epunch table by punching the box labeled "Registration".
- Make sure the personal data entered about you is correct.
- Punch the "Clear" box (may take a few seconds), then the "Check" box (at either the epunch table or near the start).
- Get a map and punch the "Start" box when you are ready to go. There may or may not be someone helping at the start to spread out runners on the same course.
- Punch each epunch box at the controls on your clue sheet—waiting till the box beeps and/or red light flashes. If the box won't respond, use the backup pin punch on your map somewhere and notify the crew at the finish.
- After punching the last numbered control, as quickly as possible punch the "Finish" box.
- Go right to the epunch table and punch the "Download" box and pick up your splits from the printer. It

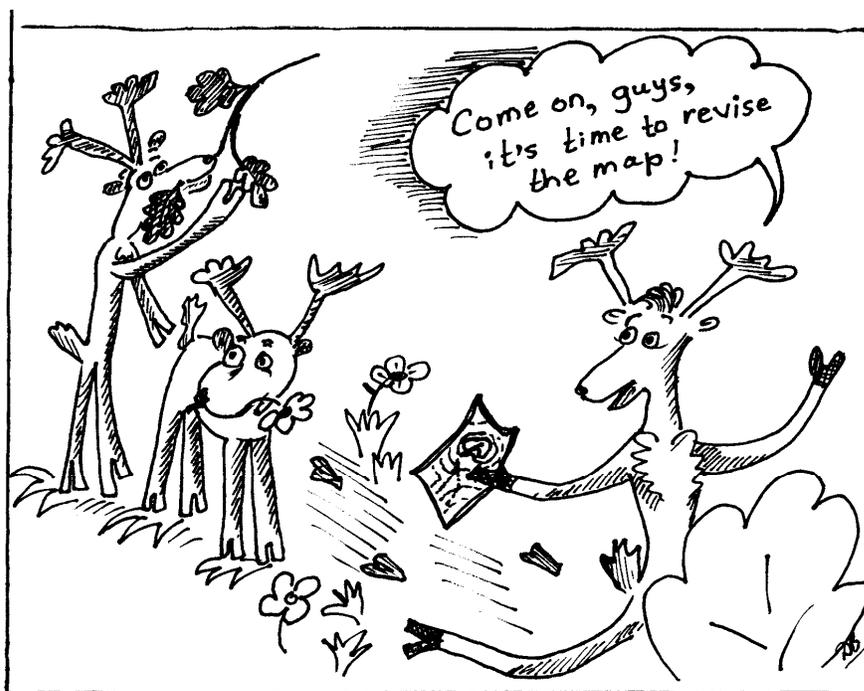
might help to check the splits right then to see if there are any surprises. If you think there is a problem, that would be the time to get it resolved—not days later.

Conclusion

Hopefully, most of you found something useful among all that. Keep in mind that some procedures and/or equipment may change for 2009 as we add to our epunch kit. A significant expenditure was authorized at the summer meeting, but no major purchases have happened yet (my fault...). The intent was to make it easier to have epunch equipment ready every week, but I've also been talking to various people about how to streamline our processes at the same time, which may require different equipment configurations. If you think you can or want to contribute to the "re-engineering" of the meet process based on going all epunch, please let me know as soon as possible. Thanks.

Fred Reed lives in NW Chester County with his wife Ginger and two kids, Sam and Bailey. He works from home, doing product design and software engineering for several small companies. Fred started orienteering regularly about five years ago after he joined DVOA. His "other" sport is golf, and beyond that he likes volleyball and backpacking.

Cartoon by Dasha Babushok



The Most Dangerous Wildlife in the Woods

By Kathleen Geist

If you think that snakes are the most dangerous creatures that you are likely run into in the woods, guess again. Pennsylvania has only three venomous species. One, the Eastern massaguaga, is an endangered species of rattlesnake and is only found in certain marshy areas of western Pennsylvania. The Timber rattler likes wooded hillsides with rock outcrops, which does sound like typical O territory. However, it is not aggressive and is more likely to crawl away from you unless it feels threatened. The Northern copperhead likes a similar habitat to the Timber rattler and also tends to avoid trouble if at all possible. None of Pennsylvania's other snake species are venomous, and most are shy and will flee rather than fight.

