

MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE MEMBERS OF
**ONTARIO CLIMBING ACCESS COALITION/
COALITION POUR L'ACCÈS AUX PAROIS D'ESCALADE DE L'ONTARIO**
(the "Corporation")

HELD in Toronto, Ontario at Joe Rockhead's Indoor Climbing, on June 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Constitution of Meeting

A quorum of the members of the Corporation being present in person and notice of the meeting having been duly sent, the meeting was declared regularly constituted.

Tony Berlier took the Chair and Patrick Lam acted as Secretary of the meeting. Graeme Taylor was appointed scrutineer.

Financial Statements

Kevin Pawliw, Treasurer, presented to the Meeting the audited financial statements of the Corporation for the year ended December 31, 2017.

Election of Directors

The Chair then stated that it was in order to proceed with the election of directors and declared the meeting open for nominations. The following individuals were nominated:

Randy Kielbasiewicz
Patrick Lam
Mike Makischuk

The Chair confirmed that Randy, Patrick, and Mike had consented to their election as directors. No member having demanded a ballot, the election of directors was conducted by a show of hands following a motion by Mylissa Prisner and seconded by Tom Valis.

The election having been held, the Chair declared Randy, Patrick and Mike to be duly elected A directors of the Corporation to hold office for a term of two years, or in each case, until their successors are elected, subject to the provisions of the by-laws of the Corporation.

Election of Co-Chairs

The Chair then introduced the special resolution appointing Tony Berlier and Randy Kielbasiewicz as co-chairs of the Board of Directors. The Chair explained that the by-laws and the *Corporations Act* (Ontario) require that any chair be elected by the members by special resolution.

No member having demanded a ballot, the election of co-chairs was conducted by a show of hands.

On motion duly made by Patrick Lam, seconded by Mark Smith, and carried, the special resolution electing Tony Berlier and Randy Kielbasiewicz as co-chairs of the Board of Directors was approved.

Appointment of Auditors

The Chair introduced the next item of business, the appointment of Peters, Brown LLP as auditor of the Corporation and authorizing the Board to fix the auditor's remuneration.

No member having demanded a ballot, the Chair conducted the vote by show of hands.

On motion duly made by Graeme Taylor, seconded by Danylo Darewych, and carried, it was resolved that Peters, Brown LLP be appointed as the Corporation's auditor for the 2018 financial year, and that the Board be authorized to fix the auditor's remuneration.

Termination

There being no further business, the meeting then terminated, as moved by Tom Valis and seconded by Gerry Banning.

Chair

Secretary

Tony Berlier

Patrick Lam

OAC ACCESS SENDS 2017/2018: Summary

CLIMBING AREAS

- **New Niagara Glen portfolio manager**
- **Halfway Log Dump partnership continues**

CLIMBING COMMUNITY

- **Organized climber events:**
 - **Beaver Valley Climbing Festival**
 - **Southern Ontario Ice Fest**
 - **screening of *Dirtbag: The Legend of Fred Beckey***
- **Deployed new OAC website**
- **Growing the OAC Facebook page**
- **Hiring a Fundraising and Outreach Coordinator**

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

- **Organized community events:**
 - **Niagara Glen Earth day**
 - **Crag Stewardship Day (Conservation Halton)**
- **Participated in:**
 - **Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee**
 - **Building the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve**
 - **Centre for Applied Science in Protected Areas Conference
Presentation and Tour of the Swamp**

OAC ACCESS SENDS 2017/2018

CLIMBING AREAS

Niagara Glen – Lots of exciting activity this year at the Niagara Glen! Kacy Wilson officially joined the OAC as Portfolio Manager for the Niagara Glen. In this position, she will be officially partnering with Niagara Parks to ensure climbing access for years to come. Kacy Wilson's passion for outdoor bouldering fueled her to develop a strong relationship with [Niagara Parks](#) which directly led to the re-opening of previously-closed bouldering sectors. She's also been heavily involved with producing the Niagara Glen bouldering guide (soon to be available in print and already released in digital version on the [Vertical-Life Climbing App](#)) with co-authors Jesse Wong and Jack Szumilas. A big thanks to this crew for creating a thorough guide that will help us all find our way to our destinations much quicker while following the Niagara Parks bouldering rules.

A huge thanks to everyone who participated in the Niagara Parks Earth Day clean up event on April 22nd. Our continued community efforts to act as park stewards and pack out trash solidifies our value to the Niagara Parks and climbing in Ontario.

Remember your annual bouldering permit comes with a free annual parking permit!

Halfway Log Dump – The OAC and Bruce Peninsula National Park are into our 9th year of partnering to supply weekend volunteer Bouldering Site Hosts. Bouldering Site Hosts, like Camp Hosts, act as stewards and caretakers for the area. The Site Host program has been a huge success for all parties involved since its launch in 2010.

CLIMBING COMMUNITY

BVCF – The 5th Annual Beaver Valley Climbing Festival took place in July 2017 and was a huge success. We attracted close to 250 people and raised funds to support future OAC projects. The weekend was packed with games, clinics, vendors, competitions, entertainment, yoga, massage, music, dancing, a huge bonfire and tasty food. The highlight was the set by headliner Ariana Gillis. The event is a rare opportunity for the Ontario climbing community to come together and celebrate the beauty of the Beaver Valley. Don't miss this year's BVCF, July 20-22nd 2018!

SO Ice Festival - Once again the OAC helped sponsor the third Southern Ontario Ice Fest February 23-25th in Maynooth, ON. The event brought together the growing ice climbing community and over the past 3 years we've raised over \$6000 for TROUT, Children's Programming in Maynooth, and local economic development in Maynooth. The event also helped increase local awareness of ice climbing's economic benefits.

CLIMBING COMMUNITY

Beckey Film screening - A sold-out crowd enjoyed our April 11 screening of *Dirtbag: The Legend of Fred Beckey* at the Revue theatre in Toronto's west end. Thanks to everyone for coming, to Mike Makischuk for organizing the event, and to our sponsors for supporting the event. Together, we raised over \$3000 to support Ontario climbing access. We hope to see you at similar events for future climbing films.

OntarioAccessCoalition.com – Check out the fully revamped OAC website! A special thanks to Allison Yan for design and implementation, Laura Banks for content, and Patrick Lam for project coordination.

Fundraising and Outreach Coordinator contract – The OAC is excited to be contracting out some access work so that we can continue to improve our service to the climbing community.

