Selective Hearing

Recognising the contribution of women to the outdoor profession

Tonia Gray, Sandy Allen-Craig & Cathryn Carpenter
Tim Low

If you want to change society, then you have to tell an alternate story

- Ivan Illyich
Introduction

A critical examination of the role, place and often invisible contribution of women in the outdoor learning environments (OLEs).
Aim
To explore how the outdoor profession may move forward positively in this space with a focus on how we address existing blind spots to recognition and barriers which females may currently experience in the field.
We would like to identify constructive ways to recognize and celebrate women's contribution to the outdoor learning environment.
The Through line...
BACKGROUND

• How this workshop and paper came about?
• Denise Mitten’s story – AEE in 1985
• UWS inaugural women’s group (2014)
Sandy Allen-Craig: ACU lecturer and ALTC award winner:

For the past 30 years, Sandy has demonstrated outstanding dedication to the development of outdoor education.

She is the National Coordinator for Outdoor Leadership and brings a depth of knowledge in risk management procedures and policy guidelines.
Cathryn Carpenter:
Outdoor educator and curriculum developer in tertiary and secondary institutions for over 30 years.

Honorary member and co-convenor of International Adventure Therapy Conference – *Expanding the Circles* – Sydney 2018

Cathryn is a Senior Lecturer at Victoria University and brings a wealth of expertise and credibility to the field.
Tonia Gray:

Senior Researcher in the Centre for Educational Research at Western Sydney University. With over 30 years in OE at the Secondary and Tertiary level, Tonia’s PhD examined the longitudinal impact of OE on adolescents. In the 80s she was the first female to teach ‘Wilderness Studies’ as a fully endorsed BoS School Certificate (High School) course.

With an MA in Community Health, her current research explores human-nature relationships and the impact on well-being.
The Professional Landscape

• A male dominated narrative prevails within the profession

• INTENT: To serve as a starting point for critical analysis and discourse about the status and visibility of women OLEs.

Photo credit Julie Fletcher
There is an under-representation of women cited in research and practice within outdoor learning environments, yet they represent half the outdoor learning population.

(Avery, Norton & Tucker, 2017)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Notability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luther Halsey Gulick</td>
<td>Proponent of Playground Education. Co-founder of the Boy Scouts of America and the Camp Fire Girls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurt Hahn / Kurt Matthias Robert Martin Hahn</td>
<td>Experiential educator. Founder of Schule Schloss Salem, Gordonstoun, and United World Colleges system. Founded Outward Bound with Lawrence Durning Holt and Jim Hogan. Originator of the Moray Badge, the forerunner of the County Badge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Hildcourt</td>
<td>Boy Scout; Scoutmaster; Scouting professional. Authored many books and articles on Scouting, outdoor activities, and Scout skills, including the first Scout Fieldbook and three editions of the Boy Scout Handbook of the BSA. Endeavored to maintain the outdoor orientation of US Boy Scouting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Kielsmoer</td>
<td>Outward Bound instructor. Proponent of experiential education and service learning. Founder of the National Youth Leadership Council and the Center for Experiential Education and Service-Learning (University of Minnesota).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernst Killander</td>
<td>Soldier; Boy Scout leader; propagator of orienteering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Louv</td>
<td>Journalist. Proponent of nature awareness and opponent of what he termed &quot;nature-deficit disorder.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Lewis Miner, III</td>
<td>Worked at Gordonstoun; took Kurt Hahn's ideas to the USA. Co-founder of Colorado Outward Bound School with Charles Froelicher. Founder of Outward Bound USA. Inspired use of outdoor education in the Peace Corps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohiyesa / Charles Alexander Eastman</td>
<td>North American Indian of the Isanyathi tribe of the Dakota nation; physician; author; worked closely with YMCA, Woodcraft Indians, and YMCA Indian Guides; co-founder of the Boy Scouts of America and Camp Fire Girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Pammen</td>
<td>Canoeing instructor. Co-founder and CEO of the Outdoor Education Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Pleh</td>
<td>Outward Bound instructor and school principal who pioneered the introduction of Outward Bound methods into the mainstream school system; father of Project Adventure (founded with Mary Ladd Smith, Robert Lentz, Karl Rohnke, Jim School and others), which gave impetus to Adventure-Based Counseling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar Munroe Robinson</td>
<td>YMCA summer camp director. Set up the fledging Boy Scouts of America organization.</td>
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The Representation of Women in Adventure Education Literature

by Martin, Sarah Virginia, M.A., Prescott College, 2013, 117 pages; 1551564

Abstract:

In the United States (U.S.), adventure education (AE) articulates a social mission: it seeks to be inclusive serving members of all communities with their respective diverse complexities. Yet, the needs of many people are not being expressed, heard, or addressed adequately. This study focused specifically on gender, one aspect of this pressing concern, offering evidence to demonstrate that AE needs to routinely examine and expand its practices to effectively meet its social claims. The topic of how women are represented in AE literature was explored by positing the question: What messages about women are manifest in the literature and during the publishing process in AE? Themes emerged regarding the status of women in AE literature by utilizing two qualitative instruments: a feminist content analysis of five major texts and semi-structured interviews on Skype with nine women authors. The third component of this research design was a citation index, created for the entire publication range of the Journal of Experiential Education (JEE) and the Australian Journal of Outdoor Education (AJOE) to display a frequency of citations comparison between female and male authors. Findings from this research demonstrated that women continue to be the predominant authors of social justice writings in AE; their work is published 25% of the time in the journals reviewed, yet once published cited as often as men; and women have found support for publishing their work when they have had opportunities to collaborate with other women. Suggestions are provided to address the ongoing disparity to help foster AE's social mission.
LIBERATION, EMPOWERMENT, EQUALITY