Skunks would be unpleasant to run into, but they are nocturnal, so getting sprayed is highly unlikely unless you run into one (literally!) during Night O. If you do run across a mammal that is normally shy or nocturnal, such as a fox, raccoon, or opossum, give them a wide berth if they are behaving abnormally. Fox, raccoon and skunk are the top three carriers of rabies in our area. I did encounter a "mad" raccoon once; it was doing a hunched-back sideways aggression display (like the typical drawing of a Halloween cat) in the middle of the road. I had to stop my car to keep from hitting it and then it attacked my tires! I called animal control, for that "mad" raccoon most likely had either rabies or distemper. Usually, however, raccoon and opossum are more likely to be asleep during the day. If you are lucky, you may see a fox. I saw one once on the high edge of a field at Valley Forge, and it was enjoying sitting out and watching the orienteers running past below.

Turkeys are usually shy, but Tom turkeys (males) can be aggressive. There have been reports of people being pecked or beaten by their wings. I'd recommend moving away from any turkey that makes a move towards you. Most of the time though, you'll see a small flock, and they are quite interesting to watch. Turkeys are very alert, and they are likely to be watching you carefully as they move through the woods. Male White-tailed deer are another creature

that may be aggressive during their mating season, so if an antlered buck makes a move towards you, move away. Their antlers and hooves can do a lot of damage. As with the turkeys, most of the time you see deer, they will be in groups and watching you carefully so they can run away if they think you pose any threat.

Of all the wildlife hazards in the woods, I would rate Lyme-disease-carrying Deer ticks as the most dangerous critter we orienteers are likely to run into. White-tailed deer get a bum rap as the carriers of Lyme ticks and Lyme disease. The truth is, they are a final host and not the reservoir where the ticks pick up the disease. Studies have also shown that cutting down deer numbers may also increase the number of ticks rather than reduce them. The reason: the real mammalian vectors for Lyme disease are those cute little chipmunks and White-footed mice! When there are fewer deer, there are more acorns for these cute little fuzzy guys to eat, and thus more small mammals as potential hosts for Deer ticks. That means you need to be most alert for ticks in any location you see chipmunks, which you are much more likely to see than the shy, nocturnal White-footed mice.

The Deer tick has four life stages: egg, larva, nymph and adult. The larvae will feed once before becoming nymphs, the nymphs will feed once before becoming adults, and the adults will feed once before laying eggs. The favored hosts for tick larvae and nymphs are small mammals; they tend to be skittering by at just the right height for the tick to latch on. A Deer tick larva or nymph has to feed on a Lyme-disease infected chipmunk or mouse in order to be able to transmit the disease – the ticks are not hatched with the disease in their guts. For that reason, you do not have to be paranoid about the difficulty in spotting the tiny larvae. The tick has a two-year life cycle. You are most likely to see larvae (if you can see something that tiny!) in the summer. After becoming

nymphs, the ticks go through a dormant period, so in the fall and winter you are more likely to see adults. Yes, there are ticks—active, and very hungry—in the winter! In the spring, the nymphs are active and looking for their meal, and the adults are laying eggs.

How to protect yourself from these dangerous creatures? One way is to wear bug repellent but not necessarily DEET. Studies are finding many other repellents equal to or better than DEET, which has been linked to some health effects and should not be used on children. If you treat your clothes with Permethrin (which is to be used on clothes only, not on skin), it will kill any tick that crawls on your clothes. The easiest way to protect yourself is to check carefully for ticks after every orienteering event. Look for something the size of a small freckle that has legs or is moving! If it has attached itself, use tweezers to grasp it as close to your skin as possible and pull straight out. You don't want to squeeze it in the middle (and squeeze its stomach contents into you) or to pull it apart, leaving its mouthparts in your skin. I got a nasty infection once (but not Lyme) from accidentally leaving tick mouthparts in my back. It is also a good idea to save the tick in case you develop any Lyme symptoms (which would begin to show up in approximately three to 30 days). My preferred method is to simply tape it down (with clear tape) to an index card, noting the date removed. If you are symptom-free after about a month, throw the card away – unless you like keeping unusual mementoes!

So enjoy the variety of Pennsylvania wildlife you see in the woods while out on your "O" course, and be wariest of the tiny tick!