Metcalfe - Met with multiple stakeholders regarding trail maintenance and bathrooms. Launched a partnership with the local climbing community to help fund a port-a-potty at parking lot to minimize further environmental impact to this sensitive area.

Gym to Crag – Four years ago the OAC partnered with the Access Fund to co-brand our logo onto their Gym To Crag poster. The poster promotes responsible crag practices in a fun way. The poster should be found in most Ontario climbing gyms and MEC locations. If not, contact the OAC for one!

OAC calendar – The OAC continues to produce a high quality calendar showcasing the beautiful and diverse climbing areas in the province that we are lucky to call our local spots. All calendar proceeds go to the OAC and support access. Our social media outlets were again inundated with submissions to our photo contest. Keep those submissions flowing this year!

OAC survey – The response rate remains high, with 211 climbers responding to our annual survey. The results of the survey provide data which inform our ongoing discussions with land managers. See detailed report.

OAC Facebook group – We surpassed 1870 likes for our OAC Facebook group as a result of regularly posting updates relevant to the climbing community.

OAC membership – Our membership continues to increase steadily with another 317 members joining in the 2017-2018 year. Total membership is now 1707 individuals.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee – Dr. Garrett Hutson (Brock University) continues participating in strategic meetings as the non-motorized trails representative for the Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee. His role is to be the conduit between non-motorized trail users and the province keeping communication channels open and leveraging opportunities to resolve conflicts when they arise.

Conservation Halton (CH) – We continued to partner with Conservation Halton to run the annual Crag Stewardship Day on May 5th 2018. This year, due to the highly successful work in prior years, OAC volunteers' efforts are now being directed to fight off the invasion of Garlic Mustard near the lower pavilion at Rattlesnake Point. This event improves climbers' visibility at some of our most popular crags.

In April 2018, the OAC chairs had a scheduled meeting with CH to strategize ways to improve climbers' experience and manage the explosion of growth in the industry. We have started discussions and planning around installing rescue kits at Mt Nemo and other CH crags. Working with CH, we hope to have some prototype kits in place for the 2019 climbing season. Additionally, we discussed recent development of Mt. Nemo routes. We helped to ensure the long term viability of climbing at Mt. Nemo with a reassertion of the 'No new routing' policy.

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) - Met with new land manager. Opened discussions regarding Eugenia Falls.

Building the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve - On May 31, 2018, two OAC board members participated in the "Building the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve" meeting. The OAC was one of over 30 delegations from municipalities, conservation authorities, academia, industry and non-governmental organizations. The meeting was a great reflection of the diversity of practitioners interested in developing a governance model for the NEBR. These meetings have also been great networking opportunities for the OAC across the region.

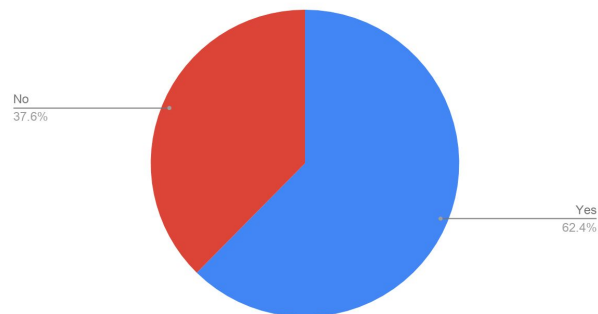
Centre for Applied Science in Protected Areas Conference Presentation and Tour of the Swamp – Dr. Garrett Hutson and Mike Penney delivered a presentation on the value of building and maintaining climber-manager partnerships to reach sustainability goals in Ontario protected areas. Following the presentation, with the help from MNRF personnel, protected area managers and ecologists went for a hike at the Swamp to view a climbing area and to discuss successful climbing management strategies.

2017 OAC Survey Results

summary by Patrick Lam

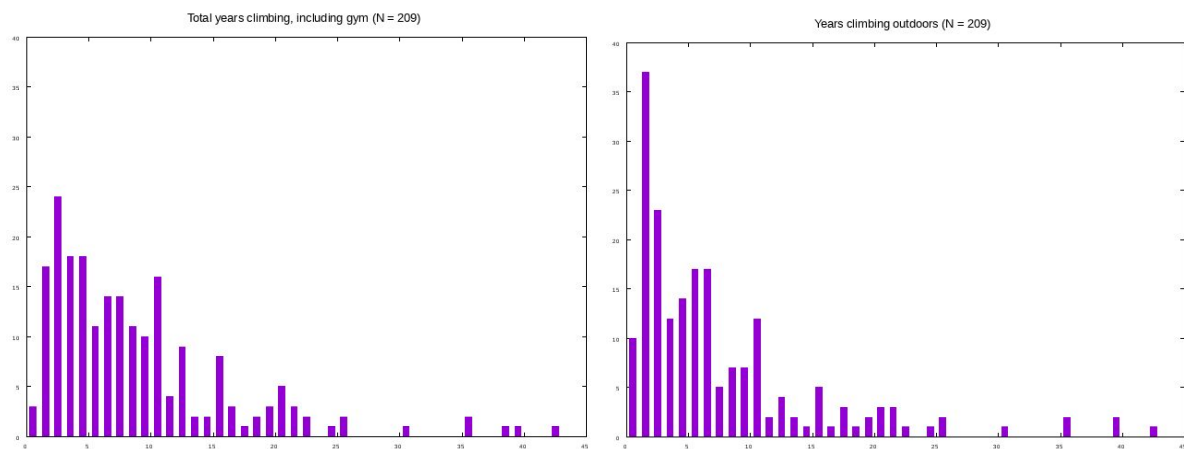
For the 2017 OAC Survey, we decided to shift the focus from the usual economic-impact survey to a more access-focussed survey. This year, we received 211 responses to our survey. Following past practice, we drew two winners for \$50 MEC gift certificates. We learned that the many short-answer questions were quite labour-intensive to process; we have read all of the responses and have typically grouped the responses into categories for this summary.

Are you an OAC member?



