

## 2007 - An Incredible Year for OA

Looking back on this year, it's hard to imagine how much OA has changed since January. In February we learned that the scholarship funds that we had been receiving from the Financial Aid Office for Frosh Trips were no longer going to be available. That left us in a real quandry about this fall's trip and how we would provide financial support for needy students. We raised this question with the members of the University administration including President Tilghman and Vice President of Campus Life Janet Dickerson. The University, recognizing the importance of making the Frosh Trip available to all students, agreed to **permanently provide full funding** for the Frosh Trip for any student receiving need-based financial aid. As a result this year Princeton provided over \$145,000 in aid for Frosh Trip students as compared to \$55,000 in 2006. Because of this new level of financial aid support, Frosh Trip 2007 set an all time record of **643 participants** (52% of the Class of 2011).

In addition to the incredible financial aid support from the University, this spring the **Friends of Outdoor Action raised over \$45,000** in annual contributions, which almost doubled the previous year's all-time record of \$25,000. This new level of support from the Friends of OA allowed us, for the first time, to provide significant financial aid support for students participating in the Leader Training Program. Allowing all students to gain the benefits of OA Leader Training (and you can read some first hand accounts on the next page) has always been a top priority for OA, but until this year we were only able to provide support to a handful of students. Thanks to your donations we were able to provide Leader Training grants to 22 high-need students. That funding had a huge impact the number of students who chose to become OA Leaders. We trained 93 new leaders (up from 66 in 2006) and the added number of leaders allowed us to take out our record number of freshmen this fall.

In addition to providing aid for Leader Training, the combination of the financial aid support for Frosh Trip and contributions to the Friends of OA has allowed us to hire a two-year **Program Coordinator** (see page 4), the first time since 2000 that we have had such a position. The goal of this new position is to allow OA to return to running a rich set of outdoor program activities throughout the academic year. So far we've been incredibly busy since Frosh Trip, running programs for the Residential Colleges, training for RAs, and trips over Fall Break. This also means that we can expand our efforts in the important areas of campus leadership development, community service, and environmental sustainability. We've also completely redesigned the OA Web site to make it easier to keep track of the latest OA activities ([www.princeton.edu/~oa](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa))

Finally, in October, after two years in the planning stages, the new **Climbing Wall opened** (see page 4). This is a spectacular facility

which has been in constant use since it opened. In addition to regular open climbing hours and classes at the Wall, a group of OA Leaders applied for a special grant from the Trustee Alcohol Initiative (AI) and received \$2,500 to pay for having the Wall open on Thursday nights from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. as an alcohol-free social alternative. At the very first 'AI' night we had over 50 people climbing! Come check out the new Wall the next time you are on campus or at our special events at Alumni Day and Reunions.

You can see why my head is spinning. So much of what has happened this year is a kind of 'coming of age' for OA. After serving the community for over three decades we are gaining a new level of support. The University has just announced its next major capital campaign and I am extremely pleased to announce that one of the items on the list of Campaign Needs is funding for a permanent endowment for OA.



**Your support makes all the difference.**

What OA has accomplished in terms of student growth and development over the past thirty-four years is simply astounding and it could not have happened without the financial support of so many OA Alumni and parents. There is still a great deal to do and I need your help once again. I am calling on all of you to help us raise a total of \$75,000 this year, another record, so that we can ensure that **every student** can afford to participate in Leader Training, and to be able to fund the Program Coordinator position over the next two years. Giving, in all its forms, is *challenge by choice*, and I know that the many Friends of OA will *choose to be challenged*. Thank you for giving back to OA and, more importantly, for taking the lessons that you learned through OA and giving them back in your community.



Rick Curtis '79  
Director, Outdoor Action

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# Leadership: How OA Transforms Students

## An Outdoor Action Experience

by Carl Boettiger '07

I began my Princeton experience, along with 598 other members of the class of 2007, with a week in the rain among the woods of the Northeast. I was lukewarm about Princeton, nervous to leave the group of high-school friends I had taken so long to make, and feeling all that I had heard of the social scene at Princeton dubious at best. I returned to campus with confidence, friendships, and a desire to figure out just how those student leaders little older than we had worked such magic. Could I learn to do that?