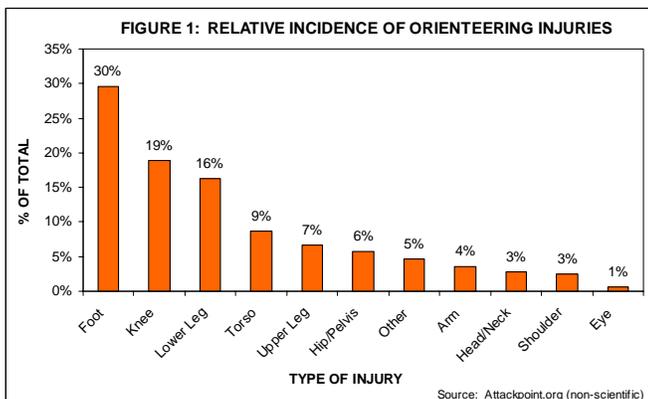
Kathleen and Larry Geist discovered orienteering 10 years ago and have been members of DVOA ever since. Kathleen is a middle-school science teacher; her school is set on the grounds of an environmental center and has an environmental focus. This year Kathleen started an "O" club; she hopes some of her students will eventually come out to DVOA events.



Keep Your Ankles Active!

By Tom Overbaugh

Fortunately, injuries other than scrapes and scratches are relatively rare in orienteering. A non-scientific analysis of self-reported injuries on attackpoint.org shows that injuries to the foot are by far the most common (see Figure 1). Of the foot injuries documented on attackpoint.org, nearly half are injuries to the ankle. I suspect the actual incidence of ankle injuries is even higher, since many likely go unreported.



Running off-trail across uneven and frequently rocky ground can test even the strongest ankles. There is nothing more frustrating than sustaining a mid-season ankle sprain that prevents you from orienteering. Below are some measures you can take to prevent injury and keep your ankles strong and active.

Strengthening Exercises

There are four basic ankle motions: pointing the toes down (plantar flexion), pulling the toes up (dorsi flexion), turning the foot inward (inversion), and turning the foot outward (eversion). The most common sprains occur due to excessive inversion. A simple exercise you can do to strengthen your ankles laterally is to sit on the floor with your back to the wall and knees straight, then turn your ankle inward and hold for six seconds. Next turn your ankle outward and hold for six seconds. Repeat ten times with each foot. Another useful exercise is one- or two-foot toe raises (again holding for six seconds and repeating ten times). More information on ankle exercises can be found easily on the Internet.

Strengthening exercises are probably most helpful for people who have not had a history of ankle sprains. If (like me) you have incurred many sprains over the years, benefits from strengthening exercises may be marginal.

Ankle Taping

Taping the ankle with athletic tape provides additional support than can reduce the likelihood of a sprain. My experience is that tape is effective for about the first half of a race. After that point, the tape loosens up and provides little support. I have sustained quite a few ankle sprains while wearing tape. The other problem with taping is that it can be difficult to determine how tight to tape the foot. It is not uncommon to discover that the tape is either too loose or too tight once you put on your O shoes.

Mechanical Braces

If your ankle ligaments have been stretched and damaged due to repeated sprains, mechanical braces can be very helpful. Some orienteering shoes now have built-in mechanical ankle supports. In addition, removable insert supports are available. A brand popular among orienteers is the Active Ankle. These removable supports are lightweight, hinged to allow your ankle to flex up and down, and fastened in place with Velcro. I have used Active Ankle supports for years for both orienteering and trail running and have never sustained a significant lateral ankle injury while wearing them. They are available from some of the orienteering gear suppliers or direct from the manufacturer on the Internet.

Tom Overbaugh started orienteering in 1979 and has been a member of DVOA for 20 years. Tom has course-set and volunteered at numerous DVOA local and A-Events and field checked the White Clay Creek and Iron Hill maps. He serves as the DVOA technical director and is a former Trustee. Tom lives in Newark, DE where he works as a chemical engineer for DuPont. In TNT circles he is known for his culinary talents. His favorite non-orienteering activities include running, Appalachian Trail backpacking and rooting for Penn State football.