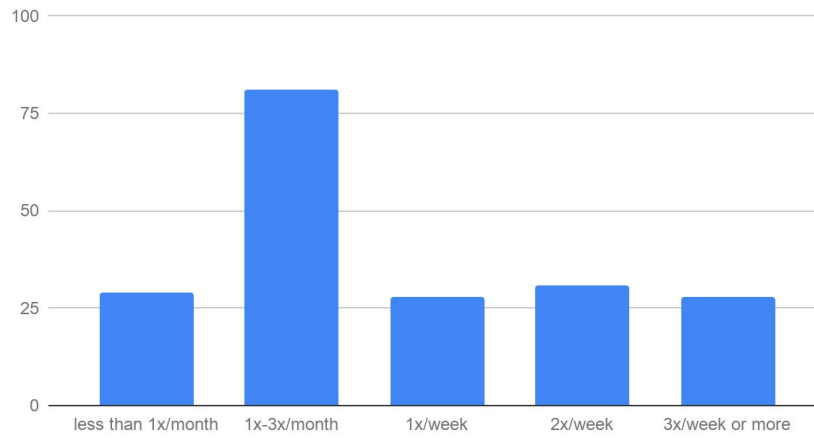
Questions about respondents' climbing

How many years climbing total/outdoors?

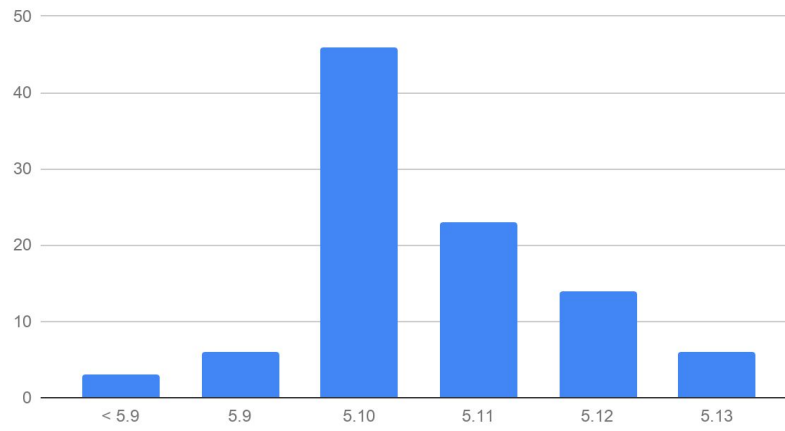


	Years climbing total	Years climbing outdoors
Mean	8.43	7.06
Median	6	5

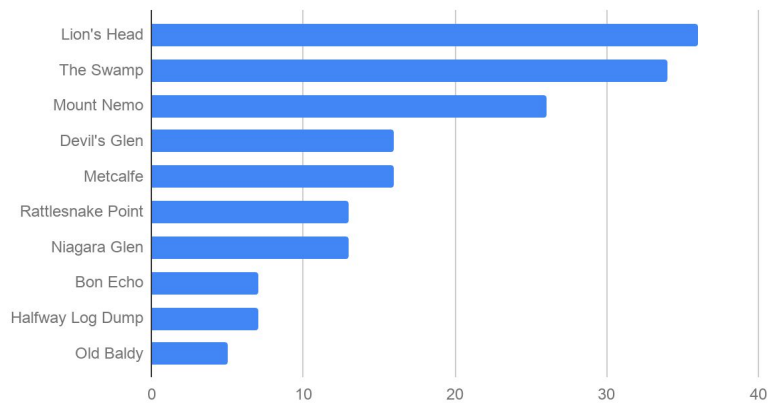
In climbing season, how often do you climb outdoors?



