



The Fuzzy Cheesecake

“FOP: The Harvard of First-Year Outdoor Orientation Programs”

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www.harvardfop.com

Welcome to the second annual Fuzzy Cheesecake, a publication compiled by FOP's current Steering Committee, designed to share the spirit of FOP with the entire family. Delivery is free, but subscriptions can be purchased NPR style - through your generous contributions.

Proclamation at the 25th

This speech was delivered at FOP's 25th anniversary event and has been published here to stand among the great speeches of our times. It was co-authored by Abe Lincoln and FOP.

One score and five to six years ago, our Dean brought forth upon this college a new program: conceived in easing the transition of new students through challenge, rather than through an ice cream social. This program was dedicated to the proposition that those who endure sleeping under a tarp together will bond together in an appropriate alcohol free and non-sexual way.

Now we are engaged in a great educational contest, testing whether our program, or any program so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great metaphoric battlefield of challenge, trying to provide more for our FOPpers: more scholarship money, more reunions after the woods, more activities, more high-calorie, light-weight food. More quality.

But now we have come to dedicate a portion of this evening to those brave leaders who gave their time to helping first years—eating half cooked grits and then having the courage to say “mmmm, good.” Carrying the food, the fuel, first-aid supplies, and tarps for 8-10 first-years while traveling up the mountains Sunapee, Lafayette, and Saddleback.

To those of you among us—those brave souls armed with only a sheet of plastic, some duct tape, and a peak one multi-fuel stove—you headed into the wilderness to provide students with great educational experiences.

To all of you we today recognize your part in a program that has grown to serve over 6,000 students. Together we are over 1,000 FOP leader alumni strong, with an active leader community of 92 undergraduates. Each year we give approximately 300 first year students an orientation experience designed to build social support and self awareness, but most importantly to transition a student into Harvard with a strong sense that they matter!

The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what leaders did here. This is our FOP.



FOP in the Family

By Mrs. Kathy Takvorian
Parent of FOPper Sam Takvorian '05 and
FOPper and Leader Kate Takvorian '07

As the mother of 2 recent “FOPpers,” I am happy to convey some impressions of what FOP has meant to them and to our family. The Sunday before Labor Day 2002 was a memorable one. After weeks of assembling all manner of gear, packing, repacking, and packing again, our son walked through Johnston Gate for the first time as a Harvard student. We were used to seeing him off this time of year, but this was different. This was COLLEGE. Little did he (or we) expect that one of the first things to happen to him was that he would be drenched in water...but happily his rainsuit passed the test! Unhappily for him, we ended up bringing what seemed like most of his socks and underwear home (he did not do so well in that category and had too much stuff). Somehow, when we saw him just six short days later, incredibly filthy, we knew that his journey during that week had far exceeded the miles that he had hiked. FOP made his transition to Harvard as smooth as it could possibly have been. It provided him with camping skills, life skills, and an inside lane into the Harvard community, all in the setting of the New Hampshire

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My FOP 2004

By Evan Jacobs '08

One of the clearest memories in my mind from my FOP trip is the very first night. We had completed a hard climb that first day, and to many of us the idea of crawling into our sleeping bags and falling asleep as soon as we had finished dinner sounded like a great plan.

However, one of the people in the group knew a great deal about astronomy, and he convinced us all to go out to an overlook and look at the constellations. So I found myself on a log bench with the other ten members of my group, sitting on an overlook at three thousand feet, staring at the clearest stars I had seen in years. It was one of those perfect moments where no one was thinking about the difficulty of the hike we had just put behind us, or the difficulty of the classes ahead of us. We were all just happy and content to be

sitting there, as if we had known each other for years.

My FOP group contained an eclectic mix of people. We had everyone from athletes to a kid who could and did count in binary on his fingers. I can say with great certainty that had first I arrived at Harvard on move-in day, along with more than 1600 other freshmen, I would never have met people like I did on FOP. I would have made friends with my roommates, and with people who share similar interests with me, but I would never have been exposed to the amazing cross section of people in my FOP group. Without FOP, I would never have had the experience of sitting on the side of a mountain in the middle of the night while someone showed the constellations to me and nine other incredible people, a memory I know will be one of my strongest from all of my time at Harvard. Moments like that are what make the First-Year Outdoor Program so special.

"Family," continued from page 1

mountains. Neither a parent nor an incoming freshman could possibly have hoped for more. Even now, as a junior, FOP is part of his life on a daily basis. In fact, one of his closest friends from his FOP group has been part of his rooming group for the past two years.