Juniors

Update: CASD Orienteering

The current members of the Coatesville Area School District (CASD) Orienteering team have been attending meets and practicing.

- They have attended training at Hickory Run in hopes of advancing their skills.
- They all came together and helped Sandy Fillebrown with the Rogaine at Fair Hill.
- Five members competed at the North American Championship in New York, and they did well.

We are currently working with North Brandywine Middle School to get an "official" club. They allowed us to have a table at Back-to-School night, and we came away with a list of students that may be interested in the club. We have a teacher sponsor and are trying to work out the details.

As it looks right now, we will have a Varsity Team and an Intermediate Team for the Interscholastic Championship to be held at West Point in April of 2009.

We will continue to recruit new members and strive to grow the orienteering sport.

A Call for a Committee

The DVOA Juniors, with the help of many gracious DVOA members, have been fundraising. DVOA is holding these funds, and we as a club need to put together a committee to determine how and when these funds are distributed to the Juniors. If you are interested in being involved, please send an email to Dawn Singley at:

dms4043@voicenet.com.

JWOC Selection for 2009

The official cut-off date for the selection of the 2009 JWOC will be with the final results of the 2009 Flying Pig 'A' event the first weekend of April. The rolling rankings including the Flying Pig results will be used to make the team selection. All petitions to be included for consideration for the 2009 JWOC team must be submitted to Janet Porter, US Junior Team Administrator (djporter2@verizon.net).

Orienteering is Not About Finding Controls

By Clem McGrath

“Orienteering is not about finding controls.” This may sound ludicrous to many, but I think that thinking of orienteering in this way can lead to approaching things backwards as an orienteer and as a course designer. In this essay I want to challenge the importance placed on two aspects of this statement: “finding” and “controls.”

“Finding”

Of course, orienteering involves going to controls, but the act of “finding” the control itself is a byproduct of what it really is about—that using a map to navigate a course through the terrain under one’s own power. Being successful at orienteering, in a consistent, repeatable way, requires deliberation and a plan. It depends on intentionality, whereas finding something can and often does involve luck to varying degrees.

We have all been in situations where we want to find the control, desperately, for a variety of reasons: because our plan has gone awry, because our plan was flawed, or maybe we didn’t have a plan. Or maybe the deck was stacked against us, and the control was made hard to “find” by the course setter. In situations like this, we may find ourselves out of contact with the map and still “find” the control. We would be hard pressed to explain how we found it, and while relieved, this is something of a hollow victory.

There are many ways to make controls difficult, but in general, they should never be hard to find. Later, we will discuss some practical aspects of placing controls, but first, let’s turn to the theoretical.

Controls

Controls exist to channel competitors through the specific terrain the course designer intends to showcase. Controls punctuate legs; legs define the course. A great sequence of legs makes a great course. As an endpoint, controls are obviously critical to anchor a leg and provide structure. Beyond that their primary contribution is aesthetic—a control is the one tool a course setter has to showcase a *specific* interesting spot or feature. A beautiful moss covered hill, an interesting pond, etc., but, in most cases, this is at best a secondary concern.

However, being mindful of the aesthetics of control sites is useful in some respects. If you can see the control, you can generally see whatever else is noteworthy in the area. And if you can’t see the control, that is a problem.

Considerations for the course setter

The control flag should *never* be hidden by anything not on the map. Given that we generally orienteer in a forest, trees are the most likely inadvertent culprits. We have all seen (although generally not right away), a control on the backside of a large-diameter tree trunk. This may happen because that particular tree happens to be close to where the course setter intended to place the flag, but such trees should not be used.

The situation is a little different when the control is something on the map, but point features can often be problematic in the same way. We have some small boulders in DVOA (and some large ones too!). There may be a need as a course setter to use a small feature when there is nothing else around, but we must be careful.

Controls should always be placed at a uniform height. In higher-profile meets we often use control stands. Doing so does much to facilitate having the control flag at a uniform height. But, even if stands are not used, we should envision the stand as a de facto “yardstick”—a mental measuring rod for how high the control should hang.

There are times to relax these standards, but it is generally better to err by being too easy rather than too devious. Having a control that might peek out over a small boulder is much preferred to one sitting on the ground.