Upper end of preferred grade range

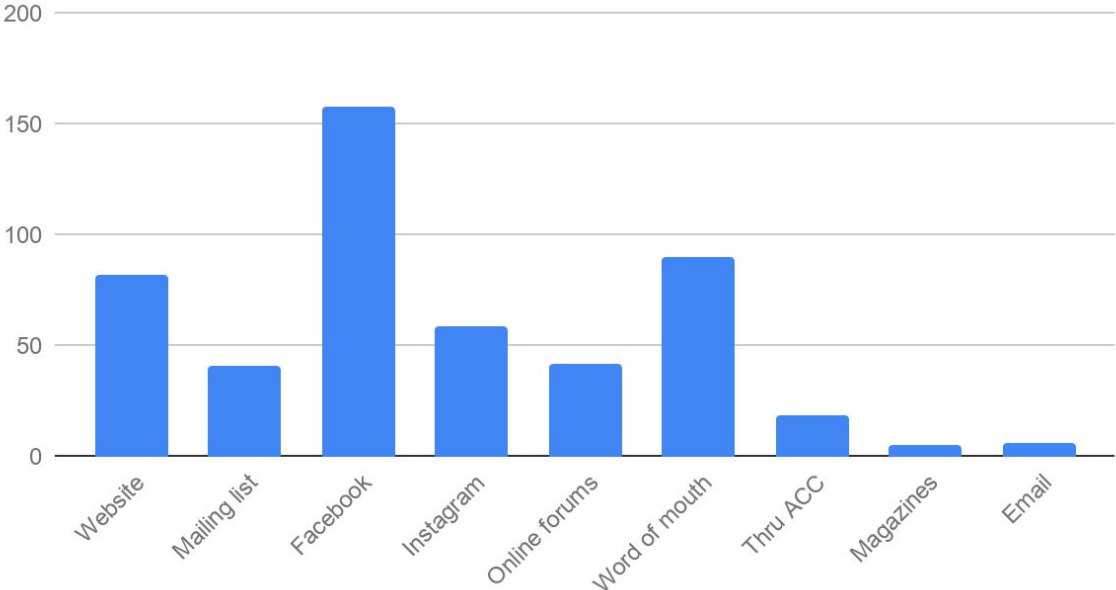


Favourite crag

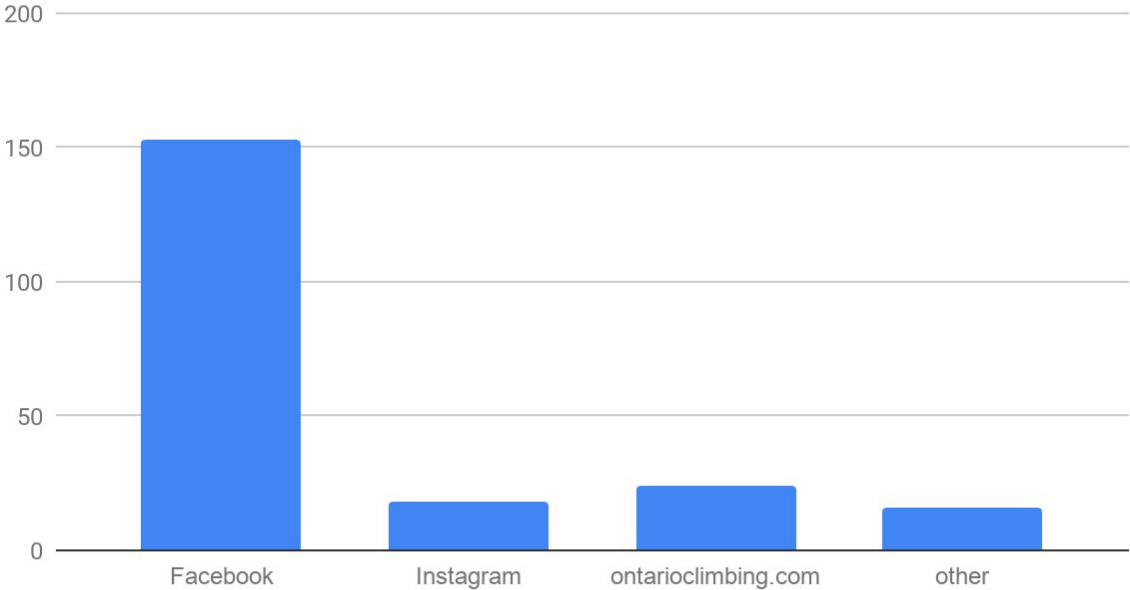


Questions about OAC communications

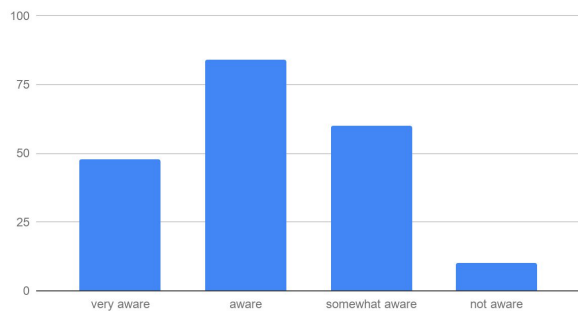
How do you receive OAC information?



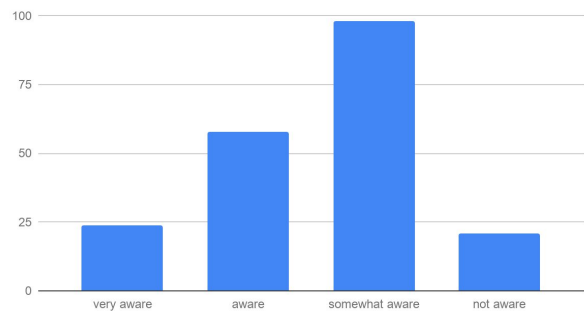
Came to survey from



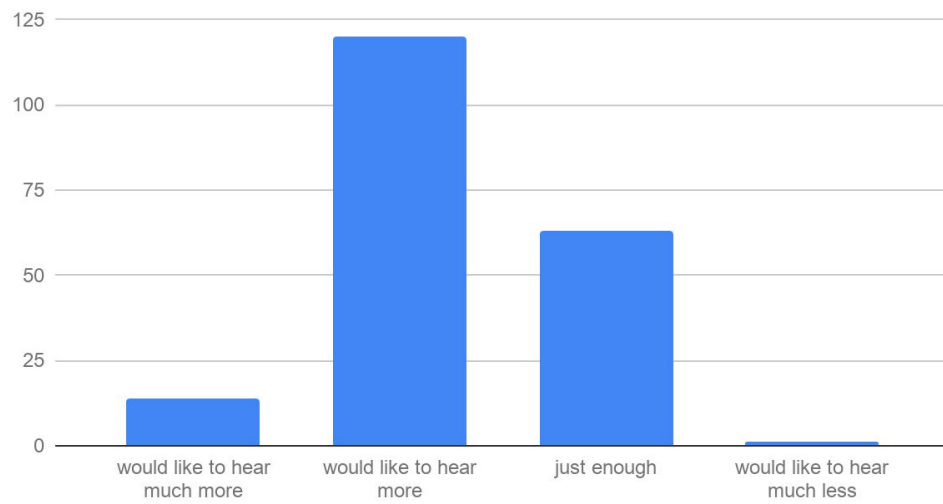
How aware are you of the OAC's mission?



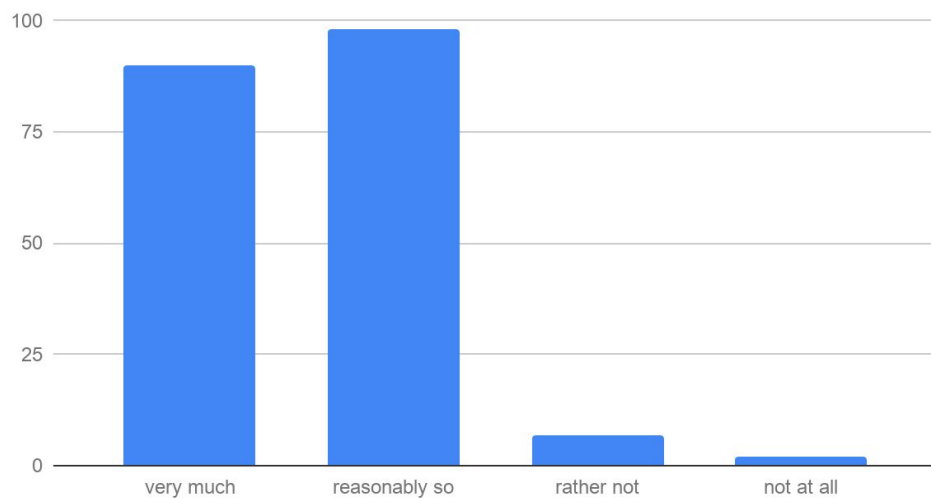
How aware are you of the OAC's activities?



Would you like to hear more or less about the OAC?