It's now four years later, and as I leave the gates of Princeton I look forward to my next transition with none of the same trepidation I held then. In preparing to become an OA leader I learned first aid skills from student-led courses that forced me to go beyond book-knowledge to provide competent and confident hands-on treatment. Inspired, I took a Wilderness First Responder course with the help of OA and returned to teach these courses. With a friend and experienced rock climber I'd met on my Frosh Trip, I explored OA's climbing program, improving my skills with

the encouragement of others and becoming a staff-member of OA's Climbing Wall. I led my first Frosh Trip the following year and felt the pride in my school and the chance to offer that experience to new students. I had found mentors, friends, activities, and skills I had never anticipated. Yet it was not until becoming a Leader Trainer in my junior year that I really began to understand the magic.

As a Leader Trainer, I've done a lot of teaching and evaluating, and of none moreso than myself. Somehow OA was no longer a hat I put on from time to time—it was part of me, how I interacted with others, how I approached novel activities, how I interpreted the world around me. Living in a quad with other OA leaders and leader trainers, we would often debrief our disagreements. I couldn't observe the interactions of any new group—a precept, a study break, a spontaneous discussion in the hallways—

without my mind running over the Tuckman model (forming-storming-norming-performing) or feeling more attuned to who is enjoying the conversation and who is uncomfortably withdrawing from a topic they find uncomfortable. Working at the Climbing Wall I no longer see only the physical and mental challenges of scaling a wall, but the development of trust in a partner's rope-handling and self-confidence in a climber's motion.



CT54 hiking the AT in Connecticut

Before, leadership seemed simple, intuitive, and inborn. Some people just had that magic touch. With these OA-lenses permanently fixed to my face, the world looks different: leadership, essentially group facilitation, is something that *can* be taught and learned. It's more like conducting an orchestra than working magic spells. Not some effortless natural gift—it's a lot of work, but it's also something in which one can always improve. In this way, I'll carry OA with me wherever I go.

How can I capture my OA experience in a few written paragraphs? I want to describe how it has transformed me, how it has taught me more than any other part of my Princeton education, skills more valuable for life than any academic knowledge could be. How it has shaped my view of the world and my sense of responsibility to it and to each other. I would want to convey my conviction that the amazing and essential role that it played in my Princeton experience should also be accessible and shared by all Princeton students involved in the program. Would this not all be dismissed as mere enthusiasm? Some things you just have to experience to believe.

- Carl has started graduate school in Physics at the University of California at Davis.



VA73 takes a break in the Shenandoahs

### Quotes from FT 2007 Participants

*One of the most valuable lessons I learned on OA was to keep an open mind and not to judge people. There were a wide range of personalities on my trip, from hard-core partiers to quiet geniuses to varsity athletes to talented musicians. Had I not been on the trip, I might have been tempted to judge the various people in my group at first glance. After spending a week in the wilderness with them, however, I learned that everyone made unique contributions to the group and that I had traits in common with everyone. The trip also helped to ease the fears I had about adjusting to college life, meeting new people, etc. It was a great experience!*

*OA, without a doubt, will be one of my best memories here at Princeton. The friends I made in OA, without hesitation, will be some of my best friends during college and even after. I had such a mind-blowing good time! My OA trip was exceptionally memorable mostly in part because I had outstanding OA Leaders!*

*Every time I walk through Blair Arch I think back to my first night at Princeton, camping out in the grass before OA, and smile. Looking up at the beautiful gothic buildings I felt overwhelmingly excited for the adventures in store over the next week, and four years. Butterflies ran amuck in my stomach though, because even though my group seemed cool, I couldn't yet tell how much we'd click, and Princeton in general still seemed a big mystery. Fast forward to our last night of OA in the Delaware Water Gap... I slept like a baby because over the course of OA I became completely comfortable. Physically, I grew to love living outdoors, actually enjoying my "mattress" of rocks. Emotionally, I felt like an integral part of my group, as if I had a place in the Princeton community before even getting there, and had learned so much about other ways I wanted to get involved in other communities once I got to campus. I can think of no better way of starting my Princeton career than OA.*

## OA Leadership - International in Scope

by Andrew Turco '07

For me, just like for most other Outdoor Action leaders, OA was one of the first things that I experienced at Princeton, and by senior year, as a leader and as a leader trainer, it was one of the few organizations that I was still strongly involved with from freshman year right up through graduation. Outdoor Action had such an impact for me because it paralleled my own development as a Princeton student, from clueless frosh to upperclassman, and from Frosh Trip participant to leader who taught and trained other leaders. The program provided consistency throughout my time at Princeton but also allowed me to take on bigger challenges and more roles within the organization, just as I was maturing and ready to grow in other areas of my Princeton life.