For the competitor

It is illustrative to consider what it means to “spike” a control. Of course, spiking a control means that you go right to it—that the control flag is where you expect it to be. Spiking a control is what makes orienteering ultimately rewarding and allows for repeatable success.

In golf, a player may find himself in trouble, with a ball behind a tree or the like, and still find a way to hit a miracu-

lous shot and land the ball in the hole. That is great and will be a relief and may even be the basis for the tales that follow the round. However, miraculous shots or their analogue—“finding” controls—do not serve as the foundation for expected success.

Spiking a control starts at the one that preceded it, or even before. It depends on the plan—the sequence of steps that brings us to the attackpoint (the attackpoint being akin to the four-foot putt in golf. It is possible to miss a control from the attackpoint, but failings at that stage are more a matter of bad technique than bad planning, *if* the attackpoint is appropriate.

Navigating to the attackpoint is the majority of our effort. Again, borrowing from golf, an orienteering leg can be regarded as a sequence with a drive, long iron, approach shot, and putting. A great golfer uses his shots to land in very specific areas in the hole that are the basis for the next shot. Each step along the way is purposeful and achieved with a combination of swing and club.

As orienteers, we need to find the areas along the leg where we want to “land” and select the appropriate technique to get there. Like the golfer, the safety-first criterion should guide us. Some of us are stronger in different areas: one person may be better at reading vegetation, another contours. Ideally, we find a “landing area” for our “drive” (the departure from the previous hole) that suits our strengths and provides for a certain “next shot.”

Next steps

In subsequent installments, I hope to touch upon more specific recommendations for both course setting and navigating. But, for now, to recapitulate: as course setters we should think of controls as the end point of a leg, not as the primary focus of what we are doing. As competitors, we want to navigate to the control, precisely and deliberately. Getting the “ball in the hole,” so to speak, at the end of the leg, should be a formality. Controls are important, but successful orienteering depends much more on what you do along the way.

Presentation

Presentation – how the control is presented to the orienteer – is an often overlooked aspect of course setting. It is the responsibility of the course setter to make sure that every control is hung / placed so that the course “leg,” that each control marks the terminal point of, is fair. The obvious requirements of presentation fairness are that the control placement neither: (1) “gives away” the location of the feature that the control marks, nor (2) shows itself more clearly to one likely approach than to others. Failings in either respect make it more likely that an undesirable element of luck will be introduced, rendering the leg unfair or “Bingo.” However, in our efforts to avoid the aforementioned pitfalls, we sometimes court a perhaps more grievous fault. For the easiest way to avoid committing the sins of (1) and (2) is to (3) hide the control. Result: a new sort of unfairness is introduced. An IOF publication, *Principles of Course Planning*, puts the point nicely:

“If, when she [the orienteer] has reached the feature, she has to search for the marker, [then] the marker is badly positioned, finding it is a matter of chance, and the fairness of the competition will be impaired.” (section 3.2.4)

A British Orienteering Federation publication “Course Planning” expands this point in an instructive manner:

“Controls must also be so hung that, having made an accurate approach, it is never necessary to search around. As an example, take an old ruin. This could be so overgrown that competitors will have to wander around a whole area with no possibility of reading their way precisely to the place.... where the course setter has hung the control.” (p.5)

When tempted to avoid sins (1) and (2) by committing sin (3), the course setter should stop and reconsider what she is doing. For, in addition to unfairness, (3) often brings a strong element of unnecessary frustration into the equation. And nothing spoils the enjoyment of our sport as much as unnecessary frustration does.

When in doubt, I would partially sacrifice (1) to (3) by perhaps hanging the control a bit higher than a “pure” observance of (1) would dictate. A related problem arises with events in our area (Mid-Atlantic) held when the vegetation thickens (June to September) and reduces visibility “in the control circle.” If the control feature is so obscured by foliage that the orienteer could pass by it at a distance of a few meters without seeing it, then it is small comfort to know that the control was hung in conformity with (1). Here I would embrace the lesser of the available evils and use the control marker to help competitors fairly find the control feature. In conclusion, if err we must, we should err in the direction of ease rather than difficulty, of visibility rather than obscurity. That is the surest route to enjoyment, and isn’t enjoyment why we do this?