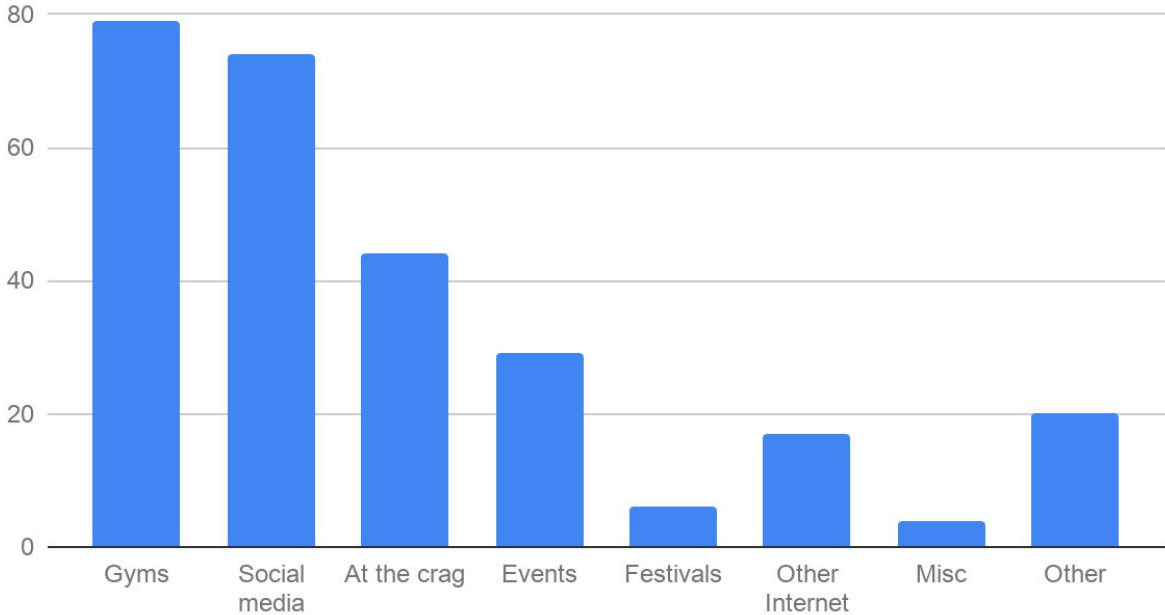


Do you trust the OAC to represent your interests?

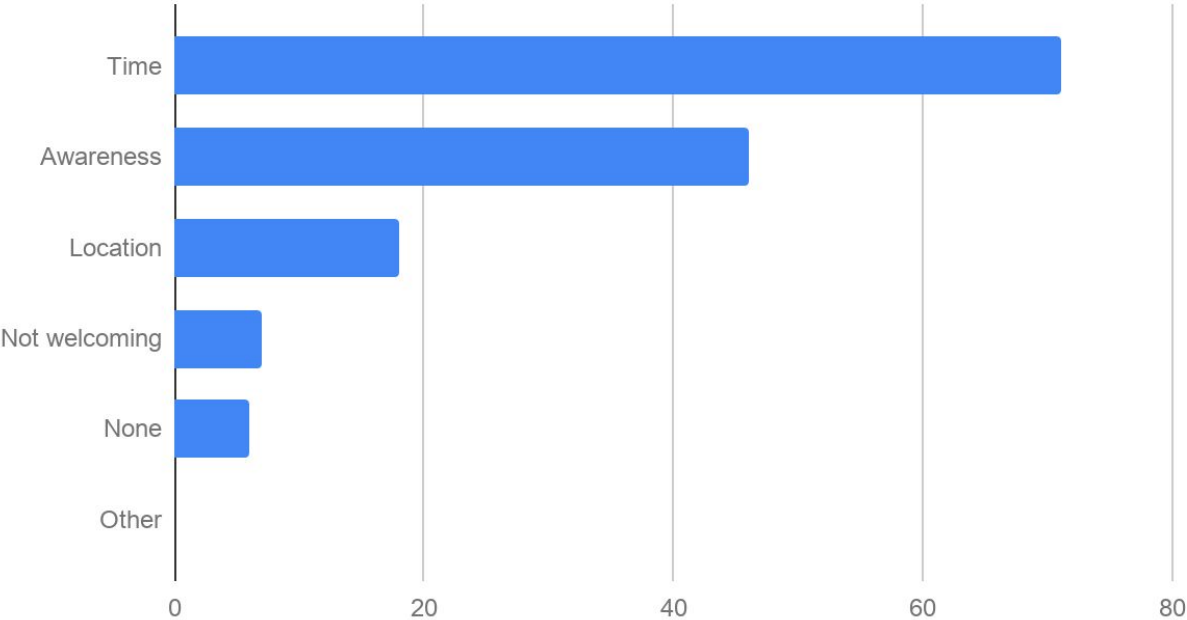


Supporting the OAC

How should the OAC engage community?

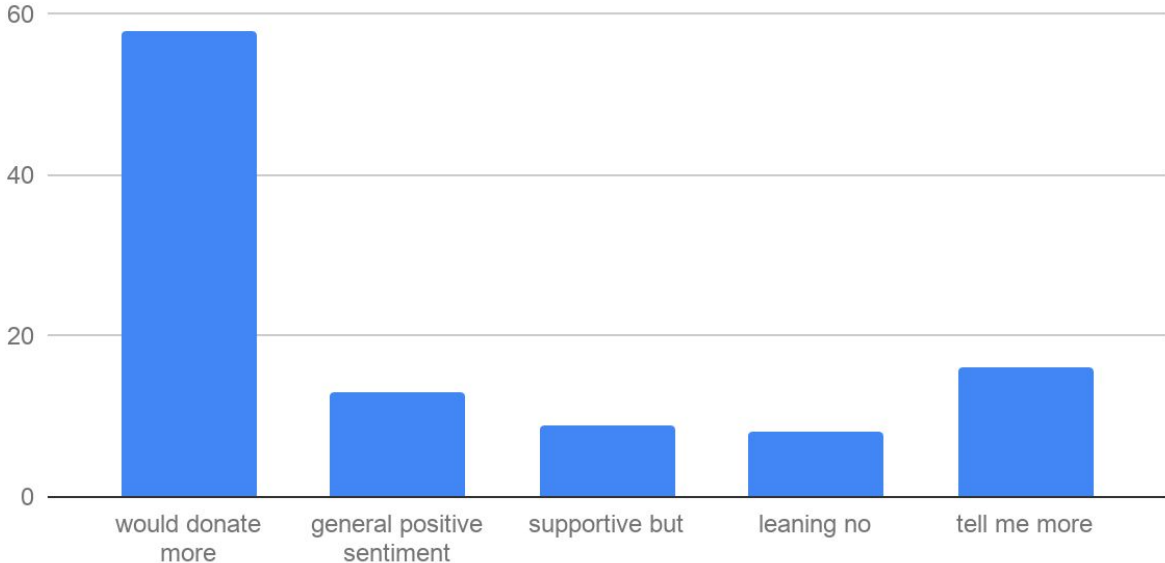


Barriers to volunteering



We are considering a tiered membership system. The base tier would remain at a \$5 lifetime fee. The preferred tier would enable members to contribute more to the OAC on an annual basis, in exchange for perks that we would negotiate with the local climbing industry.

