

Nature's Harmony Hosts Green Run in Autumn Colours

By Joel Arndt
The Mattawa Recorder

Deep in the woods on Snake Creek Road lay a plot of land ripe for adventure. Jen and Tzach Elnekave at Nature's Harmony Ecolodge hosted "Run Off-the-Grid",

a 25km/50km trail run, on Saturday, September 25th. Organized along with Jen's brother, Dustin Demille and his girlfriend, Deanne Taenzer, they focused on creating a raw and exciting experience, with the least amount of environmental

impact. On Saturday, 26 people came out to race, run, walk or hike the 12.5 Km loop that started and finished at the Ecolodge.

Those organizing the run weren't concerned about competition amongst the

runners, but more so a challenge for each individual. "It's not so much that we're looking for a specific market," Tzach noted, "But a more specific state of mind." To think about running 25km (or 50km for the matter) can begin to chal-

lenge a person's perceived limits. This is what the organizers were looking for, a group of people brave enough to step up to the challenge and complete the course. "It was remarkable to see them finish," Jen remembered, with a smile,

"They were so proud!"

This being the case, the man and woman who finished first in each run were awarded a hand carved, wooden medalion. The
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winner of the 25Km race were Jeremy Guertin of Mattawa and Sara Inch of North Bay. Jeremy's time was 2:20:32, Sara finished in 2:34:16. There were only two runner of the 50Km race: Lisa Campbell of Peterborough, and Edward Demille of Mississauga. Edward finished in 6:29:41, and Lisa came through in 6:47:03.

"Experience Ontario's race with the smallest footprint," was the tag-line for the event, so Jen and Tzach made sure that all the effort that went into preparing for the event did as little damage to environment as possible. The biggest concern was the emissions generated from all those traveling to/from this event. Jen &

Tzach approached an organization called Sustainable Travel International (STI) to conduct a carbon footprint assessment of the event. From this evaluation, it was estimated that 8.4998 metric tonnes of carbon emissions would be generated and it would cost \$215 to fully carbon offset these emissions. This cost was donated by a company in North Bay, 'Go Off The Grid', making the 1st annual Run Off-the-Grid a 100% carbon neutral event. Other green solutions that were initiated in time for the run were composting toilets, and gravity fed showers with a wood fire heating the water.

To have a course completely in the woods is uncommon. All 12.5Km set

out for "Run Off-the-Grid" were on rugged trails. Participants never once touched pavement. Some runs, such as those in provincial parks, will be primarily along trails, but every now and then runners will have to cross a road or some sort of human industry. Those that ran on Saturday found it refreshing to be completely away from almost anything industrious or artificial. According to Jen and Tzach, the participants loved how remote and truly natural the experience was.

As participants finished, the sauna and warm, eco-friendly, gravity fed, fire-heated showers were a welcome prize. There was a festive atmosphere, with

food, music and a big fire to boot. Even though the day was cold and wet, all who showed up were enthusiastic, to say the least. Those who ran, saw the rain as a welcome challenge, and all who attended sought to overcome the cold conditions by the fire, keeping together and remaining in pleasant moods.

Along with this trail run, Nature's Harmony also hosted the "Lost in the Rocks and Trees" mountain bike race in July. The Ecolodge is quickly developing their own identity and worth in the community, contributing to many of Mattawa's

endurance and outdoors events. The summer is an easy grab for them, it doesn't take much to convince tourists that they should pass through the remote haven while the weather is warm. Jen and Tzach agree that winter is when their property is at it's finest, though. They look forward to building a foundation for winter enjoyment.

Although Nature's Harmony is about relaxation and healing, they also emphasize the enduring heart, and this was illustrated best as all participants crossed the finish line.

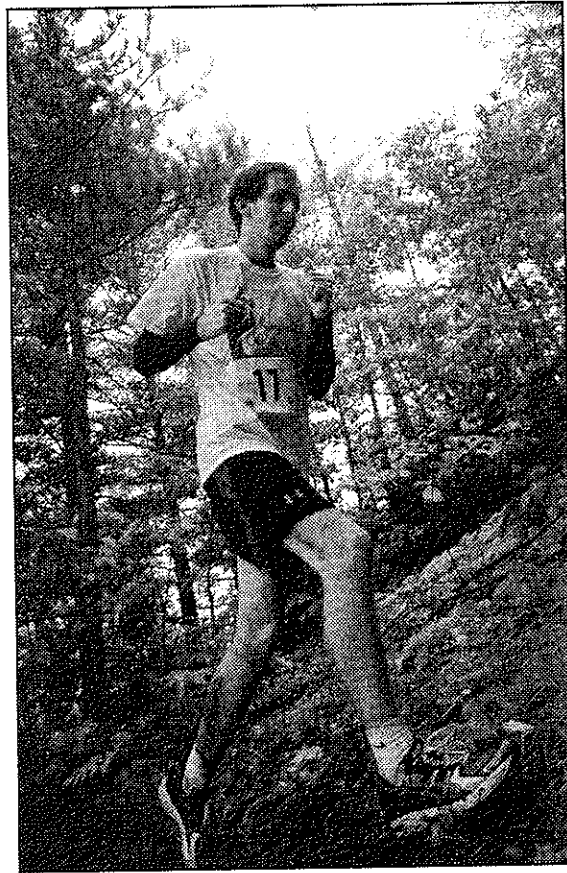


Photo by by Patrick Gilbert.

Justin Mcleod of Sturgeon Falls passes the 20km mark in the 25km race.

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