



RECORD PACE:
SIMON DONATO
RACES DOWN
THE BRUCE.

BLAZING THE BRUCE

There's a new speed mark for Ontario's longest trail

BY TIM SHUFF

THIS SUMMER, A TEAM OF RUNNERS completed the first non-stop relay run of Ontario's Bruce Trail in an event called Blaze—named as much for the runners' relentless pace as for the trail's iconic white markers.

Two 10-person teams of high-level cardio junkies left the village of Tobermory on June 17 and raced around the clock to run the 894 kilometres to Niagara in a record three days, 23 hours and 10 minutes—a feat involving dangerous spills, sprained ankles and sleep deprivation. A number of runners also got lost, thanks to the difficulty of spotting those white blazes in the dark.

Simon Donato, 32, a Calgary-based geologist and adventure racer, organized the event under the banner of Adventure Science—a project to make his endurance exploits more meaningful by combining them with scientific and charitable goals. Donato carefully divided the athletes into two teams that would be identical in fitness but different in average age, to turn the run into a science experiment.

There were 45 stages to the race, averaging about 20 kilometres each. Injuries eliminated several runners, and

night stages were run in pairs for safety, so some racers ran up to eight stages—that's essentially two, 20-kilometre trail races a day for four days straight.

One of the participants, Dr. Mark Tarnopolsky, 46, a professor of pediatrics and medicine at McMaster University, collected physiological data from the racers before, during and after the run to examine how their bodies responded to physical stress. By the end, Tarnopolsky found one athlete's muscle-damage indicator—an enzyme called creatine kinase—was more than 38 times the normal level. "If somebody came into the hospital and they had a value like that, they would be put on an IV and kept in overnight," says Tarnopolsky. "However, we know that athletes frequently cause this type of damage." Among other factors, Tarnopolsky will look at whether taking antioxidant supplements had any effect.

Age seemed not to make a difference. The two teams finished the penultimate stage only 15 minutes apart and ran to the finish line together. They arrived at the trail's southern terminus near Niagara Falls on June 20, remarkably within five minutes of their predicted time.

BLAZ'N STATS: LENGTH OF THE BRUCE TRAIL: **894 KM** SOLO RUNNING RECORD (SET BY TORONTO'S CLAYTON SMITH): **15 DAYS** PREVIOUS TEAM RELAY RECORD (SET BY THE HIGHLANDS TRAILBLAZERS): **8 DAYS** NEW RECORD: **3 DAYS, 23 HOURS, 10 MINUTES** AVERAGE SPEED: **9 KM/H** NUMBER OF STAGES: **45** LONGEST STAGE: **26.6 KM** MOST STAGES RUN BY ONE PERSON: **8 (160 KM)** AVERAGE DISTANCE RUN PER PERSON: **99 KM** NUMBER OF ENERGY BARS AND GELS CONSUMED: **360** NUMBER OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS ON SCENE: **2** NUMBER OF RATTLESNAKES ENCOUNTERED: **1**

MIKE WASHINGTON

THE APP-Y CAMPER

Our resident i-geek chooses her favourite iPhone apps for the outdoors

BY SHARON DONALDSON



iSURVIVE WILDERNESS (\$2.99)

If you're in a true survival situation, you might want to save your battery power for bona fide search-and-rescue operations. But as a source for general info, this app provides text and photos on subjects such as sourcing clean water, how to build a shelter, starting a fire and first-aid tips for broken bones and bleeding.



iBIRD EXPLORER CANADA (\$9.99)

The price may be a bit steeper, but you'll amaze and impress your friends with your birding knowledge. More than 450 profiles contain both common and Latin names, identification tips and photos, and audio clips that are authentic enough to drive the local avian population into a territorial frenzy.



CREEPY CAMPFIRE TALES (FREE)

This app from Coleman gives you some new material to share around the campfire. Categorized into stories for kids, teens and grown-ups, the campfire tales range from classic creepy to groaningly bad. Also, check out Coleman's other free app, a flashlight that lets you choose 10 different lamp options.



KNOT GUIDE (\$3.99)

If you didn't earn your knot-tying badge as a Scout, this app is for you. It includes detailed illustrations of more than 70 hitches, bends, lashings and stopper knots, geared towards climbing, boating and securing gear. A one-touch glossary brings your knot knowledge up to snuff in a hurry.



TOPOS260 FREE (FREE)

With this app, you can download and store topo maps right on your iPhone. The default is American, but with some fiddling around, you can source and upload free Canadian maps from GeoGratis. Try this free version before you decide if you want to upgrade to the \$3.99 package with more bells and whistles.

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