Just one year later, we felt like we were experiencing a re-run when we shepherded our daughter through the same routine as she prepared for her switch trip. Like our son, her gear was watertight (thank goodness), and like him, she returned unshowered, in disgustingly dirty clothes but with a glow about her and a nostalgia for the mountains that we had never seen before. She also established friendships and connections that will last far beyond her Harvard years. She made FOP an even bigger part of her life than our son has in becoming a leader at the end of her first year. FOP has given her the opportunity to develop her own leadership skills and take the initiative to welcome others to Harvard. Little did she know at the time that she would be initiated by fire, leading her own switch group through what was left of Hurricane Francis – a remarkable, memorable, an exhilarating experience, to say the least.

We have come to understand through our son and daughter the magnitude of the role that FOP can play in a first-year's life; when I ate the "warm and fuzzy cheesecake" at the 25th birthday celebration, I felt as though I had a sneak peek into a very lucky group – one filled with laughter, memories, a wholesome appreciation of nature and each other – and one sure to thrive as it nourishes future generations of Harvard freshmen.

FOP Fun Facts

FOP '04:

286 participants

72 leaders

32 trips

3 - new routes created in the Presidentials

4 - students evacuated from trips, all for illness

19 - trips rerouted because of weather or evac

42 - new leaders who trained this year

50+ - leaders who participated in the FOP Town Meeting

4 - FOP leaders who presented workshops at the Association of Experiential Education Conference in April of 2004.

500 - FOP Nalgens sold or given away, to date

\$30K - financial aid provided by FOP this year

1/3 - fraction of FOP participants who received financial aid



This year trips received over 4" of rain in less than 36 hours.

Joe Platz created a new logo, the bear hiking with a backpack, and this year was the first known year for 2-color print FOP shirts.

Bill Cane from SOLO said that this group of student leaders was the best prepared he has ever seen, a big honor coming from the curriculum director at a program that works with numerous college and student groups.

The FOOD Column

(We at FOP care a lot about food)

Fun Food Facts

This past FOP, we used:
 60 lb. margarine
 108 dry lb. quick grits
 120 lb. Nestle semi-sweet chocolate morsels
 120 lb. raisins
 140 lb. banana chips
 140 lb. spaghetti
 1,440 packets Quaker instant oatmeal
 2,880 graham crackers
 New menu item: Raisin Bran
 Brought back: Instant hummus

Reader's choice: Gado-Gado

Ingredients:
 Pasta
 1 c vinegar
 1 c soy sauce
 1 c brown sugar
 1 c peanut butter
 Salt (optional)
 Onions (optional)

Boil water and cook pasta, té other ingredients in frying pan using margarine, combine together. Add ground-spice to taste.



This spring, become a Wilderness First Responder!

Course given March 26-April 3 at Harvard.

Email fop@fas.harvard.edu or call 617-493-7935.

All are welcome!

FOP Celebrates 25 Years

(The Harvard Crimson: November 22, 2004)

By Allison A. Frost

When former Dean of Freshman Henry C. Moses arrived at Harvard more than two decades ago, he could empathize with the plight of fledgling first-years.

The Freshman Outdoor Program (FOP), which celebrated its 25th anniversary this weekend, came out of Moses' desire to ease the transition from high school and to change negative perceptions of Harvard.

"I wanted to combat an idea of Harvard that was broad at the time that people were hyper competitive...and put people in situations where they had no choice but to cooperate," Moses, the program's founder, said.

Six thousand students and 1,000 leaders have participated in FOP in the 25 years since 49 students first ventured forth in 1979.

About 160 FOP alums, leaders and even a few parents gathered at the Concord Scout House Friday night to reminisce, to mingle and to perform the FOP dance one more time.

"I'm even a little surprised at how much it means to people," current FOP Director Brent Bell said.

Bell, who holds a Ph.D. in experiential education, noted that the program's benefits extend beyond simple fun in the woods.

"Students who do these programs report having more social support than students who don't," Bell said.

Research on outdoor education programs like FOP indicates that their influence carries over at least into sophomore year.

"The positive effects seem to grow with time," Bell said. "The further people are from the experience, the more they reflect back on how important it was."

"FOP teaches you a lot about interpersonal relationships...that has

been really helpful to me throughout my time at Harvard," 2004 FOP Steering Committee member Lacey R. Whitmire '05 said.

One of the program's main goals is helping students prepare for the shock of Harvard.

"Living with eight people for five days in the most intimate setting is almost the perfect precursor for getting thrown in with 1,600 people," 2004 FOP Steering Committee member Neil K. Mehta '05 said. "It makes you think about every relationship you form."

Many also commented on the significance of involvement with the program after their freshman trip.

"The biggest surprise about FOP was how leadership training became...almost more important than the experience freshman year," Moses said.

Event organizers cited curiosity about the history of FOP as their impetus for planning the celebration.