Would you donate more money to the OAC, e.g. preferred membership?



Questions about what the OAC should be doing

Would you come to a climbing presentation by the OAC?

There was broad support for an OAC climbing presentation; of course we'll have to actually run one to see how it goes. We have discussed whether it was important to get a "famous" speaker or not, and the split was pretty close to 50/50. Some comments pointed out that it was more important to get a good speaker than a famous speaker, although a famous speaker can help people get in the door. There was a diversity of opinion about the best kind of speaker to get, although 19 responses favoured someone local, 11 responses favoured an access-themed presentation, and 8 responses favoured an accomplished sport climber. We also received 9 responses advocating female speakers. We also have a list of suggestions that we will consider, which includes both local and international climbers (including past and present OAC volunteers).

Selected responses:

- I would go. The speaker needs to somehow help promote the OAC's goals rather than their personal "accomplishments."
- I would like to learn more about the history of climbing, the mental state of climbing, climbers pushing their limits, breaking barriers, paraclimbing.
- Someone who has set routes at local crags, trad climbers, world travellers
- Someone who not only inspires great feats of strength or dedication in climbing, but also in making it sustainable and continually accessible to all for years to come.

Do you engage in protecting climbing environments currently? Do you intend to do so in the future? If so, how?

We received a variety of responses to this question. Many of the responses (45) mentioned picking up trash at the crag, particularly others' trash, which is a more low-key form of crag cleanups (7). Engaging others came up fairly often (26), sometimes leading by example (4); respondents also mentioned various leave-no-trace practices (24). A couple of responses (6) described supporting groups like the OAC and similar groups with both time and money. Other responses (5) described building and maintaining infrastructure and some responses mentioned responding to calls for letters such as during the Niagara Escarpment Plan consultation.

Selected responses:

- By reducing my personal impact - lunches in plastic containers, packing out human waste/garbage, staying on main trails, avoiding plant life while on the cliffs and approaching, climbing with one partner at a time..
- Yes, absolutely! By continuing my efforts to always pack out more than you pack in. Clean and be environmentally responsible.
- I teach outdoor rock climbing. I always emphasize to my students that we are in a shared environment, and so we have to make sure that we make it so that everyone (even people not in our group) can enjoy

themselves in it. And I talk about "no trace" ethics. I like to help with cleanup days when I'm in town. I'd like to volunteer with the OAC if I can manage it while I travel.

What could we be doing better in our relationships with land managers?

Most of the responses advocated for better relationships. The OAC is in constant communication with land managers to maintain its current relationships, and aims to develop new ones when possible. We have particularly good relationships with Conservation Halton, which is a strong supporter of climbing, as well as the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Some responses suggested exercising empathy for the land manager's point of view, which is well taken. We also ought to make an effort to show appreciation for our strong partnerships with land managers on social media.

In the past year, we have engaged land managers and provided climbing demonstrations at conferences.

A couple of responses suggested events (crag cleanups, trail maintenance). Education, particularly for private landowners, about the Occupiers' Liability Act, is always helpful, and managing climber impact is always key. We have also provided services like helping to fund portapotties at Metcalfe.

Some responses called out specific areas such as Rockwood and Tiffany Falls (which is only open to climbers taking part in organized events).

We appreciate the responses thanking us for the work we already do!

Selected responses:

- Develop unique solutions. EG. In Chattanooga, you can actually text a landowner to tell them you're there. They have a tip jar on their crag. It's a strange solution but it could work. Or ask for specific waivers for areas.
- I admittedly don't know a lot about what is being done, so I can't comment too well on this. With this in mind I would say the most important thing is keeping in mind the POV of the land manager. Educating them as best possible is key about climbing, what may happen re: injuries, damage to nature, traffic etc and where, when, how they may be liable.
- I think providing land managers with regular services such as garbage pick up, or land maintenance would help keep up our relationships with them. These services could be turned into full-scale events to raise awareness for the OAC. Win-Win.

How could we better involve the climbing community in our relationship with land managers?

Most responses focussed on the need to better educate the climbing community. Social media is certainly an opportunity to do so, and we intend to maintain our social media presence. One response pointed out the benefits of conspicuously being good stewards of our crags when parks staff are present. (It is also important to be a good steward when no one is watching.)

Some responses proposed humanizing land managers/climbers to each other, for instance with joint events, or by publishing stories about land managers (for climbers) and climbers (for land managers). We should definitely look into that.

We also received responses advocating membership drives and fundraising, which is certainly part of our goals for the near future, as well as letter writing campaigns, as we organized during the Niagara Escarpment Plan public consultation.

Selected responses:

- Climbing advocates to discuss with land managers. Volunteer to take land managers out for a day to see the activities. Allow feedback both ways.
- Have a land manager "spotlight" on the OAC website
- Just becoming aware of this issue has made me a better climber, from a perspective of involvement with land management. Having a mindset of good relationship between ourselves and land management affects our behaviour in a positive way. Climbers ought to be ambassadors for our sport. I've been able to make comments about beneficial activity I've observed by other climbers to, specifically, Halton parks staff. I've also had parks staff observe me packing out trash that I've gathered during my climbing session. These behaviours, I believe, affect our relationship with land managers at a grass-roots level.
- Meeting each other in person. Land owners and climbers coming together. Social event? Or a meeting. Or at earth day...

How can the OAC encourage good climber behaviour?

The Internet and in particular social media came up often (N=29), including some calls for videos and newsletters. At the crag was almost as popular (N=26), both in person (N=19) and through infrastructure. Closely related to at the crag was mentorship/peer pressure (N=16). Some comments encourage having ethics ambassadors who would be particularly welcoming for new climbers. A number of responses supported more output in general (e.g. "continue to advocate"). Gyms are important as well (N=15); we can reach many climbers at gyms. We can also reach climbers at courses/events (N=12).

Selected responses:

- While I enjoy speaking to others with whom I climb about things that I've learned about maintaining these places that we all love, a t-shirt would communicate, even to those to who only pass by, and with whom I may not speak, the responsibility shared by all of us to care for our crags.
- Actually engage gym climbers. These are not just for "outdoor climbers". The gym climbers will trickle in, make sure they do it the right way instead of acting protectionist.
- Through continuous engagement with the climbing community. Maintaining a platform through which to remind people, beyond the one time donation they make for membership. Kind of like what Bob Barker did at the end of every Price is Right episode when he reminded ppl to spay and neuter their pets. Steady repetition of the messaging.