Respectfully,

Harvey Lape

(erstwhile course setter, mapper, and O-politician)

Harvey Lape started orienteering in 1990 at Daniel Boone and has been a member of DVOA for 18 years. He has been involved with the initial map-scouting of several maps and was the mapper of Green Lane, Warwick and Fort Washington. Over the years he has course-set for several National Championship events. Harvey is a former President of DVOA and a former vice-president of USOF. He lives in Pottstown, PA, and is a professor of philosophy at Cabrini College. His favorite non-orienteering activities include reading, Porsche repair, and finding and restoring 18th and early 19th century American furniture.

The **Delaware Valley Orienteering Association** is a non-profit organization founded in 1967 for the purpose of providing education and organized events in the support of recreational and competitive orienteering in New Jersey, Delaware and southeastern Pennsylvania. DVOA is a mid-Atlantic regional member club of the United States Orienteering Federation (USOF) and the International Orienteering Federation (IOF). Inquiries about orienteering should be sent to DVOA, 14 Lake Drive, Spring City, PA 19475-2721, or use the DVOA telephone hotline (610) 792-0502 (9 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST) or e-mail at Frankdvoa@aol.com

Q&A From the DVOA E-board

Question from Dave Urban: *Is it better to push going up hill, down hill, or on the flat? What techniques do you use for up/down hill - straight up/down or traverse (tacking)?*

Answer 1 from Tracy Acuff: *First of all, it may depend on what shape you are in for that day. Some days, you may have the stamina to go straight up or down, then other days, maybe you got a bum knee bothering you and rather traverse. It would also depend on how steep the slope is, how long of a ways to go, and what's in between from bottom to top or vice versa, be it white woods, fallen logs, or even a bunch of fallen leaves. I'd be more likely to traverse if there were a lot of leaves on the ground, or you just might suddenly slip & have your breath knocked out of you & a tree or something caught between your legs. Yikes!*

Answer #2 from Bob Rycharski: *I like the traverse, if the hill is tall, it takes too much strength out of me to run straight uphill (and by the way, I say nasty things under my breath about the course setter when a straight uphill leg without options is a route choice!) Anyway, I almost never go straight up a hill, I usually run 45 degree angle to uppermost hill contour (needed) and slide back over to the control, even better if a catching feature is available. My knees hate straight uphill jaunts. My brain hurts also... especially if a thick stickers area is encountered on the way.*

Answer #3 from Bob Burg: *My experience, Dave, is that it is all in the eye (and legs and lungs) of the beholder. Personally I just can't run uphill. BUT, I'd much prefer a short steep climb to a long gradual climb. My body recovers shortly after reaching the top and then I can jog on the remaining level or even downhill terrain. So I guess the point is to notice how your body does with different choices, perhaps even experiment at different events to see which options actually work best (especially when we have epunch splits to compare). E.g. I'm getting better at choosing longer routes along roads and trails that take me close to my target rather than slogging more directly cross country (which I much prefer aesthetically). Then again, if your competitive time is not as critical to you, you could make the choice that is more fun for your psyche.*

Answer #4 from Ury: *And none of this even mentions the alternatives in navigational choices that might well dictate your most effective route to the next control. That's a whole other story.... Good luck*

Top-Class Hickory Run

By Tom Hollowell

The first time I visited Hickory Run was with the US Team Trails and A-meet last spring, when the middle-distance trials race was held there. I immediately fell in love. One of the great things about orienteering is that we can like (or dislike) areas for different reasons. There are areas with wide-open woods and great views that I like to run in for the exhilarating experience, other areas where elevation or vegetation challenge my physical skills, but for my particular style of orienteering, I find the technically challenging areas the most fun. And for advanced orienteering, Hickory Run offers lots of technical challenge!

So when we looked for a spot to organize our fall team training and I heard of the DVOA training weekend, the combination was a natural. And I wasn't disappointed. I am extremely impressed both by the number of participants and by the organisation, and want to give my thanks to all involved. For my activities, which were aside of the other training groups, I especially appreciated the good cooperation with Fred Kruesi, who provided me with access to maps and the other materials I needed to do my job right!

I've included below an edited version of the information that was provided for the team training activities, plus some additional thoughts. Maybe this is useful information for others.