"We wanted to find out how...FOP started, how traditions like warm and fuzzy cheesecake began," Mehta said. "We wanted to see how it became a 25-year, intergenerational community. A lot of it is about building for the future."

While the program has offered different trips over the years, participants noted the commonality of their experiences.

"The elements of the program have changed, but I think the spirit is the same," said 2003 Steering Committee member Chelsey Tanaka '04.

"When you go through a rainstorm together or eat some food that's been on the ground...you've accomplished something different than just taking a class together," Whitmire said.

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The Friggin' FOP

By Brent Bell, Program Director

One defining characteristic of a community is the development of its own language. Over the years, FOP leaders have created a community language providing humor as well as an efficiency in interaction. For instance, when I first arrived at FOP, the leaders told me they needed some new "chickens." I knew the word chicken must refer to some outdoor item and not the animal or meat. Soon I discovered that the five gallon water jugs were the chickens in the land of FOP. Why call them five gallon plastic water jugs when they look so much like chickens?

As I came to understand this community, I learned about long distance phone calls (taking some time from the group to tend to post-digestive issues) or the local call (bladder relief). I learned that hop meant more than jump up and down and was quick to agree—No hop on FOP. We also have our "Fossip," which most often involves stories about FOPpers or Trainees. We have frequent "Happy Hours" with no alcohol.



The great thing about language is that it is dynamic. But often that means that alums miss out on new language creation, or those away from summer staff or pre-FOP feel out of the loop. But that is why the "Fuzzy Cheesecake" is here to inform alums and parents of one new expression taking over the FOP community.

The term is bold and hopefully not offensive, since it certainly is not meant to be. It is simply "The friggin' FOP of" Two experiences led to the development of this term. The first was over a year ago when James Dyett had realized that NOLS had described themselves as "The Harvard of Outdoor Leadership" to which James appropriately remarked that FOP was "the Harvard of wilderness orientation programs."

Our foray into self promotion was further inspired this summer when a poster of Lance Armstrong in our office, on the days leading up to his sixth win of the Tour de France, suddenly exclaimed in a large balloon extending from his mouth, "I am the friggin' FOP of bike racing." A confident assertion for someone still riding the tour, but Lance eventually backed up his office poster words.

Soon leaders were letting each other know what was the "friggin' FOP" of numerous categories. So far we have decided that the Red Sox are the friggin' FOP of baseball teams, EMS is the friggin' FOP of outdoor stores, and James Dyett is simply the friggin' FOP. The 25th anniversary has been described as the friggin' FOP of celebrations. Although you may not want to use this term liberally around the home, it is still helpful to understand its context and rich history. If you have any questions, please instant message us in the FOP office at thefriggingfop.

Message from SC '05:

Andrew Bestwick, Kate Cosgrove,
Rachel Garwin, Catherine Jampel, Jim Murrett,
Joe Platz, and Brady Williams



Of course we're excited to be on Steering Committee because of its privileges - the cozy Matthews Basement office, York Peppermint Patties, and getting to be all about FOP, all the time. But we're also really excited about making a difference in the program this year, and our primary goal is to build upon the work of previous steering

committees to extend the reach of FOP.

We want the FOP experience to act as something to build on when starting the year, something to fall back on in times of stress and hardship, and something to continually guide first-years through this formative and sometimes confusing time in their lives. We will focus on making the FOP experience not a week, but something that lasts four years of college and beyond.

We want to share the program and these benefits with more people, through increasing both participation numbers and diversity among our participants. For many the cost of FOP is prohibitive, but we believe that through continued generous financial aid, it can be a more viable option for all, regardless of economic background. Our ultimate vision is to one day have a program that is both free and sustainable.

Increasing the scope of the program would also make it more inclusive. We have dreams for a "FOP-Lite"-which might include being based out of a campground with (gasp) showers and going on dayhikes. It would be aimed at people who are intimidated by the outdoors, but still wish to - and this is quoting an actual application we got last summer - "not sit on their bum all the time." Another idea is SOP- a sophomore orientation program designed to let new sophomores meet people in their new house.

There are plenty of pragmatic ways to improve the quality of the program. We have been working over the last few years to offer better equipment and greater availability of rental gear. Guaranteeing every FOPper the ability to participate regardless of how much outdoor experience or equipment they have would go a long way in making the program more inclusive.

We also want to continue to strengthen the leader community through new training methods, new technology, new ideas, and new initiatives. An idea that has been in the works for a while is a training video with scenarios filmed by leaders, and we're planning on getting it off the ground this year. Our ultimate goal in leader training is (of course) to make sure every trip goes out into the woods with the best leaders possible: people who are competent in the outdoors and who will be great resources for first-years.

We will never cease to dream. FOP is not in its final form. It is a developing and improving program. But even though it is always changing, FOP was, is, and ever shall be awesome.