How else should we share environmental info/best practices with climbers?

Social media was a popular answer here (N=46) with some specific callouts to Facebook. Gyms are an obvious choice (N=33), including posters and talks at gyms (N=12). Climbing teams are another possibility. At-the-crag was also popular (N=29), particularly crag signs (N=21). We continue to work with Conservation Halton to include climbing content. Some responses also suggested free garbage bags. Some answers suggested physical presence at crags (N=7). A few respondents mentioned events in general and in-person.

The OAC works with partners in the climbing industry beyond gyms, particularly retailers like MEC. Ensuring that store staff have information about access could be helpful.

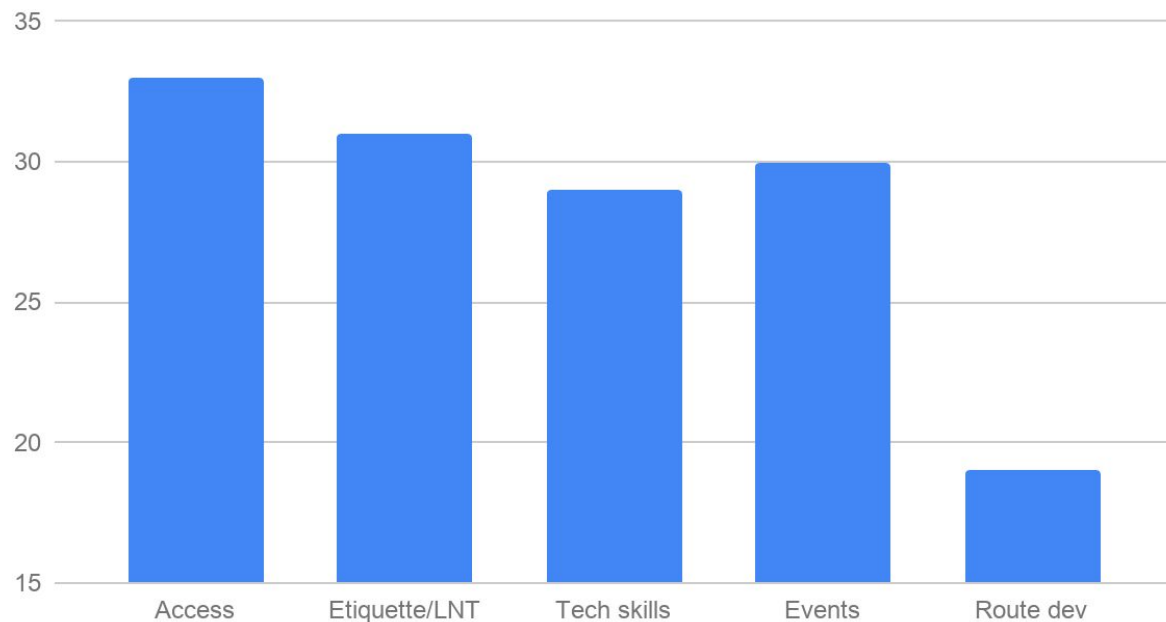
Selected responses:

- Amp up social media postings toward the beginning of the climbing season.
- Better signage at crags/trail heads. I've seen crags outside of Canada that have poop/garbage bag dispensers. That kind of thing really makes you think about your impact. Even if I you don't bother to read it, the visual reminder is obvious.
- Consider running workshops educating effective but non-confrontational interventions when non-best-practices are happening.

What services could the OAC provide to the climbing community?

Many of the responses called on the OAC to continue with its core mission of protecting access (33). There were also quite a few requests for education, both in terms of outdoors etiquette and leave-no-trace (31) and technical skills (29). Respondents also asked for events (30), particularly cleanups (7) and other community-building (7); some asked specifically for events beyond the existing festivals. Route development/maintenance was also popular (19).

Services the OAC should provide



Access. We continue to work on our core mission, maintaining access to open crags (by strengthening our relationships with land managers) and developing relationships for closed crags. We are also happy to branch out to new land managers and to work with climbers who would like to become portfolio managers.

Etiquette. We are working on content on etiquette for guides to incorporate into their gym-to-crag courses. There are a couple of calls for essentially diplomacy training for existing climbers. This is an interesting direction and we will look into it.

Technical climbing skills. Technical skills are beyond the OAC's mandate and we defer to Ontario's rock climbing guides for such education.

Events. We will discuss possible events. Capacity is a limiting factor, although we hope to get more volunteers with event organization experience working with the OAC.

Route development. In the past, the OAC has contributed to rebolting efforts (e.g. at Old Baldy). We intend to continue with such efforts as appropriate.

The OAC would like to develop conservation-related materials that might be presented as part of a gym-led gym-to-crag program. How could we make this happen?

Our current thinking is to propose a curriculum to guides and suggest that they work in collaboration with gyms to put on gym-to-crag courses. The OAC's mission does not include technical skills, but does include education as to best practices for low-impact climbing---a distillation of the OAC Code of Ethics.

Selected responses:

- Develop a easy infographic, chart or poster to explain the different elements: risk (real rock fractures and falls), gear (cliffs are big, please don't bring your gym rope. Learn quickdraw), etiquette (don't blast your music). Also could make a list of must have skills before you go outside (sport anchors, cleaning the route)
- Engagement by climbers will be low unless they have the opportunity to learn hard skills, more than just ethics and conservation tips. Gyms will not be able to offer hard skills training due to insurance. Partnerships need to be made with guides to offer "Tech tip" nights or something similar which could include advice and skills from insured guides as well as ethics and conservation info. Guide companies would get to promote their businesses and be seen to be giving back and supporting the OAC, and the gyms wouldn't have to hold the insurance liability.
- Engage local conservation biologists/ecologists to speak at these courses (if possible...I know that's a lot of organizational work). Sometimes it can help drive home the message of people hear about conservation issues from a "professional"! Course participants would also gain a greater understanding of how climbers/climbing can impact entire ecosystems (and it might help to hear just how rare some Ontario ecosystems are!)
- Sell "crag bags" with smart crag things - bio toilet paper, trash out bags, coveted OAC hang tag, drive and parking info, etc
- Create a standardized framework, and train volunteers (Active outdoor climbers in Ontario) to give these talks. Create incentives for volunteerism with gear or discount rewards (Like free parking passes for Nemo)

What is the best way to educate those who just don't know that the outdoors is not the same as a climbing gym?