Information about the US Team training activities - Hickory Run Training Camp

When planning to compete, or get the most out of your training, it is valuable to think about the nature of the terrain being offered and what kinds of skills will be required to do well. At Hickory Run the terrain is characterized by subtle contour detail and for the most part low visibility. Even though visibility is low, running speed is not affected as much as a quick look at the map would indicate. Route choice is for the most part not influenced by trying to avoid climb or big loops around areas of dense vegetation, and most legs can be approached "straight-on".

In that context, there are a number of skills that are important to master to do really well at Hickory Run and should be the focus of training activities. They are:

- Simplification - using the handrails and catching features offered by the terrain and finding solid attack points.
- Good map contact - checking off features and maintaining map contact as relocation is not as easy as in open, more distinct terrain.
- Direction and compass skills - using rough compass direction towards catching features, and exact compass and pacing skills into controls.
- Change of pace - understanding situations where running speed variations are required and being able to implement them.

Night-O is excellent training to reinforce the skills mentioned above. It gives natural low-visibility training, and simplification, good map contact and having a solid attack point are keys to success. And at night it may pay to run a significantly longer route and utilize safer handrails, catching features and attack points. Some tips: Check direction often and pay attention to change of pace (at night you need to apply a bigger variation in pace).

Can you see the trail? (A sample leg)

This is a leg we had on one of the training sessions. It shows a great combination of the skills required. I've tried to indicate the things I think of when planning execution on a leg like this.

- First of all, I have two great catching features along a straight route of attack, the swamp beyond the road after about 1/3rd of the leg, then the stream after about 2/3rd of the leg.
- To hit those catching features, I have to run on a pretty good rough compass bearing, but should be able to run at close to highest speed.
- To check off things on my way, ideally I would be able to see the stream entering the swamp, be able to see when I cross the small knoll between my two catching features, and then be able to see the stream bend as it goes from north to east.

My final attack point is going to be the spur/knoll just north of the stream bend. From there I should be able to line up the three knolls as my virtual "trail" into the control. So as I cross the stream and climb the spur I slow down to check my compass direction and look up to sight the knolls. Once I've lined them up, full speed to the bag!

Keep having fun at Hickory Run!

Tom Hollowell Jr. may not be a familiar DVOA member to most. Tom lives in Sweden, where he works with orienteering full-time as Director of O-Ringen, the world's largest (and greatest) orienteering event. Tom has until recently been the US team coach and has been team leader for the US Team at the World Orienteering Championships from 2004 to 2007. In the states Tom has previously been a member of NEOC, SMOG and MNOC and since 2007 a member of DVOA, recruited by Clem and Dasha. He is still waiting with great expectation to run his first Jukola relay in a DVOA team.



Orienteering Family Style



Our family started orienteering when our son was 7; he's now 18. We saw the event listed in the South Jersey Outdoors club event page and came out to White Clay Creek. We were hikers, backpackers and campers. We didn't have a clue. We did know that our son found hiking "boring" with no one to play with. So, there we were, on a white course, sharing a map and a compass. We even took our lunch along and ate it along the trail as hikers often do. After the course, we sat in the pavilion talking with others about the courses while our son played with the other children.

At age 7, our son had absolutely no interest in learning the sport. He simply wanted to dress in camouflage, run in and clip the flag and move on. We were all happy. We were content with this method for a few years until we went to Hickory Run Training Weekend.

Now we were armed with information and our own opinions about how to get to the control. We started to argue about the route choice. My husband told me I was too slow and that I was holding him up. With all three of us out there together, the possibility of taking more than three hours and seeing a DNF next to our name on the result page was just not an option.

So we split up! And now, years later, we are all still happy. We bring our lunch, sit in the pavilion after the event, and talk to each other about our route choices. Sometimes we camp at the event location and sometimes we take a short walk in the park using the map. It's still nice to be together, orienteering, on three different courses.

