

Wilderness First Aid Course that was held January 14-15, 2006 - DEBRIEF
Omni Centre in Pincourt, Cost of the course was \$125 which included certification with SOLO.

On January 14 and 15 eleven Area leaders (and one adopted leader from St-Bruno) dedicated themselves to a weekend of Wilderness First Aid training. The course was given by Joe Twardowski of Vanier College who certifies for SOLO Wilderness Medicine, assisted by yours truly. SOLO is one of the two premier certifying bodies in the Outdoor Education industry in North America, the other being NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) out west. Joe proved to be a relaxed and informed teacher, eliciting many questions and entertaining excellent discussions on various aspects of wilderness emergency scene management. Students spent a lot of time in practical exercises until they were confident that they had the ABCDE's of wilderness scene management firmly embedded in their brains!

The culmination of the course came on the freezing cold Sunday afternoon with an all-Scouter scenario in which 3 leaders and 8 "Scouts" came across a couple while out on a hike. The woman had fallen while cross country skiing, sliced her head open and also broken her ankle. Her husband (played by Bob Cox in true Oscar-winning style) was protective, argumentative and actually quite disagreeable at times! The "Scouts" were coached to make all the comments you would expect that age group to make - "Yeuck, that's a lot of blood", "Does she always cry like that?" etc. They were also encouraged to slip away as the Scouters tried to contain the scene and keep people warm in the howling wind. All in all it proved to be a valuable exercise in how wilderness first aid is completely different than Standard. Ensuring the safety of yourself and managing your group is paramount, the victim comes last.

Judging from the comments following the course, all participants found it to be a valuable experience which gave them fresh insights into a subject which is as fascinating as it is endless. There's never one "right" answer, you have to make judgment calls based on what circumstances are at the time. Congratulations go to the participants: Bob Cox, Bob Jackson, Patrick Hureau, Barbara Webster, Louise Houle, Pat Papp, Jamie Papp, Don Gillis, Paul Boudreau, Dana Newburgher, Jason Robillard and Grant McSorley. Thanks to Bob Cox who did all the work arranging the facility at the Omni Centre and providing much-needed coffee and goodies every morning!

Your Outdoor AAC - Alison

P.S. I already have 7 names on a waiting list for another course to be held somewhere towards the middle-end of May. Please contact me a.s.a.p. if you would like to register for this course - Contact Alison Bentley