In addition to the sense of community that OA provided throughout all four years, the program was key in teaching me leadership skills and ideas about goal setting, debriefing, and working within a group, all skills which guided me in my involvement with various international service projects that I participated in outside of OA including trips to Mexico and China. In serving as a leader of the Cruz Blanca Initiative, a service trip to Mexico, I realized that many of the group and wilderness-oriented skills that I practiced on OA were useful strategies for working with any group and for working in a foreign country, which has both different and unexpected environments from those on the Princeton campus, just as leading a group on the Appalachian Trail does.

As part of the International Service Initiative working to promote an increased level of international service trips for Princeton students, I again took advantage of some of the goal-setting and mediating skills that I had put to use through my involvement in OA. Interestingly, four of the other six students in that group were also OA leaders. Although we were certainly not in a wilderness context inside the gothic buildings of campus, being able to listen closely to what each other were really saying, being able to work with different groups, and trying to mediate differing opinions were essential for us to succeed. I actually wasn't aware that I had been using lessons from OA until someone else pointed it out to me, making me realize that OA had so successfully instilled these leadership skills that I no longer realized when I am using them. Essentially, OA provided me the context to become fluent with leadership skills that have proved invaluable. And, of course, OA

taught me how to make the best tuna, cheese, salsa, peanut butter, and GORP wrap, which is something that no other program at Princeton was as successful at doing.

- Andrew is spending this year teaching English in China with Princeton in Asia.

## New Climbing Wall Opens



## OA's New Climbing Wall - Goals for the Future

The new OA Climbing Wall opened in October. This is something that's been in the "dream stage" for many, many years. The construction work by Entre Prises of Bend, Oregon, the largest manufacturer of climbing walls in the world, was completed on September 19 and the Wall opened on October 11.

It is a spectacular facility—thirty-two feet high and seventy-five feet wide with overhangs, three vertical crack systems, and a roof. The design was done with specific input of the last year's student wall staff, and we owe a special thanks to Carl Boettiger '07 for all his dedication to building the climbing wall program over the last two years.

This new dedicated facility allows us to be open more hours each week and have hours for groups to schedule at the Wall. We have already had various Residential College groups, and student clubs and organizations use the facility. Our goal, under the guidance of Program Coordinator Eric Cielinski, is to make the wall both a training and teaching facility, as well as a team building opportunity for sports teams, academic departments and others.

We could not have opened the new Wall without the special support of the Joe Palmer '84 Fund. These donations, made in the memory of Joe Palmer who helped build the very first OA Climbing Wall in 1983, provided the resources for us to purchase all new climbing equipment (shoes, ropes, helmets, hardware, and climbing holds) for the new Wall. I want to thank the Palmer Family and all of those who have contributed to the fund for their gracious support.

Our long term goal is to build an endowed fund in Joe's name that can be used for the annual operations of the Wall to ensure that this wonderful resource is accessible and affordable to all students. Please visit the new Wall on your next visit to campus and watch for our special Wall events at Alumni Day and Reunions. For more information and photos of the new Wall and information on how to make a donation to the Joe Palmer '84 Fund go to [www.princeton.edu/~oa/climbing](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/climbing)

## OA Welcomes Eric Cielinski as the new Program Coordinator

We are really excited to welcome Eric Cielinski as the new OA Program Coordinator. Eric joins us from upstate New York where he was instructing Outdoor Education classes at SUNY Cortland in their Recreation and Physical Education Departments. He attained an M.S. from SUNY Cortland in Outdoor and Environmental Education after spending a number of years working in the field. Previously, Eric has been an instructor at the Colorado Mountain College Timberline Campus, where he led students on various outdoor pursuits including rock and ice climbing, mountaineering, sea kayaking, and canyoneering throughout the country. Eric's academic interests have focused on leadership development and environmental ethics, two areas where Outdoor Action excels. Eric's background also includes time spent working in Mountain Rescue and Emergency Medicine which compliment his medical training and outdoor expertise.