The Burton Family

Revisiting Rutgers Preserve: Orienteering in 2009

by Bob Rycharski,

Our club was granted permission (tentative) to again visit Rutgers Preserve, a forest environmental tract in between the Rutgers Livingston campus and Johnson County Park in New Brunswick, NJ. This map was produced by Graeme Auckland in 2002, while he was teaching or researching at Rutgers. He created the first generation of that topographical map (1:10,000 scale, 3-meter contours). While Graeme did a fine job mapping in 2002, time has taken its toll on the map. One area saw new private buildings go up and a street added; a wooded area is now a hurdler's dream as old trees have fallen galore. Route 18, a new road, arrived in 2004, eliminating about 3-4 acres of land to make way for a campus on/off ramp. Avenue E (north boundary of map) was slightly realigned and potentially adds a few acres of hike-able area, if it gets remapped in time.

And as is typical of many of our parks, while most of the trails are intact, some of the trails to the south have become overgrown and invisible due to non-use, and some new ones have popped up (BMX riders use them). It seems the students either like the trails or avoid the area, and its small parking lot is mostly full of tall, summertime weeds.

The tentative date for this revisit is March 29, 2009. I look forward to doing some basic field checking and hope to revise/update about 25-30 percent of the map, as time permits. The best thing is that we have a map that is challenging (Brown/Red course runners will like the vegetation changes and gully crossings), yet simple, so White course walkers will enjoy an almost pristine forest/trail map hike, and you may even see a few white-tail deer.

For those who remember a small 2002 DVOA event conflict with a small group of exuberant student ROTC teams who were team training in the woods, I have contacted the local officers of the student ROTC and have asked that they join us - at land navigation training, but to leave the firecrackers/sound effects behind. I think they will agree to share the forest and that will add to the competition.

Stay tuned for more info and notices about this early 2009 event. As always, I seek local volunteers, so if you live near Rutgers (it's near three major highways), let me know if you can attend and possibly help on the day of the event.

I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumblebee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house.

Henry David Thoreau, naturalist and author (1817-1862)



petrichor, the pleasant smell of rain after a dry spell

A city that outdistances man's walking powers is a trap for man.
Arnold Toynbee, historian (1889-1975)



President's Corner



I hope you have had enjoyable times in the woods this fall. I am particularly happy to see the new meet directors and helpers. We need to get more people involved in running the events to keep all of us fresh and enthusiastic about this wonderful sport.

In this next year I am looking forward to having the club make important moves to improve DVOA orienteering for the future. At the same time we need to consolidate what we have done in the past to keep the club strong.

I hope you will take the time to become familiar with the proposed by-law revisions that appear on the DVOA web site. While one of the objectives is to secure non-profit status for the club, we also want to strengthen the club by splitting the secretary's function from the treasurer responsibilities. The new by-laws will also provide the basis for involving others in the running of the club. DVOA needs to have more people involved in mapping, event scheduling and event management. We will vote on the new by-laws at the winter meeting, but I welcome questions and suggestions before then.

We want more of the events to use electronic equipment. In support of that objective we will have training at the Winter Meeting on the use of the equipment. I hope you will be there. At the same time we bring orienteering into the 21st century, we also need to strengthen what has made the club so successful in the past. We need to strengthen the membership by having more local events, more beginner events, and resume the distribution of paper event schedules at sporting good outlets as well as more publicity.

I thank those who have repeatedly given their time to make DVOA events the model other clubs try to emulate. At the same time I invite all of you who have enjoyed the DVOA events to donate some of your time to make orienteering enjoyable for years to come.

Tim Walsh

DVOA Annual Winter Picnic and Meeting

Saturday, January 24, 2009

Afternoon training: how to operate epunch at a local event plus other subjects to be announced

Dinner: bring a dish to share, as well as plates and flatware for yourself

Meeting: Here are three topics that have surfaced:

- By-laws approval (check out proposed changes at DVOA's web site)
- DVOA E-punching policy - This spring I would like a group of members to develop a policy concerning the handling of issues related to e-punching at an event. What do we do if someone forgets to download until days later? How do we handle someone who lost their punch while on the course? Etc.
- Do we need to institute procedures to improve the quality of courses? Do we need course vetters to ensure correct placement of controls?

Officers:

President	Tim Walsh
Vice President	Vadim Masalkov
Secretary/Treasurer	Mary Frank

Trustees:

	<u>Term Expires</u>
Ron Bortz	2009
Karl Ahlswede	2010
Maryann Cassidy	2011
John Campbell	2012
Bob Fink	2013



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