• Gray and Birrell (2015):

“(the outdoors) is not exclusively a male domain; it has been the impetus for pioneering women to start expedition companies; travel through untrammelled regions, and push against socially imposed limits. ... women can redefine themselves in terms of their capabilities and strengths, gain an awareness of cultural immersion, boost their self-esteem and develop life-long passion for travelling in adventurous settings” (p. 207).
“Being a woman in the outdoor learning profession can bring distinctive challenges and lead to facing peculiar roadblocks…

Even more demanding is sustaining a flourishing life-long career into a woman’s 50s or 60s.” (Wright & Gray, 2012, p. 12).

Photo credit Greg Fisher
Collective experiences of many women in outdoor education suggest that at times they feel:

MARGINALISED & UNDervalued

APPLY THE BECHDEL TEST TO OE

Photo credit Julie Fletcher
Methodology 1

An analysis of gender breakdown and areas of expertise of keynote speakers over the last 30 years.

Photo credit Mary Preece
Results and Discussion

Preliminary mapping of keynote presentations at State & National OE conferences.
## Results & Discussion – Methodology 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>National (6)</th>
<th>State (26)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 (4 non OE)</td>
<td>19 (8 non OE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Females</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OE females</td>
<td>.047%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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Methodology 2:

Member Checking in Qualitative Inquiry
Methodology 2: ‘Fishbowl Activity’
Complex and Convoluted

Three emergent themes were identified in the narratives:

Photo credit Mary Preece
1) Complicit ‘inertia’ stemming from feminist fatigue over the years.

2) Resignation and rationalisation;

3) Fear of raising the ‘F’ word - scrutinized.
“It grieves me that it is women who appear to be the ones [expected] to bring gender to the table still, despite it being a professional concern of us all; and that we 'beat ourselves up' so to speak when we don’t, and for our apparent complicity when we 'choose' to stay silent.”
‘Damned if we do – Damned if we don’t.’

“I let the workshop wash over me, wondering if a female would say anything, or indeed, be acknowledged by the presenters as having contributed to critical and transformative methodologies in outdoor education research… but it appears we aren’t on the (male) radar as significant contributors.”
I spent time **listening**, trying to ascertain if there was a way in for me from my experience, my worldview etc.... overall it wasn't an 'easy' **space**.
• I was disappointed that there was many very experienced women present but none (including myself) stepped forward.

• I did feel intimidated and asked myself, ‘Do I have anything significant to contribute?’

• Perhaps I needed time to reflect and consider what I might like to contribute?

Photo credit Mary Preece
I felt I would be **RIDICULED** if I had the courage to speak up... would I be labelled a ‘precious petal’ or ‘butch lesbian’ or some other derogatory term.

Men think... ‘What’s your problem? SUCK IT UP PRINCESS.’
Positives?


ORCHESTRATE CHANGE - Forged stronger bonds among us and provided an opportunity for women to have a sense of belonging and collective voice.
“I am finding that thinking about and reengaging with feminist literature through working on the chapter has reinvigorated me and my thinking about what feminisms mean to my teaching and research.”
• Achievable though **resolute solidarity**.

• **Celebrate** the role, place and contribution of women in our profession?

• Address existing ‘**blind spots**’ and recognise the barriers that we currently experience in the field?

• Newfound **advice** from Liz Gilbert …
Methodology 3

• An analysis of the emergent themes offers insights about professional and personal footprints in the industry with regards to gender invisibility, blind-spots and complicit inertia.
Results & Discussion: Methodology 3

• The silent voice of women in - who is responsible?
• Female ways of being in the outdoors
• Strength, numbers and longevity in the field.
3. FEMALE WAYS OF BEING: A DIFFERENT WAY OF CONNECTING AND INTERACTING IN OE.

“I was more interested in a different way of being in the bush than had been modelled to me and what was being modelled through the field.”

Photo credit Tonia Gray
“changing the relationship from something of domination and heroic motives, and conquering to just being...”

“... being in the outdoors and learning in the outdoors can be vastly expanded, and I think maybe that’s what one of the things we’ve got to offer as women.”

Photo credit Tonia Gray
“I wonder if our strength is also our weakness?”

“...creative leadership and vulnerability and where does that plays a role?”

“...if we can accept that feminine vulnerability as actually a power and not as a weakness”

Photo credit Greg Fisher
“it’s vital that we identify... our own [women’s] learnings, what we’ve tended to move towards that will be automatically reflecting us as women, in the outdoors.”
Litmus Test

“it’s honouring, and it’s valuing the women’s experience and the women’s voice.”
As we look back through history, we know women were at the forefront of every progressive victory in this country. 

Bernie
Questions or Comments?

Photo credit Tonia Gray
Thank you

Photo credit Fiona Cameron
References

• Carter, M. (2000). So--you do this for a living?: A study of women in adventure recreation in Western Australia. ro.ecu.edu.au
References

References

References


References

- Sharp, B. (2001). Take me to your (male) leader. *Gender and Education, 13*(1), 75-86.