## Debbie Clarke Moderow '77 shares stories of her adventures in the Iditarod Race

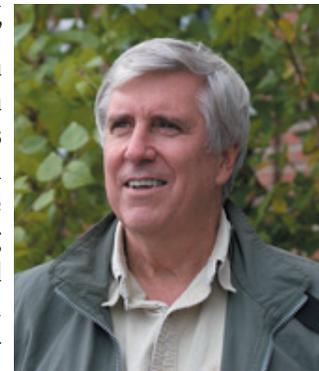
People who were on campus for Reunions had the unique opportunity to spend a morning with **Debbie Clarke Moderow '77**. Debbie lives in Denali Park, Alaska and together with her family, has developed the Salty Dog Kennel, home to 38 sled dogs. Her love of the dogs led her to the sport of mushing, and she has raced in the Iditarod sled dog Race in 2003 and 2005 as well as in numerous other mushing races. Debbie provided the audience with a unique look at the sport including the joys of working with the dog team and some of the incredible challenges she faced on races through the Alaskan wilderness. You can read more about Debbie in the article that appeared about her in PAW in 2005 ([www.princeton.edu/~paw/archive\\_new/PAW05-06/01-0914/features/Iditarod.html](http://www.princeton.edu/~paw/archive_new/PAW05-06/01-0914/features/Iditarod.html)) and at [www.saltydogkennel.com](http://www.saltydogkennel.com).



Debbie Clarke Moderow '77 with two of her team

## Josh Miner '43 Award Winner

This year's **Josh Miner '43** Experiential Education award was presented at Reunions to **Brian Rosborough '62**. The award is given annually to "a graduate of Princeton University who has provided outstanding leadership in the fields of experiential or outdoor education." Founding Chairman of Earthwatch Institute, Brian has been a pioneer in the environmental field. During his 25-year tenure as CEO, Rosborough supported innovative research in the rainforest canopy. Since its founding in 1971, Earthwatch has supported over 3,000 scientific expeditions in 120 countries to investigate and monitor environmental change. More than 80,000 volunteers have contributed about \$60 million and over 10 million hours in time and talent to essential fieldwork. Brian led a spirited panel discussion entitled "Conserving the Planet through Experiential Service" for the Josh Miner Experiential Education Panel during Reunions that included: Associate Dean of the College Peter Quimby, Outdoor Action Director **Rick Curtis '79**, and **Rory Truex '07** founder of the Summer of Service Program in China.



## Notes from the Trailhead

Send us your latest stories on the enclosed membership form.

**Edward Seliga '75** was re-elected to the Board of the U.S. Green Building Council and will help install a 10 kW solar power system at the Princeton-Blairstown Center.

**Deborah Teltscher '77** climbed the cable route up Half Dome in Yosemite with her children, Rebecca and Joel.

**Muscoe Martin '78** took his four children to the top of Half Dome last summer. He stated "taking the 'easy' route we had a terrific hike on a beautiful Yosemite day."

**Jason Gold '81** spent a week with his children in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. While taking whitewater rafting trip on the Chattooga he happened to meet up with a current OA leader, Hannah Grimm '09, who was guiding the trip.

**Philip Starr, M.D., Ph.D. '83** climbed Mt. Shasta in California by the Hotlum Glacier Route.

**Jil Robbins Pollock '85** took a NOLS trip down the Salmon River in Idaho with her husband, John, and her children, John and Claire. She stated "it's a great way to introduce kids to camping!"

After meeting on an OA winter camping trip in 1996, **Eliot Kent-Uritam '98** and **Gillian Ashenfelter '99** married last year and spent their honeymoon in New Zealand.

**Brian Bennett '00** spent the summer of 2006 rock climbing at Great Falls, VA just 13 miles from his apartment in Washington, D.C. He has a new climbing partner – his wife, Anne Tsai Bennett (Harvard '00).

**Thomas Pastorius '03** is working with Projects Abroad in New York City and recently returned from a trip to Sri Lanka.

Former OA leaders **Louise Lamphere '04** and **Louis Beryl '03** were married on February 3rd.

Leader Trainer **Lisa Newman-Wise '05** completed the Iron Man Triathlon in Hawaii in 11:35:52 on October 13 and was 13th in her age group for women. Congratulations, Lisa!