Many responses were gym-focussed and included info sessions at gyms, gym posters, and gym-to-crag courses. One response suggested that board member Mike Penney and former board member Andriy Kolos act out a skit. The gym rep program is helpful here, although perhaps a more active role vs. tabling could help. Some responses acknowledged our gym to crag poster (courtesy the Access Fund). Events and courses were also generally popular. We hope to work together with Ontario climbing guides to include specific access content. This year, at least MEC and Grand River Rocks have had events about climbing outside.

Mentorship was also popular. The OAC could provide training on effective mentorship, although we'd have to talk about how the OAC could be involved in linking mentors and mentees. It would be easy if that came from the community. One response was "an army of trad dads" [and moms, although that doesn't rhyme]. Some of the mentorship responses were more confrontational (e.g. Darwin awards).

Signage was also popular here, as was crag presence and swag. Other ways of reaching climbers include social media (including references to videos) and guidebooks.

Besides Halfway Log Dump, what do you think about maintaining a presence at other crags? Which ones would you target? How would you run such a program?

First, the question of where. Nemo was most popular at 39, followed by Rattlesnake (24), Beaver Valley (21), Lion's Head (17), and Niagara Glen (12).

How is a harder question to summarize. We received a wide range of suggestions there, but it boils down to: parking lot/trailhead, walkabouts, and signs. Reps could be identifiable by nametags or shirts.

Many times, the comments stated that it was critical to have someone friendly, helpful, and non-judgmental representing the OAC. Suggested incentives for crag stewards included free parking passes or special clothing comped by retailers/manufacturers or pro-deals. Organizing a group of stewards for a day could permit each steward to get some climbing in during the day.

At the parking lot, we could have a pop-up tent, coffee for climbers, info packets, route/conditions beta, good crag etiquette, a theme of the day.

It could also be useful to have crag stewards walk around and chat with climbers (and non-climbers). There could also be sessions with park rangers.

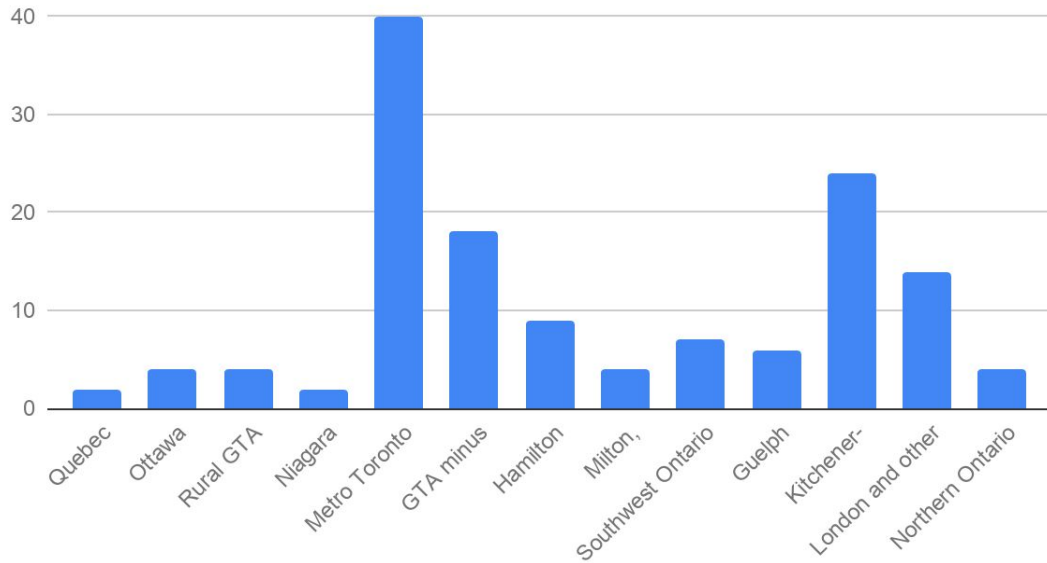
One idea was to activate the membership at large to be crag ambassadors, perhaps by having a training session.

Clinics could help, for instance on best practices, both in terms of climbing and leave-no-trace. Alternately, cleanup events came up a few times. One could imagine a once-per-month schedule for crag cleanups.

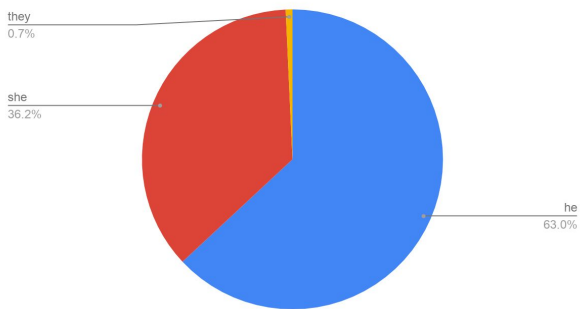
We are constantly working on initiatives for better signage.

Demographics

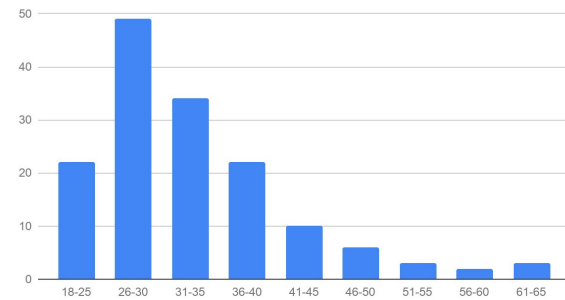
Survey respondents' location



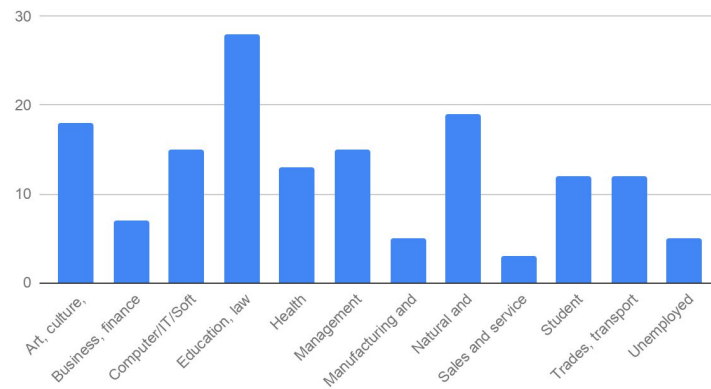
Gender of survey respondents



Ages of survey respondents



Which of the following best describes your occupation?



Source data

Raw anonymized survey data at <https://github.com/patricklam/oac-2017-survey>.